



President's Reflections

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February 5, 2016

Memory Techniques That Work

The older I get, the more I depend on post-it notes and some other type of memory jogging techniques in order to remember important dates, events or programs. But I also utilize other memory techniques that require me to “picture” what I want to remember. It is amazing how you can sharpen your memory if you are able to develop that mental picture. I know that students need to develop their ability to remember key facts and dates in school and there are methods that do help.

It seems that some children can study for hours, but not remember what they studied for the next five minutes. While sometimes we get frustrated with them and their seemingly lack of effort, there are some techniques that parents might consider using to help their son or daughter achieve at a higher level or at least remember where they put their homework.

Some strategies to use include:

- Say the vocabulary words from a lesson aloud. By actually saying what is studied can have a positive impact on memory. Simply reading the written word in your mind isn't as effective as that memory created when we say it aloud.
- Picture the answer. Have facts linked to a picture that your child makes in his or her mind or draws on paper. Making connections between an object and a fact is used by memory specialists throughout the world. When remembering numbers, I often use the jersey number of a professional athlete. Example: 8942 – Milt Morin (former tight end for the Cleveland Browns) and Paul Warfield (former wide receiver for the Cleveland Browns). This can be effective for remembering important dates.
- Make a mental video of what is being studied. An example might be for your child to imagine being president of the United States and having to make a decision regarding the War in Iraq. As the mental image becomes clearer, your child has an easier time remembering the details. It can even be some type of nonsense mental video, the sillier the better for remembering an issue or event.
- Have your child make associations. Link information to something he or she already knows. Conceptual learning can be very effective for children. In other words, if he already knows that Uncle George lives in Washington D.C....it is simple to remember that George Washington was the first president. Association links can be highly effective in remembering things.
- Rhymes or Rapping. The children can remember easy phrases such as, “I before E, except after C.” Children can select a beat and put the facts to that beat in the form of a rap. It is amazing what children can remember when they are able to find a technique that works for them.
- Quiz him or her. Make up flash cards with the study information on them. The children can put facts on one side and the word or answer on the other. Reviewing the answers can be done at odd times. The cards can be carried around in his or her pocket and utilized at any time. It can be fun for parents to become part of the contest.
- Acronyms also work to jog that memory. The names of the lines for a music staff has long been remembered by “Every good boy does fine” - EGBDF of the spaces “Face” – FACE. A more formal example might be the CIA – Central Intelligence Agency. Students can make up some type of acronym to remind them of a fact they need to remember.

There are many ways for children to develop memory techniques. While they do require practice...sometimes the actual studying becomes fun. It also can be highly motivational if your child finds success.