

Mnemonics and Disabilities

A mnemonic is a word, sentence, picture device or technique for improving or strengthening memory.

Grade Levels

Pre-K-Higher Education

Population

- Learning Disabilities
- ELL
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Emotional/ Behavioral Disorder
- Communication Disorder
- Autism
- Dysgraphia

Mnemonics are effective for students with intellectual disabilities because most have difficulty with attention, semantic memory, logical reasoning and outer directedness. This means that they may have difficulty rehearsing, organizing and elaborating upon new information. Because of these difficulties, many of these students must learn how to learn effectively. Since mnemonics are just a framework for learning and any type of tool can be applied to it, it can serve any type of need for students. For example, ELL students and those with communication disorders can use images while students with ADHD may be keen to use acronyms.

Implementation of 3 Mnemonic Strategies

Keyword Method

Associating an unfamiliar word with "to-be-remembered" information.

- 1) Identify difficult vocabulary word Ex) *Bunnia*- Hindi for merchant
- 2) Construct keyword for *Bunnia* Ex) *Bunny*- since it sounds like *Bunnia*
- 3) Depict or imagine the keyword interacting with the difficult word and definition Ex) imagine a merchant selling bunnies

When asked for the meaning of *bunnia*, the student will think of the keyword *bunny*, then imagine a merchant selling bunnies.

Pegword Method

Used to remember numbered or ordered information.

- 1) Identify information to be remembered Ex) a spider has 8 legs
- 2) construct a pegword for 8 Ex) gate
- 3) draw a picture of a spider weaving a web on a gate

The spider weaving a web on a gate (pegword for 8) should help students remember that spiders have 8 legs.

Letter Strategy

An acronym- where each letter represents a word

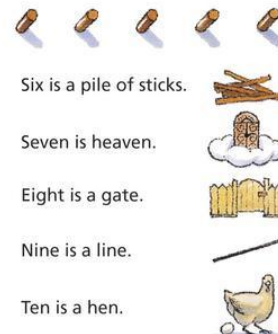
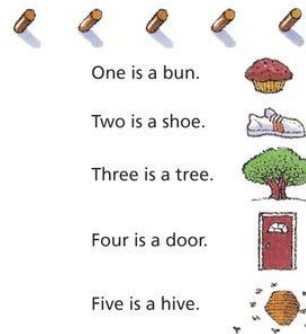
- 1) Identify information to be remembered Ex) The Great Lakes- Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior
- 2) Construct acronym with the first letter of each lake name Ex) HOMES

The acronym HOMES gives the student a "clue" about the first letter of each lake name which in turn helps the student remember the lake names.

ROYGBIV

Examples

Huron
Ontario
Michigan
Erie
Superior



"These features are theorized to be particularly beneficial to individuals with mild disabilities because they minimize relative learning weaknesses (e.g., spontaneous strategy production, verbal fluency), while maximizing relative strengths" (Scruggs et. al., 2010, p. 84).

"The effectiveness of the instructional package to teach both students acquisition, storage, and retrieval of basic multiplication facts demonstrates the viability of this option for students with moderate intellectual disabilities" (Zisimopoulos, 2010, p. 131).

References

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