



NOTE SHEET EXAMPLES

For All of My Courses

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Overview of Note Sheets for Exams

The Logic of Allowing Note Sheets

In my Social, Cultural, and Personality Psychology courses, I allow students to use one page of notes during both the multiple-choice and essay portions of an exam. This practice is grounded in my belief that I write questions that are quite broad (which many students interpret as “challenging”). These questions require students to synthesize material by describing the relevant concepts or theories that they believe are relevant, by providing everyday examples of the concept at hand, and to examine exemplary empirical evidence.

These exams amount to a hefty task if the student is expected to memorize many details. Thus, to alleviate students’ need to memorize *all* of the details – indeed, to reduce their cognitive load during the exam – I permit a note sheet. As a result, I believe that the students can better focus on the integration and interrelationships during the exam period.

But even more importantly, I believe that the proper creation of note sheets can itself promote learning. Research in psychology suggests that the more someone organizes information, the better they can recall and describe it later. Thus, by permitting note sheets (and providing rules for their creation), students may better prepare themselves for the exam.

Rules for Note Sheets

The following rules for note sheets are strictly enforced:

- **Notes must be on only one side of a single 8.5” x 11” sheet of paper.** Note sheets are not a replacement for preparation and learning. For my tests, more than a page of notes reflects an over-reliance on notes.
- **Note sheets must be self-produced.** This means that the notes must be hand-written or typed, but not photocopied. By this stage of the learning process, students learn best by working to organize and simplify the information from the course.
- **Note sheets must be approved by me before the exam and must be handed in with the exam.** Prior to distributing the exams, I ask to see all note sheets. I also examine all note sheets after giving grades for the exam. These measures help me to determine compliance with the rules, but also provide me with important information for offering constructive feedback on students’ performance.

The remainder of this document provides examples of actual student note sheets from previous exams. I have chosen these examples NOT because they are exemplary (most of them are not, in my opinion), but because they are typical. I have also provided commentary on each of them.

Sample Note Sheet #1

A Portion of a Student's Note Sheet

The box below presents a portion of a student's note sheet for a Social Psychology exam on social influence (conformity, obedience, persuasion, etc.). This exam covered approximately half of the course material. For this exam, students had access to a pool of essay questions ahead of time.

task difficulty & social behavior

social loafing - groups loaf less when task is challenging, appealing, involving

social facilitation - high evaluation concerns when being observed; dominant response strengthens whether right or wrong.

bike racing

conformity - the harder the task, the more ppl conform. ie - identifying a criminal.

→ If task is difficult & high in important, ppl conform

→ If task is import & easy, conformity goes down.

(request)

Compliance & Persuasion

Central & Peripheral Route Processing

Spontaneous Deliberate

Source vs. Message (Petty 1981)

Involvement & how we try to make ppl central or peripheral

→ persuader tried to persuade students to take comprehensive test to graduate

→ professor student; strong/walk argument; take place now/in ten years.

→ strong argument, ↑ involvement = fav. attitude

social Loafing meta-analysis (Karau & Williams) 1993

→ when task is important, ppl work harder

→ when task is not important, ppl loaf

→ if task is simple - ppl loaf

→ if task is difficult - ppl work harder

→ If coworkers exert high levels of energy/effort, you'll work harder.

→ when you are in a group of friends - you'll loaf less & work harder.

Determinants of Conflict

→ Social Dilemmas & Resource Dilemmas - communication issues for the good of the group? or me?

→ Competition - over scarce resources - realistic group conflict (Tolc)

→ Social Cognitive Factors (Misconceptions) attributions? stereotypes

→ Perceived Injustice - whether something seems fair

Resolving Conflict

→ contact - the contact hypothesis

→ Cooperation - superordinate goals (goal that both groups share)

→ Communication - bargaining, mediating, arbitration

→ Conciliation - GRIT = reciprocal de-escalation - indicating drive to reduce conflict by small de-escalation acts ease tension - a smile, gentle touch.

Sherif Study (1964)

Rattlers & eagles - group identity was established & a can was opened - flag burnings, name calling, etc.

goal → obtain water

My Thoughts about this Note Sheet

- This student clearly utilized an outline type of note sheet. This represents a fairly strong attempt to list what the student believed were the most important details and ideas for each question. This also represents that the student either pruned out details that were not perceived as being important or that the student already had memorized.
- This student's note sheet was primarily organized around the pool of essay questions. Although this may be practical, it is likely that these notes were less advantageous during the multiple choice portion of the exam.
- Because the essay question for this exam would have required students to explain relevant empirical studies in some significant detail, a considerable amount of useful detail is probably missing from this note sheet.

Sample Note Sheet #2

A Portion of a Student's Note Sheet

The box below presents a portion of a student's note sheet for a Psychology and Culture exam on psychological manifestations of culture (culture's impact on the self, on cognition, etc.) and intercultural processes (acculturation, etc.). This exam covered approximately one-third of the course material. For this exam, students had access to a pool of essay questions ahead of time.

The Impact of Self

Culture → Self Concept → Cognition, mood, Behaviors

Self: mediator of the causal link

2 types of Culture (HAR)

- ① Independent Self: tend to emphasize individual
- ② Interdependent Self: self as a member of relationships, groups.

culture as a set of Primes

① Self as Focused Attention (Trafimow et al., 1991)

Whether we can prime them or not

5-10 min to think about

②: what makes you diff?

③: makes you similar to others?

20 statement test

① read story

② choose good warrior

③: Individual skills/Values

④: Family background / social skills

⑤: Priming Meta-Analysis

⑥: American warrior task

⑦: 30 SET → prime works! Easy!

⑧: what if you move to other culture?

Culture & Mental Habits

① What is the Potential Impact of Culture? (Poortinga, 1990)

Genetic transmission

Cultural Tr.

② Culture has only a little to do w/ biological side (but some)

③ Behaviors = highly influenced by culture

④ Contd.: Memory tasks → primer for non-social events

Thinking tasks → = social

Emotion

① The theory of Emotion (Ellenbein, 2003)

Emotion Experienced → Expression Based on Specific Affect Program (tendency) → Display rules

② = based on culture

Emotion di = play

③ Masking: show an emotion that are different from what you are feeling

④ Neutralizing: show no emotion "poker face"

⑤ M + N = Down play

⑥ Overplay = intensity

⑦ = M + N

⑧ = show emotion

⑨ Collective Self-esteem (Crocker et al., 1994)

- Whites, Blacks, Asians
- ⑩: society pride, feeling of being others disapprove them
- Majority = less pride b/c they don't have to pay attention

→ Being minority = develop the sense of self (potentially threatening you)

Minority

⑩ Stages of Ethnic Identity (Phinney, 1990)

Search (1/2)

Commitment (1/2)

Identity diffusion

Identity Foreclosure

Identity Achievement

Search: try to learn about values/c

Commitment: strongly cited to the ethnic identity

⑪ Search & Commitment (Phinney & Alipia, 1990)

- Asian A, Black A, Mexican A, White A
- BA: S & C are both imp.
- C & self-esteem related sig. to all ethnic background
- S & C both imp on how they feel about themselves.

Acculturation: happens when influenced by 2 or more C.

→ changes that results in facing + competing cultural values.

video The Untouchables

India, bottom of caste → Christianity

⑫ Acculturation Levels & Types of Changes

⑬ Group-Level Acc.

⑭ Psychological Acc.

stress - pathology - adaptation

⑮ Factors affecting stress (Berry, 1999)

Acc. Experience Much & Little

Stressors Many & Few

Acculturative Stress High & Low

Factors Moderating Relationship btw Acc. & Stress

- Model of acc.
- Phase
- Nature of larger soc.:
- Characteristics of acc. g. = Ages, Status

My Thoughts about this Note Sheet

- This student partially utilized an outline type of note sheet. There is certainly some level of organization of the information but, to me at least, the organization is a bit haphazard.
- Although this student's note sheet was partially organized around the pool of essay questions, it is also organized around the relevant topics and theories. Again, this would seem to be both practical and useful for both the multiple-choice and essay portions of the exam.
- The student's inclusion of diagrams and graphs represents some attention to detail. These were definitely useful in answering questions on both portions of the exam.

A Portion of a Student's Note Sheet

Culture & Mental Habits: Differences in self produce differences in culture. **Habit:** consistent way of doing things. Culture repeatedly forces us in psych habits (i.e. think of self as an individual). Basic cognitive tendencies vary cross-culturally; culture consistently focuses on different shapes how we think.

o **Culture & Biological Habits:** **Example:** I looked at 5 broad areas in psych: *cultural, perceptual, cognitive, personality, social*. Cultural transmission has less of an impact on biology. Social: culture has a major role. Few studies focus on biology. Impact of culture on mental habits: culture has minimal influence - mental processes are learned by exposure.

differences in thinking come from different social experiences (i.e. cultures)

o **Analytic Thinking:** focus on objects; independent of context (Western perspective) **Field independence:** separate objects from background

o **Holistic Thinking:** relation to relation among objects (East Asian); **Field dependence:** objects bound to background - attention

Example: video clip, role of schooling in creating differences in math ability. Child in Brazil could do math in head not on paper. Cultural variation exists—focuses attention in specific direction. colors: primary colors universal, variations in describing colors show people are thinking differently

o **Oksapmin** body counting: basic cognitive tendencies vary dramatically cross culturally

o **Activity:** cross-cultural differences: *Game playing* - language - time - personal space

o **Minority Identity/Group i.d.** **Example:** *Lonner + Mielke* looked at two aspects of self-esteem: personal identity (self-concept) & social identity (i.e. mother, sister, etc) Individualists focus on top path; but social identity and groups can also result in positive self-esteem. People i.d. with ethnic group due to sense of pride. **Collective Self-Esteem:** how we feel about our group, reflects how you feel about self

o **Example:** *Johnson* surveyed 200 people, whites, blacks, Asians, ranked components of CSE, white majority group don't i.d. strongly with ethnic identity; being minority is important, shows how your different, contributes to social identity develop pride contributes to positive self-esteem

o **4 Components of Collective Self-Esteem:**

1. Identity (how important is your group to sense of self)
2. Membership (you make contribution to your group)
3. Private (satisfied with group membership)
4. Public (Group valued & respected by others)

o **American Minority Identities:** **Diffuse**—little or no exploration of ethnic identity
Foreclosed—take on values/attitudes without question; don't always have negative feelings of own group
Moratorium—exploring ethnic identity—some confusion
Achieved—acceptance & internalization of one's ethnicity; positive self-concept

Search: extent an indiv. has explored ethnicity
Commitment: proud/accepting of identity

o **Acculturative Stress & Adaptation** What happens to groups/individ. From outside group influences; competing cultural values (minority pressures)

o **Example:** Untouchable caste in India, changes over time, competing influences, people converting to other religions, changing their beliefs, becoming more individualistic (equality, respect) - India = collectivistic

o **Acculturation Experience** → Stressors → Acculturative Stress

o **Factors Moderating Relationship between Acculturation & Stress** (influence how much stress is experienced)

Mode of Acculturation (Integration, Assimilation, Separation, Adaptation)—how people deal with stress & i.d. w/groups

Phase of Acculturation (Contact, Conflict, Crisis, Adaptation)

Nature of Larger Society (Prejudice/Discrimination, Multiculturalism/Assimilationist)

Characteristics of Acculturating Group (Age, Status)

Characteristics of Acculturating Indiv. (Attitudes, Coping)

• **Stressors:** things that actually occur (new food/language);

o **Integration:** pos. views of both traditions maintain ethnicity, contact w/ majority

o **Assimilation:** no ethnic identity, contact w/ majority

o **Separation:** neg. views of both cultures, highly stressful, less successful

o **Adaptation:** keep making changes, no effort to behave w/ host culture

o **Multiculturalism vs Segregation** **Attitude toward host culture**

o **Attitude toward host culture**

- Like in the previous example, this student partially utilized an outline type of note sheet. Interestingly, this student appears to have revised the original type-written note sheet by adding relevant hand-written material throughout the note sheet.
- Although this student's note sheet was partially organized around the pool of essay questions, it is also organized around the relevant topics and theories. Nonetheless, the overall organization may be functional, but could have been better.
- The inclusion of simple diagrams to convey theory is an effective use of space here. However, there are no graphs or tables to assist in answering questions about empirical evidence.

Sample Note Sheet #4

A Portion of a Student's Note Sheet

Like the first example, the box below presents a portion of a student's note sheet for a Social Psychology exam on social influence (conformity, obedience, persuasion, etc.). This exam covered approximately half of the course material. For this exam, students had access to a pool of essay questions ahead of time.

OVERRIDING IDEA: The situation is a main determinant of how ppl feel, act, and think. Situations affect the likelihood of persuasion (e.g., speech given in an auditorium vs. in a friend's kitchen), conformity (e.g., is it a difficult task or an easy one?), aggression (e.g., church vs. bar), and obedience (e.g., in a court room or in a high school classroom). The situation is a huge reason why we do (or do not) change our attitudes, conform, act out, or obey. As humans, we observe the situation & attribute norms to that situation. For example, we are more likely to obey someone in a court room. If the judge tells you to sit down and there are police officers present you are more likely to obey than if you were in a high school classroom and a student was telling you to sit down. We can attribute part of the Milgram study compliance to the situation (i.e., "I am at a prestigious school, nothing bad will happen here"). In the Sherif study, we can attribute some of the conflict to the situation. The outcome would likely have been different if the study had taken place at a Bible camp. There may still be conflict, but there would likely be a change. The importance of the situation can be seen in every area of social psychology. Another example is the Nadler study ("w/ a little help from a friend") when the situation was considered ego relevant vs. non ego relevant, people were more likely to suspect that their partner wanted to appear superior. **SPONTANEOUS/DELIBERATIVE THINKING ON COMPLIANCE/PERSUASION:** W/ both compliance & persuasion it is not what you are trying to ask/persuade, but how it is presented. Deliberative & spontaneous thinking have varying effects on whether a person will comply or be persuaded. With deliberative & spontaneous thinking there are many variables that come into play (e.g., a person's mood or the importance of the task/situation). For example, if I were confronted before entering a store with a request to hold the "Salvation Army" change bin while the volunteer went the restroom I would be more likely to comply (spontaneous thinking = I know S.A., their legitimate). On the other hand if I were asked to do the same for an unknown charity (e.g., Carl's Cancer fund) I would think more deliberately before complying. I would consider things such as the validity of the organization & potential problems if they aren't legitimate. There are 2 routes to persuasion (central/deliberative & peripheral/spontaneous) - the same applies to persuasion as for compliance. The elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty/Cacioppo) mentions that message are processed with high ability & motivation or low ability & motivation, this leads to Central R.P or Peripheral R.P & affects whether or not we will be persuaded. The idea of CRP & PRP is reinforced by the Source v. Message (Petty). When a good argument is presented & the audience has high involvement they are more likely to be persuaded than those with low involvement. The amount of involvement will determine the route of thinking (central/deliberative or peripheral/spontaneous). **AGGRESSION**

PERSON/SITUATIONAL FACTORS: Aggression depends on personal &/or situational factors. Individual factors include personality. For example, Personality & Aggression (Bettencourt et al.) meta-analysis indicated that individuals with an aggressive prone personality were more prone to aggression than provocation sensitive personalities. This makes sense: people that are more easily upset/frustrated are more likely to be aggressive. Situational factors include factors such as the presence of a weapon. For example, the Weapons Effect (Bartholow et al.) indicated that aggression increased when the image of a gun was present between hunters & non-hunters & assault gun image or hunting gun image. Items such as weapons increase physiological arousal, increase neg. cognition & neg. emotions. This increases the likelihood of an aggressive act. This applies to anything that increases physiological arousal (e.g., provocation, pornographic material). **RESPONSIBILITY & HUMAN SOCIAL BEHAVIOR:** Diffusion or reduction of personal responsibility can be used to explain human social behavior. This is present in many areas, especially conformity & prosocial/helping behavior. For example, in the Milgram Shock study, many people who continued had at one point asked who would be responsible if the "student" were harmed. The lab official commented that he would be responsible. This diffused the responsibility of the "teacher," & reduced their feeling of responsibility. This is also present in helping behavior, in particular the bystander effect. When there are several people present the responsibility is diffused across the group; therefore, each individual has less personal responsibility. This, of course, can be problematic when someone is in danger. People are less likely to help if they are with a big group of people. The diffusion of responsibility can be seen in everyday examples, such as in the classroom. When the professor asks a question, not everyone raises their hand because they assume someone else will answer the question. Therefore, minimal responsibility is required of each individual. It would not be the same if the professor said, "K [] what did you think about the article?" In that situation, all the responsibility is on one person. **PRODUCE/REDUCE CONFLICT:** Many things can produce conflict. Conflict is perceived incompatibility of goals. There are 4 key determinants of conflict: 1) Social dilemmas (e.g., resource dilemma), 2) Competition, 3) Social cognitive factors (e.g., misperceptions), & 4) perceived injustice. To expand, 1), there is the Realistic Group Theory: whenever there is competition over scarce resources there will be conflict (e.g., Wii). 2) when one team is playing another (e.g., Packers v. Vikings), there will be conflict & possibly name calling (e.g., stinkers, cheaters). 3) can be caused when intentions are misperceived. For example, some people misinterpret my sarcasm for meanness. & lastly, 4), when individuals believe that there is a violation of what is fair/unfair, there may be conflict. Conflict resolution can be attained by contact, cooperation, communication & conciliations. Contact decreases conflict, prejudice, discrimination. Contact is necessary, but may not be sufficient alone. Cooperation can decrease conflict. For example, superordinate goals are goals that both groups share - they must work together to achieve the goal. Communication is important in resolving conflict as well - when you talk to individuals you can change your opinion (e.g., first impression). & finally conciliation, Charles Osgood advocated GRIT: Graduated & Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension reduction. **TASK DIFFICULTY/OUR SOCIAL BEHAVIOR:** Social facilitation: when we are presented with a difficult task & others are present our physiological responses increase. On the other hand, when the task is simple, our physiological responses barely altered (Bond & Titus meta-analysis). An everyday example would be speaking in front of people. I view it as a difficult task & therefore I get more nervous when having to do this task (i.e., that is why I waited 3 years to take Comm. 101). Loafing, we are less likely to loaf if the task is difficult/important (Karau & Williams meta-analysis). This is evident when individuals are asked to solve difficult math problems. Less people loaf when the task is difficult, however if the task is simple - individuals are more likely to loaf. Usually if others loaf we are more likely to loaf, however if the task is difficult we are less likely to loaf - even if others do. Conformity: Asch Line study. When others are present during a task (e.g., identifying matching line sizes) we tend to choose the wrong answer if that is what others are doing. If the task were given to individuals alone the accuracy increases. Other studies (Conformity Motivation & Task difficulty, Bond & Smith) indicate that when the task is difficult & of high importance (e.g., final stages, your responses are vital) there is a tendency to conform. In situations where the task is difficult & of high importance we likely conform because we look to others - we look at their reactions to gauge our own response.

My Thoughts about this Note Sheet

- This student's note sheet was completely organized around the pool of essay questions to the point of nearly writing out the answer to each question. If well done, it can be very effective. In other cases, students report that they wasted their time writing rather than organizing and studying.
- Similarly, this organization may or may not be useful for answering multiple-choice questions. In this case, the student's notes addressed only about half of the studies tested in the multiple-choice section.
- Although this note sheet lacks any diagrams, graphs, or figures, it does convey some level of detail about the relevant theories and empirical evidence. Nonetheless, the level of detail here is not sufficient and the student needed to rely on her memory to fill in the blanks.