

**Research as a Way of Singing: Methods & Performance Studies**  
**Workshop by Sujay Pandit, NYU Performance Studies**  
**June 2013**  
**(STUDENT HANDOUT)**

**PREZI:** [http://prezi.com/qnm-x-ap0emns/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy](http://prezi.com/qnm-x-ap0emns/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy)  
**Bernice Johnson Reagon Video:** <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/11232007/watch3.html>

### **Creativity and Multiple Intelligences**

"I'm not creative."

"I wish I could be more creative, but I don't have it in me."

"Why are some people creative and others aren't?"

"I'm creative in my arts field, but writing research papers are a mystery to me."

You may have some of these thoughts or perhaps you've heard them from your neighbor. **The truth is almost everyone has creative potential.** Creativity is not a "you have it" or "you don't" kind of thing. It isn't a personality trait. It's not a "one size fits all" habit of mind. It's not, simply, a set of skills to test for or a roster of art classes. What separates good creatives (or dormant creatives that get lucky) is that they've become adept at practicing navigating the creative process. Ironically, many of them don't realize that there is an entire body of research on the creative process that has been studied and documented, yet they've developed habits and processes that allow them to walk through the process. On some brute level, *they understand the process, though they don't know how the process works.*

A large part of the problem is that there is an air of mystery and mysticism around the creative process. Because people assume and reinforce the idea that some have creative potential and others don't, those that do harness their potential and work through the process become all the more "different."

So, let's take a few minutes and demystify the creative process. I will be sharing with you three different theories that relate to the creative process.

### ***Wallis' Model of the Creative Process***

Researcher Graham Wallis, in 1913, set down a description of what happens as people approach problems with the objective of coming up with creative solutions. He described his four-stage process as follows:

#### **Preparation > Incubation > Illumination > Verification**

1. In the **preparation** stage, we define the problem, need, or desire, and gather any information the solution or response needs to account for, and set up criteria for verifying the solution's acceptability.
2. In the **incubation** stage, we step back from the problem and let our minds contemplate and work it through. Like preparation, incubation can last minutes, weeks, even years.
3. In the **illumination** stage, ideas arise from the mind to provide the basis of a creative response. These ideas can be pieces of the whole or the whole itself, i.e. seeing the entire concept or entity all at once. Unlike the other stages, illumination is often very brief, involving a tremendous rush of insights within a few minutes or hours.
4. In **verification**, the final stage, one carries out activities to demonstrate whether or not what emerged in illumination satisfies the need and the criteria defined in the preparation stage.

### ***Alex F. Osborn: Father of the Brainstorming***

"It is easier to tone down a wild idea than to think up a new one."- Alex Osborn

Developed by Osborn, an advertising executive in 1953, this model uses the idea of brainstorming to harness new information and help you develop your work.

Osborn claimed that two principles contribute to "ideative efficacy," these being :

- Defer judgment,
- Reach for quantity.[2]

Following these two principles were his four general rules of brainstorming, established with intention to :

- reduce social inhibitions among group members,
- stimulate idea generation
- increase overall creativity of the group.
- **Focus on quantity:** This rule is a means of enhancing divergent production, aiming to facilitate problem solving through the maxim *quantity breeds quality*. The assumption is that the greater the number of ideas generated, the greater the chance of producing a radical and effective solution.
- **Withhold criticism:** In brainstorming, criticism of ideas generated should be put 'on hold'. Instead, participants should focus on extending or adding to ideas, reserving criticism for a later 'critical stage' of the process. By suspending judgment, participants will feel free to generate unusual ideas.
- **Welcome unusual ideas:** To get a good and long list of ideas, unusual ideas are welcomed. They can be generated by looking from new perspectives and suspending assumptions. These new ways of thinking may provide better solutions.

**Combine and improve ideas:** Good ideas may be combined to form a single better good idea, as suggested by the slogan "1+1=3". It is believed to stimulate the building of ideas by a process of association.[2]

And, finally, the work of Harvard psychologist, Howard Gardner, on his notion of multiple intelligences has informed the way we approach creativity in the modern era.

From PBS: [http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/education/ed\\_mi\\_overview.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/education/ed_mi_overview.html)

Dr. Howard Gardner, a psychologist and professor of neuroscience from Harvard University, developed the theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) in 1983. The theory challenged traditional beliefs in the fields of education and cognitive science. Unlike the established understanding of intelligence -- people are born with a uniform cognitive capacity that can be easily measured by short-answer tests -- MI reconsiders our educational practice of the last century and provides an alternative.

According to Howard Gardner, human beings have multiple, different kinds of intelligence that reflect different ways of interacting with the world. Each person has a unique combination, or profile. Although we each have all nine intelligences, no two individuals have them in the same exact configuration -- similar to our fingerprints.

For Gardner, intelligence is:

- the ability to create an effective product or offer a service that is valued in a culture;
- a set of skills that make it possible for a person to solve problems in life;
- the potential for finding or creating solutions for problems, which involves gathering new knowledge.

#### **HOWARD GARDNER'S NINE MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES:**

**1. Linguistic Intelligence:** the capacity to use language to express what's on your mind and to understand other people. Any kind of writer, orator, speaker, lawyer, or other person for whom language is an important stock in trade has great linguistic intelligence.

**2. Logical/Mathematical Intelligence:** the capacity to understand the underlying principles of some kind of causal system, the way a scientist or a logician does; or to manipulate numbers, quantities, and operations, the way a mathematician does.

**3. Musical Rhythmic Intelligence:** the capacity to think in music; to be able to hear patterns, recognize them,

and perhaps manipulate them. People who have strong musical intelligence don't just remember music easily, they can't get it out of their minds, it's so omnipresent.

**4. Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence:** the capacity to use your whole body or parts of your body (your hands, your fingers, your arms) to solve a problem, make something, or put on some kind of production. The most evident examples are people in athletics or the performing arts, particularly dancing or acting.

**5. Spatial Intelligence:** the ability to represent the spatial world internally in your mind -- the way a sailor or airplane pilot navigates the large spatial world, or the way a chess player or sculptor represents a more circumscribed spatial world. Spatial intelligence can be used in the arts or in the sciences.

**6. Naturalist Intelligence:** the ability to discriminate among living things (plants, animals) and sensitivity to other features of the natural world (clouds, rock configurations). This ability was clearly of value in our evolutionary past as hunters, gatherers, and farmers; it continues to be central in such roles as botanist or chef.

**7. Intrapersonal Intelligence:** having an understanding of yourself; knowing who you are, what you can do, what you want to do, how you react to things, which things to avoid, and which things to gravitate toward. We are drawn to people who have a good understanding of themselves. They tend to know what they can and can't do, and to know where to go if they need help.

**8. Interpersonal Intelligence:** the ability to understand other people. It's an ability we all need, but is especially important for teachers, clinicians, salespersons, or politicians -- anybody who deals with other people.

**9. Existential Intelligence:** the ability and proclivity to pose (and ponder) questions about life, death, and ultimate realities.

You can take a test on multiple intelligences here to find yours:

<http://www.literacyworks.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html>

#### **What does it mean to “do” research and what are Research Methods?**

Before learning how to determine your research needs, let's first define exactly what research is.

How do you define research and research methods? Take a minute and write down in a sentence what you believe research to be and what are research methods.

Adapted from <http://www.edison.edu/library/researchskills/Unit1/1whatIsResearch.php>

Traditionally, you may have learned that research is “The investigation of a particular topic using a variety of reliable, scholarly resources. The three major goals of research are establishing facts, analyzing information, and reaching new conclusions. The three main acts of doing research are searching for, reviewing, and evaluating information.” You've probably also learned that randomly selecting books from the library is not research, nor is surfing the Internet. On the contrary, research requires organization, resourcefulness, reflection, synthesis, and above all, time. In Performance Studies, this traditional definition of research needs to be expanded to include things like attending a dance performance, participating in a Yes Lab project geared towards activism, curating an art exhibit, or any other meaningful activity you participate in towards a goal of learning more about a particular project. In PS, research is multi-dimensional. It may even include randomly selecting books from a library or just surfing the web. That traditional description has to be dismantled and rebuilt to suit our unique, inter-disciplinary needs.

Now that you know what research is, let's define the research process. Again, in more single-disciplinary fields, you may have come to understand the research process as “the methodical approach to finding an examining a variety of reliable, scholarly resources on a particular topic.” The research process is generally construed to have a beginning and an end, with many stages or steps in between. Each one of these steps is built upon the foundation

of information (here is where it gets interesting – information for a PS student could be anything from a traditional archive to witnessing Burning Man and interviewing individuals who participated in it). In other venues, perhaps you even learned that “good” research follows certain steps like these.

Step 1: Determining Research Needs

Step 2: Defining a Research Topic

Step 3: Developing a Search Strategy

Step 4: Conducting the Search

Step 5: Evaluating Resources

Step 6: Citing Resources

The research process for you can certainly follow some form or trajectory of these steps, or maybe it doesn't. Perhaps, you aren't aware of your research needs for a paper when you visit that experimental performance downtown, and as you're experiencing the performance, it suddenly clicks – or it clicks days later- that what you experienced is vital to your project. These steps are a guideline but not the only model. You will be tailoring them as you map out your own research process in PS.

To enable you to get closer to mapping this out, we need to call upon “research methods.” BKG, in her course on Research Methods for incoming PhD students, remarks “Performance Studies methodologies are based upon interdisciplinary research paradigms (movement analysis, ethnomusicology, ethnography, history, history, orature, visual studies, ethnomethodology, among others) and the close reading and analysis of exemplary studies. We have to consider the conceptualization and design of research projects in the context of theoretical and ethical issues and in relation to particular research methods and writing strategies.”

Adapted from <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/methods/>

She advocates a development of practical skills related to archival and library research, ethnographic approaches, including participant observation and interviewing, documentation and analysis of live performance, and analysis of documents of various kinds, including visual material. All of these research methods are invaluable for PS scholars, since they challenge and build upon traditional discourses about performance and performance search.

### **Planning to Research: Finding the right resources for your project**

#### **Passive research vs. Active Research:**

Passive research is the most common types of research you may engage in on a daily basis. This includes Google searching on your tablet or phone, perusing libraries or bookstores and reading newspapers. Active research is research with a goal (even if the goal is in process). Active research can be done on-site or online.

Within the NYU library system, there are such a wealth of resources that you will only begin unpeel those initial layers during your time here. But, don't be daunted by the panoply of resources NYU offers, think of it as a challenge, of sorts.

Adapted from: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/guides/types.html>

To know where to go for information, it is useful to know how information is produced; here is a very general overview. (note that these are not rigid distinctions; the same resource can overlap categories.)

- Primary - Direct, uninterpreted records of the subject of your research project. A primary source is as close as you can get to the event, person, phenomenon, or other subject of your research. As such, a primary source can be almost anything, depending on the subject and purpose of your research. There is no clear or set line between primary and secondary sources; it depends on the purpose and perspective of your research project. For example, a philosopher studying ideas would want the last or latest edition of a writer's work as a primary source to make a philosophical analysis of a developed idea, whereas an intellectual historian studying the development of ideas would want previous editions and drafts, the writer's notes, and the writer's own sources to see how an idea developed. Or, a published version (or

even a translation) of a diary, if it is a reliable representation of the actual diary, is for many (but not all) purposes sufficient as a primary source. So be creative in thinking of possible relevant primary sources of information on your topic.

- Secondary - Books, articles, and other writings by scholars and researchers build on primary sources by interpreting and assessing primary information.
- Tertiary - Encyclopedias, indexes, textbooks, and other reference sources which present summaries of or introductions to the current state of research on a topic, or provide a list of primary and secondary sources of more extensive information.

**HERE'S A BRIEF LIST OF SOME OF THE SOURCES YOU CAN FIND IN EACH OF THESE CATEGORIES; REMEMBER, THERE ARE MANY MORE:**

**PRIMARY**

- Conference proceedings - Scholars and researchers getting together and presenting their latest ideas and findings
- Books - Extensive and detailed discussions of a particular topic or set of topics, written by the scholars and researchers who came up with the ideas or discovered the findings.
- Journal articles - Brief, specific analyses of particular aspects of a topic, written by the scholars and researchers who came up with the ideas or discovered the findings.
- Lab reports - Experiments, observations, etc.
- Historical documents - Official papers, maps, treaties, etc.
- First-person accounts - Diaries, memoirs, letters, interviews, speeches
- Recordings - audio, video, photographic
- Artifacts - manufactured items such as clothing, furniture, tools, buildings
- Newspapers - Some types of articles, e.g. stories on a breaking issue, or journalists reporting the results of their investigations.
- Government publications - Census statistics, economic data, court reports, etc.
- Internet - Web sites that publish the author's findings or research; e.g. your professor's home page listing research results. Note: use extreme caution when using the Internet as a primary source ... remember, on the Internet a page citing authoritative findings could have been published by any goofball off the street.
- Manuscript collections - Collected writings, notes, letters, diaries, and other unpublished works.
- Archives - Records (minutes of meetings, purchase invoices, financial statements, etc.) of an organization (e.g. The Nature Conservancy), institution (e.g. Wesleyan University), business, or other group entity (even the Grateful Dead has an archivist on staff).

**SECONDARY**

- Books - Extensive and detailed analyses by scholars providing criticisms, commentaries, and interpretations of primary ideas and findings.
- Journal articles - Brief, specific analyses, criticisms, commentaries, and interpretations of particular aspects of primary ideas and findings.
- Newspapers - Articles which report on earlier findings, or offer commentary or opinions.
- Internet - Web sites that comment on earlier findings or research; see cautionary note above!
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**TERTIARY**

- Encyclopedias - Articles providing introductory or summary information; coverage can be general (e.g. Encyclopedia Britannica) or subject-specific (e.g. Encyclopedia of Sociology).
- Dictionaries - Definitions or brief summaries of terms, ideas, etc.; coverage can be general (e.g. Webster's, Random House) or subject-specific (e.g. Dictionary of Cell Biology).
- Almanacs - Good for concise factual information, e.g. statistics, lists
- Directories - Lists of people or organizations, with addresses, affiliations, etc.; useful guides to finding primary source material

- Atlases - Maps of population, economic, historical, political, geological, biological, climatological, etc. information.

Indexes - Lists of sources on a subject or set of subjects; once you have some key terms for your topic, use indexes to find secondary and primary sources.

For starters, visit NYU's Bobst Library (which I think you may do as a group?) and meet with the PS subject specialist, Pamela Bloom. She will cover much more in terms of what NYU offers and how to obtain all those resources.

I am going to cover some resources that I think are indispensable. The first are physical places where you can find research materials (primary, secondary, etc) and help with research projects. **(CLICK x 5)**

**1. Fales Archive: Bobst Library, NYU**

The Fales Library, comprising nearly 250,000 volumes, close to 10,000 linear feet of archive and manuscript materials, and about 75,000 audiovisual elements, houses the Fales Collection of rare books and manuscripts in English and American literature, the Downtown Collection, the Food and Cookery Collection, the Riot Grrrl Collection, and the general Special Collections of the NYU Libraries.  
<http://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/research/fales/>

**2. Performing Arts Library: 40 Lincoln Center Plaza**

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts houses one of the worlds most extensive combination of circulating, reference, and rare archival collections in its field. These materials are available free of charge, along with a wide range of special programs, including exhibitions, seminars, and performances. An essential resource for everyone with an interest in the arts — whether professional or amateur — the Library is known particularly for its prodigious collections of non-book materials such as historic recordings, videotapes, autograph manuscripts, correspondence, sheet music, stage designs, press clippings, programs, posters and photographs.

**3. NY Public Library System: Fifth Avenue at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street**

<http://www.nypl.org/research-collections>

**4. Digital Studio: Bobst Library, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, South Wing**

<http://www.nyu.edu/its/studio/>

**5. NYU's Museum Gateway:**

<http://www.nyu.edu/life/student-life/getting-involved/museum-gateway.html>

Brooklyn Museum, Frick, Grey Art, Jewish Museum, MOMA, New Museum, Studio Museum of Harlem, etc.

The next set of resources build on the notion of the Digital Commons, which are hosted in institutional or corporate repositories of information. You may already be familiar with some of these resources, but there are definitely many more sources than just Google.

1. **NYU Graduate Resources** online: <http://nyu.libguides.com/grads> (MarLi)

2. **Google Scholar:** <http://scholar.google.com>

Google Scholar is a freely accessible web search engine that indexes the full text of scholarly literature across an array of publishing formats and disciplines. Be sure to set NYU as your preferred institution.

3. **Google Art Project:** <http://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project?hl=en>

4. **Google Books:** <http://books.google.com>

5. **BE Press:** Online List of all subscribing Digital Commons -  
[http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/subscriber\\_gallery/](http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/subscriber_gallery/)

**Strategic Note taking:**

Once you have amassed resources or even if you are tackling class reading, note taking can change the way you recall information and how it is processed. In terms of class discussions, we statistically only remember 50% of the information, and 20-30% of it is inaccurate, so effective note taking before and after class are crucial.

## TAKING LECTURE NOTES

- I. There are many reasons for taking lecture notes.
- A. Making yourself take notes forces you to listen carefully and test your understanding of the material.
  - B. When you are reviewing, notes provide a gauge to what is important in the text.
  - C. Personal notes are usually easier to remember than the text.
  - D. The writing down of important points helps you to remember them even before you have studied the material formally.
- II. Instructors usually give clues to what is important to take down. Some of the more common clues are:
- A. Material written on the blackboard.
  - B. Repetition
  - C. Emphasis
    1. Emphasis can be judged by tone of voice and gesture.
    2. Emphasis can be judged by the amount of time the instructor spends on points and the number of examples he or she uses.
  - D. Word signals (e.g. "There are **two points of view** on . . ." "The **third** reason is . . ." "In **conclusion** . . .")
  - E. Summaries given at the end of class.
  - F. Reviews given at the beginning of class.
- III. Each student should develop his or her own method of taking notes, but most students find the following suggestions helpful:
- A. Make your notes brief.
    1. Never use a sentence where you can use a phrase. Never use a phrase where you can use a word.
    2. Use abbreviations and symbols, but be consistent.
  - B. Put most notes in your own words. However, the following should be noted exactly:
    1. Formulas
    2. Definitions
    3. Specific facts
  - C. Use outline form and/or a numbering system. Indention helps you distinguish major from minor points.
  - D. If you miss a statement, write key words, skip a few spaces, and get the information later.
  - E. Don't try to use every space on the page. Leave room for coordinating your notes with the text after the lecture. (You may want to list key terms in the margin or make a summary of the contents of the page.)
  - F. Date your notes. Perhaps number the pages.

## SAVING TIME ON NOTETAKING

Here are some hints regarding taking notes on classroom lectures that can save time for almost any student. Some students say that they plan to rewrite or type their notes later. To do so is to use a double amount of time; once to take the original notes and a second to rewrite them. The advice is simple: **DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME!**

Second, there are some students who attempt to take notes in shorthand. Though shorthand is a valuable tool for a secretary, it is almost worthless for a student doing academic work. Here's why. Notes in shorthand cannot be studied in that form. They must first be transcribed. The act of transcribing notes takes an inordinate amount of time and energy but does not significantly contribute to their mastery. It is far better to have taken the notes originally in regular writing and then spend the time after that in direct study and **recitation** of the notes.

Third, do not record the lesson on a cassette tape or any other tape. The lecture on tape precludes flexibility. This statement can be better understood when seen in the light of a person who has taken his/her notes in regular

writing. Immediately after taking the notes this person can study them in five minutes before the next class as s/he walks toward the next building, as s/he drinks his/her coffee, or whatever. Furthermore, this student, in looking over his/her notes, may decide that the notes contain only four worthwhile ideas which s/he can highlight, relegating the rest of the lecture to obscurity. Whereas the lecture on tape has to be listened to in its entirety including the worthwhile points as well as the "garbage," handwritten notes may be studied selectively. A student who takes the easy way out - recording the lecture on tape as he or she sits back doing nothing - will box him or herself into inflexibility.

### NOTE MAKING

Learning to make notes effectively will help you to improve your study and work habits and to remember important information. Often, students are deceived into thinking that because they **understand** everything that is said in class they will therefore remember it. This is dead wrong! Write it down.

As you make notes, you will develop skill in selecting important material and in discarding unimportant material. The secret to developing this skill is practice. Check your results constantly. Strive to improve. Notes enable you to retain important facts and data and to develop an accurate means of arranging necessary information.

Here are some hints on note making.

1. Don't write down everything that you read or hear. Be alert and attentive to the main points. Concentrate on the "meat" of the subject and forget the trimmings.
2. Notes should consist of key words or very short sentences. If a speaker gets sidetracked it is often possible to go back and add further information.
3. Take accurate notes. You should usually use your own words, but try not to change the meaning. If you quote **directly** from an author, quote **correctly**.
4. Think a minute about your material before you start making notes. Don't take notes just to be taking notes! Take notes that will be of real value to you when you look over them at a later date.
5. Have a uniform system of punctuation and abbreviation that will make sense to you. Use a skeleton outline and show importance by indenting. Leave lots of white space for later additions.
6. Omit descriptions and full explanations. Keep your notes short and to the point. Condense your material so you can grasp it rapidly.
7. Don't worry about missing a point.
8. Don't keep notes on oddly shaped pieces of paper. Keep notes in order and in one place.
9. Shortly after making your notes, go back and rework (not redo) your notes by adding extra points and spelling out unclear items. Remember, we forget rapidly. Budget time for this vital step just as you do for the class itself.
10. Review your notes regularly. This is the only way to achieve lasting memory.

#### Traditional Note taking Methods:

**SQ4R: Adapted from <http://www.dearteacher.com/sq4r>**

1. SURVEY	Read headings and subheadings. Look at all illustrations. Read captions under illustrations. Read chapter summary.
2. QUESTION	Write a question for each heading and subheading in an assignment.
3. READ	Read only the material under a heading or subheading to search for an answer to your question for it.
4. RECITE	Recite the answer to the question in step 3.
5. WRITE	Write down the answer you recited in step 4 under its question.
<a href="http://www.w.dartmo.uth.edu/~acskills/videos/video_nt.html">http://www.w.dartmo.uth.edu/~acskills/videos/video_nt.html</a> 6. REVIEW	Do after step 5 is completed for all questions. Skim over all headings and subheadings. Recite answers to each question. Repeat this step the next day, the end of the week, and before a test.

**Cornell Method: From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornell\\_Notes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornell_Notes)**

The Cornell method provides a systematic format for condensing and organizing notes. The student divides the paper into two columns: the note-taking column (usually on the right) is twice the size of the questions/key word column (on the left). The student should leave five to seven lines, or about two inches, at the bottom of the page.

Notes from a lecture or teaching are written in the note-taking column; notes usually consist of the main ideas of the text or lecture, and long ideas are paraphrased. Long sentences are avoided; symbols or abbreviations are used instead. To assist with future reviews, relevant questions (which should be recorded as soon as possible so that the lecture and questions will be fresh in the student's mind) or key words are written in the key word column. These notes can be taken from any source of information, such as fiction and nonfiction books, DVDs, lectures, text books, etc.

Within 24 hours of taking the notes, the student must revise and write questions and then write a brief summary in the bottom five to seven lines of the page. This helps to increase understanding of the topic. When studying for either a test or quiz, the student has a concise but detailed and relevant record of previous classes.

When reviewing the material, the student can cover the note-taking (right) column while attempting to answer the questions/keywords in the key word or cue (left) column. The student is encouraged to reflect on the material and review the notes regularly.

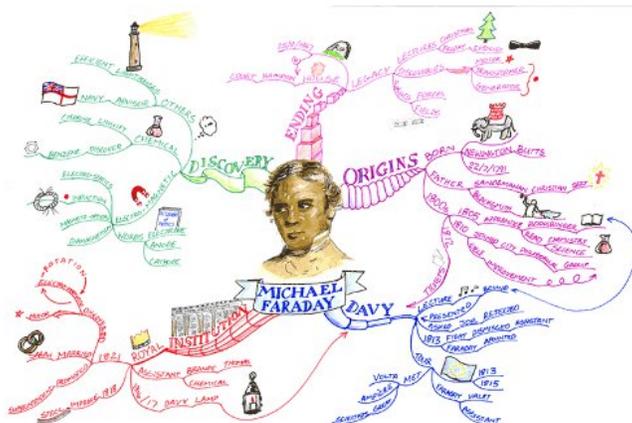
Questions / Keywords	Notes
Summary	

### Mind Mapping:

From <http://www.artofmanliness.com/2012/01/27/write-this-down-note-taking-strategies-for-academic-success/>

Mind mapping is a visual form of note-taking. Instead of typing or writing sentences in a linear format, with mind mapping you *draw* your notes. Advocates of mind mapping argue that the non-linear, visual format of mind maps allow students to find connections they'd otherwise miss when using traditional note-taking strategies. Also, because mind mapping is a somewhat creative activity, by engaging both the left and right spheres of your brain, learning retention is supposed to improve (a claim that some brain researchers dispute).

To mind map a lecture, you simply write the main topic of the day's lecture at the center of a piece of paper. As the professor makes new points, write those around the central topic. Draw lines connecting different ideas. Feel free to draw images instead of writing words. Mind mapping is a visual activity after all. Here's a colorful example of a mind map drawn by Philip Chambers:



## Non-Traditional Note taking Methods:

### SMART Method: Developed for Class Reading/Initial Stages of Research

**SMART** stands for **Skim, Methods, Arguments, Reasoning and Thoughts**. This is a quick and easy way to help you “read with purpose” and then take strategic notes.

When you begin a reading, **SKIM** through the table of contents, index, chapter introductions (précises, if available) and footnotes. Look for key words, bold words, or words that pertain to your research and determine what needs to be read more closely.

Next, look for the research **METHODS** that the author is using in their research. Is this a participant ethnography? A philosophical treatise? A visual essay that uses performative fiction? Etc.

Once you have a list of the methods used, read for specific **ARGUMENTS** that the author is making. You can list the arguments and give them as much or little detail as you find helpful. For example, perhaps one of the arguments is that postcolonial performances reshape traumatic events. Describe the argument in a way that will help you recall it.

After you have a list of arguments down, as you read, look for the **REASONING** or examples/concepts/ideas that support the author’s arguments. Notate these alongside the arguments so you can recall them together.

Finally, list any **THOUGHTS** that you have about the reading. Do you agree with the author’s arguments? Was her reasoning well-developed or lacking evidentiary support? Do her ideas link together with other PS related readings or with your project/paper?

### ARM Method

The ARM Method takes a similar approach as the SMART method but this method is very useful when you are doing a close reading of a text and preparing to write a paper. You will notice that the S and T are omitted. In this exercise, you are **JUST** reading for the arguments, reasoning/support, and methods that the author has used. In this way, you are zeroing in on the key structural pieces that link together the essay.

### POMODORO Technique – from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomodoro\\_Technique](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomodoro_Technique)

The **Pomodoro Technique** is a time management method developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s. The technique uses a timer to break down periods of work into 25-minute intervals called 'Pomodori' (from the Italian word for 'tomatoes') separated by short breaks. Closely related to concepts such as timeboxing and iterative and incremental development used in software design, the method has been adopted in pair programming contexts. The method is based on the idea that frequent breaks can improve mental agility.

There are five basic steps to implementing the technique:

- decide on the task to be done
- set the pomodoro (timer) to 25 minutes
- work on the task until the timer rings; record with an x
- take a short break (3-5 minutes)
- every four "pomodori" take a longer break (15–30 minutes)

The stages of planning, tracking, recording, processing and visualizing are fundamental to the technique. In the planning phase tasks are prioritized by recording them in a "To Do Today" list. This enables users to estimate the effort tasks require. As "pomodori" are completed, they are recorded, adding to a sense of accomplishment and providing raw data for subsequent self-observation and improvement.

For the purposes of the technique "pomodoro" refers to an indivisible 25-minute period of time. After task completion, any time remaining in the "pomodoro" is devoted to overlearning. Regular breaks are taken, aiding assimilation. A short (3-5 minute) rest separates consecutive "pomodori". Four "pomodori" form a set. A longer (15-30 minute) rest is taken between sets.

An essential aim of the technique is to reduce the impact of internal and external interruptions on focus and flow. A "pomodoro" is indivisible. When interrupted during a "pomodoro" either the other activity must be recorded and postponed (*inform – negotiate – schedule – call back*) or the "pomodoro" must be abandoned.

**Conclusion:**

American literary theorist, Stanley Fish, in his new book *How to Write a Sentence*, remarks, "Language is not a handmaiden to perception; it is perception; it gives shape to what would otherwise be inert and dead. The shaping power of language cannot be avoided. We cannot choose to distance ourselves from it. We can only choose our style, not choose to abandon style . . ." (42).

I hope these skills will help you discover your own research and studying styles as you progress in Performance Studies and I hope you will find these skills valuable here and beyond.