

“GET IT”, DON’T “FORGET IT”!

Think you have a ‘Poor Memory’? Try this Three Step Process for Better Retention of Information:

FIRST, CONCENTRATE

Deal with Internal Distractions (daydreaming, negative thoughts) by

- ✓ Keeping a Notepad handy to jot down things that you can do later (“Make a hair appt.” “Call mom.”)
- ✓ Making the Distraction a Reward (“I’m so bored/hungry. I am going to read 5 more pages, then reward myself with a half hour of TV/snack.”)
- ✓ Identifying the Reason for your lack of interest/boredom/inability to pay attention. Then find a way to deal with it. (Meet with your professor, seek Study Skills help, seek counseling if a personal problem)
- ✓ Recognizing when you need a Break, and taking it.

Deal with External Distractions (physical environment) by

- ✓ Changing your Study Spot
- ✓ Finding a Spot that is Only for Study—no bill paying, phone calls, naps etc.)

SECOND, COMPREHEND

To Comprehend means to **Make Something Meaningful** to you. In order to Comprehend, try to

- ✓ Fully Understand the Material. Get help if you need it.
- ✓ Try to Connect Old Material with New Material—get the Big Picture
- ✓ Do Something with the Material—create a Chart, Drawing, Timeline

THIRD, REMEMBER

Think of your Memory as an Office Filing System:

- ✓ Sensory (momentary, very limited)—like a pink ‘*While You Were Out*’ slip. Deal with the information and move on.
- ✓ Short Term Memory (a few minutes, limited)—like the ‘**In-Box**’ on a desk. Process the information, and decide how/where/if to store it.
- ✓ Long Term Memory (relatively permanent with unlimited capacity)—like **File Cabinets**. Study the information, Think about what it connects to, what you need to do with it. Do what needs to be done (read, solve problems, etc), and then File it correctly with other similar pieces of information. Think about why you filed it there, so you can Retrieve it when you need it!

--adapted from the Learning Support Center at Paradise Valley Community College

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