

On the top line of one sheet you write the word, "facts." On the top line of the opposite sheet, you write the word, "principles." Then you kind of lean back in your chair and you say to yourself, "produce, mister, if you can." You wait for the speaker to turn up one or the other. If he produces one of these articles, you simply make a vertical listing of it in column form on the appropriate page.

I decided to give this system a tryout. I went in to hear a speech. I had two blank sheets of notebook paper, and I came out with two blank sheets of notebook paper. Really, there is great beauty in that. You save a lot of energy that way, and, furthermore, you expose a phony. You never go back to hear the character a second time. He did not have anything to say.

I decided to give the system another try. I went in to hear an expert in the psychology of learning, a professor named T. R. McConnell. He had not talked two minutes until I realized that this fellow was a machine, or maybe there was an elf down in his abdomen turning the handle of a corn-sheller. Out of the horn of that sheller, his mouth, there flowed a constant stream of facts and ideas. When he got done that day I had 40 facts on my fact page important to me, and 2 or 3 principles on the other sheet well worth thinking about. I went back to hear him again and again, and I never heard that man give a speech that I did not come up with 20 to 40 new facts, important things, and 2 or 3 principles well worth reflection.

This was an adventure in learning, an exciting kind of experience I had never had earlier. Now, there are other beauties in this way of taking notes. If you have to take a test over the contents you have the perfect ingredients for review before that final exam. All you have to do to get an A grade, usually, is to read rapidly through your accumulated fact sheets as fast as you can go, without trying to memorize them, and put them face down; pick up the principle sheets, spend 5 minutes brooding about the applications of each principle that you have collected during the semester, and put them down. Then you read through the fact sheets as fast as you can go, and put them down. Spend 4 hours on this alternating routine and you are ready. The professor cannot beat you.