**Improving Memory**

1. **Assure Meaningfulness.** Make certain that you understand the material you are studying. Material which is meaningful to you will be better remembered than will material which is unclear. Try to fit new ideas into the total framework for a subject and to tie in new facts with those you already know. Try to organize your material by grouping facts and ideas meaningfully.

2. **Review Immediately.** Most forgetting takes place immediately after initial learning. Of course, reinforcing memory through immediate recall involves more than passively looking over lecture notes and textbook underlining. Effective reviewing requires active discussion, reciting, or writing, in your words, what you have just read or heard. On the average, we retain 5 - 10% of what we hear or read, but 90% of what we teach to others or use immediately.

3. **Distribute Learning.** Study frequently in shorter periods rather than trying to learn everything all at once. Do not cram if you can avoid it! Retention is much better after distributed study than after massed study, so it is usually better to divide your studying of a subject into a number of shorter sessions of one or two hours, rather than to mass it into one long session.

4. **Minimize Interference.** Plan your study schedule to minimize interference of other classes or activities. Interference is strongest when later learning closely resembles and closely follows earlier learning. Thus, it would be much better for you to study history and chemistry after studying French than to immediately turn to studying your Spanish assignment.

5. **Practice Restating.** Write out or recite the material in your own words. You will be required to do this on exams so you might as well learn how to express important concepts in your own words right from the start. Also, expressing the main points in your own words will make it much easier for you to remember them later on.

6. **Use Memory Cues.** Develop a system for employing key words and symbols to remind you of important details. When reading a textbook try to find a key word or phrase which symbolizes for you the main point of a paragraph or section and write it in the margin. However, be very careful about using mnemonic devices or memory tricks like rhymes and sentences. Such memory aids have two major faults - they may lead you to sidestep understanding the intrinsic meaning of the material being studied and a slight error in remembering the mnemonic device can throw you off.

7. **Overlearn Material.** The higher level to which a skill is learned, the more slowly it is forgotten. So, keep reciting the material beyond the time required for initial accurate recall, until you feel that you can say it in your sleep!
8. Recognize Attitudes. Watch out for your negative attitudes! Emotionally-based feelings about the content, such as annoyance or agreement, may cause you to overlook some concepts and distort or exaggerate the importance of others. Be alert to recognize, if not resolve, conflicts between your beliefs, values and biases and the concepts and facts presented. Dullness is not inherent in a subject; it is your own attitude that makes something boring. So recognize your negative attitudes for what they are: hindrances to both initial learning and subsequent remembering!