



THE STICKY NOTE METHOD:

A PROJECT PLANNING TOOL FOR STUDENT WRITING PROJECTS

WHY IT MATTERS

- Creating an outline allows an academic writer to organize their thoughts in a systematic manner (Beard et al., 2009).
- The sticky note method is a form of project planning that helps reduce levels of uncertainty and increases project success (Dvir et al., 2003).
- Literature supports that students who create outlines prior to writing an essay are more successful than those who do not (Salija, 2017).

HOW IT WORKS

- A total of 24 undergraduate students enrolled in an online scientific communications course were asked to utilize the sticky note method to plan their final research paper.
 - This was a fast-paced, five-week summer course.
- Students were provided an instructional video detailing the process and were asked to create a sticky note outline before starting their final project.

RESULTS TO DATE

- 21 students (87.5%) completed an outline and reflected on the process.
- A majority of students found the method to be helpful in some way.
 - Some noted they would prefer to do this virtually through computer stickies or a Word document to save time.
- Some students stated the activity was time-consuming, but said they would use this method, or a similar variation, in the future.

FUTURE PLANS

- Educators plan to utilize this method for students' final projects during future in-person sections of this course.
 - They also plan to offer instruction on using this method with virtual platforms as suggested by students.
- Researchers also plan to investigate what impact the sticky note method has on students' success on written assignments in future classes.

- The sticky note method requires a large blank space – either a wall, whiteboard, large poster, or desk.
 - It also requires sticky notes in two different sizes (large and small) and a writing utensil.
- Students were instructed to write the title of their project at the top of their blank space.
- Under the title, students used the larger of their sticky notes to write out and outline the five main sections of their research report.
 - Introduction, literature review, methods, implications, and references
- Beneath each section, students utilized their smaller sticky notes to write out what they should include in each section of their report.
- By the end, students had a complete outline that allowed them to visualize what they needed to include in their report, what they needed to accomplish in each section, and how their information should be organized.

- This method costs nothing but time and a few easy to obtain materials to implement.
 - Materials needed are two different-sized sticky notes, a writing utensil, and a blank space to organize.
- This method could also be done virtually utilizing the sticky note feature on any computer or a Word document with no additional resources needed.



"I FOUND THAT IT FORCED ME TO DIG A BIT DEEPER THAN WHAT I AM USUALLY COMFORTABLE RESEARCHING. I WOULD USE THIS METHOD AGAIN. I FEEL I WOULD QUICKEN MY RESEARCHING ABILITY."

"IT HELPED ME FOCUS ON THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE PROJECTS, AND I WAS ABLE TO MAKE SURE THAT I HAVE EVERY PIECE NECESSARY TO BEGIN WORK."

"OVERALL, I FOUND THE CONCEPT BEHIND THE STICKY NOTE METHOD TO BE PRETTY HELPFUL IN THAT I CREATED AN OUTLINE TO FOLLOW WHEN I GO TO WRITE MY REPORT."