

Rutgers Learning Centers

At Camden Campus

MEMORY

- ***Most people have good memories!***

Without good memories, we wouldn't remember telephone and social security numbers, the names of our fifth and sixth grade teachers, the items we need from a store or how to return home after shopping. But can you recall all the items you purchased a year ago, or the directions for every trip you've ever made? The difference lies in short-term and long-term memory, and how information is stored in and retrieved from each.

Short-term memory, usually created by repeating or drilling facts, requires us to assign value and process data for five seconds to fifteen minutes. The brain randomly stores this information, making it more difficult to recall as time passes.

Long-term memory processes new information temporarily stored in short-term memory by associating it with existing long-term knowledge. This association requires sustained thinking about the information in ways other than as raw data. To truly master new material, the material must be processed, frequently reviewed, and stored in long-term memory.

- ***Know how you learn and build on your skills:*** Are you a visual, aural, or tactile learner?

Do you learn by sight?

Make pictures.

Use mapping, diagramming, outlining.

Do you learn by hearing?

Make sounds.

Use tape recording, recitation.

Do you learn by touch?

Make materials.

Use writing, flash cards, puzzles.

- ***Read, wRite, Repeat, Recite:***

Tape record and teach what you've learned. Human audiences work best; they ask questions!

- ***Use visualization:*** "Picture" what you're learning.

Are you learning a process? Draw a flow chart or diagram. Number steps. Make acronyms (the first letter or letters of words in the phrase) for the correct ordering of steps; for example, accountants use depreciation terms: FIFO and LIFO — First In, First Out, and Last In, First Out.

Are you learning groups of associated data? Use mapping and create clusters. Draw a flower, pie, or another multi-part object and put information on each portion. Label the object with the name of the concept.

— See other side for more —

For more information, visit or call your nearest Rutgers Learning Center, or visit our website:<http://rlc.rutgers.edu>

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- **Use association:** Associate random information with known patterns.

Associate names with physical characteristics:

The *Tropic of Capricorn* is in the southern hemisphere.

Picture a corn on the foot — the body's farthest point South.

Imagine yourself in your favorite room:

A room is a cube having six sides or walls. Assign a major heading to each one of the six walls. Associate facts with furniture or features in the room. To recall information, walk on the ceiling, the floor and sides, and recite the information you have affixed to each selected spot.

Associate "levels" of information with colors:

Use colored flash cards to establish "levels" of information. For instance, write main headings on yellow cards, details on pink cards, examples on blue cards.

- **Use mnemonics:** Use words/letters to recall large, disorganized clumps of material.

Consider the following, frequently cited, mnemonic devices:

Two ways to remember the Great Lakes of the United States:

Lakes: *Huron - Ontario - Michigan - Erie - Superior*

Word for no particular order: **H-O-M-E-S**

Sentence to order lakes from west to east: **Strong Men Hurlled Earth Out.**

A way to remember and order England's Royal Houses; **note sound prompters:**

Houses: *Norman, Plantagenet, Lancaster, York, Tudor, Stuart, Hanover, Windsor*

No Place Like Yours To Study History Wisely.

- **Use memory techniques:** Move short-term recall into long-term memory.

Memory is based on your familiarity with the subject. The more you think about something you are learning for the first time, the better you will recall it later. Distribute what you want to remember by clustering ideas into meaningful groupings. To what can you compare these new ideas? Ask other people what they think of these ideas. Thinking about new material in different ways helps to secure it as a memory by associating new information with previously familiar patterns.

- ***For additional help in improving your memory, make an appointment today with a learning assistant.***