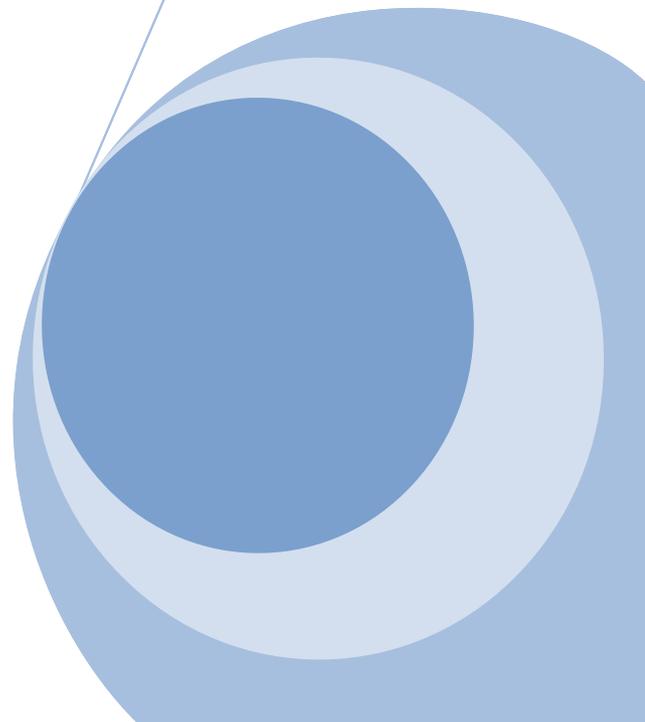


ADULT LITERACY

FROM CREATING JOYFUL LEARNING
EXPERIENCE INTO ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Trainer's Toolkit –
Methods for Joyful Teaching
Mnemonics



1. Mnemonics

1.1. Description

Mnemonic systems developed in ancient Greece, where they were successfully used by the members of the Council of Elders. Then they developed in Rome, allowing senators to make quite an impression on the plebeians and other politicians. Using of these simple methods allowed them to memorise thousands of units of information, statistics, or names.

The starting point to discuss the mnemonic is that the memory does not work randomly, has its own natural, given to us at birth mechanisms and laws.

Memorisation techniques are therefore as effective as the use of these natural laws and mechanisms. Memory uses primarily the right ideas and the "live" association, the right to the beginning and the end, the law of repetition, the law of creativity, uniqueness and understanding of the law.

The brain acts wisely. While learning it is systematic. It works on several levels, and his works can be divided into several stages. The first is the concentration, understood as focus of attention for the longer period of time. The second stage is the encoding of new information, or attempt to move it from short-term memory to available long-term memory. Mnemonics help in increasing the speed and efficiency of learning, and just as importantly enjoy the process of learning. A small number of these techniques allows to memorise the information in each field of our activity. In fact, it's only three basic methods, forming the core of knowledge about the practice of modern learning: Chain memorization method, mnemonic peg system and technique of words replacement.

The next step is to consolidate memory traces and organize stored information to their proper memory. This is done through a system of repetition, in which the most important role played by the method and time. The final stage is more associated with recalling than remembering.

All techniques share common memorising mechanisms. They are the pillars of knowledge about memory effect, decide also on the effectiveness of the use of modern techniques of learning. Here they are:

1. We think by pictures: and if we learn to consciously change new information on single images or series of them, then this information will become much more understandable to the brain, and therefore much easier memorable. Everything can be seen: the digit number, any word in any language, any sound, concept, shape, etc.

2. While learning brain connects new information with what he already knows what he remembered before. That's why we're talking today about the so-called: inverted pyramid of human knowledge. Since the birth, human senses perceive first impressions of the surrounding entourage: the stain color image over the crib, the touch of mother, her fuzzy face, father's voice, etc. The human brain combine these first information with each other and so knowledge begins to multiply and lasts until the finish of life. In light of what we know today, there is no limit of building this pyramid.

3 Nothing we head does not come out. The brain stores everything that ever in its life through the senses came to it. Only sometimes we can not remember it.

According to the first two mechanisms, the brain first tries to "see" the new information (think by images) and then to connect them with each other and (or) the levels of existing knowledge (new combine with the old). Turns out that if it is to be effective connections, the produced a "living" image must be of sufficient quality, i.e. meet certain criteria. The "living" image should be sharp, colorful, crisp, detailed, and so tangible that can affect our physiological state (ie it is able to cause reactions of our body). While creating it, exaggeration shall be used, as to the quantity and (or) size of imagined details, and to attach to image the emotions so clearly, as if you really can feel them. Particularly these should be positive emotions such as joy, happiness, satisfaction, euphoria. The image should be unusual, ridiculous, nonsensical, even beyond the limits of absurdity. It should be added to the image some action equally ridiculous and nonsensical, and at the same violent and dynamic.

The importance of "living" work of imagination in the process of memorizing is presented by the equation:

PICTURE + ACTION + EMOTION = MEMORY

Bibliography: Marek Szurawski - "Pamięć. Trening interaktywny". Wydawnictwo Aha!, 2009 r.

In the teaching on the level of basic literacy two methods can be used: Technique of words replacement and Mnemonic peg system.

1. Technique of words replacement is to substitute unknown word by a word or words known in their native language or other well-known language.
2. Mnemonic peg system is based on associating new information (in the form of the image) with the information that we have well established. The latter are like bookmarks that open access to a broader knowledge. Bookmarks are often compared to the hangers inside the cabinet, on which we can "hang" a lot of new information or hooks, to which we attach what we want to remember. We choose bookmarks ourselves with things we already know (eg personal bookmarks: hair, forehead, eyes, nose ...; tabs with spaces or furniture in our room; tabs of the letters of the alphabet, etc.), or of the things that came up (eg imaginary palace, city, fantastic animal and its wings, legs, horns ...)

1.2. Practical exercises / How did you use it for the adult literacy project?

Classes were conducted using workshop method, which helps to longer remember performed and imparted knowledge. Also technique of words replacement have been introduced in order to faster teach the students new words regarding computer and to facilitate them to remember new terms for longer period of time. None of the participants know English language.

The technique proved to be excellent at memorising key functions that are described in English, for example: shift, alt ,delete.

1. An example would be the use of the mnemonic peg system learning Polish language orthography. Words from the specified difficulty spelling as h, ch, ó, u, ź, rz associate with appliances, furniture, decorations, which are found in certain rooms of the house.

3 This example shows how to use mnemotechnics learning to write in Chinese. The characters of the Chinese alphabet have been transformed and combined with colorful images. From the learner depends on how much color, sound, sensory, crazy, strange, erotic, amazing detail added to each of the proposed association. The more details used, the longer time the characters will be stored for, provided an appropriate series of repetitions.

http://www.ted.com/talks/shaolan_learn_to_read_chinese_with_ease/transcript#t-350081

Here you can learn more about creating bookmarks:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zz4voNYevvl#t=54>

1.3. Lessons we learned / Recommendations

Method of substitute words has been proved to be useful in the memorising the function keys and the new terms. It was efficient and introduced elements of humor to the learning process. It allowed everybody to take a breath during continuous focus on subjects pursued.

Mnemonic peg system would also fulfilled its role, if it was necessary to study a number of elements in a particular order, or just remembering about each of them.

1.4 Sources / Bibliography

\Internet websites on the topic in:

http://www.ted.com/talks/joshua_foer_feats_of_memory_anyone_can_do/transcript

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ebJlcZMx3c>

<http://studypace.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/w/images/9/9c/Yates-1966-Art-of-Memory-excerpt.pdf>

CREATIVE TOOLKIT

Mnemonics

Author

Renata Woroń - trainer

FUNDACJA EDUKACJI I KULTURY IM. STANISŁAWA MICHALSKIEGO

Tenczynek, Ul. Na Grobli 42

32-065 Krzeszowice

Poland

rw.michalsky@gmail.com

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

© Adult Literacy Partnership, 2015

