

The Students Perception of the Use Cornell-Note Taking Method in Improving Reading Retention at SMPN 1 Segeri

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine students' perception of the use of the Cornell note-taking method in improving reading retention. The theories underlying this research were Organizational Behaviour Theory, as presented by Robbins (2003), and the perception framework proposed by Kiong (2009), which highlights three key indicators of perception: acceptance, understanding, and assessment. Data were collected through interviews; this research applied a stratified purposive sampling technique. Participants were selected based on their post-test performance, which was categorized into students who had the best scores after conducting the post-test at SMPN 1 Segeri. Findings revealed that students' perceptions of using Cornell Note-taking method to improve reading retention had a positive perception. The study recommends that students, teachers, and future researchers investigate other methods that can improve reading retention and investigate the long-term effects of using the Cornell note-taking method at various educational levels, such as senior high school or university.

Keywords: Perception, Reading Retention, Cornell Note-taking.

1. Introduction

Retention of reading material is necessary to complete coursework in preparation for a career. When a student actively interacts with the content in various formats, such as orally and visually, learning and retention of concepts are more likely to take place. Retention, as defined by Sousa (2001) is "the process whereby long-term memory preserves a learning in such a way that it can locate, identify, and retrieve it accurately in the future". The longer something is in working (short-term) memory, the more likely it will move to long-term memory.

Many people think that reading comprehension is the same as reading retention, but there are differences between reading comprehension and retention. Based on the researcher's understanding, reading comprehension is the ability of students to understand, analyze, and interpret the meaning of the text they are read. Students need to grasp the main ideas, important details, and the writer's intention while reading. On the other hand, reading retention is the ability of students to store information from the text they have read in their memory so they can use it later. Retention is crucial for recalling academic materials when taking exams or completing assignments.

Studies by Divol et al. (2013) "Read the Text, as if!" The Reading Retention Strategy" show that certain strategies are easier to implement for improving individuals' reading abilities, particularly in reading comprehension and reading retention. This finding aligns with Eurich's (2015) research, which distinguishes between measuring reading comprehension and reading retention. Eurich's study measured reading retention by incorporating a one-week delayed test, administered one week after the intervention. Eurich suggested that future researchers use simpler, more organized methods that actively engage students in the learning process to enhance their reading retention. In line with these findings, this study explores students' perceptions of the Cornell Note-Taking Method (CNTM) as a structured and active learning strategy designed to improve reading retention and comprehension. The CNTM's format, which includes cue columns, detailed notes, and a summary section, helps students organize information effectively and encourages active engagement with the text (Pauk & Owens, 2014). Previous research has shown that students using CNTM not only take more comprehensive notes but also recall information better than those using conventional note-taking methods (Davis & Hult, 1997; Dang Khanh Linh & Pham Trung Kien, 2025).

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By investigating students' perceptions, this study aims to understand how the CNTM supports active learning and memory retention from the students' perspective. Positive perceptions of the method may indicate higher motivation and willingness to use the strategy consistently, which is crucial for improving reading retention over time. Conversely, identifying perceived challenges or limitations can help educators refine the implementation of CNTM to maximize its effectiveness.

This study focuses on SMPN 1 Segeri, where based on the researcher indirect interview with an English teacher from SMPN 1 Segeri it was revealed that students struggle to understand the main points of texts and often cannot answer related questions. This difficulty leads to boredom, as they end up reading the text multiple times without grasping its essence. Instead of focusing on the overall meaning, they tend to fixate on individual words, which hinders their ability to identify the main idea. The teacher emphasized the need for effective method to improve reading retention, as students often concentrate too much on details and fail to distinguish between main ideas and supporting details. In an attempt to solve the problems, the researcher will employ a rehearsal strategy, specifically Cornell Note-taking method. the research aims to know how do the students perceive the use of the Cornell- note taking method in improving reading retention at SMPN 1 Segeri.

The findings will contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical improvements in teacher professional development, ultimately enhancing students' readiness for future challenges. Grounded in Organizational Behaviour Theory by Robbins (2003) and the perception framework proposed by Kiong (2009), on students cognition, this study provides a deeper understanding of how pedagogical beliefs influence skill development in classrooms.

2. Research Methods

In this study, the researcher uses a qualitative descriptive research method. Creswell & Poth (2016) stated that qualitative research is complex because it requires extensive fieldwork, a description of the process and the data, and the inductive analysis of the data while concentrating on the participants' perspectives. In addition, Corbin & Strauss, (2015) questioning the students' responses, enabled us to make comparisons, identify relationships, see patterns, and categorize the data with similar properties. Conducted in May 2025 at SMPN 1 Segeri, participants were selected based on their post-test performance, which was categorized into students who had the best scores after conducting the post-test at SMPN 1 Segeri. The instruments included an interview protocol to ensure comprehensive data gathering.

In this study, the researcher uses the theories of this research were Organizational Behaviour Theory by Robbins (2003) and the perception framework proposed by Kiong (2009), which highlights three key indicators of perception: acceptance, understanding, and assessment.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Result

The researcher conducted interviews with students to find out how students' perceptions of using CNTM to improve students reading retention. The students interviewed were students who were in the experimental class and who used the CNTM continuously during the study. There were five questions that were given. The researcher summarized the answers in the following five topics.

3.1.1. The Use of CNTM

The use of CNTM can improve the students reading retention of SMPN 1 Segeri. This data was obtained from the following interview results:

Extract 1, (Student 2) (19/05/2025)

"...sangat membantu, karena bisa mengisi soal dengan jawaban yang tepat dan saya jadi lebih ingat point-point pentingnya..."

(...very helpful, because I can fill in the questions with correct answers and I remember the important points better....)

Extract 2, (Student 3) (19/05/2025)

“...sangat membantu, karena mudah di pahami materi pembelajarannya, dan dapat mengingat informasi penting. [...very helpful, because it is easy to understand the learning material, and can remember the important information...]

(Student 4) (19/05/2025)

“...Sangat membantu, karena saya paham apa yang di jelaskan di papan tulis tadi.

(Very helpful, because I understood what was explained on the board.)

(Student 5) (19/05/2025)

“...Bagus, agar bisa memahami pelajaran, mengingat informasi yang di sampaikan guru....”

(Good, so I can understand the lesson and remember the information delivered by the teacher....”)

Extract 3 (Student 6)

“...sangat membantu, karena saya baru mengetahui metode ini, ternyata lebih simple...”

(...very helpful, because I just found out about this method, it turned out to be simpler...)

Based on the interview results from five students , it shows the second student stated that CNTM was very helpful because it made it easy for him to fill in the questions with the correct answers, and it was easier for him to remember important points. The third, fourth and fifth students stated that the CNTM method is very helpful because they can easily understand the learning materials and stories that are read and can remember important information. The sixth student said that this method helps, and just found out that this method is simpler.

From the students' statements above, it can be concluded that the use of CNTM can improve their reading retention. We can see that all went through the process of learning using CNTM and learned to remember detailed information from each reading they read.

3.1.2. The Benefits of CNTM

There are benefits of using CNTM, especially in learning English. for example, knowing vocabulary that you previously did not know, it is very practical, does not take much time, and you can remember difficult English words.

This data was obtained from the following interview:

Extract 4 (Student 1) (19/05/2025)

“...Lebih mudah, dan sangat bermanfaat karena dapat membuat saya mengetahui kosa kata Bahasa Inggris yang belum tahu jadi tahu....”

(...It's easier, and very useful because it can make me know English vocabulary that I didn't know before...)

(Student 2) (19/05/2025)

“Sangat penting, karena dapat membuat saya mengingat informasi penting dari bacaan tadi, dan saya juga jadi tahu beberapa kata dalam Bahasa Inggris yang bisa berubah dari give up ke gave up.”

(Very important, because it helps me remember important information from the reading, and also learned that some English words can change, like from “give up” to “gave up”.)

Extract 5 (Student 3) (19/05/2025)

“...lebih tidak banyak memakan waktu, sangat praktis tidak seperti cara membuat catatan biasanya...”

(...less time consuming, very practical, unlike the usual way of taking notes...)

Extract 6 (Student 6) (19/05/2025)

“...sangat bermanfaat, karena saya mudah mengingat informasi yang sudah di pelajari pada minggu sebelumnya dan bisa mengingat dan menulis Bahasa Inggris yang susah di ingat...”

(...very useful, because I can easily remember the information that I learned the previous week, and can remember and write English that is difficult to remember...)

(Student 9) (19/05/2025)

“...Manfaatnya, saya jadi bisa mengingat dan menulis Bahasa Inggris yang saya susah ingat.”

(The benefit is, I can remember and write English word that I usually have trouble remembering....”)

The first and second students said that this method is very useful because it can help them to know the English vocabulary that they do not know yet. The third student said that this method is less time-consuming, very practical, unlike the usual way of making notes that is used. The sixth and ninth students said that this method is very useful because they easily remember the information that has been learned in the previous week, and can remember and write English that is difficult to remember.

It can be concluded that the CNTM has many benefits, such as increasing vocabulary, being very practical, and also improving students' ability to remember detailed information.

3.1.3. The obstacles when using CNTM

In using CNTM, students experience obstacles, such as limited note-taking due to limited column images. Difficulty in writing English words. This data is obtained from the following interview results:

Extract 7 (Student 3) (19/05/2025)

“...Kendalanya yaitu, pada saat membuat rangkuman di kolom bagian bawah, tidak cukup ruang, dan butuh ruang banyak untuk membuat catatan...”

(...The problem is, when making a summary in the bottom column, there is not enough space, you need a lot of space to make notes....)

(Student 6) (19/05/2025)

“...Ada sedikit kendala yaitu pada saat membuat rangkuman di kolom bagian bawah tidak cukup.”

(there was a slight obstacle, which was when making a summary in the bottom column, there wasn't enough space.)

Extract 8 (Student 8) (19/05/2025)

“...Ketika saya menulis kata Bahasa Inggris yang sulit....”

(... .When I write difficult English words...)

The third and sixth students said that they were constrained when making notes or summaries because they were limited by the column design in the Cornell note-taking method. While the eighth student was only controlled when writing English vocabulary that was difficult to remember.

From the three statements above, it can be concluded that the obstacles experienced by students in using CNTM are the design column of this method, which is too limited, so they cannot record other information that they consider important as well. and there are also students who are constrained when writing English vocabulary that is difficult for them.

3.1.4. The use of CNTM format in an easier, organized lesson.

In using CNTM, students experience convenience after using this method, such as minimizing notes and not taking much time. each column in this method makes everything look clear and neat. This data is obtained from the following interview results:

Extract 9 (Student 2) (19/05/2025)

“...lebih mudah pake metode ini, lebih rangkum, jelas dan tidak banyak mengambil waktu...”

(...It's easier to use this method, it's more concise, clear and doesn't take much time....)

Extract 10 (Student 6) (19/05/2025)

“...Lebih suka metode ini, karena bisa membuat catatan sesuai kolom nya dan membuat catatan dalam kolom seperti itu terlihat rapi dan mudah di baca Kembali...”

(“...I prefer this method, because I can make notes according to the columns and make the notes in the columns look

neat and easy to read back....)

(Student 7) (19/05/2025)

“...Lebih mudah pakai cara ini, karena saya suka membuat catatan didalam kolom seperti itu, sangat mudah.”

(it’s easier to use this method, because I like making notes in columns like that, very easy...”)

The second student said that it was easier to use this method, besides not taking much time, the format of this method also made it easy for students to summarize each lesson they had. The sixth and seventh students said that they preferred to use this method because it could make their notes look neater and easier to read again.

From there statements above, it can be concluded that Students like the method and design of the Cornell note-taking method. In addition to making notes more organized, CNTM also makes it easy for students to reread notes they have already made.

3.1.5. Students' perception of continuing to use CNTM in their daily activities

Worthiness CNTM is worth recommending to students to improve their reading retention. This data was obtained from the following interview:

Extract 11, (Student 4) (19/05/2025)

“...saya akan menggunakan CNTM untuk mata pelajaran lain karena lebih simple dan tertata, dan akan digunakan saat belajar dirumah....”

(“...I will use CNTM for other subjects because it is simpler and more organized, and will use it when studying at home....”)

(Student 6) (19/05/2025)

“... saya akan memakai ini pada saat belajar di rumah, dan untuk mata pelajaran lain.”

(Yes, I will use this when studying at home and for other subjects...”)

Extract 12, (Student 3) (19/05/2025)

“...saya belum tahu jika harus digunakan di mata pelajaran lain, tetapi akan selalu di gunakan untuk Bahasa inggris, karena saya langsung merasa lebih mudah belajar Bahasa inggris...”

(“...I don't know yet if it should be used in other subjects, but it will always be used for English, because I immediately find it easier to learn English...”)

Extract 13, (Student 8) (19/05/2025)

“... iya, saya akan menggunakan CNTM pada saat belajar untuk ujian kenaikan kelas karena lebih mudah....”

(“...Yes, I will use CNTM when studying for the promotion exam because it is easier...”)

The fourth and sixth students stated that they would use this method in other learning activities, because it is simpler and more organized and will also be used when studying at home. The third student said that, he did not know if it should be used for other subjects, but would always be used for English subjects, because he immediately felt he was learning more English. The eighth student said that he would use this method when studying for the class promotion exam because it was easier.

From the three statements above, it can be concluded that CNTM deserves to be recommended for other learning activities and is very much needed in teaching English as a media to improve reading retention and long-term memory.

3.2. Discussions

3.2.1. The use of CNTM

From the analysis result, the researcher found that the students gave various answers, but the points they conveyed were the same. From the sixth students’ answers, they said that CNTM can help them to remember detailed information from the story they read, which means that it can improve their reading retention. we can see that all six

of them went through the learning process of using CNTM. According to Allan Paivio's Dual Coding theory (1971), effective learning involves processing information through two channels: verbal and visual. These CNTM facilitate this by organizing notes into structured sections, enabling students not only to record information verbally but also to connect it visually through the creation of cue questions and summaries. Furthermore, John Flavell's Metacognition theory (1976) stated that the importance of awareness and regulation of one's own thinking during learning.

3.2.2. *The benefits of CNTM*

On the second question, the researcher talked about the benefits of CNTM. Of the five students interviewed said that the Cornell note-taking method has many benefits, especially in helping them to remember the information. The first and second students said that this method is very useful because it can help them to know the English vocabulary that they do not know yet. The third student said that this method is less time-consuming, very practical, unlike the usual way of making notes that is used. The sixth and ninth students said that this method is very useful because they easily remember the information that has been learned in the previous week, and can remember and write English that is difficult to remember. All students who have been interviewed feel there are benefits after using CNTM.

Trisnawati, Y. (2020) discovered that the use of CNTM in learning English, especially in reading English text, note-taking, revealed significant improvements in students' note-taking abilities. The researcher found that students utilized the structured format of CNTM to effectively organize and summarize information from English text. This method helped students to focus on key vocabulary and important concepts, enabling them to better remember and reproduce the material. Students reported that the CNTM made the note-taking process more practical and less time consuming, which encouraged consistent practice through this method, students were able to enhance their understanding of English text, improve their vocabulary retention, and develop more efficient study habits, thereby supporting the findings of the current research on the benefits of CNTM in improving reading and memory skills. Overall, this method is a practical and powerful tool to improve students' ability to remember and retrieve reading content.

3.2.3. *The obstacles when using CNTM*

On the third question, the researcher talked about the obstacles when using CNTM from the third and sixth students said that they were constrained when making notes or summaries because they were limited by the column design in the Cornell note-taking method. While the eighth student was only controlled when writing English vocabulary that was difficult to remember. From the three statements above, it can be concluded that the obstacles experienced by students in using CNTM are the design column of this method, which is too limited, so they cannot record other information that they consider important as well. And there are also students who are constrained when writing English vocabulary that is difficult for them. Agustian (2023) found two obstacles when students' using CNTM, particularly related to the limited design of the columns, which restricted their ability to record important information comprehensively. The researcher concluded that there will always be obstacles in the learning process, but it is up to the teacher or learner to be more creative in dealing with the obstacles.

3.2.4. *The use of CNTM format in an easier, organized lesson*

On the fourth question, the researcher talks about the worthiness of using CNTM. From the three students who have been interviewed, they said that the Cornell note-taking method is appropriate to be used as an independent learning medium at home or for another subject, not only for the English subject to improve their reading skills. We can conclude that the use of CNTM can be used by teachers as a method to improve students' reading skills, especially reading retention. Because its use requires time and sustainability, this method can be used at home, and teachers can monitor students' performance every week. Kien, P.K. (2025) investigated the use of the Cornell Note-Taking Method (CNTM) to enhance students' reading comprehension. Their study revealed that CNTM is effective not only in classroom settings but also as an independent learning tool at home. Students found that the structured note-taking process helped improve their reading retention and understanding. Rhaudyatun (2023) found that the Cornell Note-Taking Method significantly improved students' reflective thinking and retention skills. The study highlighted that although students initially faced challenges adapting to the column design of CNTM, with proper guidance and sufficient time, CNTM can be a valuable method for independent learning across various subjects.

Based on these previous findings, it can be concluded that CNTM is a worthy method to improve students' reading skills and retention. Its use as a self-directed learning tool at home, combined with regular teacher monitoring, fosters

sustained engagement and better academic performance. This aligns with the idea that when students are motivated and provided with structured methods, the learning process becomes more effective and enjoyable.

3.2.5. Students' perception of continuing to use CNTM in their daily activities.

On the fifth question, the researcher talks about the students' perceptions of continuing to use CNTM in their daily activities. The four students who have been interviewed stated that they would use this method in other learning activities, because it is simpler and more organized, and will also be used when studying at home. Some students stated that they did not know if it should be used for other subjects, but would always be used for English subjects, because they immediately felt he was learning more English, and would also use this method when studying for the class promotion exam, because it was easier.

Several studies have been conducted that relate to this research. Ulfani, et al (2023) revealed that students showed positive attitudes towards using the Cornell Note-Taking Method (CNTM) because it helped them organize information systematically and improved their reading comprehension. Many students expressed willingness to continue using the method across different subjects and learning contexts, especially for reviewing material at home. Amhout et al. (2023) confirmed that students found CNTM easy to use and effective in improving the quality of their notes and overall learning performance. The study highlighted that students tended to apply the method consistently in various subjects and learning situations, which increased their motivation and academic achievement. This aligns with the perception that the method is simpler and more organized, making it suitable for continuous use in daily study.

Based on these previous findings, it can be concluded that students have a positive perception of continuing to use CNTM in their daily learning activities. The method's simplicity and organizational benefits encourage students to apply it beyond English classes, including for exam preparation and independent study at home. This supports the idea that CNTM is a practical and effective tool for enhancing students' learning processes.

4. Conclusion

The students' perception of the use Cornell note-taking method in improving students' reading retention was positive. It was evidenced by interviews that have been conducted with nine students, they argue that using CNTM helped them organize information, understand learning materials, and improve their ability to remember new vocabulary. Although there were some challenges, such as limited space in the note columns, students still found the method beneficial. On the use of Cornell note-taking method, students expressed a desire to continue using this method not only in English classes but also in other subjects.

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