

The Three R's of Memory

RETENTION

RECALL

RECOGNITION

I. **RETENTION** refers to the basic ability to keep the traces of past experiences available in our minds.

- 1) For most types of learning, one should learn facts and ideas in the same order or logical organization in which one will most probably wish to reproduce them at a later time.
- 2) General principles and meanings tend to be retained much better than isolated details.
- 3) The more significance you attach to whatever you are learning, and the more you value it, the greater will be the likelihood of effective retention.
- 4) You should concentrate on learning basic principles before attempting to master the details.
- 5) Retention is also facilitated by full attention.
- 6) Learning with the explicit declaration of intent to remember seems to strengthen retention of specific material.

II. **RECALL** is the power to reproduce correctly and to apply previous learning to subsequent problems and situations.

The principal methods of facilitating recall are:

- 1) development of enthusiastic interest in the subject matter.
- 2) learning with intention to recall.
- 3) evaluation of learning material, especially with the use of comparison and contrast.
- 4) concentration of attention.
- 5) spaced repetition of principles and facts.
- 6) logical organization of subject matter.
- 7) application of the learning material.

III. **RECOGNITION** is implicit in recall, for the student recognizes the identity or meaning of what he remembers.

- 1) Recognition starts with a feeling of familiarity as you realize that you have previously encountered a particular idea of its opposite.
- 2) By means of comparison and contrast, you associate the feeling of familiarity with past experiences and then recall the entire set of ideas into which the feeling of familiarity falls.
- 3) Association of facts with personal interests helps recognition and recall.
- 4) Recognition is easier than recall because the presentation of alternatives provides cues to the correct responses.

* Smith, Samuel, Best Methods of Study.