

Memory Principles: Quick Reference Guide

Making an Effort

- **Interest.** The brain prioritizes by meaning, value, and relevance. For something to have meaning, you must **understand** it.
- **Intent to Remember.** Your attitude has much to do with whether you remember something or not. A key factor in remembering is having a **positive attitude**, believing that you will get it right the first time. Attention is not the same as learning, but little learning takes place without attention.
- **Basic Background.** Your understanding of new material will depend on how much of it can be connected to knowledge you already have. The more you increase your basic knowledge, therefore, the easier it is to **build** new knowledge on this background.

Controlling the Amount and Form

- **Selectivity.** You must determine what is **most important**, and select those parts to begin the process of studying and learning.
- **Meaningful Organization.** You can learn and remember better if you **group** ideas into meaningful categories or groups.

Strengthening Neural Connections

- **Recitation.** Saying ideas aloud in your own words strengthens synaptic connections and gives you immediate **feedback**. The more feedback you get, the faster and more accurate your learning is.
Visualization. Visualization is the brain's quickest and probably the longest-lasting response to images. By making a **mental picture**, you use an entirely different part of the brain than you do by reading or listening.
- **Association.** Memory is increased when facts to be learned are consciously associated with something familiar to you. Memory is essentially formed by making neural connections. Begin by asking, "What is this like that I already know?"

Allowing Time to Solidify Pathways

Consolidation. Your brain must have time for new information to establish a neuronal pathway. When you make a list or review your notes right after class, you are using the principle of consolidation.

Distributed Practice. A series of shorter study sessions distributed over several days is preferable to fewer but longer study sessions.