EFFECTIVE MEMORY TECHNIQUES

Doing well on exams requires an effective study plan, active study strategies, and a good memory. What you typically think of as learning involves storing information in your memory so that it will be available when you need it.

Diana L. VanBlerkom, Orientation to College Learning

In the hierarchy of academic woes, forgetting holds the sole possession of the summit. It is the biggest problem you will encounter in school... Memory is under constant assault from forgetfulness. Forgetting works both massively and rapidly to undo the work that learning has done. Unfortunately, forgetting’s acts of sabotage are extremely successful. After you learn something new, you will forget most of it by the end of the day.

Walter Pauk, How to Study in College

The retention curve has serious implications for you as a learner. Basically, it suggests that unless you are one of the lucky few who remember almost everything that they hear or read, you will forget a large portion of the information you learn unless you do something to prevent it.

Kathleen McWhorter, College Reading and Study Skills
IF YOU WANT TO REMEMBER SOMETHING . . .

- concentrate when you hear the information the first time so that the information is crisp and clear
- select and organize information to remember
- strengthen your memories by using association and recitation

CRISP AND CLEAR

Long-term memories (the kind you want) start as short-term memories, but they cannot even be useful short-term memories unless they are impressed upon your mind in a way that is CRISP AND CLEAR, not fuzzy and indistinct. How do you make sure to make CRISP AND CLEAR first impressions of the material that you are reading in your texts and hearing in your classes?

- Eliminate distractions when you sit down to study.
- Sit in the front of the class in lecture with your materials prepared.
- Monitor your understanding
- Reread material that you didn’t get the first time
- Go to office hours or CLAS to get fuzzy reading or lecture material cleared up.

IF IT DOESN’T MAKE SENSE TO YOU, YOU WILL HAVE A VERY DIFFICULT TIME REMEMBERING IT.
Be selective about what you are going to remember. Don’t leave it to chance.

You can predict what might be important to remember for your class by
- listening for what your professor says is important.
- reading the syllabus carefully, especially the course description and lecture titles for clues about key concepts.
- examining practice tests, study questions, or paper prompts as soon as they are handed out.
- looking for duplication, i.e. the same material covered in lecture, the reading, and/or in section.

USE SOME SYSTEM TO MARK WHAT YOU INTEND TO TRY TO REMEMBER. MARK UP YOUR NOTES AND READING.

CHUNKING MATERIAL REDUCES LARGE NUMBERS OF FACTS INTO A SMALLER NUMBER OF CATEGORIES, MAKING THEM EASIER TO REMEMBER

Think about the things you’ve selected to remember and, as much as possible, sort this material into different categories. If you make your study materials so that you can learn things in chunked groups, you will remember things more quickly and more effectively. For instance, you might...

For art history    divide the works up by century
For math          divide problems into different types
For languages     learn grammar rules together, verbs together, etc.
For social science cluster facts around theories that they support
For literature    cluster facts around theses

How can you chunk the material in your classes?
You can further organize some material that you need to remember by consolidating several facts into a matrix.

### Time 1066-1300

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>POLITICS</th>
<th>ECONOMICS</th>
<th>RELIGION</th>
<th>ART &amp; ARCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANCE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLAND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITALY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Art and Architecture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EARLY MIDDLE AGES</th>
<th>HIGH MIDDLE AGES</th>
<th>LATE MIDDLE AGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANCE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLAND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITALY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

## Strengthening Memories

### Ways to Strengthen Memories

- **Association**
  - Logical
  - Based on Background
  - Visual
  - Keywords
- **Artificial (Mnemonic Devices)**
- **Recitation**
  - Written
  - Oral
  - Visual
Examples & Exercises

Association-Logical-Built on Background:
Logical association that you build on background is the integration of new material with material that you already know. If you connect something you learn to your own life, you're doing logical association. For instance, if you had to learn the three ways of acquiring property:

Inheritance: Property is transferred when laws specify that a person must get property if there is no will or that a person cannot be excluded from a will (for instance, a spouse cannot be excluded from a will).
Legacy: Property is transferred through a will.
Accession: Property that a person already owns increases.

How could you use logical association to help you remember these concepts?

Much of what you will have to remember will be difficult to connect to your own life. In these cases, you can use logical association by connecting new course material to material you have already learned. Single out the facts or ideas that you want to remember from your last lecture. How are they connected to each other? How are they connected to what you learned in the previous lecture?

Association-Logical-Visual:
You make logical visual associations when you try to visualize, perhaps even drawing, the material that you need to remember. Sometimes this is easy because the material lends itself to visual representation. In some classes, you will be tested on your knowledge of the location of things. In other classes, you will not necessarily need to know any visual information, but making a visual association can help. Let's say that you're trying to remember the major military campaigns of Charlemagne as described in this passage. Try remembering without looking at the map. Then see how it goes if you follow along with this visual.

"In the early years of his reign, he emphasized the martial tradition, conquering lands in all directions and subjugating the conquered peoples. He invaded Lombardy in Northern Italy, seizing the Lombard crown and annexing the kingdom in 774. He then moved northward and began a long and difficult war against the Saxons, concluding only after more than thirty years of fighting, during which he forcibly annexed Saxon territory and converted the Saxon people to Christianity through mass baptisms at the point of the sword. To the southeast, Charlemagne waged a campaign against the Avars, the people who had fought the Byzantines almost two centuries before. To the southwest, Charlemagne led an expedition to Spain, setting up a march, or military buffer region, between Al-Andalus and his own realm. By the 790s, Charlemagne's kingdom stretched eastward to the Saale River (today in eastern Germany), southeast to what is today Austria, and south to Spain and Italy."

Even material that has no visual component can be visualized by the use of charts like the one on the previous page.
Examples & Exercises

Association-Artificial/Mnemonics-Keywords: You use an keyword when you make an artificial association between a set of information that you need to learn and a word that will cue you to remember that information. One common way is to make an acronym. Now what were those modes of property acquisition?

Legacy L
Inheritance I
Accession A

Making a word with these three letters will create another association that will help you remember your material.

Mnemonic acronyms can be a nonsense words. All that matters is that you can hold it your mind.

Association-Artificial/Mnemonic-Key Sentences:
You are probably already familiar with some of these. For instance some people remember the biological subdivisions (kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, species, variety) by remembering the sentence

Kings play cards on fairly good soft velvet.

It is perhaps the fanciful, visual quality of this sentence that makes it a useful association even though its relationship to the material is purely artificial.

Try to think of something that you have to remember for one of your classes. Can you make it into a mnemonic sentence?
Examples & Exercises

Association-Artificial-Peg Systems: Peg systems work by associating something new with something that you know very well. They’re called peg systems because you’re hanging new information on the pegs of something old. Let’s say you have to remember the seven parts of the neuron. These are

the nucleus,
the dendrites,
the cell body,
the nodes of Ranvier,
the myelin sheaths,
the axon,
and the terminal endings

In a peg system, you would use your associations with a set of seven things you know well, in this case, perhaps, the days of the week, to remember the seven new items. Can you assign the terms above to days of the week. Expect the associations here to get pretty bizarre. You can use other pegs like your five fingers, the months of the year, the rooms of your house, the members of your family, etc.

Association-Artificial/Mnemonic-Visualization:
You use visual artificial association when you use a mental image, often an absurd one, to remember a piece of information. For instance, the French word for butter is beurre, pronounced almost like the sound “brrrr” someone makes when she or he is cold. An example of an mnemonic visualization would be to remember this fact by imagining a shivering pat of butter.

Here are some more French words. What images come to your mind when you read them? Can you link these visualizations with their English meanings?

visage   face
laver    to clean
oiseau   bird
soulager  to ease
Recitation to Remember

You can recite your material either orally or in writing. The important thing is to recite, not merely to reread. Use some system to cue yourself to recite material. Try to work a period of recitation into you daily studying routine rather than leaving it all to just before exams. Remember that you will lose all but twenty percent of what you learn within a week unless you review it. What are some forms of recitation that you could use?

- cornell notes
- working problems
- flashcards
- filling out diagrams
- outlining essays
- question sheets

Regular recitation (not just before exams) is important because memories deteriorate as soon as you stop using them. Remember the retention curve!!! Recite today and get an A!!!

recitation: flashcards (two styles)

What is an amoralist?

Little Georgie tortures frogs and beats up on his little brother. He finds that he has no feelings of concern for the frogs, his brother, or anyone or anything else for that matter. Little Georgie is best described as

a. An amoralist
b. A psychopath
c. An egist
d. An externalist about moral judgements

Why?

Someone who makes sincere moral judgements but still denies that he has any reason to be moral. He simply doesn’t care about morality.

Lecture notes, 04/07/05, page 3-4.
recitation: question sheet

chapter 1
page 2
1. What are the three things made possible by the development of speech?
2. Why is effective communication important?
3. What is required to be an effective communicator?
4. What is meant by a “comparative perspective”? How does a comparative perspective apply to the study of communications?

messages may go out to millions of people. Unique factors characterize communication in each context, with each medium posing its own problems. These issues as well as the process of communication in various settings are addressed in the following chapters.

Defining Communication

What is communication? The nature of communication has been debated throughout history. From ancient times to the present, philosophers, scholars, and teachers have examined how personal meanings for the world outside our minds are acquired through the use of speech and language, how personal meanings represent reality, and how people are influenced through both public speaking and teaching as forms of human communication. They have left a legacy of important treatises on such topics as oratory, rhetoric, dialogue, persuasion, elocation, and grammar that deepen our contemporary understanding of human communication.

In recent times, communication scholars throughout the world have tried to identify the nature of communication by studying communication among both animals and human beings. This approach provides a comparative perspective, which means studying the ways in which communication occurs among all animal forms, from simple to complex, and then sorting out what is common to all. This strategy is best seen in the work of psychologists, who have defined...
Recitation: Outlining Essay Questions: In classes where you will have to write essays, particularly if you will have to write essay exams, start predicting possible essay questions early. You can usually find them in the course description, as study questions handed out by TAs, and in your lecture notes. For each possible question, make a page, add evidence to answer these questions to the page as you come across it. Start reciting these outlines early and often.

Was the New Deal New?

- New Deal Programs
  - New Deal Ideas
    - Consumer Economy
    - 3rs deal of change
    - Emergency Banking Act
    - National Industry Recovery Act
    - Federal Emergency Recovery Act
    - "Rugged Individual"
    - Temporary Recession
  - Hoover's Idea
    - Type the box

- Businesses freed from anti-trust prohibition on setting prices, production, and to "open shop," more unifying classes
Workshop Evaluation

Learning Skill Counselor: ___________________________ Workshop: ___________________________

1. Have you used CLAS services prior to this quarter? 
   Yes No

2. Please rate the counselor according to:
   a) expertise and knowledge of subject matter
      Excellent 5 Good 4 Fair 3 Poor 2 Inadequate 1
   b) Ability to present the material in a well-organize & clear manner
      5 4 3 2 1
   c) level of preparedness for workshop
      5 4 3 2 1
   d) ability to encourage student participation
      5 4 3 2 1

3. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of your workshop?
   5 4 3 2 1

4. How much did the workshop increase your confidence to study for your courses on your own?
   (Very Much) (None)
   5 4 3 2 1

5. Did the workshop provide you with specific ideas or techniques you can apply to your coursework?
   Yes No
   1 2

6. What aspects of the workshop did you find most valuable?

7. What additional comments and suggestions would you like to make about your workshop or CLAS services in general? (If needed please use the backside of this page for additional comments. Thank you)