Recommendations to Enhance Learning & Memory Retrieval

- **Chunking**
  - It is easier to memorize information when you break it up into small chunks. This is called chunking. You may not realize it, but you use chunking often, like when you memorize your friend's telephone number, a locker combination, or your social security number. It's easier to remember long numbers when you "chunk" them into groups of threes, fours and fives. That's because most people can only remember about three, four or five bits of information at a time.
  - Chunk vocabulary words by grouping them by parts of speech or other attributes
  - Chunk history by time periods or events.
  - Chunk foreign language by grouping words into categories like household items or occupations.
  - If there is no pattern to the information you need to study, just group the items into three, four or five at a time, and that will help a lot.

- **Over learn new material**
  - When you want to remember information, you have to practice it, or else it fades
  - Repeat well beyond the level of mastery
  - Write out new information several times to facilitate moving it from immediate into long-term recall
  - Read and make notes on pertinent information before the information is taught
  - Rehearse information for short practice periods (30 to 60 minutes) and then take a 10-minute break
  - Distribute learning (marathon study sessions are not effective) and set up smaller learning expectations over longer periods of time
  - Try to study and learn material in two different environments. Long-term memory and retrieval of this information is improved when it is studied in more than one environment because there are more potential triggers to help your recall
  - Review material before going to sleep because information studied this way is better consolidated (any other task performed after reviewing and before sleep may interfere with the consolidation of information in recall)

- **Understanding**
  - Before you begin trying to memorize something, try to understand it. A good way to do this is by making a connection between what you are learning and what you have experienced. The better you can relate the new information to what you already know, the easier it is to learn. For example, before attempting to memorize events of European history, find the places on a globe (or world map) and see where they are relative to one another and also relative to where you live.
  - Make information meaningful to you (relate it to information you have previously learned)
  - Associate or "connect" words or events you are learning with a person, place, thing or situation. For example, you may connect what you are trying to learn with someone you know or a character.

- **Acronyms/Mnemonics**
  - An acronym is a word made up from the 1st letters of a list of words. You take facts/information you want to remember and put them in an order so that the first letters of each word, or the 1st syllables spell a real word or a made up word. (e.g. to remember the names of the 5 Great Lakes you use the acronym HOMES - Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior)
  - Develop acronyms even for daily tasks (e.g. if you need to go to the bank; purchase eggs; and take in your dry cleaning, write the word BED somewhere prominent to help you recall this

- **Multi-sensory approach**
  - Learn information actively, create an atmosphere conducive to learning; sit up, stand up, gesture, draw concepts in the air; involve your body in studying
- "Helping Students Remember" by Milton Dehn (2001)

- Make lists of things that need to be done and check them off once accomplished (visual cues)
- Make use of graphic organizers to visually organize study notes and other information
- Talk about the information you want to learn. Tell someone you know what you have learned. One of the best ways to learn/remember information is to know it well enough to be able to explain it to others

- For additional information on memory strategies read "Helping Students Remember" by Milton Dehn (2001)

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