



**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA**  
**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC**



**RESEARCH**

**Chadli Benjedid University - EL Tarf -**

**Faculty of Letters and Languages**

**Department of English**

**Students and Teachers' Perceptions towards the  
Effectiveness of Using Mind-Mapping Technique in Note-  
Taking  
(Case Study: First Year LMD Students of English at Chadli  
Bendjedid University, El Tarf)**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment for the  
Requirements of the Master degree in *Didactique de l' Anglais*.

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**Academic Year: 2017/2018**

## Declaration

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “*Students’ Perceptions towards the Effectiveness of Using Mind-Mapping Technique in Note-Taking*” was created on our own, and had not been submitted earlier to any other institution or university for any degree.

We have faithfully provided citation to all the sources we relayed on in this work.

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## **Dedication**

*We dedicate this work to our beloved parents,*

*brothers and sisters,*

*little angels; nieces and nephews.*

*For those who prayed for us and besought God to help us;*

*To Mohamed Lamine & Riyad we dedicate this work,*

*and to all our families and friends.*

## Acknowledgements

All praise and gratitude are to *Allah* who gave us the courage and energy to complete this research work.

We would also express our hearty gratitude to our supervisor Ms. Ladaci Naima who provided us with valuable advice and devoted much of her time to guide us.

All appreciations go to the examining member of jury who accepted to read and evaluate our work. We will also express our tremendous attitudes to all teachers who have been teaching us along five years.

We also express our sincere thanks to all teachers and students, at Chadli Bendjedid El Tarf University, who participated in this work.

## **Abstract**

Since taking notes is a necessity at university classes, English as Foreign Language (EFL) students are always wondering about the way they are going to use to accurately capture key information and main ideas. Usually, they tend to use the traditional way that involves linear notes; it is a time consuming and hard to retrieve, when they can simply shift their attention to using a creative note-taking method i.e. mind mapping. This research work aims at investigating both EFL teachers and students' attitudes towards the importance of using mind-mapping strategy in improving EFL students' note taking skills. To achieve such an aim, two questionnaires are addressed to both five written expression teachers and forty first year License Master Doctorate (LMD) students of English at Chadli Bendjedid El Tarf University. The data analysis reveals that both teachers and students have positive perceptions towards using mind mapping strategy and its effect in enhancing EFL students' note-taking skill. In the light of what has been discussed, a set of recommendations has been proposed to raise both teachers and students' awareness about the importance of using such a technique and its effects in increasing EFL learners' levels and achievements as well.

**Keywords:** Note taking, Mind mapping.

## المخلص

بما أن تدوين الملاحظات يعتبر أمر ضروري في صفوف الجامعة، يتساءل الطلاب دائماً عن الطريقة التي يستحسن استخدامها للحصول على المعلومات الأساسية والأفكار الرئيسية بدقة. في العادة، يميل الطلبة إلى استخدام الطريقة التقليدية التي تنطوي على الملاحظات الخطية. هذه الطريقة تستغرق وقتاً طويلاً ويصعب استردادها. في حين هم قادرون على تغيير وجهة نظرهم لاستعمال طريقة إبداعية للتدوين مثل اعتماد رسم الخرائط الذهنية. يهدف هذا البحث إلى التحقق من وجهات نظر كل من أساتذة و طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه أهمية استخدام إستراتيجية رسم الخرائط الذهنية في تحسين مهارات تدوين الملاحظات لدى الطلاب الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. لتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم تقديم استبيانين إلى كل من أساتذة مقياس التعبير الكتابي و طلبة السنة الأولى لغة انجليزية بجامعة الشاذلي بن جديد الطارف. يكشف تحليل البيانات أن كل من الأساتذة والطلبة لديهم تصورات إيجابية نحو استخدام إستراتيجية رسم الخرائط الذهنية وأثرها في تعزيز مهارة تدوين الملاحظات لدى الطلاب. بناء على هذه النتائج، تم تأكيد فرضية البحث على أن الطلاب بحاجة إلى استخدام إستراتيجية رسم الخرائط الذهنية أثناء المحاضرات لتعزيز مهاراتهم في تدوين الملاحظات. في ضوء ما تمت مناقشته، تم اقتراح مجموعة من التوصيات لزيادة وعي الأساتذة والطلاب بأهمية استخدام مثل هذه التقنية وأثارها في تحسين مستويات و كذلك إنجازات طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>EFL</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>LMD</b>	License Master Doctorate
<b>NLP</b>	Neuro-Linguistic Programming

## **General Introduction**

In high education settings, teachers usually supply their students with a considerable amount of information, which are impossible to remember even by students with good memories. In this situation, taking notes is an information-saving strategy, but it is considered as a difficult challenging task for many EFL learners because they are unaware about which effective way they have to use in order to skillfully capture key ideas. For them taking notes means writing down important information in the form of blocks or linear lists which are in fact time consuming and misleading strategies. Therefore, the focal concern of this study is to present the mind mapping strategy as an effective tool for improving EFL students' note-taking skill.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Many EFL learners find it difficult to achieve the goal of being competent note takers. They face a big problem when it comes to capturing main ideas and key information in lectures. Therefore, in this study we will spot light on the importance of using mind-mapping technique as a creative tool for taking notes and enhance their memorization in general.

### **2. Aims of the Study**

The main purpose of the present study is to capture both EFL teachers and students' perceptions about the effectiveness of using mind mapping strategy in developing the note-taking skills. Thus, it is hoped that they have positive attitudes towards the use of such a technique in educational settings.

### **3. Research Questions**

The current study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are students and teachers' perceptions towards using mind-mapping strategy as an effective note-taking tool?
2. To what extent may mind mapping enhance the note-taking skill competency of first year LMD students of English at Chadli Bendjedid University?

### **4. Hypotheses**

In the light of the above mentioned questions, we hypothesize the following:

1. Both EFL students and teachers have positive perceptions towards the great role that mind mapping plays in promoting EFL students' note-taking skills.
2. If EFL learners use the mind mapping strategy during lectures, their note taking skill will be developed.

### **5. Means of the Research and the methodology**

Our research study has been conducted through the descriptive method. Therefore, in order to provide our work with more valid data we have administrated two questionnaires: one for five selected written expression teachers, and the other one for 40 first year LMD students who were chosen randomly from the English department at Chadli Bendjedid University – El Tarf. The major aim of the two submitted questionnaires is to explore both teachers and students' attitudes towards the use of mind-mapping technique and its fundamental contribution in promoting and ameliorating the note-taking skill.

## **6. Structure of the Study**

This study comprises three main chapters. Chapter one covers three essential sections. The first section deals with the writing skill in general, the second section is devoted to the note-taking skill while the third section involves the mind-mapping concept. Chapter two of the research includes the description and analysis of the different data obtained from the questionnaires. Chapter three offers a set of suggestions and recommendations which are deemed helpful for both EFL learners and teachers who aim to lift writing to its higher standards.

## **7. Limitations of the Study**

Though our research study has achieved its main purpose, nevertheless there were inevitable limitations. This work is limited to a short period of time; we did not have much time to tackle the whole number of first year LMD students of English (106). And since we are beginner researchers and we did not experience any quantitative research earlier, we felt that we could not analyze a huge amount of data in a very limited period of time. The second limitation is when we have limited our research study to one area which is linked to students' perceptions toward using mind-mapping technique to improve and enhance their note-taking skill. Other studies may tackle the concept mind mapping with an association to the writing skill itself i.e. developing essays through using mind mapping technique.

# *Chapter One*

## *General Overview of Note-Taking and*

## *Mind-Mapping*

## **Introduction**

This chapter opens with the concepts of writing in general, tackling its different definitions, main approaches to writing instruction and the reasons behind teaching writing itself. The second part is mainly devoted to note taking skill and its importance in the learning process, highlighting some methods that could be used to take notes. Along with this, we shed light on the mind mapping concept, introducing its main benefits, characteristics, and basic steps that we may go through when using it. Finally, we will finish with some problems that could be encountered when taking notes.

### **1.1. Definition of Writing**

Writing is a productive skill that received different definitions. Crystal (2006), for example, considers writing as “a way of communicating which uses the system of visual marks made on some kind of surface” (p. 257). In a similar vein, Gelb (1963) defines writing as “a system of intercommunication by means of conventional visible marks” (as cited in Chrisomalis, 2010, p. 20). Therefore, the above definitions refer to writing as a set of graphic symbols linked together to serve as a form of communication. Bhat (2017), moreover, views writing as a visual system, he mentions that the use of writing is an act of language representation which entails handwriting, printing, or electronic display of written form.

Writing is not only a combination of visual marks; it is a complex activity as reported by Olive and Levy (2002) who state:

Writing is clearly one of the most complex activities that people can accomplish. For instance, writing first involves cognitive processes. It engages not only text-related cognitive processes, but also processes involved in multiple cognitive activities, such retrieval from long-term memory, lexical access, defining goals, and so forth. (p. 02)

Browne (2007), however, argues that writing entails many skills. Thus, it is a complicated task which demands a decision about what is going to be written down, selection of appropriate ways to express what is going to be said and suitable formation of ideas in an understandable way.

Writing, therefore, is considered as a troublesome, challenging task. It entails jotting down ideas on a paper through combining sentences and words in certain grammatical order. Its purpose is using meaningful pieces of writing for communicating different messages and thoughts. It is also seen as a visual representation that can be used to share, express and communicate ideas based on specific principles and conventions.

## **1.2. Approaches to the Writing Skill**

Teachers, who face different levels and different styles in their students' writings, are always wondering about which way they ought to use to teach the writing skill. Thus, there are different approaches and methods that may be useful to apply.

### **1.2.1. The Product Approach to Writing**

It is an imitation-based approach, which is primarily concerned with copying and imitating models as proposed by Nunan (1989) who sees that the emphasis of this product is on the final version resulting from composing certain pieces of writing such as; letter, essay, story or any other sort. He believes that users of such an approach will be interested in checking particular criteria of the end result i.e. grammatical correctness and text readability. According to him, students who are learning to write through this approach will be supposed to copy, imitate and develop various kinds of sentences and paragraphs from different models. Pincas (1982), similarly, views that the product approach focuses on mastering linguistic knowledge and pays attention to “the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesive devices” ( as cited in Ahmed, Cane , & Hanzala, 2011, p. 54).

### **1.2.2. The Process Approach**

In the 1970s and 1980s, the process approach emerged to replace the traditional product approach. It introduces a totally new strategy of developing written scripts, which pays attention to some aspects i.e. discovery and thinking (Hedge, 2000. as cited in Roux, 2012). Johns and Lerner (2014) claim that “the writing process approach to writing focuses on the entire process that writers use in developing a written document” (p. 388). In this regard, Carter (1995) argues that the main focus of such an approach is about the various types of methodologies that contribute in developing different features of language competence. Moreover, he considers the work through different drafts and the discussion about text changes as essential parts in the process of producing a final version.

### **1.2.3. The Genre Approach**

There are numerous definitions of genre based approach presented by many scholars and experts. The first definition is provided by Martin (1992) who describes genre as a “goal-oriented, staged social process” (as cited in Hyland, 2004, p. 25). Morson and Emerson (1990) give another definition to this approach; they stated that genre is “the residue of past behavior, an accretion that shapes, guides, and constrains future behavior” (as cited in Spinuzzi, 2003, p. 42). Swales (1990) claims that genre is “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (p. 58). Halliday and Hasan (1989) also mention that the genre approach becomes a fixed group of texts used in daily life interaction similarly to “the service encounter”. They believe that the appearance of such an approach is resulted from the communication between people in social context (as cited in English, 2011).

### **1.2.4. The Power Approach**

Nemouchi (2014) argues that during the publication of “Power Writing” in 1989 by Sparks, the power approach was originated. Based on a specific remark, Sparks (1989) coined

the notion of power writing. The latter is considered as a valuable system given to: main idea, major and minor details (as cited in Nemouchi, 2014). Power writing is composed of what is called “the powergraph” which is a method of simple paragraph construction. Besides presenting writing paragraph structure, it helps students better identify the major ideas and supporting sentences. On this continuum, Sparks (1989) points out that the core of the traditional power writing is a numerical approach to the structure of writing. Its use can be suitable to all types and forms of writing (as cited in Nemouchi, 2014). The major goal of power approach is guiding students how to manage their ideas in writing and how to construct well prepared and logical paragraphs. Poulton (2004) proposes the numerical structure of power writing as follows:

Power 1: Focus, main idea, topic sentence or thesis statement.

Power 2: Major supporting ideas to power 1.

Power 3: Details, elaboration, examples about power 2.

Power Zero: Voice and extra information. (as cited in Nemouchi, 2014, p. 37).

### **1.3. Reasons for Teaching Writing**

The rapid fading characteristic of the speaking skill pushes people to look for a new skill. Thus, for a great majority, having reliable written records is an evident proof for learning the skill of writing. In this regard, Harmer (2007) argues that students should experience the writing skill for many reasons.

At first, he mentions that unlike the conscious process of speaking, writing gives them enough time to think deeply about the language. Secondly, he says that the writing skill is very important to learn, because many students greatly benefit from relying on written materials rather than oral/aural way. For them, seeing language written down is especially

effective and more powerful than the others in enabling us to better acquire and retrieve what we have learnt. Harmer (2007) adds another cause for learning writing which is writing for writing. He claims that students should master all types of this skill. Also, he explains that a reasonable cause for encouraging students to write is engaging in writing emails, letters and reports which are very necessary in our real life.

#### **1.4. Definition of Note-taking**

According to Tabor (2018), the negligence and the underestimation of note-taking make it a defied and thrilled strategy in any classroom and in any meeting place. That is why it is very helpful and useful in our daily life where teaching and learning take place.

Note-taking is not merely an educative strategy; it is a significant skill as proclaimed by Hathaway (2014), who says:

Note-taking is also an important research skill, as it provides a system for organizing information. As students read various research sources, they must extract larger overarching ideas and the supporting details. If students are to apply this information in a meaningful way, they must arrange the information in such a way that makes sense. (p. 118)

Cody (2010) defines note taking as an important means of recording and organizing information to retrieve it back later on. He adds that the use of note taking can be while reading to record organized concepts, as well as during lectures for capturing main ideas from what a teacher is saying. Thus, it is an effective learning technique. Furthermore, Dillon (2007) describes note taking as an essential skill, in which he says:

One of the skills you need to excel at in college is note taking. Over the course of your college experience, you will take thousands of pages of notes on what you read in your

textbooks and on what you see, hear, and do in lectures, labs, and discussion groups.  
(p. 70)

### **1.5. Importance of Note-taking in Learning**

Taking notes is one of the most important skills in teaching/learning process. It is considered as a beneficial technique that learners have to shed light on. The reasons behind focusing on such a strategy are the wide variety of benefits that it provides. Its primary benefit is improving students' achievements. When learners write down their notes in their own words, they are going to have better memorization of ideas the fact that may give them well organized version which includes only important information. In other words, it offers useful summaries and helps them to promote their concentration process. That is why note takers always try to be so attentive in classrooms.

Moreover, Kesselman-Turkel and Peterson (2003) for instance have tackled one of the main advantages of note taking. They believe that getting facts and information in our heads is a time consuming process where remembering takes place. Thus note-taking is considered as a muscle activity which helps us to better remember the written information. Also it has a great efficacy than listening or reading. Many learners fail to take notes while reading or hearing due to the lack of concentration. In accordance with the previous idea, learners will gain long shortcuts because they spot each and every single detail that has no relation with their notes. In addition, while taking notes learners may lose the flow of what is being read or said.

### **1.6. Note-taking Methods**

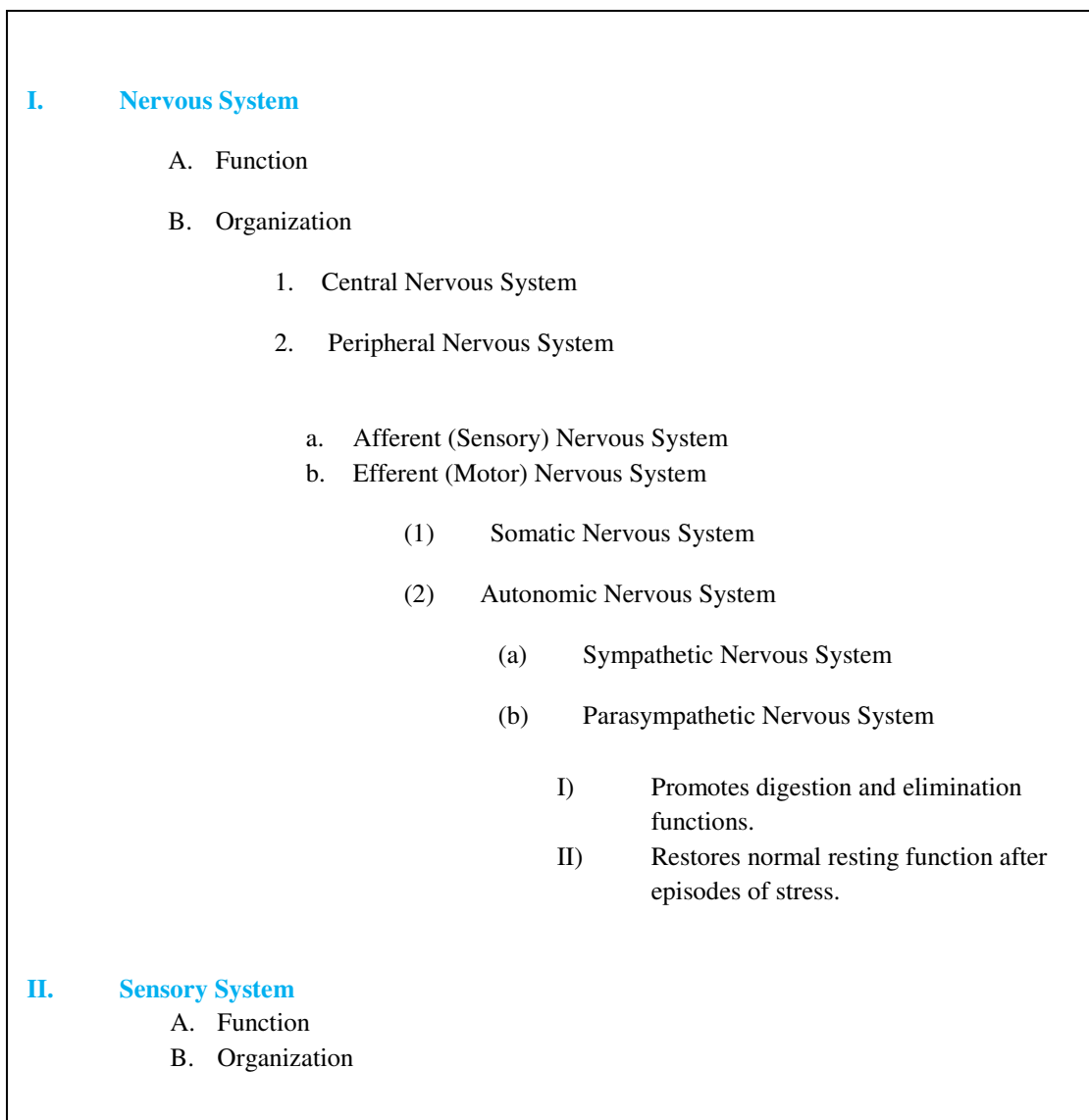
Although, note taking is an essential skill that students have to master, most of them have never been explicitly taught how to take notes during lectures. Therefore, talking about certain

note taking strategies is very important. The most common ones include the outline method, mind mapping method, and Cornell method.

### **1.6.1. The Outline Method**

Cody (2010) says that the outline format is a method of note-taking. It gives systematic and hierarchical structure of information by using headings, subheadings and subordinate points. It uses indents to structure like: Roman and Arabic numerals, lowercase and uppercase letters to maintain the arrangement of subordinate facts and headings. In this reason it indicates importance of note-taking features. Figure (1.1) provides an example which explains in detail the main points that shape the outline method and how it looks.

First, the two main headings are: **I. Nervous System** and **II. Sensory System**. Those start with Roman numerals. Second, the two subheadings are: **A. Function** and **B. Organization**. Those start with uppercase letters. Third, the subordinate points are: **1. Central Nervous System**. It starts with Arabic numerals. **a. Afferent (Sensory) Nervous System**. It starts with lowercase letter, etc.

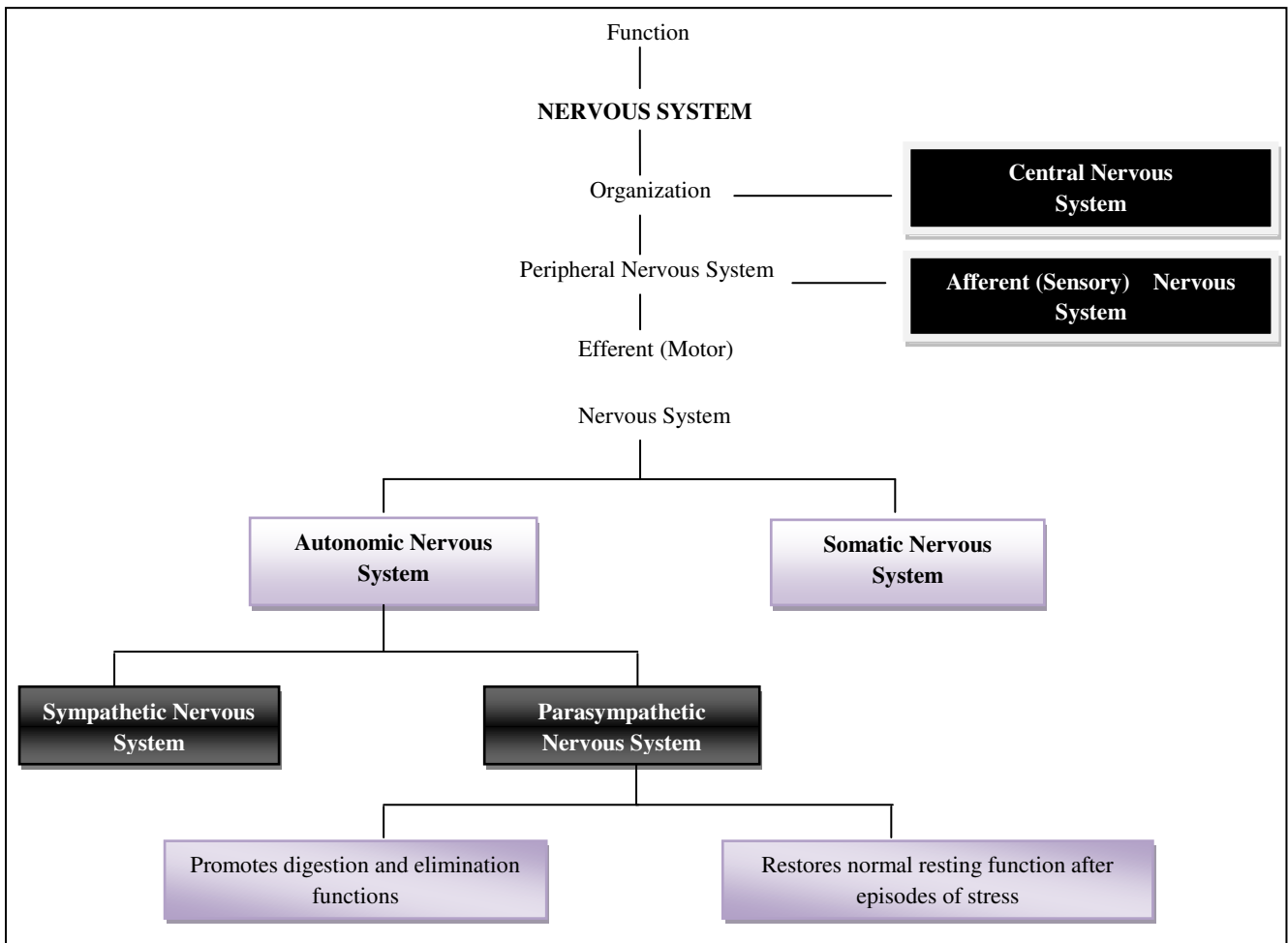


**Figure 1.1: Outline Format (taken from Cody, 2010, p. 07)**

### **1.6.2. The Mind-mapping Method**

Cody (2010) considers mind mapping as “a more creative variation of the outline format” (p. 07). According to him, outlining and mind mapping have a common goal which is organizing information so that the details of a topic obviously demonstrate its unifying features. In addition, he mentions that the starting point of a mind map is writing down the main idea of the whole topic at the middle of the page. While the next step of making a mind map is expanding the central main concept to certain subheadings by providing some subordinate information. However, the following stage is forming further extension by

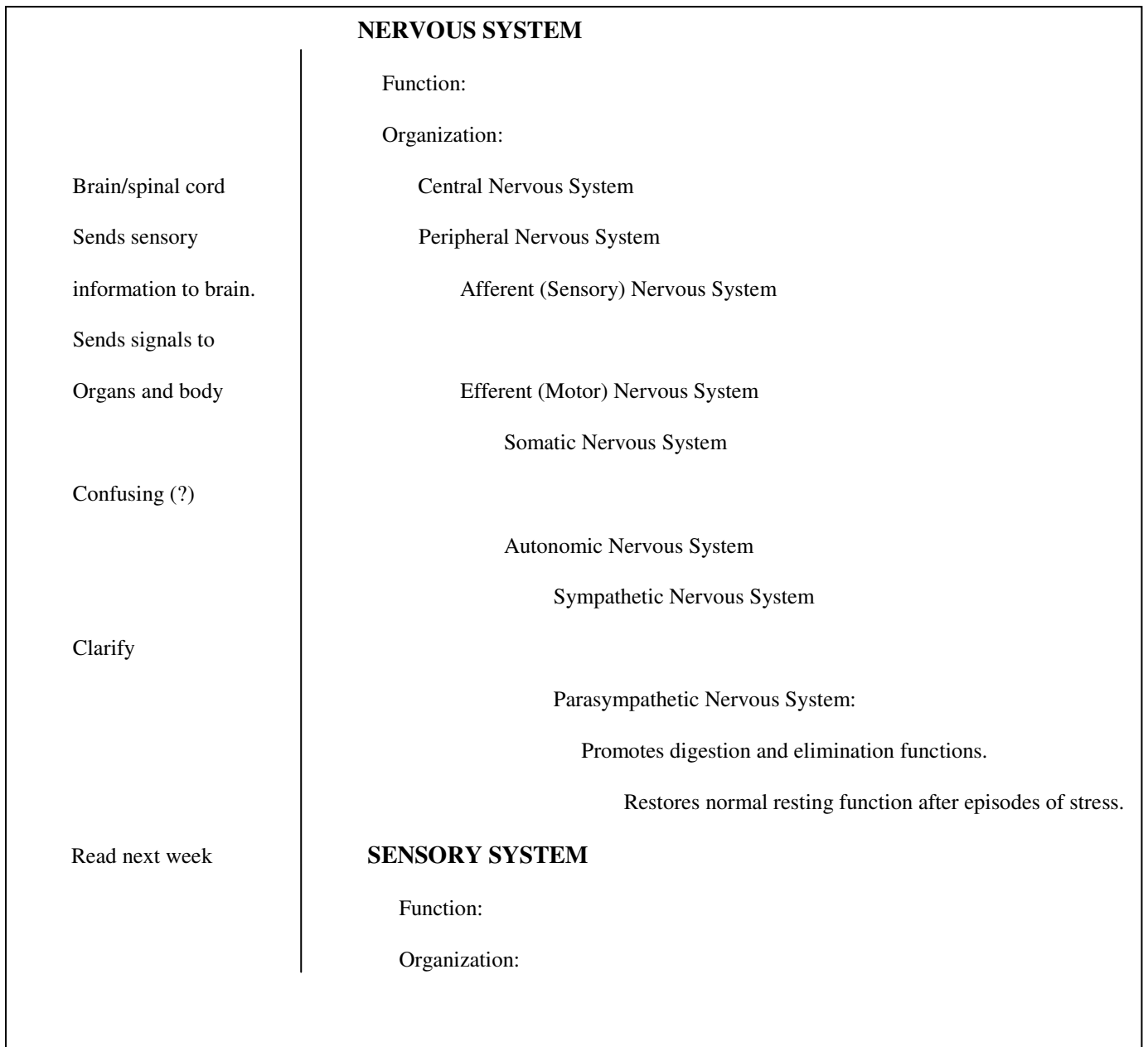
recording more detailed branches about the supporting ideas. The following figure illustrates an example of how a mind map looks like.



**Figure 1.2: Mind-mapping Format (taken from Cody, 2010, p. 08)**

### 1.6.3. The Cornell Method

As Conlon (2016) have mentioned, the cornel system was developed by Walter Park at Cornell University. Cody (2010) asserts that this method has two main columns: a two inches margin to the left where key words take place and a summary part on the right hand which serves to keep recorded notes (see figure 1.3). Maybe using mind-mapping or outline format that students select to reinforce organization, topic integration. Moreover, this part may contain major information or key notions, also written sources references like periodicals and texts.



**Figure 1.3: Cornell Format (taken from Cody, 2010, p. 09)**

### 1.7. Effective Note Taking

Although there is a variety of note taking strategies, but for students who want to be competent note takers, choosing which strategy to rely on is somehow a critical issue. Mind-mapping is a visual method, which provides a lot of information in just one page in a wonderful way that shows the relationships between different ideas. However, like the mind mapping format, outline and Cornell methods have the same goal of providing students with

written records of important concepts. Unfortunately, each of them has some negative points that may lead students to avoid its use. For example, using Roman numerals in the outline method is a confusing task for many students. Also, in a Cornell method, wondering about what to write in the cues column and what to put in notes column is really a time consuming process.

## **1.8. The Mind-mapping Format**

### **1.8.1. History and Definition**

Mind mapping has developed over time to become one of the most important techniques in the field of teaching and learning today. Diamond (2010) mentions that history of mind mapping technique dates back to the 1960s, she also says that Tony Buzan was the one who created it in the U.K. She adds that Buzan's main purpose for developing such a technique was facilitating students' note taking and memorization processes.

Mind mapping is one of the good note taking strategies. It refers to that visual, graphical representation of different ideas. Manoharan (2008) considers mind mapping as a beneficial tool that students can use to record and organize different ideas. He defines it as “a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea” (p. 125). According to Dupree (2006), mind mapping is an effective way which entails using pictures, colors and symbols in order to reduce a text to its key points. Furthermore, Toikka (2007) provides a definition to this concept when he says that it is “a powerful graphical technique that harnesses the full range of cortical skills from both sides of the brain” (p. 124). Moreover, Sanaghan and Gabriel (2012) emphasize that this visual depiction of ideas taps both the left and right sides of the brain.

Nowadays, mind mapping has become a very popular tool that many people tend to use for brainstorming, depicting new information, solving problems and communicating more

effectively. For instance, it is used by business leaders, educators, and anyone who wants to be more productive and creative (Diamond, 2010).

### **1.8.2. Benefits of Using Mind-mapping Technique**

The use of mind mapping has significant numbers of benefits. Diamond (2010) says that just the act of creating a mind map improves our remembering process, because learning studies have proved that people remember 90 percent of what they do, but they only remember 10 percent of what they read and 70 percent of what they say and write. Green (2014) provides some advantages to the use of such technique, they are as follow:

1. Combination of words and pictures helps to better retrieve the stored memory.
2. Key items are easier to remember than lengthy definition and description of the whole topic.
3. Connected ideas are more helpful compared to isolated sentences and notes, because it provides more accurate organization of thoughts.
4. The main topic, its subtopics, and even the minutest detail can be easily reached from just a single glance. Thus, mind map provides a general overview of the whole topic.
5. Because of the unique format of a mind map, differentiation between what is important and what is not is an easy task for its users.
6. Since a quick glance gives all the needed details, memorization process will be so faster. Thus, precious time will be saved.

### **1.8.3. Characteristics of a Unique Mind map**

Buzan (2013) mentions that preparing a mind map is an opening way for a new natural learning state. Add to this, mind map is a good, genuine and fascinating experience where we find in its use a huge amount of benefits. It helps students to show off their emotional side

effectively, it also grabs their attention and their ways of thinking to be better engaged in the task they have studied. Moreover, sitting in an upright position and having a regular breath are two physical elements of making a good mind map. In this context ‘anchoring’ is one of the useful techniques which create an associational connection to that natural learning state. It is used in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and hypnosis. Furthermore, contradicted opinions revealed that mind maps are not good but the reality shows that they have a framework which makes them more efficient and smart because they are structured and freewheeling in the meanwhile.

For some people, mind mapping is not just a kind of drawing but rather a helpful technique of better remembering in which the use of icons, symbols and mind-mapping software programs are available with great ease of use. Eventually, making a ‘messy’-looking mind map is not something bad but it is a result of quick reflection and visualization of information that the mind records during a session. In addition, revising, changing, reviewing and improving the first draft is a good chance for constructing a final developed version of the mind map. Also when someone starts copying from other mind map then the brain learns and creates what he has been copied in a new way.

#### **1.8.4. Creating a Mind map**

Mind maps are very natural, simple and easy to do. Based on this idea, Buzan (2018) claims that to make a good mind map one need to have some elements which are: white blanked paper, pens and pencils of different colors, a brain, an open mind, our imagination and certain topic that is supposed to be explored.

##### **1.8.4.1. The Basic Steps for Making a Mind map**

According to Buzan (2012), developing a mind map requires seven steps which are summarized as follows: the first step begins from the center of a white paper spreading out in

many directions. This gives brain the freedom to disseminate itself naturally. In the second step, instead of using words the writer tries to enrich the central idea with some images or pictures. It is more fascinating and beneficial. It helps to focus more, to concentrate and to use imagination. The third step, which is using colors throughout, is as thrilling to the mind as are pictures. To support this idea, Buzan (2012) says: “Color adds extra vibrancy and life to the mind map, adds tremendous energy to the creative thinking, and is fun!” (p. 25). The fourth step, as the brain works by association the writer attempts to connect the main branches to the central image and connects the other radiate branches to the first and second levels, etc. Because linking branches together helps easily remember a lot of things. The fifth step is reflected in making the branches curved as the trees are more charming to the eyes rather than straight-lined which are tedious to the brain. The sixth step is to use a single key word per line this makes the mind map flexible and powerful. Finally, using images throughout merits lots of words. It is similar to the central image. Thus if one owns 10 images in his/her mind map, then this equals 10,000 words of notes.

### **1.9. Problems Encountered in Note Taking**

Although note taking is considered as an enjoyable process, it entails some problems that may encounter some note takers. Lilley, Collins, Snyder, and Swart (2016) provide some difficulties that may be faced when taking notes. The first problem is the appropriate selectivity of important ideas, which is a complex, challenging task. Many note takers find it difficult to differentiate between what is really important and what is not. Thus, they usually wonder about choosing which information they are going to copy down. The second one is facing unfamiliar vocabulary, because unknown words are somehow confusing. Further, illegible handwriting is another problematic issue; students sometimes became frustrated because their notes are hard to be read. Fourthly, listening and writing at the same time is so hard, because it may split our concentration and understanding.

## **Conclusion**

Recording huge amounts of data in a limited period of time is a common desire that everyone wants to reach. Therefore, in order to achieve this goal, EFL learners should have knowledge about certain note taking strategies to develop their note taking skills and consequently being proficient note takers. Throughout this chapter, we attempted to provide a clear overview about writing skill in general and note taking process in particular. Furthermore, ample details were given to the powerful mind mapping strategy. Finally, the closing point was devoted to the main problems that EFL students face during the note-taking process.

# *Chapter Two*

## *Questionnaires' Analysis*

## **Introduction**

The second chapter is devoted to the analysis of both teachers and students questionnaires. To reach the research goals, we relied on the descriptive method when we used the questionnaire as an appropriate data gathering tool to discover both teachers and students' perceptions towards using mind-mapping as an effective strategy for promoting EFL students' note-taking skill.

### **2.1. The Students' Questionnaire**

#### **2.1.1. Aim of the Questionnaire**

This questionnaire aims at giving students the opportunity to reveal their understanding, opinions and perceptions towards the use of mind-mapping strategy, and if they see it as a beneficial tool that improves, ameliorates and enhances their note taking skill.

#### **2.1.2. Administration of the Questionnaire**

This questionnaire was handed to forty students out of a population of one hundred six (106), who were randomly chosen from the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University, El Tarf. The questionnaire, which was answered inside the classroom, was administrated to discuss a common problem that almost all students experience; they find it difficult to accurately take notes during lectures.

#### **2.1.3. Description of the Questionnaire**

The students' questionnaire constitutes of 18 different questions divided into four main sections which are as follows:

**Section One: General Information.**

This section entails just one question (Q1) which seeks to know in which skill students are interested. It aims to obtain clear information about our students' background which helps us to build a good analysis.

**Section Two: The Writing Skill.**

This section deals with the writing skill; it is comprised of three questions (Q2-Q4). Question (2) seeks to know the significance of writing as a language skill. Questions number 3 and 4 are put to see if students are satisfied about their level in writing or not and how they consider it.

**Section Three: Note-taking.**

This section includes six questions (Q5-Q10); it is allocated to gather facts about students' note-taking skill. Question (5) is designed to ask students if they tend to rely on handouts, take notes or just listen during lectures. Question (6) attempts to discover the students' attitudes towards the note-taking skill. While the next question (7) tends to show the frequency of note-taking. Question (8) seeks to present the students' perception towards the benefits of note-taking in class. Question (9) attempts to ask students if they find difficulties when they take notes or not. The last question (10) is about the strategies that students usually use when they take notes.

**Section Four: Mind-mapping.**

This section contains eight questions (Q11-Q18); it deals with the technique of mind-mapping and its effects on students' note-taking. The first question (11) tends to know the students' views about mind-mapping as a good strategy for note-taking. Question (12) is designed to know if students highlight important information when they take notes or not.

Question (13) shows the frequency of relying on mind mapping to take notes. Moreover, question (14) asks students if they can write fast enough to keep up with the teacher when they take notes or not. Then, question (15) is made to show either students use complete sentences or just key words. Question (16) is asked to know if they use special symbols and abbreviations for some words or not. Question (17) seeks to know if students use diagrams, colors and pictures when they organize their notes visually on the page or not while the last question (18) is about the difficulty of making a mind-map.

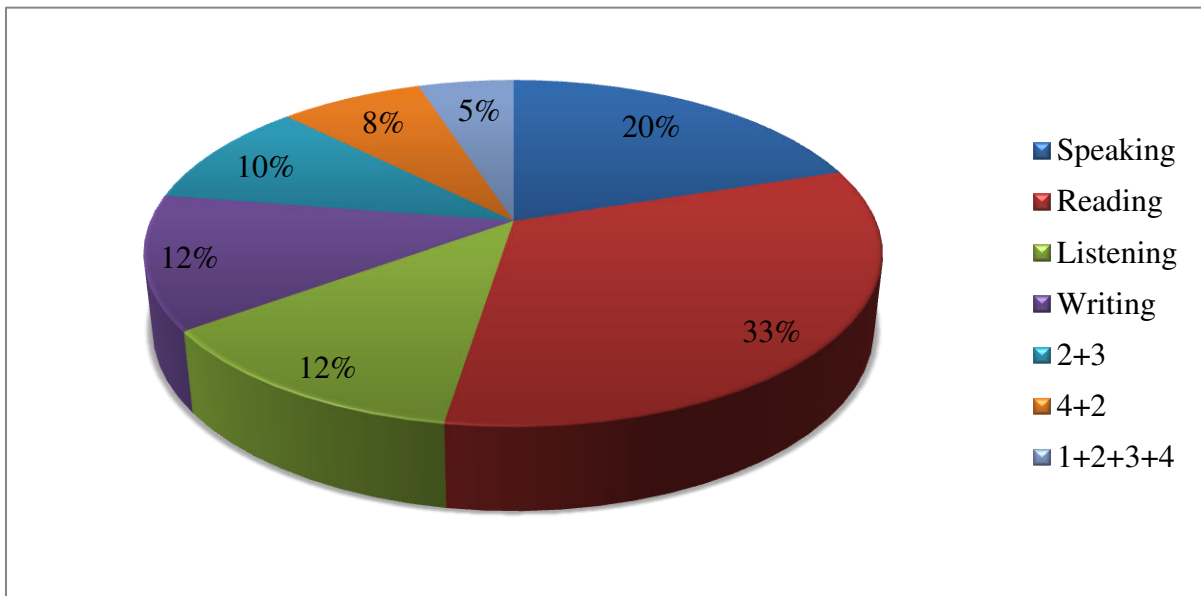
#### **2.1.4. The Analysis of Students' Questionnaire**

##### **Section One: General Information**

##### **Q - 1. In which skill (s) are you interested?**

**Table 2.1: Students' Favorite Skill**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1- Speaking	08	20%
2- Reading	13	32,5%
3- Listening	05	12,5%
4- Writing	05	12,5%
2+3	04	10%
4+2	03	7,5%
1+2+3+4	02	5%



**Figure 2.1: Students' Favorite Skill**

From the figure, we notice that 32, 5% are interested in the reading skill. 20% state that their favorite skill is speaking while 12, 5% prefer writing. Also, 12, 5% claim that they are interested in listening. 10% go to reading and listening whereas, 7, 5% students who are interested in writing and reading. In fact, the analysis of this question shows that the majority of students prefer the reading skill since it improves their level, by enriching their linguistic storage with new vocabulary and feeding their imagination. However, 5% have chosen the four skills together; thus, they are aware that these skills work in parallel and they develop each other.

**Please, say why?**

- They mention that reading helps them to discover new words and explore different ideas.
- They use speaking to communicate English language and express themselves freely; especially when they talk with foreigners in Skype.

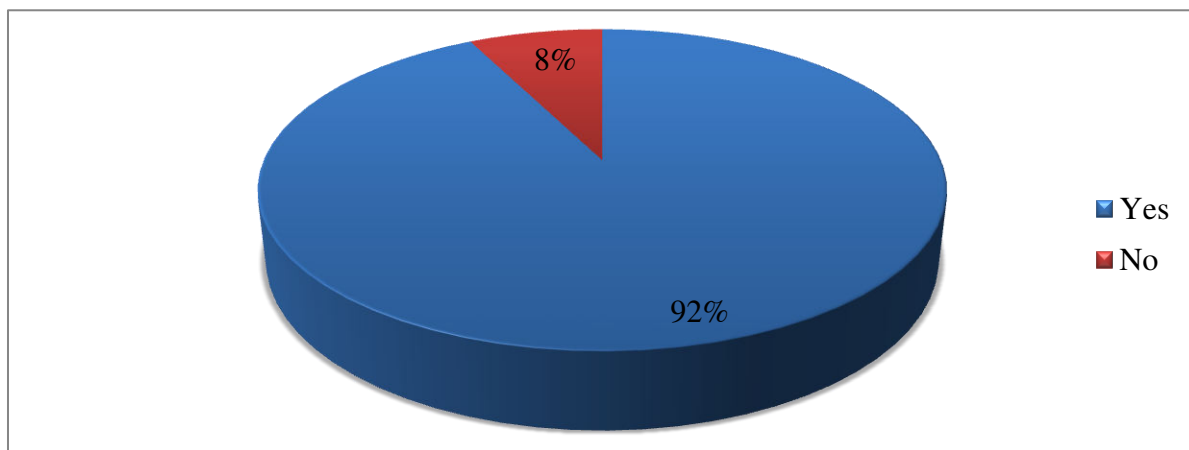
- Writing gives them enough time to think deeply about grammar rules, spelling, correct punctuation, accurate organization and appropriate choice of vocabulary.
- They claim that listening helps them to improve their pronunciation.

## Section Two: The Writing Skill

**Q - 2. Do you believe that writing is important as a language skill?**

**Table 2.2: The Importance of Writing as a Language Skill**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	37	92,5
No	03	7,5



**Figure 2.2: The Importance of Writing as a Language Skill**

A very interesting data gathered from this question where 92, 5% of students believe that writing is an important language skill; while, only 7, 5% see that writing is not important. These results confirm that a great majority of learners are already aware of the importance of writing in language learning.

### Say why?

The majority of students who considered writing as an important language skill argued that:

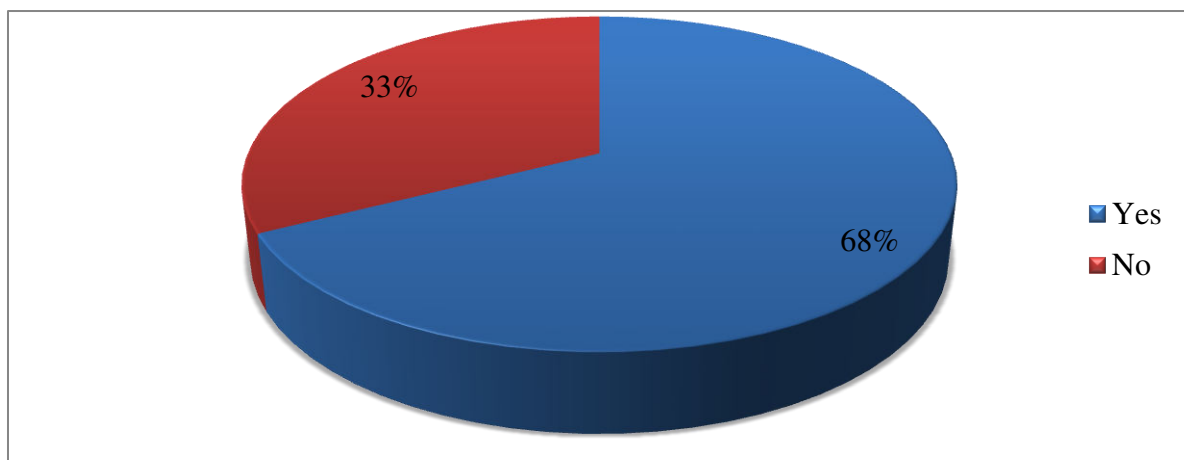
- Unlike speaking, writing shows them their silly mistakes that should be avoided later on. Thus, it improves their level.
- Writing gives them touchable written records.

The three students who did not agree with the importance of writing as a skill claimed that it is just a means of recording; they considered reading as the most important one since it promotes their levels by enriching their semantic repertoires.

### Q - 3. Are you satisfied with your level in writing?

**Table 2.3: Students' Opinions about their Levels in Writing**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	27	67,5%
No	13	32,5%



**Figure 2.3: Students' Opinions about their Levels in Writing**

Responses to the question asking the students if they are satisfied with their levels in writing or not show that 67, 5 % of them claim that they are; only 32, 5% claim that they are not. These results show that some students still face some difficulties and problems during writing.

**If “no”, please explain why?**

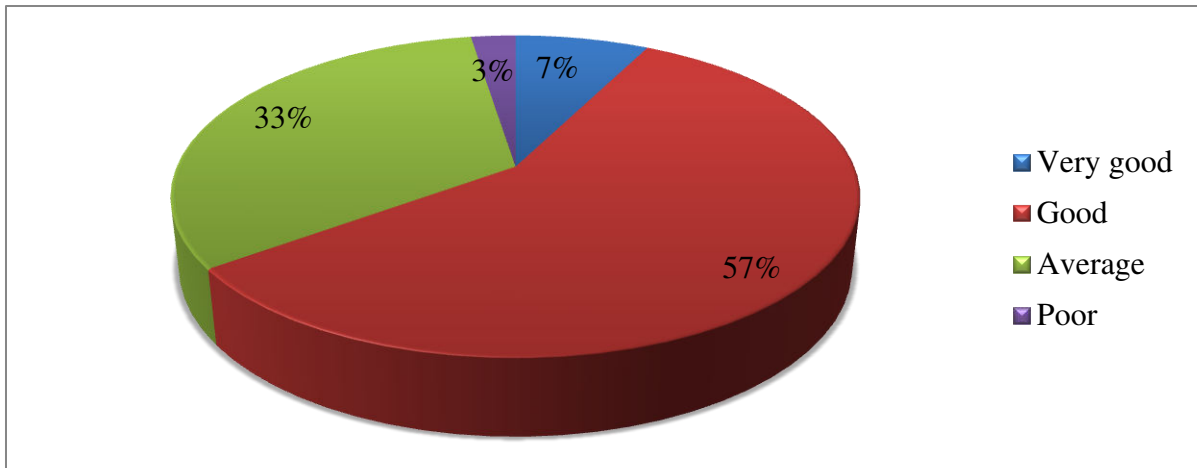
The justification of the 13 students who stated that they are not satisfied with their levels in writing can be summarized in the following points:

- They still have problems with spelling; since there is more than one way to spell a word.
- They do not know how to punctuate; for them, using punctuation marks is a challenging task.
- They find it difficult to write a structured, well organized piece of writing.
- They face difficulties when it comes to applying grammar rules; they still have recurrent problems in grammar.
- Lack of vocabulary is a common problem which they usually face.
- First language interference is one of the frequent difficulties which they still face.

**Q - 4. How do you consider your level in writing?**

**Table 2.4: Students’ Views about their Levels in Writing**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1. Very good	03	7,5%
2. Good	23	57,5%
3. Average	13	32,5%
4. Poor	01	2,5%



**Figure 2.4: Students' Views about their Levels in Writing**

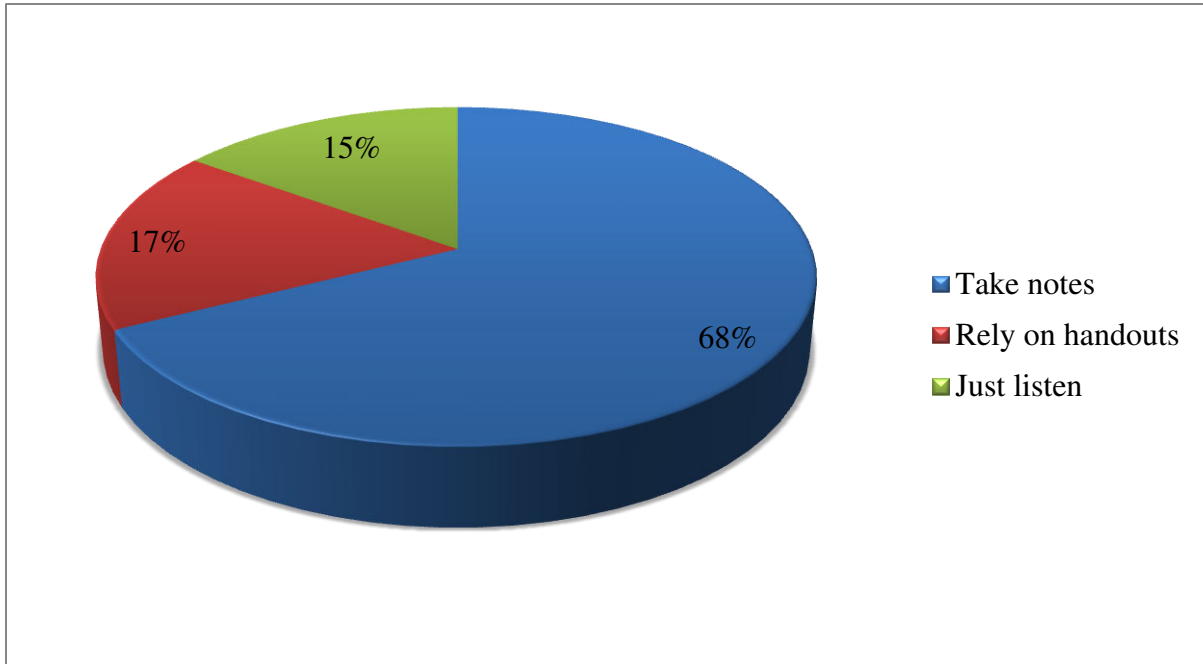
Answers to this question confirm what students have responded in the previous question. Some learners (7, 5%) considered themselves as competent writers who reached a very good level in writing, while, more than half of the participants (57%) stated that they have a good level in this skill. 32.5% of the students claimed that their level in writing is average and only few students (2, 5%) declared that they have a poor level in writing. It can be noticed that yet the majority of students did not reach the higher level in writing, this may be due to the fact that they still face some problems concerning grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, organization, etc.

### Section Three: Note-taking

**Q - 5. During the lecture, you would like to: -take notes - rely on handouts -just listen?**

**Table 2.5: Students' Choice of the Learning Material**

Options	Number	Percentage
Take notes	27	67,5%
Rely on handouts	07	17,5%
Just listen	06	15%



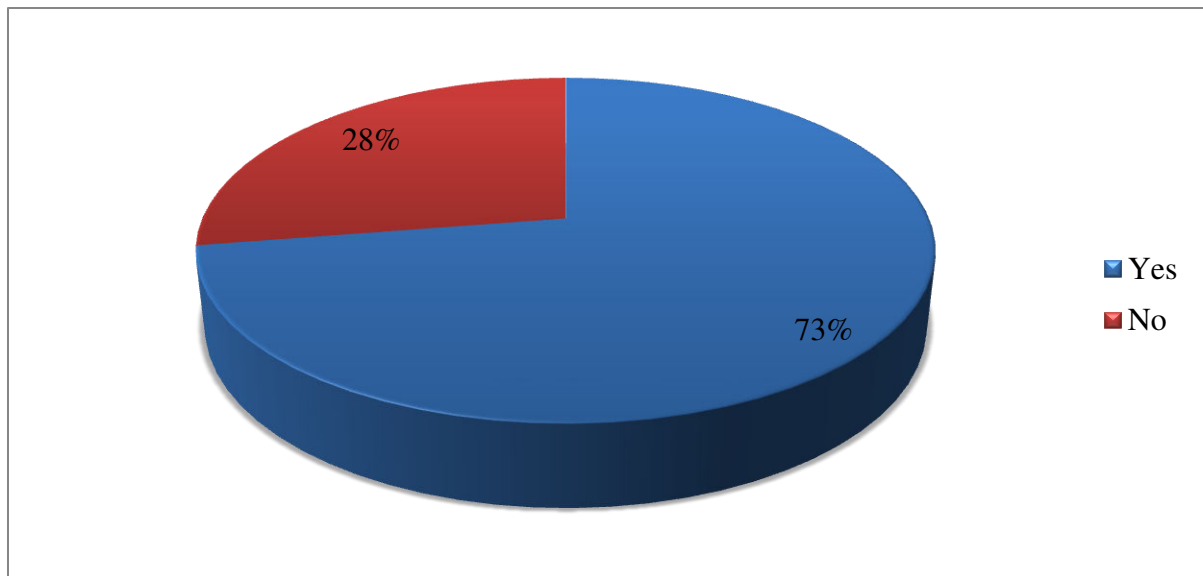
**Figure 2.5: Students' Choice of the Learning Material**

As it is mentioned clearly in the table (2.5) and the figure above most of the students (67, 5%) stated that they would like to take notes during lectures, while, 17, 5 % claimed that they prefer to rely on handouts. For the rest of respondents (15%), listening to what the teacher is saying is enough. The results confirm that the great majority of learners are aware of the importance of taking notes in educational settings.

**Q - 6. Do you enjoy taking notes?**

**Table 2.6: Students' Attitudes towards Taking Notes**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	29	72,5%
No	11	27,5%



**Figure 2.6: Students' Attitudes towards Taking Notes**

From the analysis of this question, we have noticed that the great majority of the participants (72, 5%) said that they enjoy taking notes, and about 27, 5% of students indicated that they do not like to take notes. These results correlate with the responses that students have provided in the previous question.

**Please, say why?**

The 29 learners who stated that they enjoy taking notes justified their answers in the following:

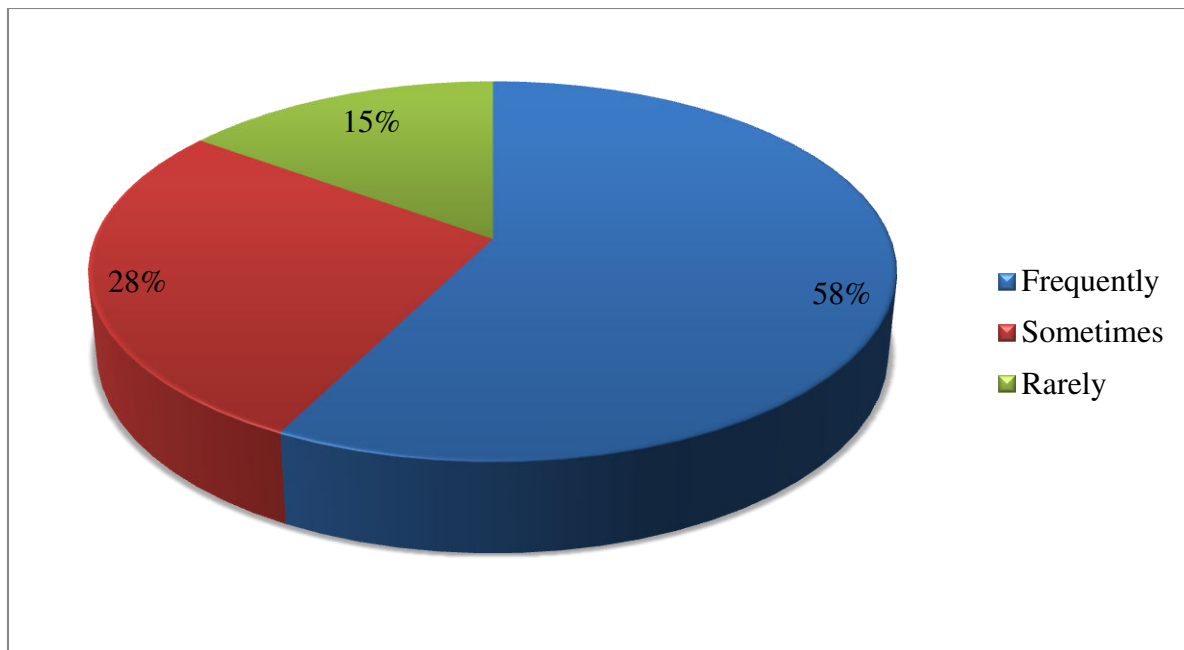
- Taking notes oblige them to keep attentive in classes.
- It provides students with organized summaries including what is really important.
- It helps them to better understand the lesson and make it easy to memorize and revise.

While the 11 participants who refused to take notes have justified that they cannot do two tasks meanwhile; for them focusing on what the teacher is saying and writing down key points is a challenging task.

**Q - 7. How often do you take notes?**

**Table 2.7: Taking Notes Frequency**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	23	57,5%
Sometimes	11	27,5%
Rarely	06	15%



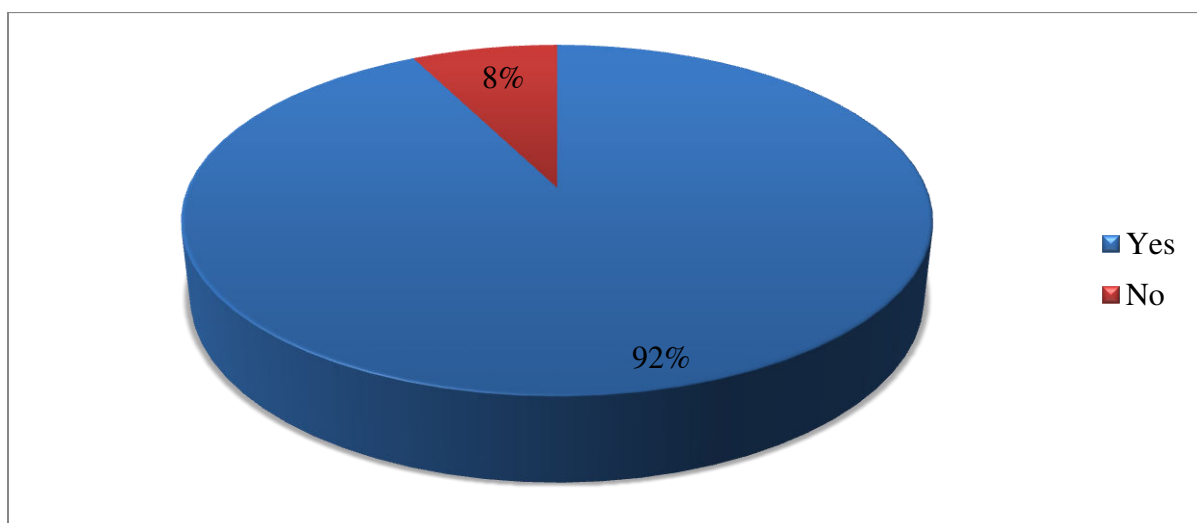
**Figure 2.7: Taking Notes Frequency**

The above results illustrates that more than half of the students (57, 5%) take notes frequently, while, 27, 5% do it sometimes. But only 15% rarely tend to take notes. This demonstrates students' positive attitudes towards taking notes.

**Q - 8. Do you realize the benefits behind taking notes in class?**

**Table 2.8: Students' Perception towards the Benefits of Note Taking**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	37	92,5%
No	03	7,5%



**Figure2. 8: Students' Perception towards the Benefits of Note Taking**

This question aims to see whether or not students realize the benefits behind taking notes. The over whelming majority (92, 5%) stated that they do, while only 7, 5% claimed that they do not. This shows the students awareness about the benefits of such a technique.

**If yes, for which purpose (s) do you take notes?**

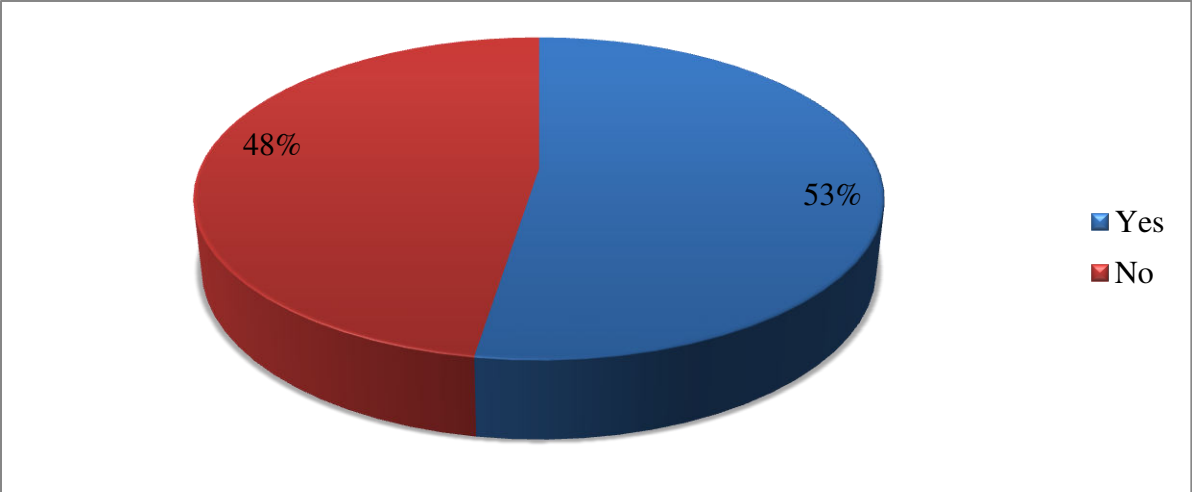
Among the 37 students, who reported that taking notes in class is an advantageous process, 20 learners (50%) claimed that the main reasons behind their notes is to facilitate their preparation for tests and quizzes, as well as to get better grades. The other 10 respondents (25%) declared that they take notes in order to highlight important ideas,

understand the lecture and easily remember its notes. Some other participants (17, 5%) ticked all the choices. From these results, it can be concluded that most of the students are interested with gaining more marks rather than grasping knowledge and understanding input.

**Q - 9. Do you find difficulties when taking notes?**

**Table 2.9: Students’ Difficulties in Note Taking**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	21	52,5%
No	19	47,5%



**Figure 2.9: Students’ Difficulties in Note Taking**

When we have asked students such a question, more than half of them (52, 5%) responded that they encounter some difficulties when taking notes. The rest (47, 5 %) stated that they have no problem with it. What the results indicate is that most learners are not perfect note takers; it is suggested that they find themselves unable to take notes easily because of the series of problems that they face.

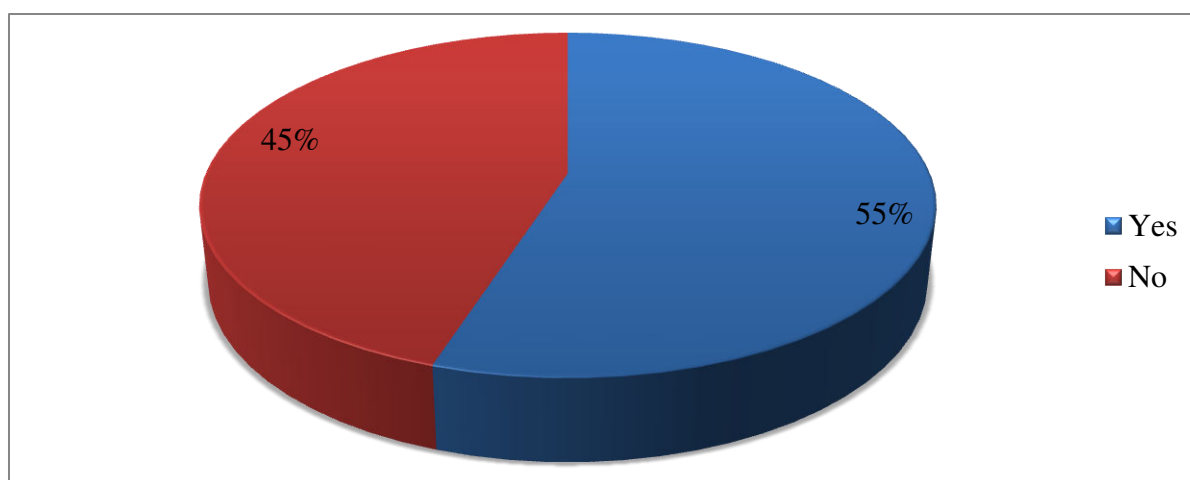
### If yes, what is the hardest part about taking notes?

Most of the students, agreed that taking notes is not an easy task. Forty five percent of them claimed that when teachers' lectures are too fast, they fail to take good notes because jumping from one point to another makes them confused. While, some respondents (7, 5%) announced that they find it difficult to jot down important information because they cannot understand or hear their instructors; especially those who speak with low tone and unfamiliar vocabulary the fact that distracts them from doing this task in a good way. But, no one has considered note taking as a boring process. This is an indication that students are conscious of their challenging problems and thus express their willingness to develop their note taking skill.

### Q - 10. Do you use certain strategies when taking notes?

**Table 2.10: Using Strategies when Taking Notes**

options	Number	Percentage
Yes	22	55%
No	18	45%



**Figure 2.10: Using Strategies when Taking Notes**

The results show that a considerable number of students (55%) agreed that they use certain strategies to take notes. While 45% of them stated that they do not have any strategies to rely on during this process. This means that most of learners are aware of the effectiveness of using particular note taking strategies and the big role those strategies play in facilitating the task of capturing key notions and ideas.

**If yes, give examples**

The 22 students, who opted for a “yes” answer, gave us some examples which are stated in the following:

- Recording the lecture with cell phone.
- Organizing notes in one copybook, drawing tables and tree diagrams, using different colors. In addition to relying on sticky notes.
- Avoiding long sentences, writing only important information, using abbreviations and highlighting key words; they take only general ideas without any details.
- Concentrate and listen carefully to the teacher and jotting down main titles, subtitles, names and dates during the session then developing them when coming back home.

**If no, please say why?**

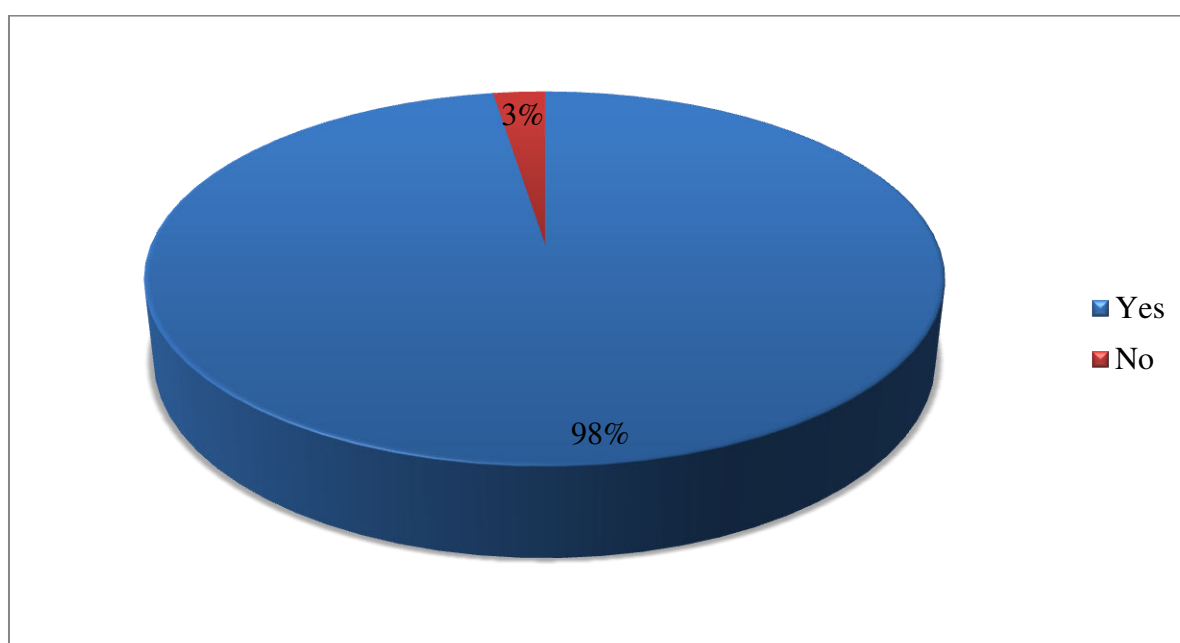
The rest of the participants claimed that they do not use any strategies because they have never been taught how to take notes. Thus, it is advisable to endow EFL students with some techniques that may facilitate the writing task.

## Section Four: Mind-mapping

**Q- 11. Do you consider mind-mapping as a good strategy for note-taking?**

**Table 2.11: Students' Perceptions towards the Effectiveness of Mind-mapping**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	39	97,5%
No	01	2,5%



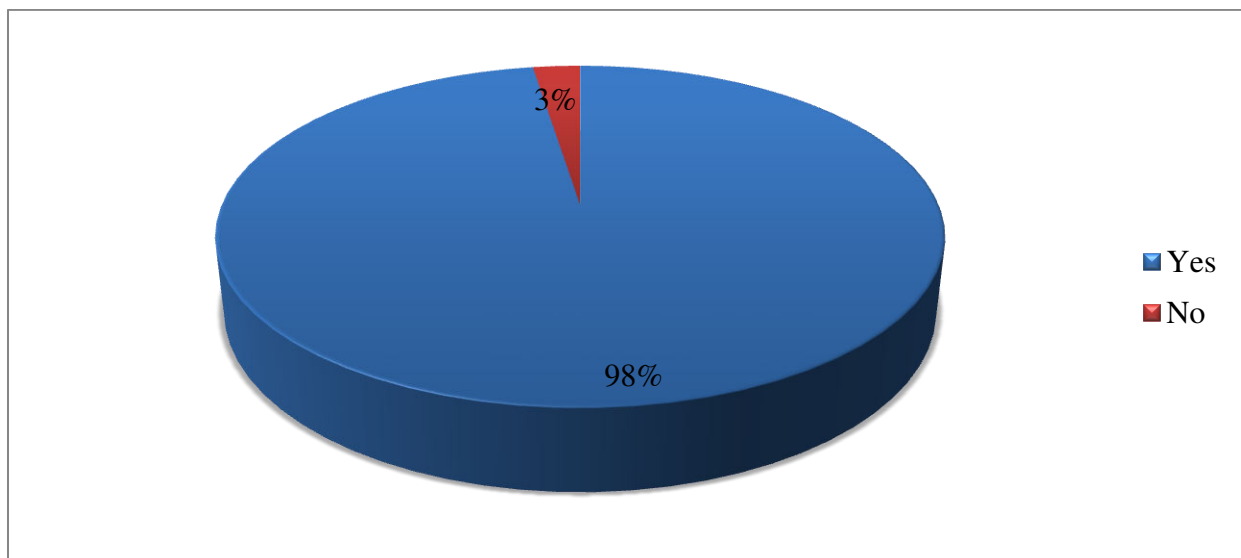
**Figure 2.11: Students' Perceptions towards the Effectiveness of Mind-mapping**

From this figure it is clear that a great majority of learners (97, 5%) classified the mind-mapping method amongst the good note taking strategies. Whereas, 2, 5% of them did not. This in fact reveals that the great majority of the participant students are interested in the mind mapping strategy; this may be due to the fact that they have a clear overview about its main benefits.

**Q- 12. When taking notes do you highlight important information?**

**Table 2.12: Highlighting Important Information when Taking Notes**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	39	97,5%
No	01	2,5%



**Figure 2.12: Highlighting Important Information when Taking Notes**

From the results, it is obvious that the great majority (97, 5%) agreed that they highlight important information while taking notes while only 2, 5% do not. From the analysis of this question, it can be concluded that students are so attentive during writing; since, they select precisely what is really important to be highlighted.

**If yes, do you use: -circles -underlining?**

Great deals of participants prefer highlighting important ideas. Twenty three students (57, 5%) tend to underline them. While, only 12 (30%) like to put them in circles. The last four respondents (10%) claimed that they use both.

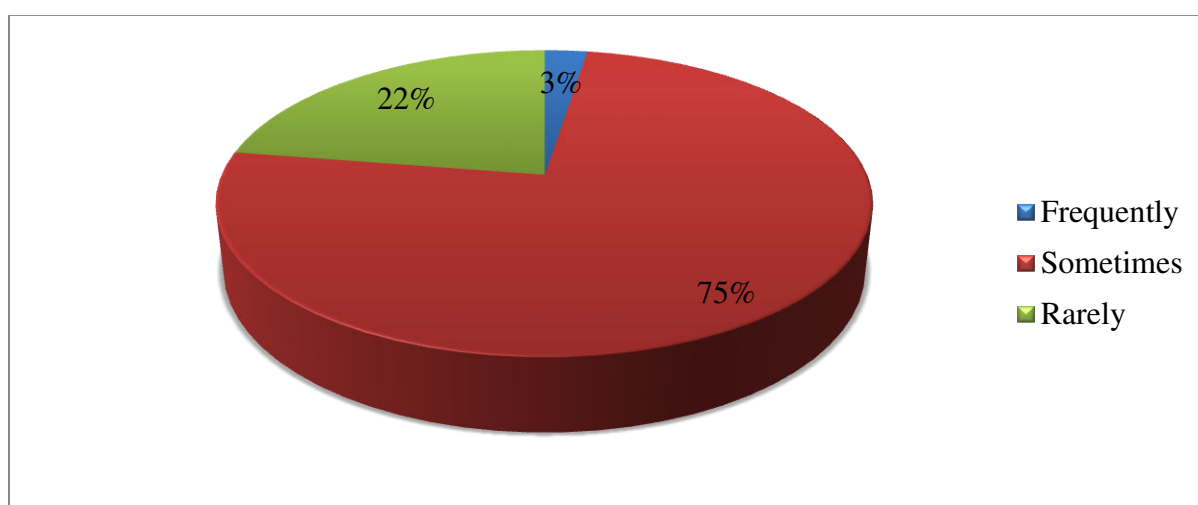
**If no, say why?**

The only participant who said that highlighting what is necessary is a needless step argued that there is no time for highlighting.

**Q- 13. How often do you rely on mind-mapping to take notes?**

**Table 2.13: Frequency of Relying on Mind mapping when Taking Notes**

Options	Number	Percentage
Frequently	01	2,5%
Sometimes	30	75%
Rarely	09	22,5%



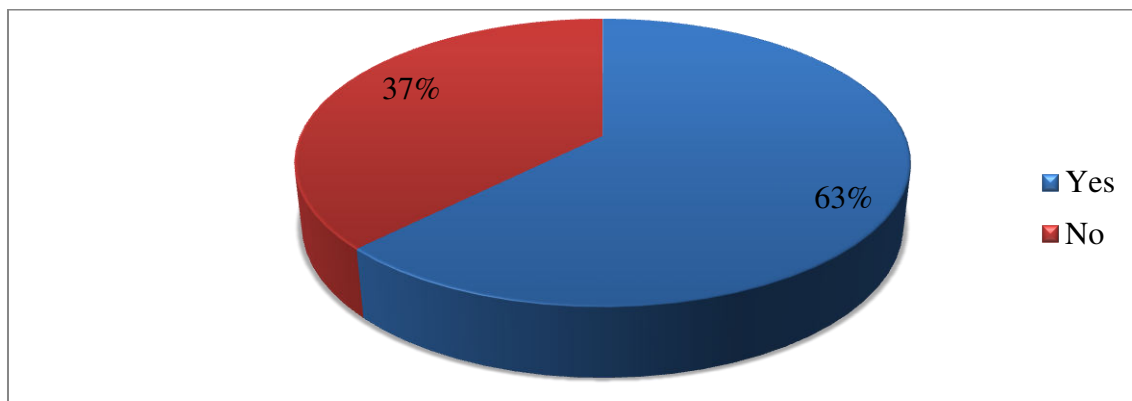
**Figure 2.13: Frequency of Relying on Mind mapping when Taking Notes**

Although nearly all students have considered mind mapping as an effective note-taking technique only 2, 5% of them stated that they frequently rely on it. While, most of them (75%) claimed that they sometimes use mind mapping to take notes. For the rest (22, 5%) they declared that they rarely tend to utilize this strategy. This indicates that students are not aware of the way of how to use such a useful note taking tool.

**Q- 14. Can you write fast enough to keep up with the teacher when taking notes?**

**Table 2.14: Students' Ability to keep up with Teachers when Taking Notes**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	25	62,5%
No	15	37,5%



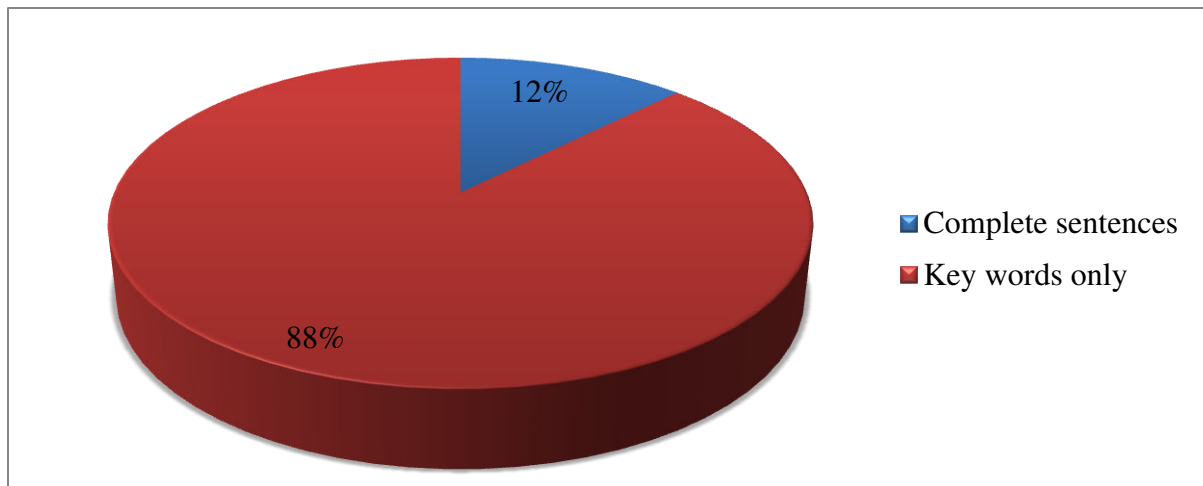
**Figure 2.14: Students' Ability to keep up with Teachers when Taking Notes**

Answers of this question show that 62, 5% of the participants are capable of being fast note takers who can keep up with their teachers. Whereas, 37, 5% stated that they are unable to be speedy enough to catch every point. The results show that most of the students get used to take notes rapidly although it is their first year to experience this activity; thus, the speed of students hand writing is really important in this case especially when drawing mind maps.

**Q- 15. Do you use: -complete sentences -key words only?**

**Table 2.15: Using Complete Sentences or only Key Words**

Options	Number	Percentage
- Complete sentences	05	12,5%
- Key words only	35	87,5%



**Figure 2.15: Using Complete Sentences or only Key Words**

This question aims to see if students use complete sentences or only key words when taking notes. We found that the latter is used to by 87, 5% while the former is utilized by 12,5%. It seems that most of the students tend to avoid writing complete sentences since it is time consuming.

**Please, say why?**

The 35 participants, who claimed that key words are enough, provided us with the following reasons:

- They are sufficient to be developed later on.
- They help us to keep up with the teacher. Therefore, when using key words, following teacher explanation would be easier.
- No need for complete sentences since there is no much time to be wasted.

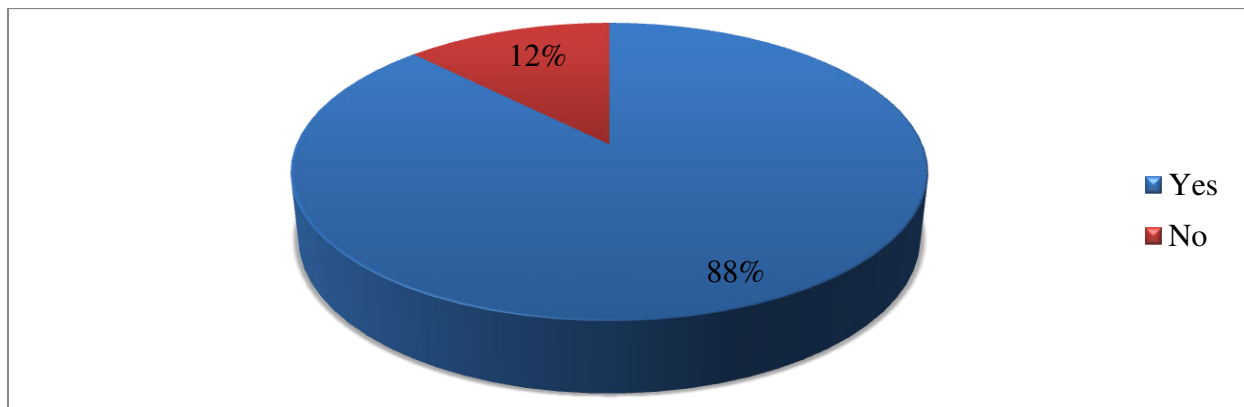
The rest who supported complete sentences have justified that:

- Every single detail is important to be written down.
- When writing just key words, they cannot remember the whole idea when come back home.

**Q- 16. Do you use special symbols and abbreviations for some words?**

**Table 2.16: Using Special Symbols and Abbreviations**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	87,5%
No	05	12,5%



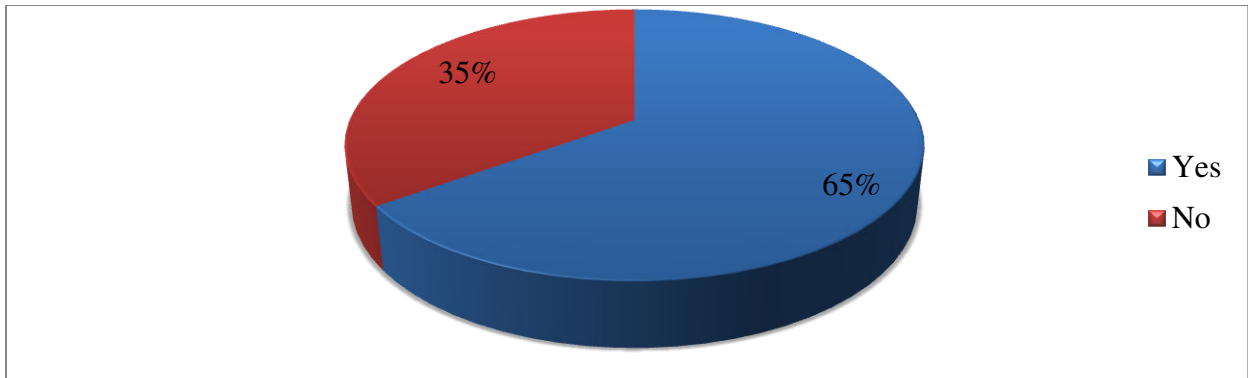
**Figure 2.16: Using Special Symbols and Abbreviations**

It can be noticed that the great majority (87, 5%) argued that they give special symbols and abbreviations for some words. While, the rest 12, 5% did not agree with them. It can be concluded that most of the students are aware about the importance of using symbols and abbreviations in mind map, since it is a summary represented in a diagram form.

**Q- 17. Do you organize your notes visually on the page using diagrams, colors and pictures?**

**Table 2.17: Visual Organization of Notes**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	26	65%
No	14	35%



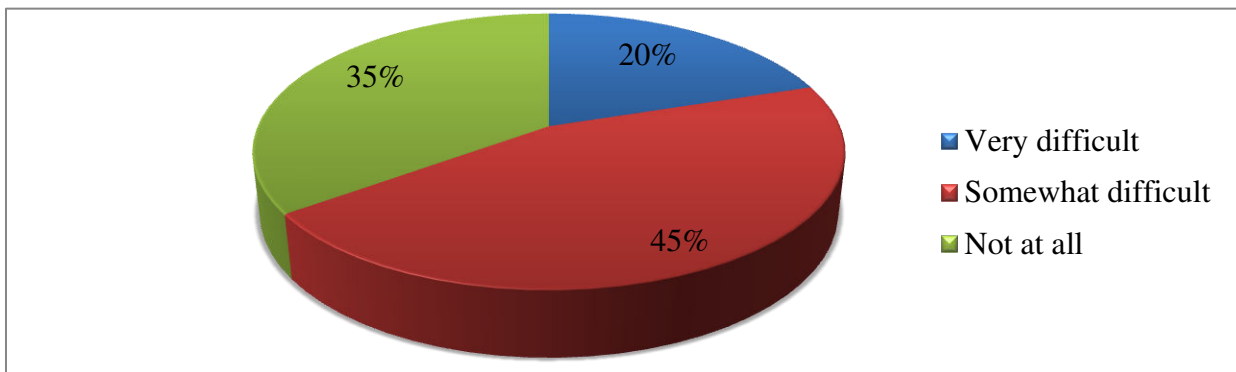
**Figure 2.17: Visual Organization of Notes**

This question is asked to ensure that students are not giving answers randomly; it is an indirect question to see if they use mind mapping technique when taking notes or not. We found that 65% of respondents agreed that they organize their notes visually on the page using diagrams, colors and pictures. Thirty five participants answered negatively. The results of this question confirm the data that students already provided when answering question number 16.

**Q- 18. How much is it difficult to make a mind map?**

**Table 2.18: Difficulty of Designing a Mind Map**

Options	Number	Percentage
Very difficult	08	20%
Somewhat difficult	18	45%
Not at all	14	35%



**Figure 2.18: Difficulty of Designing a Mind Map**

As shown in the figure (2.18) 45% of participants stated that it is somewhat hard to make a mind map. 35% considered it as not difficult at all. For the rest 20%, making a mind map is a very difficult task. Students have different views concerning the complexity of doing such an activity; this is an indication that learners have different levels in writing.

## **2.2. The Teachers' Questionnaire**

### **2.2.1. Aim of the Questionnaire**

The purpose behind this questionnaire is to investigate teachers' perceptions towards the effectiveness of using mind mapping technique in note taking and its contribution in enhancing their students' note taking skill.

### **2.2.2. Administration of the Questionnaire**

These questionnaires were administrated to five experienced teachers of "Written Expression" in the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University – El Tarf who were very active in that they returned them back the same day they received them.

### **2.2.3. Description of the Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire comprises 07 questions divided into four main sections. The first section includes general question about teachers' experience in teaching written expression at the university. The second section is about the writing skill. It aims at knowing whether teachers deem writing as important for EFL students or not. The third section is about note taking; it seeks to get information about teachers' opinions concerning this technique and to see if they help their students to be perfect note takers or not. The fourth section is designed to discover teachers' views about mind-mapping strategy and its major benefits that students may obtain from its use.

## 2.2.4. The Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

### Section One: General Information

Q- 01. How long have you been teaching English at the university?

Table 2.19: Teachers' Experience

Options	Number	Percentage
1 year	01	20%
2 years	00	00%
3 years	00	00%
4 years	00	00%
5 years	00	00%
6 years	02	40%
7 years	00	00%
8 years	01	20%
9 years	00	00%
10 years	01	20%

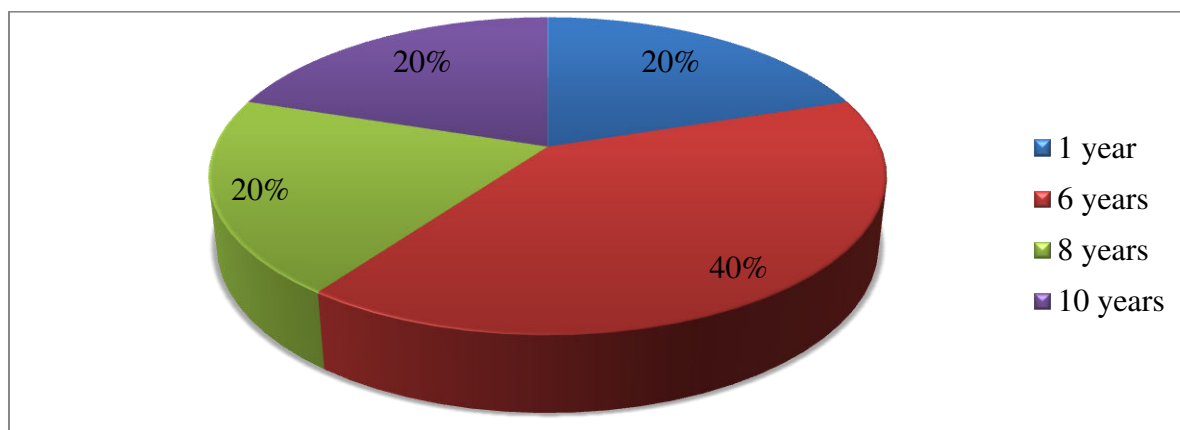


Figure 2.19: Teachers' Experience

From the analysis of this question, we find that only one teacher has one year in teaching English at the university. While two teachers have stated that they have been teaching English at university since 2012. Another teacher stated that she has 8 years of experience whereas; the last one declared that he has 10 years teaching experience. It can be noticed that the majority of teachers have been teaching English at university for more than 6 years; so it is obvious that they have enough experience that makes their answers somehow reliable.

## Section Two: The Writing Skill

**Q- 02. Do you believe that writing is an important skill for EFL learners?**

**Table 2.20: The Importance of Writing Skill for EFL Learners**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	05	100%
No	00	00%

From this table, it can be noticed that 100% of teachers agreed on the importance of the writing skill for EFL learners because they believe that it works in parallel with the other skills; it helps them to be developed.

**If yes, explain why?**

Teachers believed that writing is an important skill for EFL learners because:

- Writing allows students to have strong and rich background in the target language.
- It develops students' way of thinking.
- It is a means for students to express their ideas and thoughts.

- Because students need writing everywhere; they need it to answer written tests, make summaries, take notes, record data and so further.
- Writing takes student to the world of creativity and imagination.
- It helps students to better understand and easily remember the learned task.

**Section Three: Note-taking:**

**Q- 3. How often do you advise your students to take notes?**

**Table2.21: The Frequency of Teachers' Encouragements**

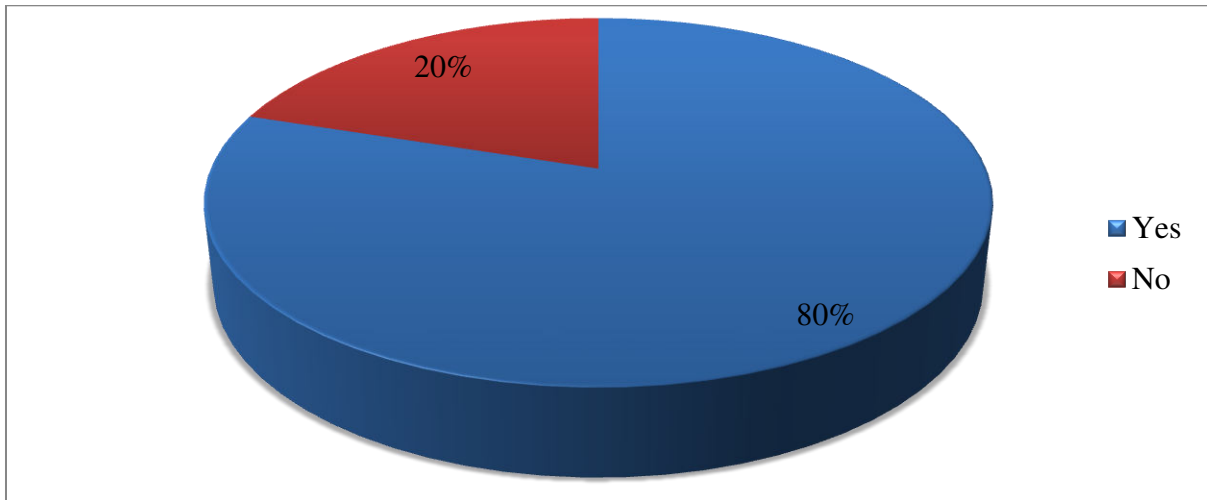
Options	Number	Percentage
Always	05	100%
Often	00	00%
Sometimes	00	00%
Rarely	00	00%
Never	00	00%

All teachers stated that they always advice their students to take notes. These results indicate that teachers are extremely aware of the impact of taking notes on improving students' academic achievement; that is why they encourage them each time to take notes.

**Q- 04. Do you give some note taking strategies to your students?**

**Table 2.22: Frequency of Providing Students with Note Taking Strategies**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	04	80%
No	01	20%



**Figure 2.20: Frequency of Providing Students with Note Taking Strategies**

All teachers except one agreed that they provide their students with certain note taking strategies. This shows teacher's awareness of the importance of giving students clear overview about how taking notes should be.

**If yes, please explain**

The teachers who have ticked “yes” provided the following justification:

- Sometimes it is a part of the lesson to show your students the way how we should take notes.
- When I notice that students are facing problems with such an activity, I will give them remedial courses.
- Because I want them to gain time and space while taking notes through the use of abbreviation, acronyms and shortened words.
- Because I want them to have some knowledge to be used when needed. Thus, to facilitate the task of taking notes.

## Section Four: Mind-mapping

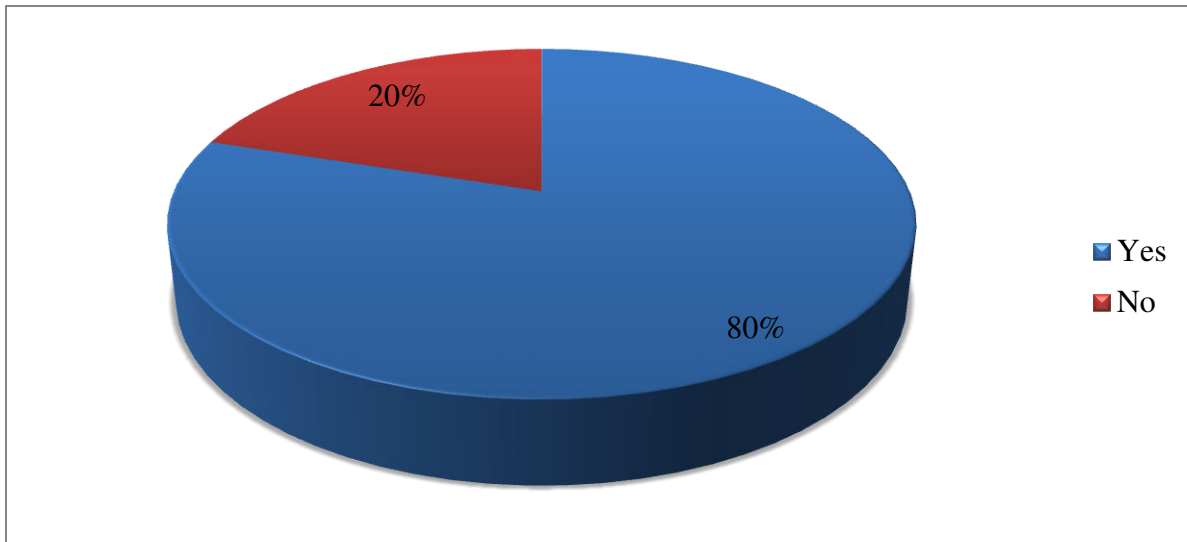
### Q- 05. According to you, what does mind mapping mean?

The five teachers have provided definitions for the concept mind mapping; one of them defined it as a technique for highlighting the most important ideas in order to facilitate memorization. The second one stated that it is a technique in writing which allows students to better retain the notes they usually take. While, the third teacher said that for me to mind map is to draw a map of the topic you are writing about using arrows, colors, key words and avoiding long sentences. Another instructor described mind mapping as a more fascinating method for note taking which helps students to better remember the lesson. The last one considered it as an organized representative tool which includes only titles and most important information. It can be noticed that no one of the experienced teachers have said that he never heard about this concept. This means that mind mapping is a popular technique in the field of teaching and learning.

### Q- 06. In your opinion, does mind-mapping technique improve the students' note taking skill?

**Table 2.23: Teachers' Views about the Role of Mind-mapping in Improving Note Taking**

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	04	80%
No	01	20%



**Figure2.21: Teachers’ Views about the Role of Mind-mapping in Improving Note Taking**

Only one teacher denied the significance of mind mapping in ameliorating the students’ note taking. This indicates that the majority of teachers consider mind mapping as an effective tool for beginner note takers.

**Q- 07. According to you, what are the benefits that students may gain from using Mind-mapping strategy?**

The main aim of this question is to check teachers’ views on the benefits that students may gain from using mind mapping strategy. They have provided the following answers:

- ❖ It promotes their note taking skill, and helps them to be competent note takers.
- ❖ The use of mind mapping technique facilitates the students’ memorization because the use of colors, arrows and circles help them to better remember what they have written down.
- ❖ It helps them to gain space and energy; they get lots of information about the main topic in just one page.
- ❖ It gives them very organized version of notes.

- ❖ Its form gives students the chance to add new ideas later on.
- ❖ It helps them to save time when revising since it gives them clear overview about the whole topic.
- ❖ Mind mapping makes them effective note takers; it shows them the link between different ideas.
- ❖ It is a delightful and entertaining technique that makes them adore the act of taking notes.

### **2.3. Discussion and Results**

After having analyzed the two questionnaires addressed to both written expression teachers and first year LMD students of English at Chadli Bendjedid El-Tarf University, we noted that the majority of students and all teachers as well have considered writing as an important language skill. They claimed that it is needed everywhere; whether to answer written questions, summarizing, taking notes or recording data. Although most of the students argued that they are satisfied with their levels in writing and they have considered themselves “good” and “very good” writers, we found that some of them still have problems with certain language aspects.

In the next section, we tried to investigate both students and teachers’ attitudes towards the importance of taking notes during lectures. The results revealed that all teachers encourage their students to take notes because it is a vital skill that should be mastered. Therefore, when we have asked students about what they used to do during lectures; the majority of them declared that they frequently prefer to take notes; they enjoy it because they are totally aware about its benefits. Concerning facing certain difficulties when taking notes, more than half of the students who participated in the study considered this act as a challenging task; they argued that the main problem that they usually encounter is teachers’ lecturing speed. Moreover, the data showed that all the teachers except one used to provide

their students with some note taking strategies. This result was confirmed by more than half of the students when they announced that they use certain strategies to take notes such as; using sticky notes, designing tables and tree diagrams, using colors, abbreviations, symbols and so further.

Concerning the last section, both teachers and students have shown their interest with mind mapping strategy; they give their positive perceptions towards the importance of using it as an effective note taking tool. As the data demonstrated, all students except one have claimed that when taking notes they used to highlight important information whether using circles, underlining or both. Moreover, the majority of them affirmed that they sometimes rely on such strategy; they explained that they are speedy enough to keep up with their teachers because they usually use key words, symbols and abbreviations. When we reformulated an already asked question we got the same results that most of the students tend to use mind maps. For that reason, when we asked students about the complexity of making a mind map, only few students argued that it is very difficult to design. Through data analysis, we found that teachers are totally aware of the great role that mind mapping plays in promoting students' levels and their academic achievements as well.

From the results, it is evident that mind mapping is an important task and it contributes in developing students note taking skills. It helps them to be competent note takers who can easily have a well organized version of notes and accurately capture key information and main ideas during lectures.

## **Conclusion**

In the light of the findings obtained from this investigation, it can be deduced that note taking is a focal part of the process of learning in general. This crucial activity may be improved by experiencing the creative mind mapping strategy. From the analysis of both

questionnaires, it can be noticed that answers of our research questions are reached; According to both EFL teachers and students at Chadli Bendjedid University, mind mapping is an effective, powerful strategy that could ameliorates EFL students' note taking skills. Hence, both teachers and students provided positive perceptions about using such a tool and its contribution in developing the skill of note taking.

# *Chapter Three*

## *Suggestions and Recommendations*

## **Introduction**

The ultimate goal of the present study is to highlight the importance of using mind-mapping strategy and its effects on promoting EFL students' note taking skill. The obtained results from this study have confirmed the great role that mind mapping plays in improving EFL students' academic achievements. Hence, it is considered as a crucial task to be relayed on in foreign language learning process. Therefore, building on both students and teachers' questionnaires, we provided this chapter mainly to offer some implications and suggestions seeking to help EFL teachers to encourage their students to frequently use this effective strategy, as well as, to aid EFL students to develop their note taking skills.

### **3.1. Suggestions for Students**

Although taking notes has long been considered as an essential process in the field of learning in general, it was sometimes seen as a challenging task especially for second/ foreign language learners. Thus, in order to develop their ability to jot down what is really important, EFL learners should take into account that to promote their note taking skill, they need to experience some effective note taking strategies such as mind mapping. Hence, it is advisable to propose the following recommendations to guide them to be skilled effective note takers.

- Students must be aware of the importance of recording important facts and notes in high education settings. The more students know about the benefits of taking notes, the more they are going to be motivated to do it.
- Students need to recognize the main problems that make the process of taking notes a very complicated task. Awareness of main difficulties facilitates finding solutions process; for example if they have a problem with teacher lectures speed, they are going to ask him/her to slow down or maybe they are going to practice listening to videos of native speakers who are speaking too fast. Also when they find it difficult to

hear their teacher, they may ask him/her to raise his/ her voice or simply they are going to sit in the front seats. But when they cannot understand what their teacher is saying, they may look for appropriate ways to enrich their vocabulary i.e. reading books or listening to educational videos.

- Students need to adopt some note taking techniques and strategies and must be aware of the great role that those strategies play in improving their achievements.
- Students should organize their notes in one note book; they should separate each module from the other, also, they are advised to use diagrams and different colors. This makes them motivated to take notes and to revise their lessons as well.
- When taking notes during lectures, students are expected to be very active as well as so attentive to highlight most important facts and information. They may circle words that they do not know and underline main important ones.
- For students to keep up with their teacher, they need to be fast note takers. They should jot down only key words and avoid writing long sentences.
- Using symbols and abbreviations is a fundamental issue in the process of taking notes. Therefore, for students to save their time, they need to have a clear idea about how to abbreviate and symbolize different words. In fact, there are some abbreviations and symbols as well that could be used when taking notes. They are illustrated in the following examples:

# Abbreviations

<b>alt</b> alternate	<b>meas</b> measures	<b>prev</b> previous	a time, return to LH
<b>approx</b> approximately	<b>MI</b> make one (inc 1 stitch)	<b>psso</b> pass slipped stitch over	needle, purl 2 slipped
<b>beg</b> beginning	<b>MIL</b> Left leaning increase.	<b>P2tog</b> purl 2 stitches together	stitches together tbl
<b>cn</b> cable needle	With left needle tip,	<b>P3tog</b> purl 3 stitches together	<b>st(s)</b> stitch(es)
<b>cont</b> continue	lift strand between	<b>pwise</b> purlwise	<b>st st</b> stocking stitch
<b>dc</b> double crochet	needles from front to	<b>rem</b> remain(ing)	<b>tbl</b> through back of loop
(US single crochet)	back. Knit lifted loop	<b>rep(s)</b> repeat(s)	<b>tog</b> together
<b>dec</b> decrease (work two	through back of loop.	<b>rev st st</b> reverse stocking stitch	<b>tr</b> treble crochet
stitches together)	<b>M1R</b> Right leaning increase.	<b>RH</b> right hand	(US double crochet)
<b>DK</b> double knitting	With left needle tip,	<b>RS</b> right side	<b>w&amp;t</b> wrap and turn
<b>DPN</b> double-pointed needle	lift strand between	<b>skpo</b> slip 1 stitch, knit 1	<b>WS</b> wrong side
<b>dtr</b> double treble (US treble	needles from back to	stitch, pass slipped	<b>wyib</b> with yarn in back
crochet)	front. Knit lifted loop	stitch over	<b>wyif</b> with yarn in front
<b>est</b> established	through front of loop	<b>sl</b> slip	<b>yb</b> take yarn back (no inc)
<b>fol</b> following	<b>MB</b> make a bobble	<b>sl st</b> slip stitch	<b>yf</b> bring yarn to front
<b>inc</b> increase	<b>MS</b> main shade	<b>ss</b> slip stitch (crochet)	(no inc)
<b>K</b> knit	<b>P</b> purl	<b>slm</b> slip marker	<b>yfwd</b> yarn forward
<b>KFB</b> knit into front and back	<b>patt</b> pattern(s)	<b>SSK</b> slip 2 stitches one at	<b>yo</b> yarn over
of stitch	<b>PB</b> place bead	a time, return to LH	<b>yrn</b> yarn round needle
<b>K2tog</b> knit the next two	<b>PFB</b> purl into front and back	needle, knit 2 slipped	
stitches together	of stitch	stitches together tbl	
<b>kwise</b> knitwise	<b>pm</b> place marker	<b>SSP</b> slip 2 stitches one at	

Figure 3.1: Abbreviation in English (retrieved from:

<https://www.fluentland.com/groups/english-grammar/forum/topic/abbreviation-in-english-3/>)

## Note-Taking Symbols:

> or +	more than	%	percent
< or -	less than	&	and
↑	increase, rise	*	important info
↓	decrease, fall	( )	(date)
→	becomes, leads to	~	approximately
@	at	:	includes
#	number	ex:	for example
\$	money, dollars	/	per
=	equals	≠	not equal
vs.	against	w/o	without
?	unsure	k, m,	thousand, million
√	check	b/c	because

Figure 3.2: Note-Taking Symbols (retrieved from:

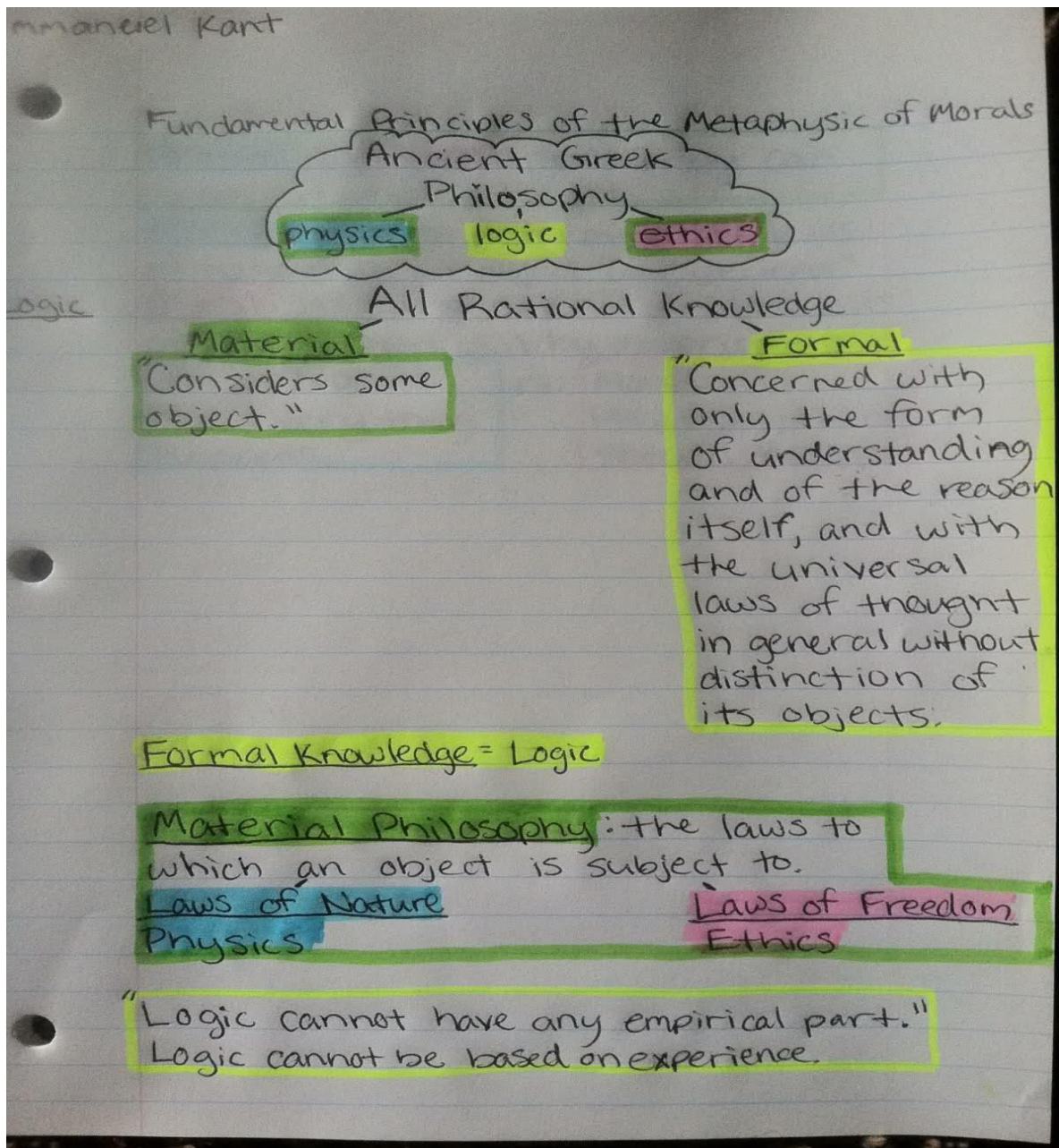
<http://www.teslimes.com/listening-speaking/ls-note-taking.html>)

### **3.2. Suggestions for Teachers**

Teachers need to encourage and boost students to develop their note taking skill because it serves as a good aid of summarizing, recalling and retaining information. There are several note-taking strategies and techniques that most instructors should present to their students. One of them is mind-mapping which is really important for EFL learners. As well as it paves the way for them to better ameliorate their academic achievement.

In line with the present study' analysis that turns around investigating the best use of mind-mapping in promoting and enhancing EFL learners' note-taking skill, and relying on the students' questionnaire, we have drawn up the following suggestions and recommendations for teachers who may encourage students to develop their note taking in order to attain successful learning. They are as follows:

- On an ongoing basis teachers can motivate their EFL students to practice the note taking skill (see figure 3) that helps students better elaborate their ideas clearly and more deeply during the learning process.

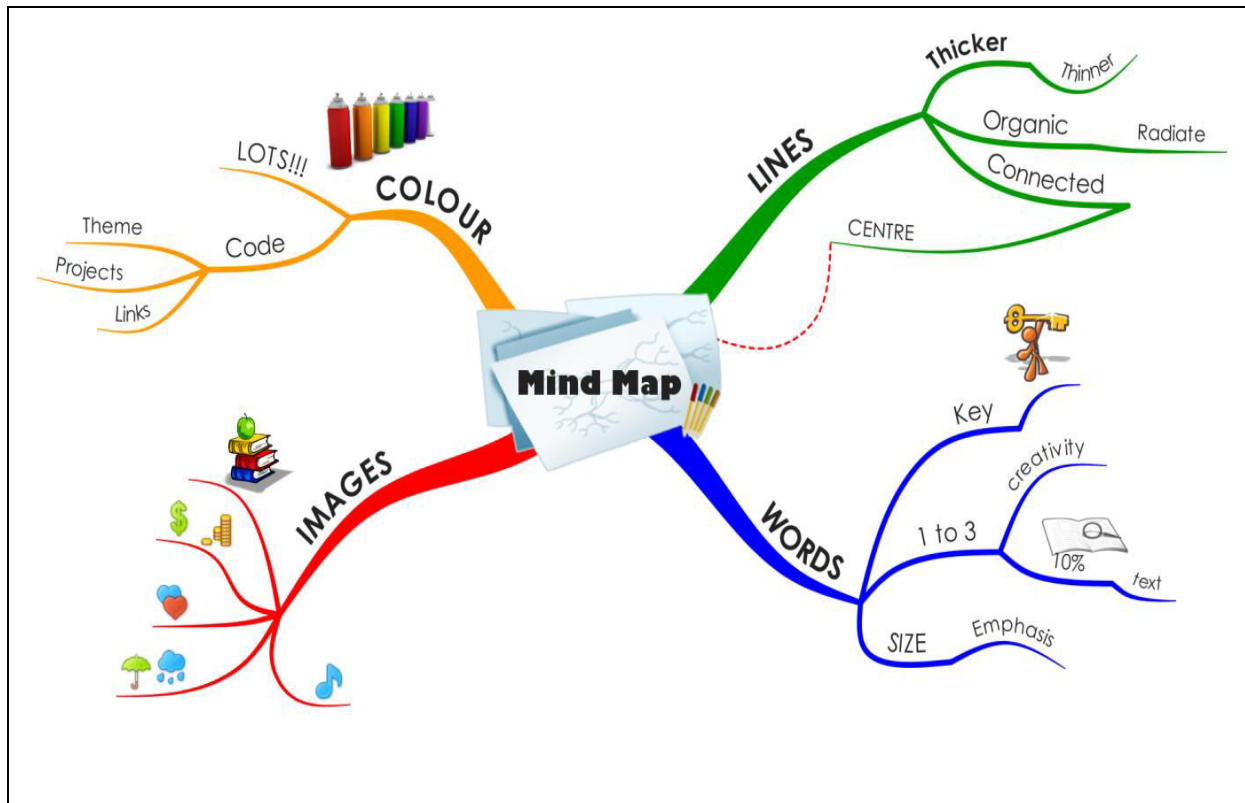


**Figure 3.3: The First Page of Notes on Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals by Immanuel Kant. (Retrieved from: <http://www.personalitycafe.com/intj-forum-scientists/82964-how-do-you-take-notes.html>)**

- While presenting lessons, teachers must talk with an appropriate speed to facilitate students' understanding, to maintain their attention and to encourage their listening skill. Also they should be always selective to use understandable vocabulary that most students are familiar with but not complex one which makes them confused and

frustrated. Moreover, teachers should speak with low tone to make students more focused and attentive for the success of the lesson rather than shouting loudly.

- Teachers should provide learners with note taking strategies in order to improve their levels and facilitate their note-taking task.
- English teachers must use mind mapping when they teach. Consequently, this technique helps students to improve their note taking skill; it aids them to generate their thoughts quickly. Also it opens the way for them to be more productive and creative.
- Teachers need to teach the mind mapping technique in order to make the learning process more funny, interesting and enjoyable. As well as to encourage students remember important information rather than reading complete sentences.
- Teachers should advice and encourage their students to use colors, pictures, circles and underlining to organize their notes appropriately.
- Since mind-mapping plays a major role in memorizing information, ameliorating creativity, instructors are obliged to raise their learners' awareness towards the use of such a technique; they must equip their students with some representative images as it is shown in the figure (3.4).



**Figure 3.4: New Mind Map Simple and Easy (Retrieved from:**

<http://attaingreatness.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/new-mind-map-simple-and-easy.png>)

- Teachers have to present the benefits of mind mapping to encourage students to use this technique along the teaching/learning process.
- Teachers must foster students to have clear, neat and legible handwriting for the purpose of getting understandable notes.
- Additionally, teachers need to advice students to write key words, to use special symbols, acronyms and abbreviations for some words because these instructions help them gain time and follow teacher explanation.

### **3.3. Suggestions for Further Research**

The main purpose of this research is to present the mind-mapping technique for first year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid University to better ameliorate and enhance their note-

taking skill. The practical resources shown below are suggested to give suitable ways to follow along the whole learning process.

### 3.3.1. Websites

Online sources are one of the most popular sites used all over the world nowadays. For more implications we have proposed various books and websites to equip EFL learners with different information concerning mind-mapping technique.

- The following article talks about the use of mind-mapping to promote independent learning and study skills, its benefits in education and how it works. Also it talks about mind-mapping software.

<http://www.bbcactive.com/BBCActiveIdeasandResources/UsingMindMappingTools.aspx>.

- Tracy Gardner presentation on mind map: how to create a mind map.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRFn1U3jvCw>.

- Another presentation by Susan Gregory on mind map: how to make a mind map - the basics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLWV0XN7K1g>.

### 3.3.2. Books

The following books are proposed to EFL teachers which they may use to encourage their students to use mind-mapping technique in note-taking, as well as to guide students to improve their note-taking skill. Consequently, they reach the highest peak of success during their learning career.

- Effective Note taking (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.): Strategies to help you study effectively by Fiona McPherson; Ways Press, 2012.
- Note Taking Skills for Everyone: Learn the strategies of effective note taking in order to earn maximum grades today! by Vernon Macdonald; Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.
- Mind Mapping: Step-by-Step Beginner's Guide in Creating Mind Maps! by Scott Green; Yap Kee Chong, 2015.
- Mind Mapping with Free Mind by Silvina P. Hillar; Packt Publishing, 2012.

## **Conclusion**

The main goal of our research study is to see the perceptions of both EFL teacher and student towards the use of mind-mapping technique in note-taking. As well as raising the students' awareness about mind-mapping to improve and enhance their note-taking skill during the educational process. Therefore, this chapter provided to display a set of different suggestions and recommendations in order to help EFL teachers to greatly foster their students to use the mind-mapping technique, as well as, to assist EFL students to improve and ameliorate their note-taking skill.

## General Conclusion

Although note taking is a focal part of language learning in general, it has for long been considered as a challenging task. Many EFL learners find it difficult to achieve the goal of being skillful note takers; which is due to some problems that make them fail to take accurate notes, such as: teacher lectures speed, the unclear voice and complex vocabulary that some teacher use and the most affecting problem is probably their lack of awareness of the importance of relying on some note taking strategies. Thus, to master the note-taking skill they may need to adopt some effective strategies i.e. mind mapping.

This research study has tackled the mind-mapping technique and its major effects in enhancing and ameliorating EFL learners' note-taking skill. First year EFL students as well as written expression teachers at Chadli Bendjedid University - El Tarf - have filled the two administrated questionnaires; their answers confirm the hypotheses of our research work. It is confirmed that both EFL students and teachers have positive perceptions towards the importance of using mind-mapping technique and its effects in EFL students' note-taking skill. Another fact is that if EFL learners rely on such a strategy, their note-taking skill will be developed

The obtained results showed that first year EFL learners at Chadli Bendjedid University are aware of the various benefits that they may gain from using mind mapping and the big role that this benefits play in improving their note taking skill. Nevertheless, they are not frequent users of such a technique; this may be due to the fact that they are not motivated enough to experience it.

All in all, in order to be effective note-takers EFL students need to use the mind-mapping technique and teachers need to motivate them and raise their awareness on using such a strategy to make them able to take notes easily and more successfully.

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# *Appendices*

**Appendix: 01**

**Students' Questionnaire**

Dear students,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire, which is part of a research conducted in Chadli Bendjedid El Tarf University. Its purpose is to introduce a creative note-taking tool called mind-mapping. Your answers are very important for the validity of this research. So, we would be thankful if you give us your full attention and interest.

Please, tick (√) the appropriate choice (s) where necessary.

**Section One: General Information**

1. In which skill (s) are you interested?

Speaking       Reading       Listening       Writing

Please, say why?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Section Two: The Writing Skill**

2. Do you believe that writing is important as a language skill? Yes  No

Say why?.....

.....

.....

3. Are you satisfied with your level in writing?

Yes

No

If no, please explain why?.....

.....

.....

4. How do you consider your level in writing?

Very good

Good

Average

Poor

**Section Three: Note-taking:**

5. During the lecture, you would like to:

• Take notes

• Rely on handouts

• Just listen

Others.....

.....

6. Do you enjoy taking notes?

Yes

No

Please, say why? .....

.....

7. How often do you take notes?

Frequently

Sometimes

Rarely

8. Do you realize the benefits behind taking notes in class?

Yes

No

If yes, for which purpose (s) do you take notes?

Highlight important ideas

Understand the lecture

Easily remember the lecture notes

Get better grades

Facilitate preparation for tests and quizzes

Others.....  
.....  
.....

9. Do you find difficulties when taking notes?

Yes

No

If yes, what is the hardest part about taking notes?

• Teacher lectures too fast

• Can't understand or hear teacher

• Monotony and boredom

Others, please specify.....  
.....

10. Do you use certain strategies when taking notes?

Yes

No

If yes, give examples

.....  
.....

If no, please say why?

.....  
.....

**Section Four: Mind-mapping:**

Mind-mapping is amongst the most effective note taking techniques. It refers to capturing key notions and ideas in a diagram form. In which the use of circles, underlining, colors and numbers is very important.

**11.** Do you consider mind-mapping as a good strategy for note-taking?

Yes  No

**12.** When taking notes do you highlight important information?

Yes  No

If yes, do you use: circles  underlining

If no, say why?

.....

**13.** How often do you rely on mind-mapping to take notes?

Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely

**14.** Can you write fast enough to keep up with the teacher when taking notes?

Yes  No

**15.** Do you use: - Complete sentences   
- Key words only

Please, say why? .....

.....

**16.** Do you use special symbols and abbreviations for some words?

Yes

No

**17.** Do you organize your notes visually on the page using diagrams, colors and pictures?

Yes

No

**18.** How much is it difficult to make a mind map?

Very difficult

Somewhat difficult

Not at all

*Thank you for your participation*

**Appendix: 02**

**Teachers' Questionnaire**

Dear teachers,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your opinion concerning the importance of using mind mapping strategy and the great role it plays to develop your students' note taking skills. Your answers are very important for the topic we are investigating. So, we would be very grateful if you could give us the needed answers.

Please, tick (√) the appropriate choice (s) where necessary or provide full statement (s) when necessary.

**Section One: General Information**

1. How many years have you been teaching English at the university?

..... years.

**Section Two: The Writing Skill**

2. Do you believe that writing is an important skill for EFL learners?

Yes

No

-If yes, explain why? .....

.....

.....

**Section Three: Note-taking**

3. How often do you advise your students to take notes?

Always     Often     Sometimes     Rarely     Never

4. Do you give some note taking strategies to your students?    Yes     No

- If yes, please explain why?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Section Four: Mind-mapping**

Mind-mapping is amongst the most effective note taking techniques. It refers to capturing key notions and ideas in a diagram form. In which the use of circles, underlining, colors and numbers is very important.

5. Please, can you tell me what does it mean for you? .....

.....  
.....

6. In your opinion, does mind-mapping technique improve the students' note taking skill?    Yes     No

7. According to you, what are the benefits that students may gain from using Mind-mapping strategy?

.....  
.....

*Thank you for your participation*