

Stone Soup Project
Hosted by the University of Missouri School of Law
Center for the Study of Dispute Resolution

Notetaking at Educational Programs

People presenting educational programs can use the programs to elicit, record, and share new information from practitioners or other experts in the audience. This process involves taking notes on a laptop during the program to capture the discussion with the audience.

To take advantage of this process, presenters should plan to ask the audience questions about challenging situations they experienced relevant to the topic and how they handled the situations.

If possible, notetakers should be recruited before the program. Students attending the programs often would be good people to take notes.

If appropriate, the notetakers can participate in calls to plan the program and/or receive presenters' powerpoints or notes in advance.

At the beginning of the program, the moderator should explain to the audience that someone is taking notes of participants' statements for distribution after the program and that the notes will not include people's names and other specifically identifying information. Participants should be informed that they don't want their statements to be included in the notes, they should let the notetaker know.

Instructions for Notetakers

Before the program, notetakers should be given the following instructions (or some variation). If the notetakers receive the instructions in advance of the program, the program moderator should review the notetaking process with the notetakers immediately before the program to answer any questions about what to do.

Notetakers should type the general points that people make but generally not try to take verbatim notes. It's fine to use abbreviations while taking notes during the program.

BUT if someone uses language that is particularly vivid in expressing the idea, notetakers should try to type the actual words and put them in quotation marks.

If there are powerpoint presentations, the notetakers should not bother taking notes of those presentations, other than discussion with the audience not covered in the powerpoints.

The notes should NOT include anyone's name or other identifying information, except that the notes can mention if speakers identify themselves as lawyers or mediators handling certain types of cases etc.

As soon as possible after the program, notetakers should review the notes and write things out so that others can understand them. Generally, this does not need to be polished prose. It is important to do this promptly because notetakers will not include everything in their notes and will use their memories to supplement the notes.

After cleaning up the notes, notetakers should email the edited notes in a document -- presumably a Word file -- by a certain date. Attached is a model format for the summary of the program.

For More Information

The [Stone Soup Project website](#) describes the project and includes the following materials:

- [Rationale and Overview About Collecting Data from Continuing Education Programs](#)
- [Guidance for Doing *Modest* Stone Soup in Continuing Education Programs \(including model forms\)](#)
- [Guidance for Doing *Ambitious* Stone Soup in Continuing Education Programs \(including model forms\)](#)
- [Guidance for Doing Stone Soup at a Conference](#)
- [Questions that Presenters Might Ask in Continuing Education Programs](#)
- [Illustration of Data Collected from *Modest* Continuing Education Program](#)
- [Illustration of Data Collected from *Ambitious* Continuing Education Program](#)
- [Illustration of Data Collected from Multiple Conference Programs](#)