The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard
Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking

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Abstract
Taking notes on laptops rather than in longhand is increasingly common. Many
researchers have suggested that laptop note taking is less effective than longhand note
taking for learning. Prior studies have primarily focused on students’ capacity for
multitasking and distraction when using laptops. The present research suggests that
even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning
because their use results in shallower processing. In three studies, we found that
students who took notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual questions than
students who took notes longhand. We show that whereas taking more notes can be
beneficial, laptop note takers’ tendency to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than
processing information and reframing it in their own words is detrimental to learning.