

Note-taking is an activity that all college students engage in, and with many options available to them, it is hypothesized that factors such as perceived hand fatigue or desired note-taking rationale have an influence in a student's choice. Note-taking methods include handwritten via pen/paper, handwritten via stylus/tablet, or typing via computer/keyboard. This study consists of a two-part multimethod design which includes quantitative and qualitative data gathered from undergraduate students at a Southeastern US university. The survey includes questions about note-taking methods, perceptions of hand fatigue, and note-taking rationale which provide quantitative data. Semi-structured interviews provided qualitative data. The purpose of this study is to understand the factors that influence a student's choice of note-taking method, specifically through perceived hand fatigue associated with the method of note-taking, note-taking rationale associated with the method of note-taking, or some other factor. Of the 24 respondents, the most preferred note-taking method was handwriting via stylus/tablet (n=13). Higher rates of perceived hand fatigue (on a scale from 6-30, with higher scores representing higher perceived hand fatigue) were reported for handwriting notes via pen/paper (mean±SD = 18.5±5.6) vs. typing notes via computer/keyboard (mean±SD = 11.5±6.4; P<0.001). Also, the mean±SD score for handwriting via stylus/tablet was 15.3±4.8 and did not statistically differ from the other two note-taking methods. No statistical differences in note-taking rationale were found between preferred note-taking methods as related to speed (P=0.26), organization (P>0.99), legibility (P=0.50), and recall of information (P>0.99). Lastly, among those participating in semi-structured interviews, themes related to note-taking via stylus/tablet emphasized the importance of downloading PowerPoint slides for annotation during lecture. Because the study yielded a small sample size, further investigation is needed to determine the social factors that influence choice of note-taking methods in this population.