



# NEWSLETTER

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## WORKING MEMORY & STUDY SKILLS

WHY OUR KIDS NEED IT AND HOW TO INCORPORATE IT IN THEIR DAILY LIVES

In the article, *Working Memory Underpins Cognitive Development, Learning, and Education*, Cowan defines working memory as “the retention of a small amount of information in a readily accessible form. It facilitates planning, comprehension, reasoning, and problem-solving” (2013). Not to be confused with short-term memory, which is the ability to hold information in mind; working memory facilitates manipulation of information and is a necessary process for moving information into long-term memory. Many things can inhibit working memory including fatigue, distractions, and task difficulty, while regular mindfulness/focus practice has been shown to improve working memory (see BEST October Newsletter on Attention & Focus).

It is this need to use information in order to transfer it into long-term memory that makes it imperative for students to learn and utilize active study skills. Russell Barkley Ph.D., of the Virginia Commonwealth University, states that working memory relies on both imagery and verbal cues.

So banish the idea of the student passively reading a textbook and grab the crayons and glue!! You are about to launch into the wild ride of active studying!!

### Strategies for Active Studying!

- **Make Information Meaningful** by summarizing what you’ve just learned in your own words. Com-

pose questions based on the information. (See Cornell Notes in side box)

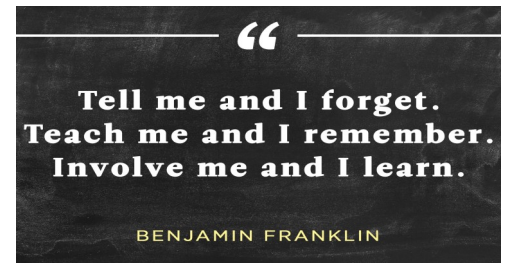
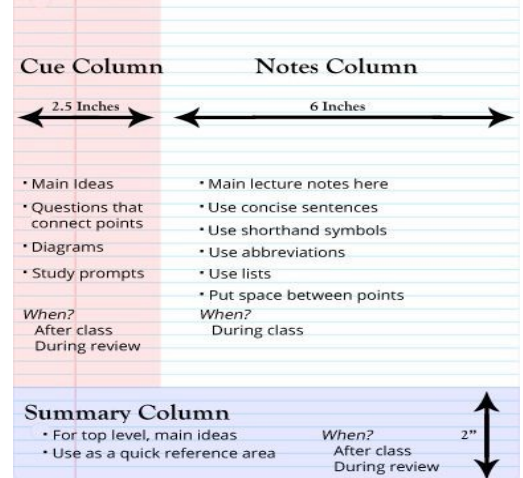
- **Organize Information by Chunking** information into logical groups. Vocabulary words can be chunked by part of speech, vowel sounds, etc. History can be chunked by events or time periods.
- **Use Pictures!** According to *Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication* (Lester, P.M., 2006), “people remember 10% of what they hear, 20% of what they read, and 80% of what they see and do.” Draw a picture to represent a vocabulary word, use graphic organizers (see resources), create a storyboard, draw a map.
- **Tell Stories** to teach about scientific processes like photosynthesis or digestion. Ask your student to teach you what they have learned.
- **Use Mnemonic Devices**—phrases and rhymes that help you remember information. Remember the order of the planets with this silly phrase, “My Very Enthusiastic Mother Just Served Us Noodles!” (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune). Or an Acronym such as Roy G. Biv (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet). Try learning the verb to-be to the tune of Jingle Bells!—am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been, become...



## Book Recommendation



### Cornell Notetaking Method



## Study Skills Resources

- Graphic Organizers: <https://www.hmco.com/blog/free-graphic-organizer-templates>
- Mnemonic Devices: <https://www.tckpublishing.com/mnemonic-devices/>
- Storyboard Templates: <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/downloads/storyboard-template/>
- Study Skills: <https://www.educationcorner.com/test-preparation-tips.html>
- Mindfulness: <https://sites.google.com/learn.conejousd.net/cvusd-wellness-room/mindfulness?authuser=0>

