

A Dozen Sure Fire Ways to Boost Memory in the Diverse Classroom



Do you have students who have difficulty remembering information for tests? Most teachers do. Here are a dozen sure-fire ways to boost memory in your diverse classroom:

1. Provide **visual clues**.
2. **Create visual images to represent key concepts** being taught by using simple clip art or line drawings or symbols. Whenever the concept is presented, present the visual symbol also. Have students draw the visual symbols in their notes, or provide a one-page handout of drawings representing concepts in the unit for students to cut and paste in their notes or on their study cards.
3. **Color code notes**. When giving notes, connect a color with specific chapters/units being studied. For example, an eight-grade teacher presents the French and Indian War in green overhead marker, and has students write notes using green marker. The next unit may be presented in blue, the next in brown. Caution: Avoid using red and green back-to-back, or blue and purple back to back, as students with color deficiencies may not see a difference between the colors.
4. **Create silly ditties out of connected information** such as historical events, literary sequence of events, science system parts and function or sports rules.
5. Have students read with a blank piece of paper on the desk and instruct them to **mind map the story line, characters, and detail as they read**.
6. **Have students create mnemonics to remember lists**. At the beginning of each class session, quickly review the unit's mnemonics as a whole group, reciting them aloud. If possible, give the recitation a 'rap' beat.
7. **Put emotion into your lessons**. When introducing new concepts or facts, put on your "drama" hat and use animated expression, modulated voice body language, and hand gestures to bring the concept alive. Students may announce that you are 'nuts' but if their test scores go up, nuts is good.
8. Ask students what they already know about a topic before you teach it. Have them **list three things they want to know about the topic**. Teach the topic, and then ask students to come up with connections to their own lives. For example, "Have you ever experienced the feelings that Juliet describes?" "Do you think the problems Madame Curie faced exist today?"
9. Have students **print key facts to be tested on index cards using colored markers**. Use a different color for key words/cues in the facts. Have students write a question for the fact on the other side of the index card.
10. The brain is social. At the beginning of class, during a transition period, or at the end of class, **have student pair with a partner and spend 5 minutes reviewing** using their study cards. Use a kitchen timer to signal the end of review.
11. **Create visual diagrams or flow charts of the step-by-step process** for using machines, cooking, computer instruction, physical education games, body system process, etc. Have students review by presenting the diagrams without the words for the students to complete. Some students may need a word/phrase box.
12. **Create time sequence charts** with titles for major eras of history. Then create a mnemonic to represent the titles in sequence.

About the Author



Susan Fitzell is a nationally recognized speaker and author of several educational resource books. She has over two decades of experience with differentiated instruction, teaching youth with special needs, students with behavioral and anger management issues, and students who experience bullying. Susan's company, AIMHI Educational Programs, focuses on building caring school communities. <http://aimhieducational.com/>