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Research carried out with Fifth Year
Biology class 2006/2007

Using keywords as a structure to improve students' note-taking

Background

- Students rewriting paragraphs of text
- Difficulty in accessing texts
- Terminology not understood
- Lack of structure of notes
- Unable to link major points

Aim

To make Biology Terminology accessible to all my students

Procedure

- Consultation with class
- Options explored
- Mind Map/List on board/Keyword List
- Experimentation on interventions
- Feedback from class
- Design of Keyword List Sheet
- Application of List in Biology Class
- Review

Student Opinion

"It helped me write notes in my own words"

"Gave me a better understanding of what I was learning"

"A great help for things I was curious about – not so helpful for others"

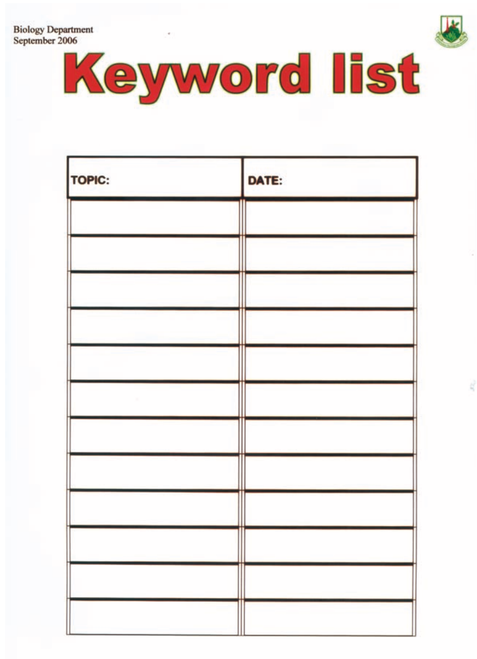
"Hasn't been much help I prefer doing my own notes"

"Handy for learning definitions of important words"

"Keywords help me remember and focus on the main points"

"If boxes were bigger we could write an explanation in each box and keep all the lists in a folder"

"Notes are shorter and chapter is summarised easily using key points"


Biology Department
September 2006

Keyword list

TOPIC:	DATE:

Main Outcomes

- ✓ Students more competent at note taking
- ✓ Better recall of key points
- ✓ Improved structure of notes
- ✓ Students more motivated
- ✓ Class gelled as a group

Recommendations

- ❖ Worthwhile gaining student insight concerning research in order to meet their needs
- ❖ Re-Design Keyword List Sheet
- ❖ Master Copy for each topic
- ❖ Folder for use as a glossary in class
- ❖ Rotate keyword recording on sheet among class members