

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT MEMORY FOR LEARNING

Psychologists use the term 'memory for learning' to refer to the ability we have in processing & storing in the mind and then retrieving & applying information at a later point. The following strategies are designed to help those students who have limited memory for learning – as with all aspects of learning, each individual will find some more beneficial than others.

1. Noughts & Crosses → During reading activities, practise a routine of students reading the information once and discussing it, and then reading the information a second time circling key words and crossing the start & end of key pieces of information as they go. A game of tic-tac-toe can be played where the student has to recall something they have circled or crossed before putting it down on the grid.

2. Incredible 20 → When revising important information for an exam, research has shown the 20minutes of reading before sleeping (if the student is still fully awake!) can be crucial in retaining information on a longer-term basis. This only works if the 20minutes are not interrupted or followed by brushing your teeth, watching TV, listening to music etc.

3. Acronyms → On trying to remember a sequence of words, events or actions that need to be used later, try to create acronym cues that list them in a memorable sequence using their starting letter i.e. to remember 'point → example → explain' we can use PEE.

4. Acrostics - Another technique to remember a list of words, events or actions in order is to make up an acrostic sentence, using the first letter of each word in the list i.e. The colours of the rainbow in order, from the outside to inside are: *Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet*. They can be remembered using this acrostic, "*Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain*".

5. Pic Subs → To help remember a list of subject-specific words, put each word on a card with a picture cue and regularly play memory pairs with them. Another activity is to cover the picture, and try to guess it using the word, and then immediately play again but vice versa.

6. Word Subs → To help remember the trickiest subject-specific words, it can be useful to link them to similar sounding high-frequency words or rhyming phrases. For example, 'occipital' can be remembered as 'exhibit hall' and 'photosynthesis' can be remembered as 'photos in to this'.

7. Stepping → Students who have a weakness in memory should not rely on mental computations when solving math problems. For example, if they are performing long division problems, they should write down every step including carrying numbers. When solving word problems, they should always have a scrap piece of paper

handy and write down the steps in their calculations. This will help prevent them from losing their place and forgetting what they are doing.

8. Rhyming Numbers - A way of remembering an exact sequence of numbers such as quantities and dates is by picturing objects that rhyme with each digit from 1 to 10, i.e. 1 rhymes with bun, 8 rhymes with gate and 6 rhymes with sticks. So to remember that the speed of light is 186,000 miles per second, you imagine a bun (1) going through a gate (8) made of sticks (6) whilst being struck by a two bolts of lightning. This strange visual image will help you remember the numbers one, eight, and six in order and associate that figure with 'light' (lightning) and 'per second' (two bolts).

9. DIY Quiz → Research has shown that long-term memory is enhanced when students engage in competitive retrieval practice i.e. the act of remembering information against a timer or opponent. This does not have to be teacher-led as students can make up their own quiz questions and complete them racing against an opponent or, if studying alone, a timer.

10. Grafix → When making notes, to help the student remember them more easily and effectively, it is better to use graphic organisers such as mind-maps and flow diagrams rather than to simply list bullet points – examples of these can be found at: www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers

11. Pegging → This technique involves some coaching and practice. The student is asked to imagine a place they are very familiar with such as a route they often walk or their house. From there the student 'pegs' facts onto well known features of the place and then repeatedly imagines walking through the place, recounting the facts as they go – they could even do this literally at first. The idea is that unfamiliar information becomes closely linked to familiar information, locking it into their long-term memory.

12. Chaining → This technique involves making a story where each word or idea the student has to remember cues the next idea they need to recall i.e. if they had to remember the words *Napoleon*, *ear*, *door*, and *Germany*, they could invent a story of "*Napoleon with his ear to a door listening to people speak in German*".