

## Remember What?



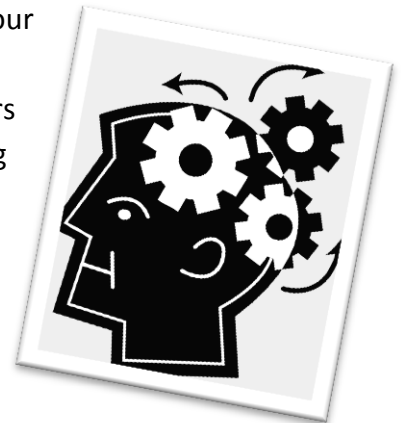
It's frustrating to spend time reading notes or your textbooks only to finish and wonder what it was you were reading in the first place. Taking the following tactics into consideration can greatly improve your retention of course material!

### CONTROL THE AMOUNT AND FORM

- ❖ **Be Selective:** It's impossible to remember everything, so you have to identify the most important material and then learn those specific items.
- ❖ **Break it up:** Survey the reading and break it up into manageable parts, while keeping the whole idea, or "big picture" in mind.
- ❖ **Organize in a Meaningful Fashion:** Grouping ideas into patterns or categories will help you learn and remember them more effectively. You can use **mnemonic devices**, create your own **study guides**, or even **recite** the material out loud.

### STRENGTHEN NEURAL CONNECTIONS

- ❖ **Review Immediately:** Taking a few minutes after your initial reading to stop and mentally quiz yourself about what you've just read is the essential first step to remembering the material later.
- ❖ **Recite:** Saying ideas aloud **in your own words** is a powerful tool for transferring information from short-term to long-term memory. Remember to rephrase the material into your own words!
- ❖ **Visualize:** Making a mental picture of what you need to remember triggers an entirely different part of the brain rather than simply listening or reading the material.
- ❖ **Associate:** Make connections between things you already know and things you need to learn. This helps to create mental associations between old and new information, thus enhancing your memory.



### ALLOW TIME FOR CONNECTIONS TO SOLIDIFY

- ❖ **Consolidate:** Your brain needs time for new information to soak in. When you make a list of what you've learned, created a study guide or reviewed your notes after class, you're using the principle of consolidation.
- ❖ **Practice:** Distributing learning activities over several shorter sessions is typically more effective than using a single long session.
- ❖ **Sleep on it:** Review and refresh your memory before going to bed. Newly learned material is better remembered after a period of sleep than after an equal period of daytime activity when interference may take place.

## Remember What?

| WHAT?   | WHEN?   | WHY?   |
|---|---|--|
| Intend to remember  | Before beginning to study   | Intention is crucial. If you don't actively plan to remember something, you won't remember it very well.   |
| Preview the task at hand  | Whenever you begin a new learning project                                   | Getting a preview of the whole task will help you later as you read, practice, etc. You'll be able to fill in details of each part if you start with a simplified version of the entire task.  |
| Review  | Immediately at the end of each study session                                | Most forgetting takes place immediately after learning occurs – not hours or days later. Try to review immediately, even if it's just for a few minutes.   |
| Learn actively  | Always  | Spend most of your learning time on self-testing and practice. Use as many of your senses as possible to remember the material: read it, hear it, visualize it.  |
| Reading an entire chapter   | Throughout the semester, for an hour or two at a time                       | Complex learning, such as understanding new relationships or solving problems, requires longer periods of time for effective learning. Break up studying into smaller 45-minute chunks with 10-minute breaks in between sessions. Spread out the task! |
| You need to complete a simple, mechanical task or rote-memorization tasks | Whenever you have short periods (2-10 minutes) of time                      | Simple tasks and anything you have to memorize are best learned in short, frequent practice sessions rather than in longer sessions of an hour or two.   |
| Practicing what you learned   | Between the time you first learn something and the time you're tested on it | Most forgetting takes place because people haven't periodically practiced or reviewed what they learned. Try to do some sort of review before beginning each new assignment.   |
| Learn in an organized way   | Always  | You'll remember much more easily when you have a systematic, orderly view of what you've learned. If you've only studied concepts as isolated events without drawing connections, then you'll forget more quickly.                                     |
| Set and understand the goals and objectives for your study                | At the beginning of any learning or self-testing sessions                   | Having a complete overview of each study session will help you become a more systematic and organized learner. This process goes right back to step one!   |

*Adapted from Utah State University – Memory Improvement and University of Texas – Principles of Memory*