



## PREFACE

### Dear Reader

Memory is something we deal with every moment of the day, even when it seems like we're not actively using it. Memory is important not only for students to pass exams but to everyone in everyday life. We all are gifted with the ability to memorize. But Memory is like Muscle, and it must be regularly trained to enhance the memory skills. In our education system, a student's progress depends a lot on their ability to retain the subject taught to them. The memorizing skills of students in a classroom vary to a large extent, yet it is a teachers' objective to ensure equal learning to all. Keeping that in mind, we have taken up this issue in this volume. As put by Mr. Edward Bolles- *"We remember what we understand; we understand only what we pay attention to; we pay attention to what we want."* So we are including strategies that teachers can use in the classroom to ensure attention of students leading to a satisfying learning experience. Also included in this issue, is our 'Idea' column on making Learning an enjoyable experience for students by including humour and laughter. *'Laughter is the best medicine for a healthy body and mind,* and it is also a powerful learning tool.

Hope you enjoy this issue. **Thank You!**

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## DECODING THE MYSTERY OF MEMORY

As teachers, we all have come across situations where a student is very good during the class and answers all questions. However, the same student fails to answer questions from the same lesson after few days. Is it our failure to teach the subject properly or is it a problem of child's capacity to retain the concept in the long term. Whose responsibility is it to ensure retention in the long term? Can we take up this responsibility of empowering the students in such a way that his long term memory is as strengthened as his short term memory? In this article, we are going to throw light on strategies and approaches to equip us on the same.

**Short-term memory** temporarily records the succession of events. It may register a information such as names, numbers, face etc. but this information will quickly disappear forever unless we make a conscious effort to retain it. Short-term memory has a storage capacity of only about **seven items** and lasts only a **few dozen seconds**. Short-term memory is a necessary step toward the next stage of retention, long-term memory. **Long-term memory** not only stores all the significant events, it lets us retain the meanings of words and the physical skills that we have learned. Its capacity seems **unlimited**, and it can last days, months, years, or even an entire lifetime.

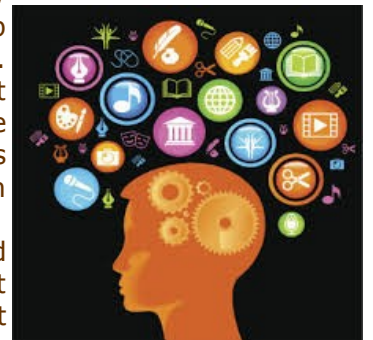
That is why in the above situation the student registered information in the short term memory but did not transfer it into long term as result he suffer through forgetting. Apart from that some students may have specific problem in specifically at short term memory or long term memory.

Students who have deficits in registering information in short-term memory often have difficulty remembering instructions or directions they have just been given, what was just said during conversations and class lectures and discussions, and what they just read. Students who have difficulty with working memory often forget what they are doing while doing it.

For example, they may understand the three-step direction they were just given, but forget the second and third steps while carrying out the first step. If they are trying to solve a math problem that has several steps, they might forget the steps while trying to solve the problem. When they are reading a paragraph, they may forget what was at the beginning of the paragraph by the time they get to the end of the paragraph. These students will look like they have difficulty with reading comprehension. In facts, they do; but the comprehension problem is due to a failure of the memory system rather than the language system.

Students who have deficits in the storage and retrieval of information from long-term memory may study for tests, but not be able to recall the information they studied when taking the tests. They frequently have difficulty recalling specific factual information such as dates or rules of grammar. They have a poor memory of material they earlier in the school year or last year. They may also be unable to answer specific questions asked of them in class even when their parents and/or teachers think they really know the information.

As the memory processes starts with sensory input attracting attention is most important concept related to memory. Some of the components that enhance attention and memory are Intensity, Novelty, Emotion and Personal Experience.



## DECODING THE MYSTERY OF MEMORY

### TEACHER ENTHUSIASM

Don't underestimate the importance of making content interesting and exciting for students. It is critical that instruction be clear and unambiguous, but—other things being equal—if a teacher's presentation of ideas is lively and engaging, the chances are greater the students will remember the ideas than if the presentation is dull, dreary, drab, desultory, and dark. Teacher enthusiasm can have a profound effect on the students in a given class.

### GIVE TEACHER-PREPARED HANDOUTS PRIOR TO CLASS LECTURES

Class lectures and series of oral directions should be reinforced by teacher-prepared handouts. The handouts for class lectures could consist of a brief outline or a partially completed graphic organizer that the student would complete during the lecture. Having this information both enables students to identify the salient information that is given during the lectures and to correctly organize the information in their notes. Both of these activities enhance memory of the information as well.

### TEACH STUDENTS TO BE ACTIVE READERS

To enhance short-term memory registration and working memory when reading, students should underline, highlight, or jot key words down in the margin when reading chapters. They can then go back and read what is underlined, highlighted, or written in the margins. To consolidate this information in long-term memory, they can make outlines or use graphic organizers. Research has shown that the use of graphic organizers increases academic achievement for all students.

### MAKE IT MEANINGFUL

One way to create meaning is to learn from the general to the specific. Start with the main ideas and bigger concepts then focus on the details. You can organize lists to make things meaningful. Wurman (1989) proposes five principles for organizing anybody of ideas, facts, or objects: a. Organize by time: events in history or in a novel flow in chronological order b. Organize by location: physical addresses c. Organize by category: subject areas or types d. Organize by continuum: highest to lowest e. Organize by alphabet:

### HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP CUES WHEN STORING INFORMATION

According to the memory research, information is easier retrieved when it is stored using a cue and that cue should be present at the time the information is being retrieved. For example, the acronym HOMES can be used to represent the names of the Great Lakes — Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior. The acronym is a cue that is used when the information is being learned, and recalling the cue when taking a test will help the student recall the information.

### WRITE DOWN STEPS IN MATH PROBLEMS

Students who have a weakness in working 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 scratch 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.

### PRESENT INFORMATION IN AN INTERESTING WAY

We as a teacher should try to present the information in way that includes novelty and emotion. Pleasant and Positive Emotionally charged events are remembered better than unpleasant ones. Some of the way teachers can use to make information interesting are:

STORYTELLING This is one of the all-time favorite brain activities. Stories have emotional components that attract the amygdale, the emotional center of the brain.

HUMOR humor -- not necessarily joke-telling -- is not only attractive to the emotional system, it also allows for some higher level thinking higher up in the brain. Humor, laughter, and joyfulness release important brain chemicals that make us feel good and aid in retention. Some research suggests that we remember at least 30 percent more of what we learn with humor.

### GAMES

Games are another hit with student and adult brains. Learning through play is one of the most powerful ways to learn. Limiting competition is important, but never limit the fun. Repetition aids in storing memory, and the fun will help the brain mark the connections for later memory encoding.

### PICTURE

Use imagery or pictorial techniques to explain important points to your students. It is always



### Words Worth

There are two words that have the power to transform our health, happiness, performance and success. These words are: THANK YOU.

Research shows that grateful people are happier and more likely to maintain good relationships. A state of gratitude also improves the heart's rhythmic functioning, which helps us to reduce stress, think more clearly and heal physically. Its actually physiologically impossible to be stressed and thankful at the same time. To improve any day immediately, just say and feel 'Thank You'.

## DECODING THE MYSTERY OF MEMORY

easier for people to remember images than words, especially during class time when there is a great deal of information to be covered. Use images that illustrate your points during a lecture, and ask your students to come up with examples of their own.

### EXPERIENCE

Another important strategy for promoting retention of concepts is concrete experience. When we examined the impact of reading versus doing in science classes, we found that the students in lab-type experiences recalled far more of the different kinds of things that they had studied than when they had simply read about them and discussed them in class (Scruggs, Mastropieri, Bakken, & Brigham, 1993). A combination of mnemonic encoding combined with concrete experience seems to be the best way to proceed when students are expected to recall the names of the things that they studied as well as specific characteristics that could be demonstrated through activity-based approaches to instruction.

### PRACTICE AND FEEDBACK

Rehearsal is important. Repetition is a common memory device because it works. It blazes a trail through the pathways of your brain, making the information easier to find. If there's a simple fact answer, asking the student to give that answer to several questions that vary just a little different from each other is likely to be helpful. It's especially important to distribute this practice over time and situations. It is also important to give the student feedback as to how well that he or she is doing in his/her memory work.

The memory demands for school-age children are much greater than they are for adults. School children are constantly bombarded with new knowledge in multiple topic areas in which they may or may not be interested. Additionally, they are expected to both learn and demonstrate the mastery of this knowledge on a weekly basis. Thus, an effective and efficient memory is critical for school success. The success of your students is very important and this means you must do all you can in order to help them improve **memory** skills. If a student has a good *memory*, it will help in ensuring that they are able to retain whatever you teach them, and that will help them to succeed and get good grades.

**Idea** – An idea that can change your teaching

## LAUGHTER LEADS TO LEARNING

We say that laughter is the best medicine and the effects of humor in medicine have long been studied. But what about the effects of humor on learning? Humor is often seen as unsophisticated, unnecessary and something that undermines the seriousness of education. Laughter may be tolerated to some extent, but it's not, at least *generally* speaking, nurtured in the classroom. Humor is a powerful teaching tool that can create a positive "emotional and social environment" in which students can lower their defenses, focus more on what is being presented, initiate and sustain student interest as well as improve students' divergent thinking and memory of the topic presented. Humor is effective in the following ways to engage students and



activate learning.

### Create a Comfortable Learning Environment

When teachers share a laugh or a smile with students, they help students feel more comfortable and open to learning. Using humor brings enthusiasm, positive feelings, and optimism to the classroom. Not only it will make you more approachable, it will also help put students more at ease in your classroom.

### Fire Up Students' Brains

Brain scans have showed high levels of activity in multiple areas of the brain when humor was used in conversation and instruction. If you're listening just auditorily in a classroom, one small part of the brain lights up, but humor maximizes learning and strengthens memories.

### Bring Content to Life

Teachers can use humor to bring content to life— through games, parody, or comical voices. Students respond to their teacher's playfulness and appreciate the effort he or she puts into making a lesson fun. Humor give you an "out" when you make a mistake. Remember when you misspelled something on the whiteboard or forgot what day it was? Relax. Turn these mistakes into teachable moments for both you and the students.

### Humour At Work

Molly: Mummy, please ask for a new teacher for me.  
 Mother: Why, darling?  
 Molly: My teacher can never make up her mind. The day before yesterday, she said 5 and 4 make 9. yesterday, she said 2 and 7 make 9 and today she said that it's 3 an 6 that make 9 !!



# LAUGHTER LEADS TO LEARNING

## Tips to teacher for introducing humor at class

### **Do amuse yourself & don't sweat it when your joke falls flat**

If you prefer subtle humor, chances are that it's going to fly under the radar of most students—at least at first. Eventually they'll catch on, but in the meantime, amuse yourself and carry on. Positivity is contagious. If you're enjoying yourself, there's a good chance that your students will too.

### **Don't use humor to get a student out of a bad mood**

Doing this means that you'll be calling attention to the student's behavior and singling her out. Unless you encounter a resistant student, someone you cannot get through to no matter what you try, always avoid singling him or her out.

### **Do use self-deprecating humor**

Poke fun at your *own* mistakes—not your students'. Self-deprecating humor breaks down hierarchy and shows that you're not afraid to make mistakes. Again, you should always avoid singling out a student unless you've exhausted all other approaches.

### **Don't use unrelated humor—or at least keep it to a minimum**

Distractions are detrimental to the process of learning, so skip—or at least minimize—the stuff that's not directly related to academic content.

### **Do make intentional mistakes—and when you make *unintentional* mistakes, encourage students to laugh at them**

We've said it before, but mistakes are an integral part of learning because they yield teachable moments. Embrace your mistakes and encourage your students to embrace (rather than hide) theirs, too.

While there are many benefits, the use of humor when teaching a lesson can also have its down sides. Humor is very personal and what is considered humorous varies from person to person. A comment that one person finds funny can completely fall flat with another, or even worse, be insulting. Additionally they posit that too much humor can be detrimental as it can undermine the credibility of the instructor and result in a loss of focus of the instructional objectives. Humor is a powerful force. It can encourage an atmosphere of openness, develop students' divergent thinking, improve their retention of the presented materials, and garner respect for the teacher. But like most things in life, it needs to be used in moderation.

**Dreamers are Believers  
Believers are Achievers**

Amitabh Mohan



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