

## MIND DEVELOPMENT COURSE 4



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# Super Student

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By Gregory Mitchell

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# Super Student

## CONTENTS

Foreword.....	3
Introduction .....	4
Barriers to Learning .....	5
Setting Objectives.....	14
Reading Techniques .....	16
Key Word Noting .....	20
More on Note-Taking .....	21
Associative Networks .....	25
Asking Questions & Listening.....	32
Thinking Clearly .....	34
Word Definitions .....	36
Defeating the Decay of Memories.....	38
Physical Learning .....	41
Sight, Sound, Action... ..	43
The Decision to Fail.....	47
What's Next? .....	49

# Foreword

By Peter Shepherd

Implicit in any concept of learning is the notion of change. If we learn something, we change some part of ourselves: our attitude, behavior, values, assumptions, or perhaps the amount of knowledge we have. The change may mean a rejection or an alteration of previously accepted beliefs or behavior, or it may mean an expansion or extension of them.

Change is often perceived as frightening as it threatens to rob us of the safety and legitimacy of our personal, often cherished, position and boundaries - especially since maintaining this safe space has helped us to survive as well as we have up to now (even if that's not as well as we could do).

When change is demanded by another person or new circumstances, we tend to feel threatened, defensive and perhaps rushed. The new learning is not perceived as something desirable and of our own choosing. Pressure to change, without an opportunity for exploration and choice, seldom results in experiences of joy and excitement in learning.

To turn this around, we need to be proactive in our learning, to expand our knowledge and abilities in advance of forced changes of circumstance. If there's one thing guaranteed in our lives it is that change will be upon us, sooner or later; usually sooner. If we are open to change, and are willing to learn whatever is necessary to predict and adapt to it, we can even become its master and control its direction. Self-directed learning is therefore key to mastery over life and to the creation of the life that we want.

Many people had bad experiences at school and perhaps later in life, when attempting to study a new subject. It is easy to quickly get bogged down with new terminology, and often new concepts and procedures seem unclear. This situation can quickly get out of hand as the student gets left behind and the subject either becomes an ongoing struggle or it is abandoned. But none of that is necessary; it is possible to succeed with the study of any subject.

With this course you will learn how to study a subject with maximum comprehension, with excellent recall, and with the ability to apply what you have learned effectively.

You will also learn how to take notes at rapid pace from books or live lectures, and how best to represent that information with key words, mind maps and flow charts that aid memory and understanding.

These abilities will be useful for your home studies, at college or work, and for your study of further Mind Development courses. You will indeed be able to succeed at studying effectively those subjects you are interested in, even those that were difficult before.

# Introduction

It can take the shock of a calamity to open our eyes. A personal catastrophe like unemployment may provoke a dogged determination not to be left out of life. However, it would be senseless to await such events to drive us into action - we would do better to steer our own course. Take a few moments to think about your friends and acquaintances - you are likely to come up with several people who have succeeded in altering their lives quite radically, either in their work or their leisure. To do so, they inevitably needed to acquire new knowledge; they needed to become a student and to succeed in their studies.

To enter a new field of learning, however modest it may be, is to enter a state of change. We move out of a safe and predictable world into a new area in which we have to admit, we do not know all the answers. We need to acquire new skills, and to do that we need to study and make sense of the most appropriate information resources, either in the form of attended courses, books and videos, or personal tuition. The rewards for succeeding in our studies will almost certainly exceed the effort, not least in new self-esteem and self-knowledge.

When it comes to learning, we are inherently brilliant. We have all learned very difficult, complex tasks, such as learning to walk, to talk and to write. Information cascades into our brains from the moment we are born and we never stop learning and remembering. Just how much experience we store only becomes apparent when something jogs our memory - a picture, face, smell or sound conjures up those past times that are never actually forgotten.

As you read these pages your mind is submitting every word, every concept, to intense scrutiny by comparing it to your previous experience. It is looking for patterns and is trying to match these new ideas with those you may have encountered or decided upon in the past. However hard you think you are concentrating, your mind is in fact ranging far and wide, ceaselessly searching for associations, only a few of which may be selected for conscious attention.

Because this process of considering and learning continues without obvious effort, we scarcely acknowledge it is happening. We may readily deny we have any aptitude for learning at all. Perhaps this is because of our past experiences in attempting to study a new subject, perhaps in a classroom or with a book. Although these sorts of learning may employ the same brainpower as our natural learning, they call for a significantly different approach. We may need to learn how to learn, in particular how to study.

While the majority of what we need to know to survive and lead our lives came to us quite easily and informally, the crucial extra information and skills needed to open up a new career can come hard to those of us unused to study. The purpose of this course is to provide you with the necessary skills for you to succeed in your studies.

# Barriers to Learning

The purpose of study is to understand something and to be able to apply what one has learned. Before you can start studying something you must recognize that there is something you don't know. You must be able to see that there is a gap in your knowledge that you wish to fill. Get a feel for what it is that you don't know and what you plan to do about it. So now you **intend** to learn the subject: you want and desire to learn. Your own desire to learn the subject is what allows you to make your own choices as you progress through the subject. Don't study for anybody else's sake, study for you. These points need to be maintained throughout one's study. However simple they are, they are the foundation on which your progress is based.

Evaluating the relative importance of individual data is essential when studying. Assigning a uniform importance to all data is not workable and will not lead to understanding and application. It is advisable when studying to continuously evaluate the importance of what you study. What does each datum really mean to the subject, how central is it, what class of datum is it? We can divide any subject into elements of varying importance:

## **1. Basic principles:**

The underlying essentials of the subject. The basic principles. These must be known and fully understood.

## **2. Methods of application:**

What one must be able to do in the subject: the actions, skills, activities, and methods involved. These must be learned and mastered.

## **3. Explanations:**

Discussion of why the basic principles of the subject are true and a description of how the activities function, is necessary in order to fully understand the subject.

## **4. Examples:**

Examples illustrate what is being taught and give a fuller understanding.

## **5. Opinions:**

The writer might offer many and various opinions on the subject and even on unrelated subjects. These might be interesting, but aren't necessarily important compared to the basic principles and activities.

## **6. Supplementary:**

Study materials might include a biography, glossary, index and other references that function as study aids but are not the content itself.

There is a drastic difference in importance between basic principles and opinions about unrelated subjects. However, they might be in the same print in the text and they might

not be given different emphasis. It is normally up to you to place the emphasis where it is due.

Outside of the basic principles and methods of application, information is there to help you understand the subject better *while you are studying it*. As long as you understand those parts when you study them, 100% retention of them is not necessary.

But the basic principles and methods of application have to be understood and mastered 100%. You have to know and retain these things fully. If you don't know them you can't apply the material.

**The following can make study difficult:**

1. Obscure word-meanings,
2. Unfamiliarity with the subject,
3. Insufficient opportunity to apply the ideas.
4. Missing information or too steep a learning curve.

***1. Defining word-meanings***

The first and most important barrier is the **misunderstood word**. If in studying you go past a word you don't fully understand, if you notice it or not, your attention will subconsciously stick to that word and subsequent parts of the text will blank out on you. You are likely to not notice what you are reading right after that point. Your memory of what you have studied will have holes in it and you will have a feeling of emptiness concerning the subject.

Suppose that you had a book that wasn't written in English, but in a language you didn't know. Naturally, you couldn't study it - unless you learned the words of the new language. But what about English? You know English, of course, but nevertheless suppose you read that in a certain course, the theory was *interdigitated* with practical examples. The word 'interdigitate' means: 'to put the fingers of one hand between the fingers of the other', as you might do when clasping the hands together. So, when the theory and the practical examples are interdigitated, you get a part of the theory, then a practical example, then more theory, followed by a practical example, and so on. That's what you would expect if you read that the theory and practical examples were interdigitated.

Suppose you started to study something and there was a word, such as 'interdigitate', that you didn't understand. How would you *feel*? Would you feel bored? Would you feel that this is a difficult subject? Would you feel sleepy and fed-up? It is likely that you would and that after a few such words you'd *quit your studies* in this subject.

Therefore, when studying this course or any other subject in which you wish to be successful, be very sure that you can *define all the words* that are used. **Look up the**

**word in a good dictionary and make sure you can define it clearly. Then use the word in several sentences, until you feel you really can understand and use the word without hesitation.**

A misunderstood word is not necessarily obvious. The words you clearly know that you don't understand are not the most damaging. Much more insidious are the words you have an imperfect understanding of. You might have the wrong definition, a partial definition, an uncertain understanding, or whatever. Simple words are particularly dangerous. Very often one has never bothered to fully understand them or takes them for granted and they can wreck havoc on one's understanding of a subject.

If you think the subject is difficult, or you feel bored or tired and your mind is wandering, or if you have read several pages and cannot remember the content, immediately look for the word that you have passed by and which you cannot define - *there will be one*. Look the word up in a dictionary and use it in some sentences of your own, until you are familiar with it.

If you continuously go past misunderstood words the symptoms will compound. You will not only feel blank and washed-out, you will start disliking the subject. It is not really fun anymore, it bores you or upsets you. If you continue any further you will start complaining and blaming the subject or others for your trouble. And eventually you will leave, you will drop the subject and not want to come back to it. If you are forced to keep studying you might develop ways of memorizing the material and even pass tests. But, you are no longer with it, and you won't be able to apply it.

## ***2. Familiarizing yourself with the subject***

A student may be able to give a simple definition of the word in question but still feel the meaning is an abstraction, and unable to relate the concept to real world situations. To help concretize your understanding of a word you will need to consult an Encyclopedia. A good encyclopedia will help you to obtain more reality than a dictionary offers and to become familiar with practical applications.

Suppose you are meeting a friend somewhere and you don't know how to get there. You are unfamiliar with this part of the city. You ask a policeman. He says, "Go down this road, take the third right and then take the second left. The place you want is on the right, about half way down that road." Now you have some data, but it isn't *your* data. You are not familiar with the route, nor even sure that the directions are correct. Perhaps the policeman made a mistake. You feel uncertain, wondering if you are going to be late.

You go down the road and take the third turning on the right, just before a cinema. You go down that road and take the second turning on the left, just after a big pub. About half way down this road, on the right hand side, is the place you want and there is your friend waiting for you. It took you ten minutes.

Now you don't just have the *data*, you have used it and you know it's correct. You are *informed*. It's *your* information; you *own* it. You are no longer uncertain and can now say that you are familiar with the route. You know how to get to that place and you could give directions (information) in your own words, for example:

“You go down this road and turn right just before the cinema. Then turn left, just after the big pub. The place is about half way down the road on the right. It takes about ten minutes.”

Of course, you don't know how to get there from a different direction, but you are familiar with *your route*.

In study, too, it is necessary to become familiar with the subject, so you could explain it in your own words. Defining the words is the first step, and then to obtain a wider understanding through the use of an **encyclopedia** or through other kinds of appropriate background reading and research.

To aid in your comprehension of the material it helps to paraphrase and restate passages in your own words, to explain and summarize what you feel is significant.

### ***3. Applying the data***

The next step is to be able to demonstrate the information, using **demonstration items**. When you demonstrate an idea, you let parts of the idea be represented by physical objects, such as paper-clips, a mug, or pens, etc. Using these items, you can show to another person your understanding of the subject and think about the subject yourself, especially how one item relates to another, without becoming too introspective and doing it all in your head.

To take a very simple example; in order to demonstrate “the man rode the horse,” you could say, “this pen is the horse” and “this paper clip is the man,” putting the paper clip on the pen and moving them around. So use demonstration items to help yourself to understand ideas from the course and apply the information to real life.

The student learns to apply the data by demonstrations, thinking of examples, doing practical exercises and by being tested on his understanding. Having done this, the student can feel confident about using the data in everyday life.

Other means to balance the significance of the written materials with real-world substance are to watch videos on the subject; to make drawings, diagrams and models; and to either watch demonstrations of the methods of application of the subject or preferably to have the chance to directly put them into action through practical exercises.

If there is insufficient opportunity to apply the ideas taught in the course in exercises that simulate real world situations, this causes an imbalance: a frustration that “it's all significance but no practice.”

Data need to be evaluated. Just because some text book tells you something doesn't mean that you should accept it. It might still be blatantly false, it might have nothing to do with you, or you might need to adjust the datum for your own use.

Evaluating how data apply to you is also an excellent tool for increased understanding. If you look at how each piece of information relates to your situation you have a realistic way of grasping it. You can fit it into your frame of reference as you go along.

Today, education is biased toward thought instead of action. The idea of action in relation to many subjects may be quite foreign to many students. Formal education frequently allows students to mouth words and descriptions which mean nothing to them. The student can recite or write the answers in the correct words, then the teacher assumes that the pupil knows all there is to know about the subject. On the surface this appears to be a form of education, but in terms of Mind Development it is not. Here, we are not concerned with the mere recapitulation of facts, students are expected to USE facts.

Modern education neglects drills. Mostly it consists of grasping something in a stumbling sort of way. This becomes the foundation of the next thing to be learned, and the process continues resulting in little practical ability at the end of the course. The concept of 'overlearning' has been lost. Instead this is replaced with 'oversignificance,' an endless sequence of intellectual information that because it has not been put into practice is very soon forgotten.

To learn to sing, play an instrument, learn a new language or think with a trained mind, and to do this with above average ability, requires hundreds of hours of practice, much of which is in the form of repeated exercises or drills. This requirement for drills cannot be bypassed if you wish to gain positive gains in ability.

In the army, considerable time is spent taking your gun to pieces and putting it back together again, and similar types of activity. Likewise in singing there is practice, practice, practice. When a behavior or skill is overlearned it tends to become automatic, furthermore it cannot be disrupted in stressful situations. The gunner will be able to repair his gun in the stress of battle and the singer will not be put off her stroke by anything that happens among the audience.

New habits require new connections in the brain and this requires work in the form of practical exercises. The exercises rely on the principle of overlearning for their force.

The human mind consists of layers of programs (a special kind of habit), all of which have been overlearned until they are automatic. An aspect of Mind Development consists of adding additional layers of programming and programs of greater effectiveness. To become automatic and to operate naturally and appropriately, these programs must be overlearned, and this is done by practicing an exercise until competence is easy and no longer requires conscious effort.

Similarly, if new skills are not exercised in everyday life, but instead the old habits are reverted to, the skills will be forgotten and lost. Whatever you are studying, look for ways that you can apply the ideas in your life and then do just that, try them out and see what works best for you. This will also serve to expose any misunderstandings you have about the meaning of the materials - if a principle doesn't apply and work for you in the real world then either the principle isn't applicable and is therefore itself at fault or you have not fully grasped the principle and so are not able to apply it as intended. With well-researched materials it will normally be the latter, so then you go back and revise your understanding.

#### ***4. Filling in the gaps***

With a well designed course you move ahead one step at a time. Indeed, you can accomplish anything if you can lay out the steps from where you are to where you want to go and then follow the steps one by one. When you study something on the correct gradient, each step is designed to include a little bit more than the step before it. It will require you to understand, know and be able to apply the preceding steps and therefore it demands more of you. If you follow all the steps you will end up with the level of skill and accomplishment you want.

It is impossible to succeed in studying a subject if the course has missing information in a step, or one or more missing steps, or in general, too steep a learning curve. The solution here is to communicate with the tutor, to obtain the missing information or to request intermediate steps that explain more simply and clearly how to achieve a practical outcome. If this kind of communication is not possible, then one needs to obtain further materials on the subject by other authors, that provide the missing information and explanations.

Often, however, it is not so much the study materials that are at fault as that a chronic condition has arisen in which there have been many misunderstood words. These leave a significant blank in the understanding of the student, so that further information in a later stage of the course then seems incomprehensible, and the student is likely to feel alienated from the course and critical of it. Eventually this may lead to the point where the student leaves the course (or is expelled) and he or she may be reluctant to ever attempt to study the same subject again.

In a traditional system of education, the child has to stay in school as a legal requirement. The above effects are likely to occur, but because the students cannot withdraw from the course they instead withdraw their interest and attention. They will in essence set up a sub-personality, capable of receiving and remembering words and giving them back on demand. Frequently, formal schooling teaches a student how to be there without actually attending to what is being taught. When a student is operating on a sub-personality in this way, he may be a quick student who can learn the verbal

content of a course quite rapidly and be able to pass examinations, but this information will soon be forgotten and he will be unable to apply any of it in his everyday life.

The key to testing a student's understanding is through demonstration, either through small representative objects on the desk, with drawings and diagrams, with modeling, or using the actual objects under discussion. Any verbal glibness will disappear and a real level of understanding will take place. Why is this so? Students who have gone through their educational career by memorizing words, are still able to sustain an attitude that the subject does not really have anything to do with them. This is a stance that many people have taken in relation to arts subjects, history, religious knowledge and literature. The student is not there in a complete sense, he is playing a tape recording of what he has heard. However, the moment you say: "demonstrate that," his playback mechanism is overridden. A student actually has to be there in order to manipulate objects in order to illustrate his understanding of a principle.

If you study something at too steep a gradient you will be hit by confusion and overwhelm. In a state of confusion you need to grab hold of something that is certain and fixed, and from there to reorient yourself. So, if your studies bog down, go back to the point where you were doing well, clear up your understanding (defining misunderstood words with the help of dictionary and encyclopedia and testing your understanding of principles by demonstration) and if possible recognize where you went off the tracks before, and then start off again from that point.

Any subject can seem confusing at first. But as you build up a structure of clearly understood information it will become less and less confusing. In studying you are building up a structure of accepted realities about the subject. As that structure expands, you will become more and more able to handle confusions in the subject.

### ***How to study this course***

It should be noted that left-brain dominant student will tend to approach a course in a linear mode. He will start with the first item and work on it, then go on to the second, and so on, until he reaches the end. In contrast a right-brained approach is cyclic: the student will sample the course at various entry points; he may even start at the end and work backward, and he will do a little bit of this and a bit of that, working through the course several times. There is a lot to be said for a cyclic approach if all the materials are eventually covered, but not if material is missed out, because a well-designed course is hierarchic in structure, one skill facilitating the next one. With this in mind I would suggest to you the following:

1. Firstly, you should read through the material like a novel, to get a general overview and see what's coming. As you do this it is important that unfamiliar words are looked up in a dictionary, in order to gain a full understanding of the theory and what is expected.

2. Then you should start work on the course. Ideally, because the course is hierarchic in nature, you should begin with the first item, and continue in the given sequence. A plateau of performance should be reached on each item before moving on to the next. That is, reach a level of competence that you're satisfied with and then move on (to return later on the next run through the materials).

3. This suggested approach may not always be your preferred route. Each student is different, thus some students may not be able to get going on a particular item. If this occurs with you, then move on to the next item and go back to the problematic one later on.

Irrespective of his IQ, a student tends to have a specific level of competence. This is a level of cognitive function at which he or she feels capable and complete. We tend to be successful in avoiding situations that could cause us to operate above this level. In fact we learn to be so good at this that we are seldom made to feel thick or stupid. However, Mind Development will only work if you are continually pushed beyond your level of competence. Frequently this will make you feel stupid. This feeling of stupidity is the result of a barrier. This is indeed your feedback as to the existence of the barrier and with this awareness you are in a position to understand and deal with it. By diligently practicing the appropriate exercise you will finally pass through this barrier and move on to a higher level of competence. Further work will push you to the limit of this new level, and so on.

Unless a student has done at least 75 hours work on this course they cannot be said to have done it. Some students may require 150 hours to reach a good end point, that is sufficient to be able to apply the skills in their everyday life with unconscious competence. You are attempting to change the bad habits of a lifetime and these habits cannot be changed in a day.

Work in the purely mental dimension may appear to produce sudden results; work at this level is directed toward getting a student to change his mind. Once a student has let go of a fixed viewpoint, he has changed his mind, and if the correct fixed viewpoint has been discovered the mental block would dissolve away. It can happen suddenly because all the student has to do is change his/her mind. Working on the level of mind will handle attitudes, emotions, and unwanted sensations and pains. It can improve certain types of memory, particularly long-term memory of personal experience. Forgotten skills and even languages can be recovered. But these are rapidly lost unless an educational stage is applied, as soon as possible after the release. Otherwise much behavior will remain unchanged, as behavior is given force by habit. These are the limitations of all therapies which work solely at the level of mind and ignore the dimension of behavior. Unless this further dimension is addressed, case gain will be subjective only.

The brain is the servant of the mind. Pathology has shown cases where an individual has lost the ability to read and write through an injury to the left hemisphere of the brain, but has been able to regain this ability by training other parts of the brain to take over this function.

This fact is important. The mind can influence the brain, and the brain is only a tool of the mind - its most important tool but only a tool nonetheless. We can improve the tool and enhance its function.

By and large, therapies operating at the level of mind produce effects at that level. To produce change at the level of brain (behavior and performance change) requires appropriate exercises and practical drills. And the amount of change is directly proportional to the frequency, intensity and duration with which these techniques are applied. "The only way out is the way through."

Your course tutor is Peter Shepherd. Please don't hesitate to email him if you have questions or need advice about your studies of **Super Student**:

<mailto:shepherd@trans4mind.com>

**GOLDEN RULE:** When studying this course, and indeed, whenever reading passages that you want to understand and make use of, make sure never to pass by a word or concept that you do not understand. If you do pass by a misunderstood word or concept, the rest of the text will probably become incomprehensible, and you will feel distracted and bored. If it's worth reading at all, then you owe it to yourself to define any word you're not sure of, or find the misunderstood word(s) in the concept that is unclear and sort that out before going further. If your studies bog down, **go back to where you were doing well, clear up your understanding and start off again from that point.**

When you *want* to learn something (or you *need* to learn it), nothing much happens until you *do* something - some practice, repetition perhaps, and learning from your mistakes. Of course the given exercises are of primary importance. Also you can summarize information, explain it to someone else (and to yourself!), test yourself on what you remember, apply it to solve problems, etc. It's then important to digest and *make sense* of what you've done, to deepen your learning. This is reinforced when you get *feedback*: other people's reactions, praise, or criticism. The feedback helps to clarify what you still need to learn, how best to go about some further practice, and so on. Discussing with other students is helpful (as in the Mind Development Forums at trans4mind.com) and with your course tutor (by email - address above).

## Setting Objectives

We are motivated to act in order to acquire those things we feel we need and want. In life there are a range of such desires: survival and security needs (including health, sex, food and shelter), social needs (to belong and to have influence over one's situation in society), ego needs (for self-esteem and other people's respect), and fulfillment needs (to express ourselves and reach our full potential).

A necessary early step in studying a subject is to consider what it is you are aiming for and what needs you are trying to fulfill:

**“What do I really want to get from this course?”**

Be as specific as possible. As you study, keep reminding yourself of this objective for doing the course, as this will keep you on target.

Here are some useful guidelines for clarifying your objectives:

1. State your objective as precisely as possible. Consider how you will know when your objective has been attained. This will ensure that your objective is realistic and specific enough.
2. Ask yourself whether there is a senior objective lurking behind your apparent objective: ask why it is that you want what you want. Ensure that any such objectives do not conflict with each other.
3. State a target date by which you want to achieve this and give your reasons why.
4. Be clear that you want this for yourself and not for someone else.
5. Identify all the challenges you face in order to attain your objective.
6. Work out your plan of how you will manage each of these challenges and identify the resources (both within yourself and externally) you will call on to assist you.
7. Finally ask if there is anything that can stop you achieving your objective now.

Establish not only your objective but your reasons for it. It may be that you simply want to earn more money or have more fun. Or it may be the desire to change your current circumstances or become what you conceive to be a better educated person.

Tell yourself the truth about your own motives. Lay down your aims and get to work with sensible determination. Trust yourself, for you are your own boss. You are no longer a child to be intimidated, you are an adult in control of your own learning. And you are a customer: the course and those who conduct it are there to serve and help you.

Whenever you set out on a course of learning, however modest the subject, you never really know where it will lead you. You set your sights and make your plans but the world is wonderfully unpredictable... by opening your mind to knowledge you are

inviting life to touch you in new ways, for new opportunities to arise that could never be foreseen, and for you to have a new level of influence on the world around you. Not only does knowledge help you adapt to change, it helps you to create it.

### ***Concentration***

Thinking has a gloomy image. Many people tend to see thinking as some sort of mental drudgery rather than as a liberating activity. Perhaps this view stems from schooldays when we were told “Concentrate and pay attention or else.” Obeying this command required furrowed brows and hunched shoulders. The true picture of concentration however is quite different. Someone engrossed in a subject is normally in a relaxed state and enjoying their activity. The process of concentration is a controlled wandering of the mind, from the subject to associated ideas and back again to the subject. For creative thinking is like juggling: the more balls you get in the air, the greater the chance of seeing new patterns emerge. The mind needs to draw on its many resources as well as the current instructions.

Consciously, you can point your mind in a certain direction but then you need to let it pick and choose from its world of ideas. Our minds need to scan just as our eyes do. A fixed form of concentration is alien to our mental process and actually harmful. When we think intelligently and creatively, such as we need to do when we are learning, we are melding together many relevant ideas, our own and other people’s. Original thought inevitably derives to a large extent from the thoughts, ideas and discoveries of those before us, from whom we have learned.

We are individuals in a long line of human endeavor. The people that wrote your study materials are trying to hand down the hard-won wisdom of others before them. If you are fortunate you may eventually add to this process. But merely to share in the great traffic of knowledge is a pleasure in itself. You will indeed find that thought need not be a drudgery and can be exhilarating and liberating.

NOTE: You can greatly boost your ability to concentrate effectively by doing the Mind Development Course ‘Educating the Will.’ This is an excellent preparation for effective study, therefore it is the preceding course in the Mind Development series, but if you haven’t come by that route it is highly recommended that you go on to acquire these skills which will very much complement your new studying abilities.

# Reading Techniques

Reading includes not only the recognition and assimilation of the written content, but also understanding, comprehension, retention, recall and communication.

The most common approach to the study of a new text is the 'start and slog' approach. The reader opens the book at page 1 and reads through to the end. This might seem the most obvious approach, as indeed it is necessary when reading a fictional novel, but when studying instructional material it is an inefficient use of the student's knowledge and time and has a number of disadvantages:

1. Time may be wasted going over material that is already familiar, or that is irrelevant to the study in question, or which may be more conveniently summarized later.
2. The reader has no overall perspective until he finishes the text, and possibly not even then.
3. Any information that is retained is usually disorganized; it is seldom well integrated with the rest of the book nor with the student's whole body of knowledge.

A linear approach to study is like going shopping by systematically walking along each street, going into every shop, hoping to find something but not knowing what.

The holistic approach to study parallels the normal activity of shopping: one prepares a list of what is required, goes only down the relevant streets (noticing other shop windows on the way in case they contain unexpected items of interest), and visits only those stores that contain all that one needs, with time and energy to spare.

## *In-Depth Reading*

With an initial survey or pre-reading (scanning quickly through the text), one grasps the context and main concepts that are being presented. The in-depth reading which follows requires critical and analytical thinking to interpret, evaluate, judge, and reflect on information and ideas. There are four main aspects to in-depth reading:

1. Gathering facts and ideas.
2. Sorting facts and ideas for relative importance and their relationship to one another.
3. Measuring these ideas against one's existing knowledge base.
4. A process of selection, separating the ideas into those that you wish to remember or act upon, and ideas that you wish to reject.

In-depth reading techniques are a form of self-questioning. As we read we try to answer questions of HOW and WHY together with the implied suggestions: explain, describe, evaluate, interpret, illustrate, and define.

When reading non-fiction and other serious material, the full procedure is as follows:

### **1. Establish Purpose**

Answer the following question as carefully and completely as possible:

What do I want to learn from this material?

Your answer to this question is your purpose for reading. It may help at this stage to review your current knowledge of the subject. This increases expectancy of what is to come, and exposes gaps in one's knowledge and a corresponding desire to fill the vacuum.

### **2. Survey**

A book or publication should be surveyed as follows:

Read the title, any subtitles, jacket summaries (in the case of a book), and identify the source of the publication, i.e. the author and publisher.

Read the date of publication or copyright. The book may well have gone beyond its sell-by-date, e.g. a book on electric motors written in 1950 would be irrelevant, unless perhaps you were trying to mend Grandma's lawnmower.

Analyze the Index. The particular concepts listed and the way in which they are organized will tell you a particular author's bias and whether or not the book will cover the ideas that you are trying to get wise on. Frequently, the Index is a better guide for these purposes than the Contents page.

Read the Preface. Nearly always written last, it will often provide an excellent summary, and usually a statement of purpose for the book and a note on the author's perspective on the subject. Also scan the Forward and Introduction.

Read the Table of Contents. Note the sequence and check for Chapter summaries. Chapter summaries are an abstract of the Chapter contents. They will frequently inform you whether or not a particular publication is suitable for your purposes.

The next step is to look at the visual material. Read the maps, graphs, illustrations, charts, and bold headings.

Get a close feel for the actual contents of the book by looking at beginnings and ends of chapters, subsection headings and anything else which catches the eye - bold print, italicized sections, etc. Read any summaries the author may have provided. If there are study questions at the end of each chapter, you should look at these also. This will give you an indication of the level of the book in relation to your present knowledge.

Now you have completed these steps, then decide to use the book or not.

### **3. Revise Your Purpose**

Once you have surveyed the material and gained more information and if you have decided to use the book, then revise your original purpose for reading the book. Ask yourself: Why am I reading this? This will establish your specific learning objectives.

### **4. Study in Depth**

Keeping in mind what you want to learn, speculate on what the material will tell you. Begin to read with the satisfaction of your objectives in mind. Sometimes it is inappropriate to start at the beginning, so decide where to start reading. Your overall purpose for reading the material is your best guide.

Note: the manner in which the author presents his ideas will demand that you vary the rate of reading appropriately, if you wish to be efficient. Sections that are complicated, introducing new terminology and concepts, need to be read carefully, every word digested. Other sections may be much easier and so can be read through quite quickly. If you continue reading at the same rate for a prolonged period, it is a good indication that you are not reading flexibly and that you are allowing yourself to become inefficient.

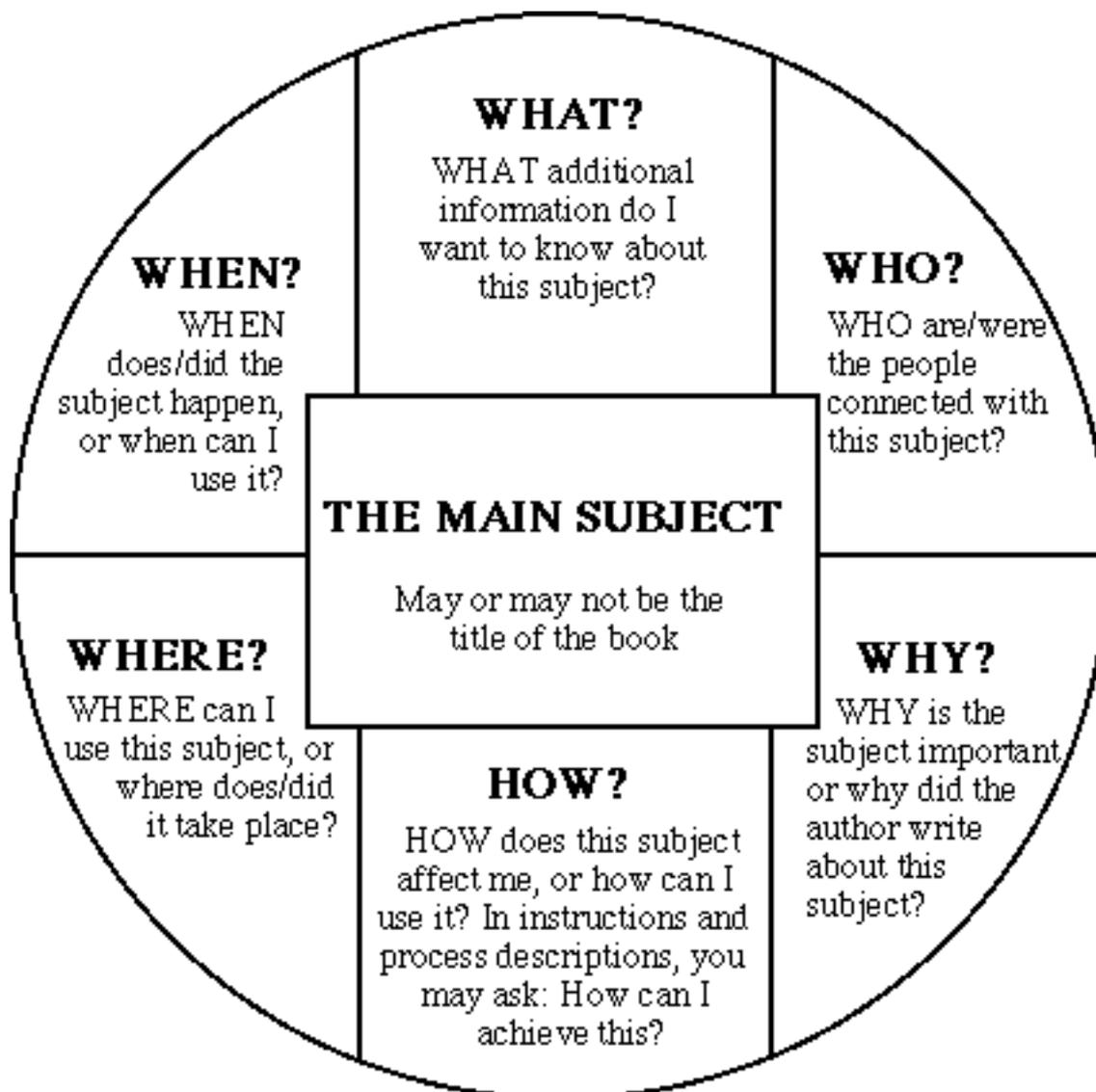
It helps to mark or underline key words and concepts in the book itself, with a soft lead pencil that can easily be erased, to aid review. If it is your own book, do not be afraid to use different colored highlighter pens; it helps memory and distinguishes different themes and topics. You can also add Post-it notes to summarize your understandings and insights about key passages.

Be prepared to omit sections that are irrelevant, already familiar, padding, repetition, outdated, or excess examples. Also reject false arguments, such as: generalization from the particular; false premises; undefined sources; misuse of statistics, etc.

Continually ask WHO, WHY, HOW, WHERE, WHEN and WHAT questions, as an interactive dialogue between yourself and the study material, in order to extract the important facts.

The *Who* question helps you to hold in mind any significant people. *Why* classifies purposes. *How* classifies cause and effect sequences, time sequences, procedure or process instructions or where the new information fits into your life. The *Where* question points to where the action is taking place or where the new information can be used. The *When* question can both denote when a subject takes place and when you can use the information. Finally, the *What* question allows you to take a quick survey of your current knowledge.

Take regular breaks every thirty or forty minutes. After each short rest break, take a minute to review the previous work: this consolidates the retention.



## 5. Evaluation

Describe the things that you have learned with a focus on your primary purpose. Your thoughts may be organized in the following way:

- State the most important idea or concept pertaining to your reading purpose.
- List related key words, facts, and information in order of importance - using as few words as possible - that pertain to your learning objectives.
- Finally, jot down important words or phrases in relation to the ideas listed above. The most important things to jot down are key people, important events, places, and dates. These will act as thought joggers or memory clues.

## Key Word Noting

A lot of people are dissatisfied with their note taking. They realize that they take down too many words, which in turn makes it difficult to get an overview. They find it difficult to sort the essential facts out of a lecture, a meeting or study materials. Very few people have had a satisfactory training in effective note taking, so the purpose of this chapter is to improve this skill.

Association plays a dominant role in nearly every mental function, and words themselves are no exception. The brain associates divergently as well as linearly, carrying on thousands of different actions at the same time, searching, sorting and selecting, relating and making syntheses as it goes along, using left and right brain faculties. Thus a person often finds that in conversation, his mind is not just behaving linearly, but racing on in different directions, exploring to create new ideas and evaluating the ramifications of what is being said. Although a single line of words is coming out, a continuing and enormously complex process is taking place in the mind throughout the conversation. At the same time subtle changes in intonation, body position, facial expression, eye language, and so on, are integrated into the overall process.

Similarly the listener or reader is not simply observing a long list of words; he is receiving each word in the context of the ideas and concepts that surround it, and interpreting it in his own unique way, making evaluations and criticisms based upon his prior knowledge, experience and beliefs. You only have to consider a simple word and start recognizing the associations that come into your mind, to see that this is true.

Words that have the greatest associative power may be described as **Key Words**. These are concrete, specific words which encapsulate the meaning of the surrounding sentence or sentences. They generate strong images, and are therefore easier to remember. The important ideas, the words that are most memorable and contain the essence of the sentence or paragraph are the key words. The rest of the words are associated descriptions, grammatical constructions and emphasis, and this contextual material is generally forgotten within a few seconds, though much of it will come to mind when the key word is reviewed.

Because of their greater meaningful content, key words tend to 'lock up' more information in memory and are the 'keys' to recalling the associated ideas. The images they generate are richer and have more associations. They are the words that are remembered, and when recalled, they 'unlock' the meaning again.

When a young child begins to speak, he starts with key words, especially concrete nouns, stringing them together directly - for example, 'Peter ball' or 'Anne tired'. It is not until later that sentences include grammatical construction, to give expressions such as 'Please would you throw me the ball' or 'I am feeling tired'.

## More on Note-Taking

Taking notes performs the valuable functions of:

- Imposing organization upon the material.
- Allowing associations, inferences and ideas to be jotted down.
- Bringing attention to what is important.
- Enhancing later recall.

Since we do not remember complete sentences, it is a waste of time to write them down. The most effective note-taking concentrates on the key words of the lecture or text. In selecting the key words, a person is brought into active contact with the information. The time which would have been spent making long-winded notes can be spent thinking around the concepts. He is not simply copying down in a semi-conscious manner but is becoming aware of the meaning and significance of the ideas, and forming images and associations between them. This increases comprehension and memory. Because the mind is active, concentration is maintained, and review of the notes becomes quick and easy.

The ability to pick out the most appropriate word as a 'key' word is vital if you want to remember the most important information from any text. We mainly use the following parts of speech when we pick key words:

**Nouns:** identify the name of a person, place or object. They are the most essential information in a text. 'Common nouns' are whole classes of people or things, e.g. man, dog, table, sport, ball. 'Proper nouns' name a particular person or thing, e.g. Beethoven, the 'Emperor' Concerto, Vienna.

**Verbs:** indicate actions, things that happen, e.g. to bring, kiss, exist, drink, sing.

**Adjectives:** describe qualities of nouns (people and things) - how they appear or behave, e.g. old, tall, foolish, beautiful.

**Adverbs:** indicate how a verb (activity) is applied, e.g. gently, fully, badly.

A key word or phrase is one which funnels into itself a range of ideas and images from the surrounding text, and which, when triggered, funnels back the same information. It will tend to be a strong noun or verb, on occasion accompanied by an additional key adjective or adverb. Nouns are the most useful as key words, but this does not mean you should exclude other words. Key words are simply the words that give you the **most inclusive concept**. They do not have to be actual words used in the text - you may have a better word that encapsulates and evokes the required associations, and a phrase may be necessary rather than just a word.

As an example, suggested key words have been indicated in bold type throughout the following text. There may be words you do not understand, even when taking account

of the context; in this case it is certainly necessary to look these up in a dictionary. Psychological terminology like 'intrapersonal' may not be in your dictionary, but the prefix 'intra' means within, so the meaning can be derived.

Though there is no way to place oneself within the infant's skin, it seems likely that, from the earliest days of life, all normal **infants** experience a range of **feelings**, a gamut of affects. Observation of infants within and across cultures, and comparison of their **facial expressions** with those of other primates, confirm that there is a set of **universal** facial expressions, displayed by all normal children. The most reasonable inference is that there are bodily (and brain) states associated with these expressions, with infants experiencing phenomenally a **range of states** of excitement and of pleasure or pain.

To be sure, these states are initially uninterpreted: the infant has no way of labeling to himself how he is feeling or why he is feeling this way. But the range of bodily states experienced by the infant - the fact that he feels, that he may feel differently on different occasions, and that he can come to correlate feelings with **specific experiences** - serves to introduce the child to the realm of **intrapersonal knowledge**.

Moreover, these discriminations also constitute the necessary point of departure for the eventual discovery that he is a distinct entity with his own experiences and his unique **identity**. Even as the infant is coming to know his own bodily reactions, and to differentiate them one from another, he is also coming to form preliminary distinctions among other individuals and even among the moods displayed by 'familiar' others. By two months of age, and perhaps even at birth, the child is already able to discriminate among, and imitate the facial expressions of, **other individuals**. This capacity suggests a degree of 'pre-tunedness' to the feelings and behavior of other individuals that is extraordinary.

The child soon **distinguishes** mother from father, parents from strangers, happy expressions from sad or angry ones. (Indeed, by the age of **ten months**, the infant's ability to discriminate among different affective expressions already yields distinctive patterns of brain waves.)

In addition, the child comes to associate various feelings with particular individuals, experiences, and circumstances. There are already the first signs of **empathy**. The young child will respond sympathetically when he hears the cry of another infant or sees someone in pain: even though the child may not yet appreciate just how the other is feeling, he seems to have a sense that something is not right in the world of the other person. A link amongst familiarity, caring, and the wish to be **helpful** has already begun to form.

Thanks to a clever experimental technique devised by Gordon Gallup for studies with primates, we have a way of ascertaining when the human infant first comes to view himself as a separate entity, an incipient person. It is possible, unbeknownst to the child, to place a tiny marker - for example, a daub of rouge - upon his nose and then to study his reactions as he peers at himself in the **mirror**. During the first year of life, the infant is **amused** by the rouge marking but apparently simply regards it as an interesting decoration on some other organism which he happens to be examining in the mirror. But, during the **second year** of life, the child comes to react differently when he beholds the alien coloring. Children will touch their own noses and act silly or coy

[**embarrassed**] when they encounter this unexpected redness on what they perceive to be their very own anatomy.

Awareness of physical separateness and identity are not, of course, the only components of beginning self-knowledge. The child also is starting to react to his own **name**, to refer to himself by name, to have definite programs and **plans** that he seeks to carry out, to feel efficacious when he is successful, to experience distress when he violates certain **standards** that others have set for him or that he has set for himself. All of these components of the initial sense of person make their initial appearance during the second year of life.

(From 'Frames of Mind' by Howard Gardner)

Looking at the marked key words separately from the text, the sense of the passage can be re-constituted:

**infants**  
**feelings**  
**facial expressions**  
**universal**  
**specific experiences**  
**intrapersonal knowledge**  
**identity**  
**other individuals**  
**distinguishes**  
**ten months**  
**empathy**  
**helpful**  
**mirror**  
**amused**  
**second year**  
**embarrassed**  
**name**  
**plans**  
**standards**

### ***Exercise***

Read the Foreword to this course and write down the words that you consider to be key words. Then from your notes, try to reconstruct the full information of the text. In retrospect, then see if you could have made a better choice of key words. Then choose another text and repeat the exercise.

Key words are the ones which are most loaded with meaning, the ones that unlock your memory. When you practice picking out key words, you will probably find that you tend to take down too many words, 'just in case'. Try to reduce the number of key

words, and concentrate instead on finding key words that hold many associations, and which remind you of the meaning of the text.

The more that notes are oriented around key words, the more useful they are and the better they are remembered. Ideally, notes should be based upon key words and accompanying key images, and incorporate summary diagrams and illustrative drawings. This concept is further expanded in the next chapter on 'Mind Maps'.

When taking detailed notes at a lecture or conference, it is important to include the following:

- The time and date.
- All the significant facts, noted in the sequence in which they were given.
- Everything noted should of course be a true and valid record.
- Make the most important things (including key words) stand out in your notes. This can be done by using highlighter pens - red for the most important information, yellow for the next most important, and green for other important ideas.

Logical deductions cannot be made from your notes if any of the above are omitted as the result of a false economy of recording and observation.

Put things in your own words; this necessarily involves you in thinking about what you're writing. Capture the meaning. Sometimes you need to take duplicate notes but most of the time, what you should try to do is to capture for yourself the essence of what is being said and shown in lectures.

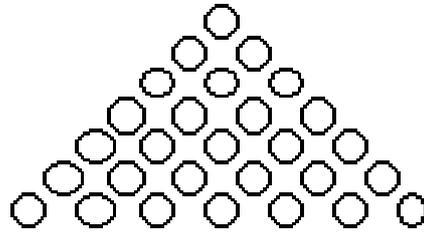
In addition, useful notes taken while reading or listening may well include thoughts which were not the speaker's but spring from your own conclusions. You may well have had new insights that you will want to remember, and plans of action for implementing what you have learned.

Also, every time there's something you can't quite understand, write down your questions (maybe in a special color just for such questions). You can find out the answers later, or ask the lecturer, but if you hadn't noted your questions, a few hours later probably you wouldn't remember them and they would never be answered.

'The more the merrier' is certainly not a good rule in note-taking. The more notes you take, the more difficult they will be to use later. Be economical and well organized - use key words as the basis of your organization. Try to boil down a whole passage into a single sentence; the very process of paraphrasing a text can enhance your comprehension and fix it in your memory. Whenever possible include diagrams and labeled illustrations in your notes, as these will be easy to remember and convey a large amount of meaning.

## Associative Networks

Knowledge in any subject can be described as a pyramid of hierarchically related data. The top of the pyramid contains the simplest, most general, most wide ranging, most abstract data in the subject. The further down we go in the pyramid the more specific, complex, limited, and practical the data gets.



The practical data at the bottom of the pyramid builds on the abstract principles found further up in the pyramid. The general principles at the top can be explored and illustrated by the manifestations and examples found further down.

Any conflict between specifics low in the pyramid are resolved by moving one or more steps up and inspecting the general principle the specifics are based on.

The process of developing lower parts of the pyramid is called **deduction**. It is the construction of specifics by the application of general rules. General laws can be combined logically to establish and predict practical data. Engineering is an example of this. The mathematical formulas for bridge building are known, they just have to be applied to the conditions at hand.

The process of working out the top parts when only the bottom parts are known is called **induction**. One can guess at theories that will explain the maximum number of observed specifics. The theory or fact that explains the most is the best candidate for a high position. Science usually uses this approach. The theory of evolution was developed like that. A theory is thought up and then one checks if reality fits the theory.

Any subject has a structure like this, no matter if it is being presented like this or not. It is the duty of the student to structure his own understanding and to get the relative importances and seniorities right.

The higher the datum is placed in the pyramid of knowledge the more important it is to know it 100%. Lower data can always be developed if the higher are known. However, it might not be possible to have conceptual understanding of widely spanning, abstract data unless a sufficient number of specifics and examples have been understood and evaluated.

In the subject of physics you can predict a lot of things if you know the laws of gravity. They are placed very high in the hierarchy. If you know that things in general fall to Earth according to certain principles you don't have to walk around remembering that

apples fall down, stones fall down, coffee cups fall down, etc. You might develop your conceptual understanding of the subject by observing a lot of things falling down, but once you understand the rule, the specifics have much less importance. Any confusion or question about the specifics can be sorted out by referring to the general rule.

Meaning is an essential part of all thought processes, and it is meaning that gives order to experience. Indeed the process of perception is ultimately one of extracting meaning from the environment. If the mind is not attending, information will go 'in one ear and out the other'; the trace it leaves may well be too weak to be recalled in normal circumstances. If concentration is applied, i.e. there is conscious involvement with the information, more meaning is extracted, more meaningful connections are made with existing understanding, the memory is stronger, and there will be more opportunity to make meaningful connections with new material in the future.

Memory is not recorded like a tape recording, with each idea linked to the next in a continuous stream; instead, the information is recorded in large interconnecting associative networks. Concepts and images are related in various ways to numerous other points in the mental network. The act of encoding an event, i.e. memorizing, is simply that of forming new links in the network, i.e. making new associations. Sub-consciously, the mind will continue to work on the network, adding further connections which remain implicit until they are explicitly recognized, i.e. they enter the pre-conscious as relevant material, and are picked up by the spotlight of consciousness.

Such associative networks explain the incredible versatility and flexibility of human information processing. Memory is not like a container that gradually fills up, it is more like a tree growing hooks onto which the memories are hung. So the capacity of memory keeps growing - the more you know, the more you can know. There is no practical limit to this expansion because of the phenomenal capacity of the neuronal system of the brain, which in most people is largely untapped, even after a lifetime of mental processing.

### ***Mind Maps***

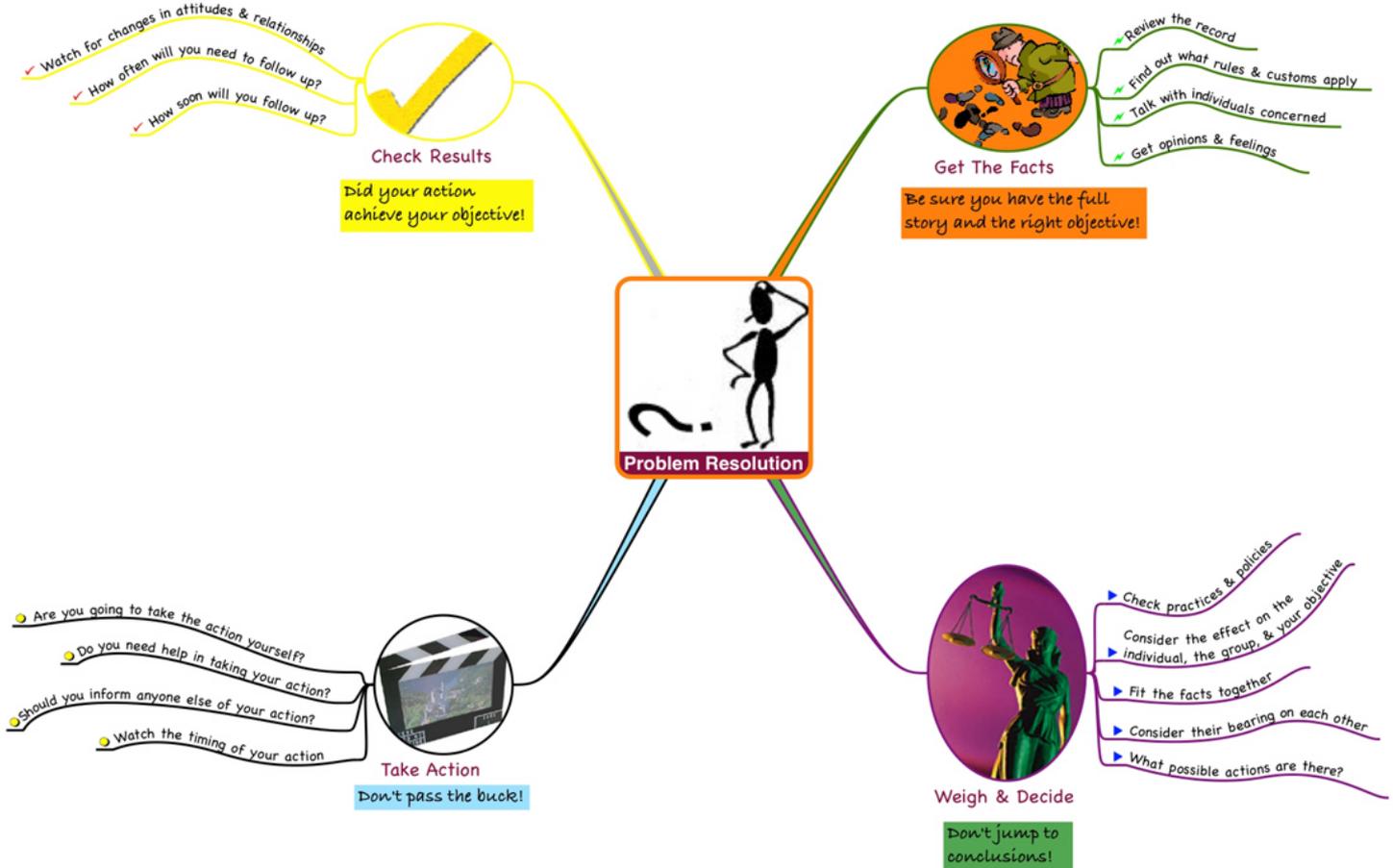
Because the brain naturally organizes information in associative networks, it makes sense to record notes about information you want to remember in a similar way. Mind Maps were developed in the late 1960s by Tony Buzan as a way of helping students make notes that used only key words and images. The non-linear nature of mind maps makes it easy to link and cross-reference different elements of the map.

Using the method of Mind Maps, all the various factors that enhance recall have been brought together, in order to produce a much more effective system of note taking. A mind map works organically in the same way as the brain itself, so it is therefore an excellent interface between the brain and the spoken or written word.

Paradoxically, one of the greatest advantages of Mind Maps is that they are seldom needed again. The very act of constructing a map is so effective in fixing ideas in

memory that very often a whole Mind Map can be recalled without going back to it at all. Because it is so strongly visual, frequently it can be simply reconstructed in the 'mind's eye'.

To make a Mind Map, one starts at the centre of a new sheet of paper, writing down the central theme very boldly, preferably in the form of a strong visual image, so that everything in the map is associated with it. Then work outwards in all directions, adding branches for each new concept, and further small branches and twigs for associated ideas as they occur. In this way one produces a growing and organized structure composed of key words and key images.



### Tips:

- Use just key words, or wherever possible images.
- Build out and from the center, spatially organizing as you go.
- Make the center a clear and strong visual image that depicts the general theme of the map.
- Create sub-centers for sub-themes.
- Put key words **on** lines. This reinforces the structure of notes.
- Lower case is more easily read (and better remembered) than upper case. Print

rather than write in longhand.

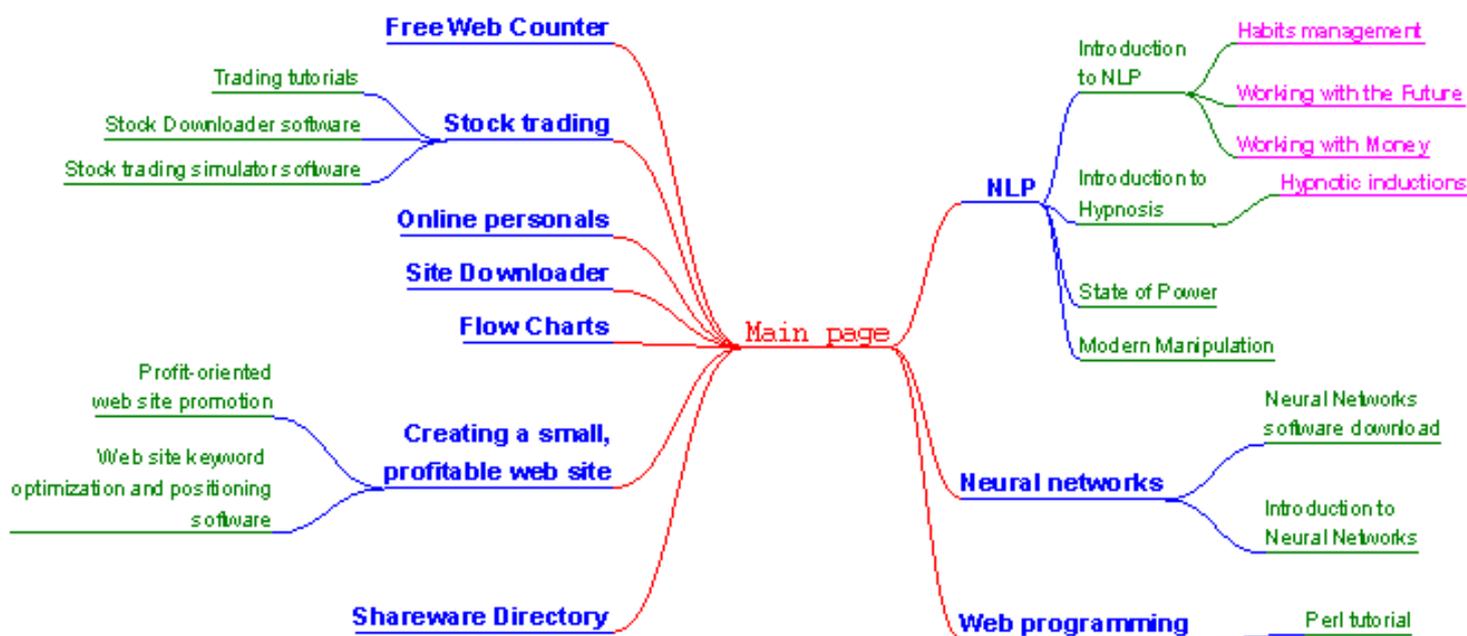
- Use **color** to depict themes, associations and to make things stand out.
- Anything that **stands out** on the page will stand out in your mind.
- Think three-dimensionally.
- Use arrows, icons or other visual aids to show links between different elements.
- Don't get stuck in one area. If you dry up in one area go to another branch.
- Put ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit. Don't judge or hold back.
- Break boundaries. If you run out of space, don't start a new sheet; paste more paper onto the map.
- Be creative. Creativity aids memory.
- Revise the mind map by quickly sketching out the key patterns and words.
- Reinforce understanding and recall by explaining your mind map to another person.

### ***Exercise***

Read through this Super Student course and at the same time, based on your growing understanding, build up a Mind Map displaying the main ideas and how they connect.

### ***Tree Charts***

Tree charts represent hierarchical information, such as the structure of a web site...

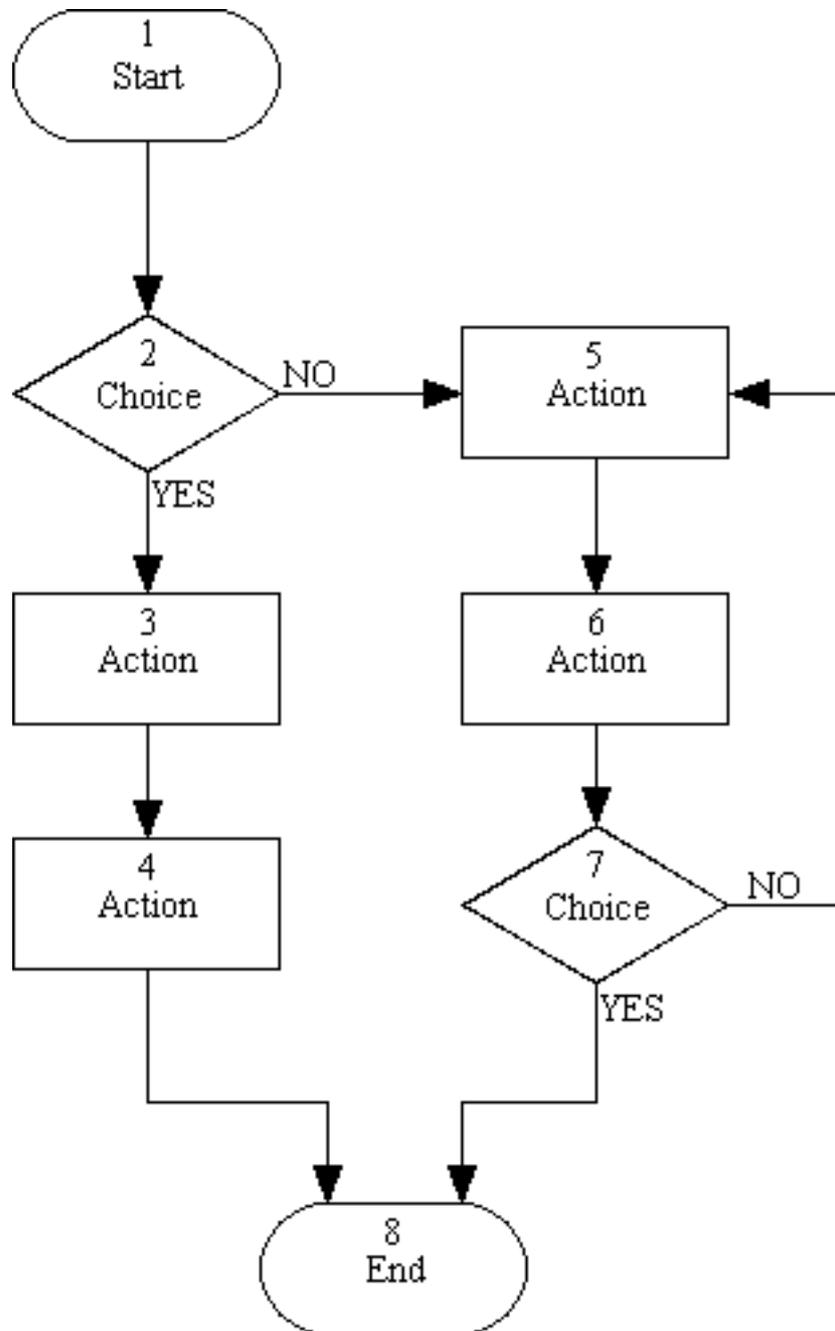


Software can be obtained for making these useful diagrams, such as the FuzzyMap program shown below, so the chart can be easily edited and supplemented as your understanding grows. This chart shows the processes involved in the practice of hypnosis...

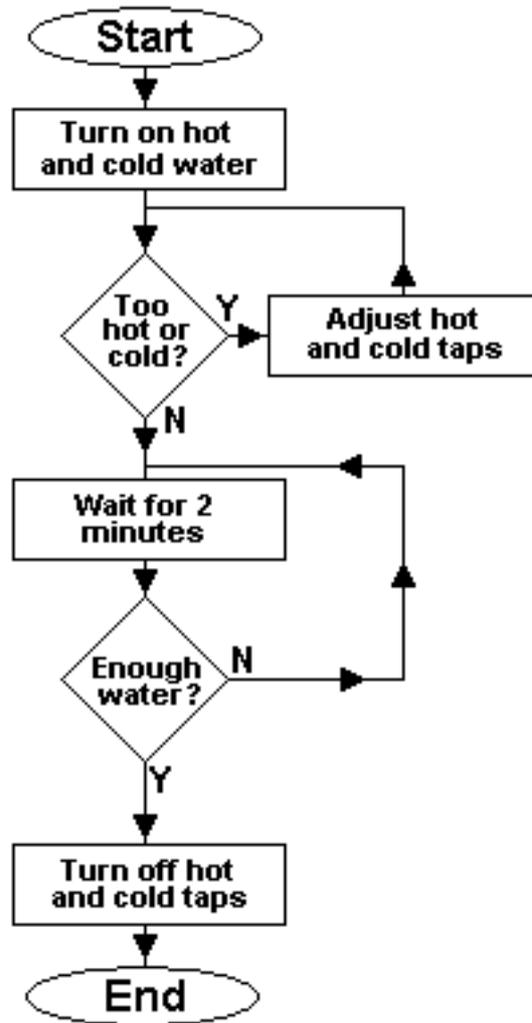
The screenshot displays the FuzzyMap software interface. The main window shows a mind map centered on "Hypnosis" (red text). Two primary branches, "Trance" and "Mirroring" (blue text), extend from the center. "Trance" branches into "Signs of", "Deepening", and "Utilizing" (green text). "Mirroring" branches into "Posture", "Breathing", "Gestures", and "Much more" (green text). A secondary branch, "Language" (blue text), extends from the center to the right. "Language" branches into "Patterns" and "Predicates" (green text). "Patterns" further branches into "Ambiguities", "Hidden commands", and "More..." (magenta text). "Predicates" branches into "V, A, K" and "Preferred rep. system" (magenta text). The interface includes a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Help), a toolbar, a style panel (Style name: Presentation, Level: 1, Line width, Colors, Spline), a font sample area (Arial, Font sample), a tree view on the left, a URL field (http://nlp.snowseed.com/intro\_hypnosis.htm), a zoom control (Zoom (%): 100), and an update button.

### *Flowcharts*

A flowchart illustrates the steps in a process. It identifies the start and end points of a process, the sequence of actions in the process, and the decision or branching points along the way...



Here is a simple example flowcharting the process of filling the bath...



Drawing a flow chart can often help to clarify your understanding of a complex sequence of decisions and processes. It may even expose fallacies, false assumptions and illogical sequences in the study materials themselves.

## Asking Questions & Listening

Our dignity and urge to survive are intimately tied in with the ways in which we make meaning out of our experiences, through the use of our intellect, our feelings and our knowledge. This capacity to make meaning can be enhanced by improving our questioning and listening skills.

In order to learn, we need a questioning frame of mind, a sensible tendency to take nothing at face value, even from those we consider to have authority in a subject. For example, try conducting a debate in your mind: take several sides in an argument. You may discuss the ethics of capital punishment. Contradict your first opinions - indeed work out arguments that attempt to prove that your most passionately held conviction is baseless. If your dearest beliefs can stand up to such examination then you may understand them better, or even understand them truly for the first time. Or be willing to change them for more realistic ones.

Another useful exercise is to challenge ideas which may not be your own but which are popularly held views, such as the varying beliefs that your parents and peers have about issues of sexuality, religion, censorship, law, and so on. Every generation has a collection of almost unquestioned assumptions which are promptly overturned by the next generation, but it may be that neither is truly objective in their thinking.

Exercises like these establish the habit of questioning - a heightened awareness which will help you understand and remember. From being the passive receptor of facts you have become the active seeker after truth.

A good teacher or tutor will thrive on being stretched by their students. They want to be pressed to justify their assertions and clarify their comments. If they are vague, it is necessary to ask them to be precise. The 'Effective Communication' course taught the skills of asking questions and of listening effectively. Of course, we need to ask questions to find out facts we are missing and to learn the opinions of others.

We ask 'open questions' to get background information, to explore opinions and to encourage discussion - for example: "What do you mean by...?" "Where have I gone wrong...?" "Why is it better to...?"

Closed questions, which can be answered in a few words, such as "In what year did that occur?" are used to find out specific facts and to get Yes/No answers. Clarifying and extending questions - "What exactly do you mean by...?" "Could you tell me more about...?" - are used to probe and obtain information in greater depth.

And then of course you need to really listen to the replies you obtain, and if necessary to make notes and to check if your interpretation and new understanding is correct.

What does the discipline of listening involve? The levels of meaning expressed by an individual may be myriad and subtle. We cannot address all of them in the immediate

moment so we make choices, we select, we decide to focus on particular aspects of what is said. The words, the content, are one thing; beyond that we may try to understand what assumptions the speaker is defining or trying to communicate. Listening to the individual and having respect for his or her effort to make sense, is something totally outside of our day-to-day experiences of talking to people. In many of our conversations, people tend to take positions and they retreat into giving advice, "You should do this because..." Or we may be exchanging ideas and as soon as there is the opportunity for disagreement, each person expresses his view without consideration for the merits of what the other is saying nor for the opportunity for learning that the situation presents.

Retreat into a position of authority as a means of justifying control and power, however, results in inaccessibility to negotiation and thwarts mutual learning. When control and power become issues of central concern in a learning situation, the emphasis shifts from an open examination of assumptions; argument, justification and subterfuge become the predominant responses. Each person becomes more concerned about maintaining their position, as if their integrity is at stake. Ideas and knowledge become possessions over which one must exert control, with the focus upon maintaining one's status, rather than sharing one's discoveries, meanings and speculations.

One of the most difficult things to learn is to listen and see the world as the other person sees it, not just conceptually but also experientially and emotionally. If a person can experience his feelings he can make meaning out of them. The capacity to make meaning is one of the things that people begin to discover when they are heard. If two people are empathetically in communication, truly listening to one another, then true learning can take place between them.

## Thinking Clearly

“I read it in a book” is often considered as sufficient evidence for the truth of a statement. In study we must apply more rigorous standards if we are to discern truth from falsehood. We must abandon common assumptions and subject all knowledge to scrutiny. This means abandoning such phrases as “It’s common sense.” It was once common sense to burn witches and to believe that the earth was flat. Today’s common sense stands a good chance of being tomorrow’s discarded superstition.

The aim of study is the search for more accurate knowledge. A questioning attitude is essential for those who wish to understand critically rather than by rote. Much experimental work in psychology has confirmed that people tend to ignore evidence which is contrary to their own preconceptions. The most strongly held idea holds sway against overwhelming evidence. For example, the driver who objects to safety belts because of the odd case where a life is saved through not wearing a belt, is ignoring the thousands of contrary cases which justify the wearing of safety belts. Similarly, nationalistic attitudes are reinforced by concentrating on the undesirable behavior of a few and attributing this both to their being foreign and also to everyone else of the same nationality.

In study it is essential to examine all the available evidence in order to sum it up and reach useful conclusions. In addition to looking for evidence which supports an argument you also need to consider evidence which is contrary or which is apparently contrary to the argument. Unless you can show that you considered all the evidence and explain why you rejected opposing evidence, your own argument will be unconvincing and open to the charge of bias.

Truly logical thought, starting from true premises, must lead to a true conclusion. Irrational thought, whether or not it starts from true premises, can only reach the truth by accident. The moral is that if you want to understand and master the world, learn to think clearly and start now.

### *Some common faults in thinking*

#### **1. The causative fallacy**

The mistake here is to assume that because A and B occur together, that A therefore is causally connected to B. Or that because B follows A, that A is the cause of B. Proof that A causes B is much harder to arrive at than merely finding A and B occurring together or one after the other. A wage demand may precede a strike but that doesn’t mean it is the cause of it.

#### **2. Selecting convenient examples**

One naturally looks for evidence to support an argument, since without supporting evidence your argument would be pretty worthless. But equally, unless you look for

and consider contrary examples, your argument may be considered uninformed. For example, you may know someone who took a university degree and remains unemployed, but that doesn't mean that studying is a waste of time.

### **3. Tautology**

A tautology is basically saying the same thing twice whilst giving the appearance of an argument. "People who are clever get high marks in intelligence tests," is simply stating the obvious. Quite often though, the two parts of a tautology are widely separated and difficult to spot.

### **4. Exceeding the evidence**

Evidence leads us to set up an hypothesis, which we then go on to test. At the end of this testing stage we hope to uphold or refute our hypothesis. We may, however, on the basis of slim evidence, go on to make some wonderful theory that has not actually been tested. For example, somebody we may see a friend driving a big, expensive car and assume he has come into a fortune, maybe won the lottery. But we have deduced too much from a single fact. He may have borrowed or even stolen the fancy car.

### **5. Bowing to authority**

The arguments of an 'expert' must be tested just as severely as anyone else's. The value of what is stated should be solely based on the supporting evidence provided. Consider whether examples given hold up in the light of your own life experience, and whether alternative evidence is available.

### **6. A biased view**

Quite often we consider a view from one point of view only. Residents in the line of a motorway are only likely to see it as something which destroys the value of their property. But for clear thinking, each question must be viewed from all possible angles so as to avoid the bias of viewing from one position.

The further Mind Development course 'Thinking in Concepts' will give a great deal more information about logical analysis of studied materials and how to think without distortion or fallacy.

## Word Definitions

Man thinks in concepts. A concept is a classification which helps us to understand the world around us. The idea of 'car' is a concept. You haven't seen all the cars in the world but because you have a concept of 'car' in your mind you can recognize a new vehicle that fits your criteria for 'car' immediately.

A person forms a concept in order to think more conveniently - he doesn't have to describe every car to himself, he just thinks 'car.' The concept is also valuable as a means to communicate conveniently - however the success of the communication depends on the closeness with which our concepts agree. We get into trouble when one person and another use the same word to mean different things, especially since not all concepts are so straightforward as 'car' - how about beauty or sin?

In everyday speech we are quite careless about the words we use and the meanings we attach to them. We may have just a vague understanding, but in the situation of studying a subject we need to do better than that. We need to ensure that we know precisely what the author means by the words he uses. Only then can we understand the author's arguments. Equally, we need to be on the lookout for ill-defined words which may have led the author to unjustified conclusions.

### *Creative Definition Procedure*

The purpose of this procedure is to handle an area where the student's understanding is incomplete. It examines the known and unknown assumptions behind the meanings and definitions of symbols, words and language. You will learn to creatively generate clear definitions that can be used to comprehend and communicate about any term precisely.

Sometimes a given word can be run through this procedure several times with benefit, because some words and symbols are so identified with that the student cannot distinguish, intellectually and emotionally, between the word and the thing that it symbolizes.

Choose a word that is causing difficulty or of which your understanding is vague.

- First look the word up in a good Dictionary and provide example sentences of the word being used, for each of the definitions that the dictionary provides.
- Next look up the word in Roget's Thesaurus and find out what words are synonymous with the word in question, and what words are antonyms.
- Look up the word in an encyclopedia (if an entry exists) to see how the word is applied in the real world.
- Now answer the following questions and continue until you have a new enlightened definition of the word in question...

What is your understanding of the word (...)?

What are some things the word (...) does not mean?

What are some things the word (...) can be used to describe?

What are some things the word (...) can not be used to describe?

What can the word (...) be associated with (connected with)?

What words, symbols or things can the word (...) be differentiated from?

What is the word (...) similar to?

Provide a deliberately misunderstood example of the word (...) in a sentence.

Is there an earlier subject or are there earlier ideas that affect or influence your understanding of the word (...)?

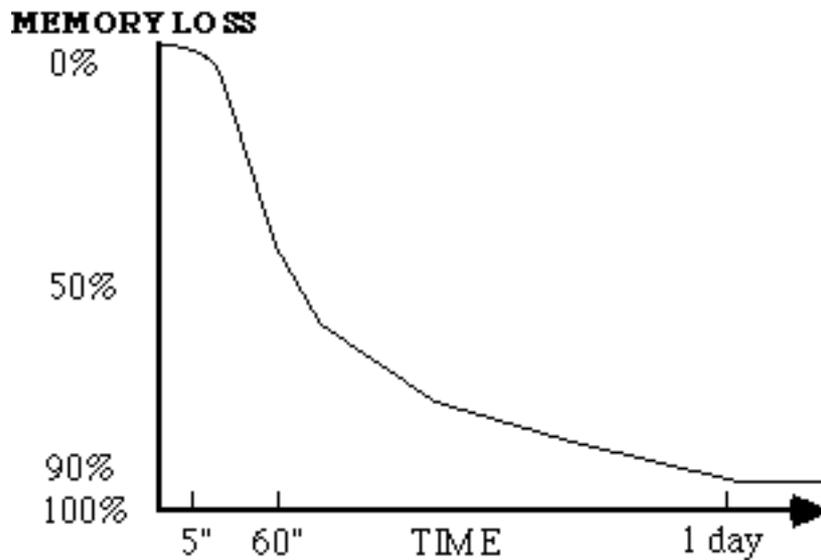
What prior assumptions or beliefs are necessary to understand or give meaning to the word (...)?

Exactly how would you convey your understanding of the word (...) to another person?

Compare your understanding of the word (...) at the beginning of these questions to the understanding you have now.

## Defeating the Decay of Memories

The decay of memory capacity is such that an hour after trying to memorize, approximately fifty percent of the facts may have been forgotten. A day later nearly everything related to the memory exercise may have evaporated. A graph drawn to show the way in which people forget would show a sudden, dramatic downward curve starting about five minutes after the attempted memorization. This assumes that full attention was given to the spoken or written materials, with understanding; obviously if little attention was paid or the material was not understood, there would be little to be remembered! The amount of forgetting passes the fifty percent mark at one hour and falls to 90% after a day. The curve then levels off at about 90 - 99%.



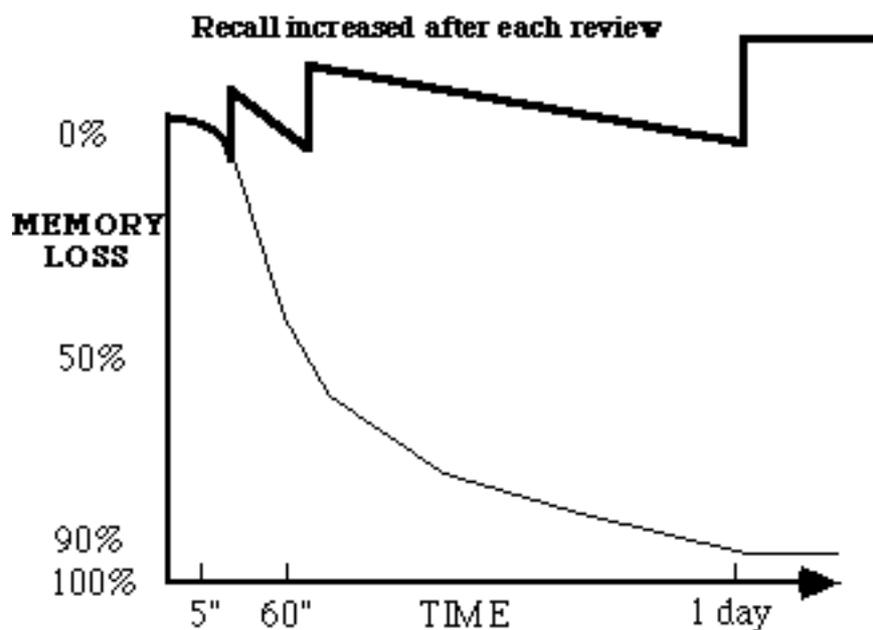
Suppose instead one could turn this curve around and increase the amount of remembered facts with the passage of time. Studies have been carried out by Dr Matthew Erdelyi of New York University which showed that volunteers trying out his ideas, found themselves remembering twice as much information the day after the learning had taken place than five minutes after. From these studies practical techniques have been evolved which enable anyone to reverse the usual forgetting curve and remember things better as time goes by.

The method is as follows. Suppose you have to attend a lecture or meeting where it is not possible to take notes or make a recording, yet it is vital to recall the salient points which were discussed. To ensure effective recall you must set up a program in your mind which will act as a store for information. Therefore, as the session proceeds make a mental note of key points which are raised by repeating these subject headings to yourself in numerical order. Repeat this list from the beginning as each new heading is added. In this way you can keep a running total of all the successive points that have been raised. This is possible because your inner thought-stream is much faster than the vocalized speech that you are listening to, so you can fill in the gaps with your review

programming. It also helps to accompany each heading with a visual representation of the subject matter, particularly if that image is striking or humorous, i.e. memorable.

Five or ten minutes after the session ends, find a quiet place where you can sit down and relax, then go through these key topics in your mind. Do not worry if in this short space of time quite a lot of the material seems to have been forgotten. Spend a couple of minutes on this exercise and never strain yourself to recall elusive items. Just make an educated guess about anything you cannot recall at that time. Repeat each of the topics to yourself just once and make a written note if you can. This helps the initial neurological consolidation of the memories from short term to permanent long term recordings.

About an hour later, have a second recall session, exactly as before, going through all the topics without undue strain, repeating them to yourself. New aspects and data will reappear by association. The third session should take place about three hours later, the next after six hours, preferably before going to sleep. This makes maximum use of the consolidation occurring during the dreaming process. Repeat the recall procedures three or four times on each of the second and third days, spacing the sessions out evenly through the day.



Matthew Erdelyi found that his subjects recalled information most easily if they were able to call up mental images associated with a particular topic. It seems that the mind handles images, especially vivid and unusual ones, far more effectively than it deals with words, numbers, or abstract concepts. You can make use of this fact by briefly forming a picture of each major topic when it is initially described and later as you review the topic; this will enhance retention and recall.

If you get stuck at any point make use of the picture association to jog your memory. Remain relaxed and think of the first thing that the previous item you were able to

remember reminds you of. This should produce an association of some kind that can be used as a trigger, leading on to the next link in the chain.

After perhaps up to ten such links have been pulled out of your mind, one of the missing topics will reappear, like a rabbit out of the conjurer's hat.

Try this review system as an exercise at the earliest opportunity in a real-life situation. Compare the gain in remembered facts with what you were normally able to hold in your mind over a period of three or more days. Your memory and your ability to learn are much, much greater than you may have supposed. The effect of such a review program is to reduce greatly the rate of forgetting. Instead of the memory dropping off rapidly by about 80% over the first 24 hours, it can be reinforced by reviews at the critical consolidations periods and at subsequent intervals, and it can be raised back towards and then above, that which was initially retained.

The same technique can be applied whenever you study materials that you intend to remember. It may be thought that with continued study of a subject, the reviews would accumulate and take over most of your study time. Actually, this is not the case. Supposing a person studied every day for one hour a day, and in addition set up a review program for this study. On any one day he would need to review the work from the study session just finished (immediately after, a few hours after and before going to bed), and also material from one day, one week, one month and six months before.

<b>Review of work done:</b>	<b>Time taken:</b>
Same day	5 minutes
1 week before	3 minutes
1 month before	1 minute
6 months before	1 minute
Maximum review time on any one day:	10 minutes

Thus a person spending one hour a day on study would need to spend only a maximum total of 10 minutes a day to complete all the necessary reviewing, and improve his memory many times over. Thus a few minutes devoted to review makes the hours spent studying effective and worthwhile.

To summarize: keep going backward! Make time to stop and reflect. Go back to what you learned yesterday, the day before, last week, and so on. You still need all of this. Don't just go surging forward, letting all your learning evaporate in your wake. Your success will be measured by how much you've consolidated - not on how much you once learned and then forgot. When you have acquired the discipline of organized review of previously studied materials, and received the benefits, the procedure will become automatic and easy.

# Physical Learning

Thought is not necessarily distinct from physical activity. Thought need not be something going on in your head with no outward manifestation. You actually have two bodies: your physical body and a mental representation of the physical body called the kinesthetic body. Ideally your physical and kinesthetic bodies act in coordination. But sometimes the habit patterns installed in the kinesthetic body (in the motor region of the brain) have urges and impulses of their own that we have to over-ride. Thus clumsiness, lack of coordination and difficulty acquiring physical skills is easily explained. It's like having one leg going one way and the other heading in a different direction. The secret is to get your physical and kinesthetic bodies working together, then you can quickly learn new physical skills and improve your performance of existing ones.

## *Integration Exercise*

1. Slowly *raise your arms* up into the air and then lower them again, paying close attention to all the sensations of muscle, bones and flesh that this movement involves. Do this several times.
2. Keep your arms down at your sides but this time *mentally* raise your arms above your head and lower them again, and try to feel all the same sensations as you felt before. Do this action in your imagination, as vividly as you can, repeating it several times.
3. Now raise your physical arms up into the air above your head; then as you lower your physical arms down to your sides simultaneously raise your mental arms above your head; and then raise your physical arms whilst lowering your mental arms. Continue this cycle of actions until you can perform it smoothly and realistically.
4. Take a step to the right with your physical right leg and return, then do the same with your left leg, stepping to the left and returning. Then repeat with your mental legs, concentrating on getting the same sensations. Continue until you can clearly feel and differentiate your two bodies.
5. Concentrate on feeling your two physical arms as they hang by your sides. Then try to feel your mental arms occupying the same place as your physical arms. And then try to simultaneously feel both your physical and mental arms at the same time.
6. Raise your physical and mental arms simultaneously, being aware of both at the same time. Then lower them simultaneously, maintaining your focus on feeling them both together.

7. Step to the left and return, making the same step with your mental legs as well. Then similarly step to the right. Continue until you can feel your mental legs as a separate set of sensations moving in coordination with your physical legs.
8. Come to rest. Draw in both a physical and mental breath. Feel both equally. Have your physical and mental lungs breathe slowly and evenly in coordination, and enjoy the relaxation.

If you are studying a subject which describes a physical skill, it is effective learning to mime the actions. Miming or acting it out in this way will help your understanding and your memory, so when you actually come to do it, it will not seem unfamiliar. To help your mime, use your imaginative powers to put yourself in the situation you are miming - try to see yourself swimming, driving, fixing the car, etc. At the same time as you mime the physical movements, make the same movements with your mental (kinesthetic) body. Visualize as clearly as you can what it would actually feel like - what sensations are there in your body? How will you move your hands and feet? What do your surroundings look like and what are you wearing? How is your breathing and tension? Are you scared or confident or in between?

## Sight, Sound, Action...

### Visual

Approximately one third of persons prefer to learn by seeing. They have a preference for the visual sense. They enjoy communicating through pictures, graphs and visual artifacts. They are particularly good at visualizing remembered or imaginary scenes. They may utilize pictures rather than sounds when spelling and remembering. They prefer to 'map out' instructions using a layout plan; when giving directions they will make references to what you will 'see' and in general they will think in visual terms.

### Auditory

Another third of persons enjoy communicating and learning by means of sound, including the spoken word. They have a preference for the auditory sense. Discussion and oral exercises suit them best. They tend to remember names rather than faces and may spell by recalling the patterns of sounds. They prefer to give and receive instructions verbally, with emphasis on sequence, repetition and summary.

### Kinesthetic

The final third of persons prefer to engage with experience physically. They have a preference for the kinesthetic senses of feeling, touch, movement and position. In communication they make their point with their hands and bodies and become animated as they do so. They learn best through practice and experience and may feel frustrated with static learning situations using books and lectures. They will give instructions by demonstration or gestures; when giving directions they would be more inclined to take you there.

We do, to a large extent, utilize all three sensual modalities, but tend to have a particular preference for one. We do best to structure our learning to utilize all the senses, including our favored modality. Since the given materials, such as the current Mind Development course, may be predominantly written information, it falls on the student to express the information in diverse ways. In doing so, he or she will learn more in the process.

Let us take the example of an airline pilot, to see how he learns complex series of mechanical and systems checks. Every six months his license and therefore his living, depends on his passing a test that requires him to remember all these checks in sequence and to apply them in a test situation. In this case the test situation is a simulator and amongst the many compulsory drills to be tested is a simulated engine failure during take-off. It is a situation, whether imagined or real, of high stress.

Lives depend not only on the pilots ability to remember but also on the ability to perform the remembered tasks in the correct sequence whilst also catering for other, unanticipated, variables. He does not remember and learn to perform at this level by

reading and re-reading the manual, followed by a written exam. That is not enough; he needs a multi-sensory approach.

The flight deck of a modern airliner is organized so that the systems controlling the aircraft can be managed effectively and systematically. Flight instrumentation gives feedback on all operating systems. The crew are required to talk through agreed procedures and affirm their completion: it is aural. As they engage a control or operate a switch, the pilots point to and physically touch the instrument: it is physical. In the unlikely event of a stall or being too close to terrain, a warning system operates: lights flash, a loud warning signal repeats and a recorded voice warns of the danger, plus the control column vibrates. It is a visual, auditory and kinesthetic experience.

How does a pilot learn the complex systems? Yes, there are manuals. Yes, there are updates and briefings. Yes, there are simulator courses, feedback from supervisory captains and regular tests. But ultimately it requires the individual on his or her own to learn the mass of material. He needs to make the information his own.

Firstly, he takes the systems notes provided by the official manual and reconstructs the essential areas into his own notes. There are more maps and diagrams than written explanations. Each complex procedure is broken down into structured elements following a clear formula comprising flow charts and highlighted keywords, and the actions sequenced properly. A summary map is placed on the wall above the study desk. On the desk is placed a large layout of the controls of the airplane's flight deck.

To learn the drills, the pilot looks at his flow chart, says the action described there aloud, as he reaches forward and touches the control on the layout plan. It is rehearsed until there is no need for the props and prompt cards - until he can do it blind: in his mind's eye he is able to say the action described, see the flight deck, move his hand to operate the control, and move on to the next action. The learning is being rehearsed in three different sensory modalities: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. The new knowledge is reviewed regularly both by the pilot and in formal tests in order to keep the retention high.

This is real learning: learning for application, both mental and physical. It requires involvement and initiative from the student, but the reward is a high level of skill and that makes possible the realistic accomplishment of life objectives.

## ***The formula for effective recall***

Effective recall = MOSS...

**M**otivation + a clear sense of a positive **O**utcome + useful **S**trategies + the correct **S**tate

### ***Motivation***

Recall requires conscious attention and directed effort. We need to intend to recall the information at the beginning of the 'revision' process. Ask:

- Are you certain about what it is you want to know?
- When will you have learned it by?
- For what purpose are you learning it?
- How will it connect you with what you have learned before and what is to come?
- How will you reward yourself for having learned it?

### **A clear sense of a positive outcome**

An outcome we can move toward is important. Ask:

- Once this is learned what will I be able to do to demonstrate it?
- How would someone else know that you had learned this material?
- Have you given yourself an overview by scanning the materials you need to learn?
- What kind of questions will you be able to answer once this material is learned?
- Then visualize and experience the feeling of successfully achieving your outcome.

### **Useful strategies**

Combinations of learning methods - such as those discussed above - are most effective. Ask:

- Do you have the resources you need?
- Are your learning strategies visual, auditory and kinesthetic?
- Will you combine strategies?
- How will you test your recall?
- What plans do you have to come back to the material?

### **The correct state**

We need to be in the correct state for study, both physically and emotionally. This requires regular breaks, a healthy diet, good sleep, a supportive learning environment and a positive state of mind. Ask:

- Have you set aside an adequate period of time free from interference?
- Are you in a comfortable space which you can use to assist your learning, for example by putting up memory maps, diagrams and colorful reminders on the walls?

- Is the space warm but not too warm; light; quiet or with music which helps you learn?
- Will you have regular breaks?
- After having a break will you review and preview, before starting again?

It is said that we learn...

10% of what we read

20% of what we hear

30% of what we see

50% of what we both see and hear

70% of what is discussed with others

80% of what we experience personally

90% of what we teach to others

## The Decision to Fail

Frequently a child encounters an area of study, such as math, and decides that it requires too much mental effort, that others are doing better than themselves so they are falling behind, and that they are not likely to succeed in the subject. They then make a decision that it is better not to try any more in this subject, in order to salvage their self-esteem. They have made *a decision to fail*.

Such decisions by children act with the power of hypnotic commands, as they are normally made in a state of considerable emotion and stress. The consequences of such decisions can act for a lifetime. Even a person with a high IQ may find that certain simple mental operations are forever beyond his grasp. If the decision to fail is so deeply impressed that it cannot be recalled, practice in these areas can still produce little gain.

A decision to fail may also derive from a block in the subconscious mind. Perhaps a child is forbidden to touch a precious musical instrument and after some trauma eventually concludes that music is out of his reach. This 'giving up' on the subject continue to haunt later years for that person as a subconscious assumption that music is out of reach.

It has long been recognized that anyone's mind cannot function well where there is anxiety. The effect of troubled emotions in class was the subject of a research project run in the USA by the Public Health Service. This project showed the intimate connection between emotions and learning ability. Children with social and emotional problems were also poor readers relative to their tested level of IQ.

My own experience as a psychotherapist is very similar. Frequently reading problems will manifest earlier than severe emotional problems. This is because related complexes in the mind are pushed down one of top of the other to form a stack, so that the last one to be entered on the stack is the first one to appear - but the real cause is buried further down the stack. Assuming normal intelligence, only a severely disturbed child will experience difficulties learning to read, so one can expect some traumatic experiences down at the bottom of the stack.

If a small child has emotional problems and this is unrecognized by the parents, then nothing will be done about it until the child reaches school. Then the child will be singled out because of poor academic performance, not because of emotional problems. So the situation is compounded, particularly if the child is not helped at that point but has to struggle through the school system under a cloud. The neglect then becomes very costly to the child, the family and to society.

The causes of emotional tension in the home are many. The most potent of all are quarrels between the parents which strike at the very root of the child's need for security. It should be remembered that the dominant parent is seen by the small child as

an infallible, godlike creature. The parent's pronouncements have the force of hypnotic commands. Statements like "run away and play," or "don't bother me with stupid questions," can turn a child into a work-shy recluse in later years. Most dangerous of all are the parent's prognostication such as "you'll never make anything of yourself," or "you'll just be a waster." Even if spoken in jest they may become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Some children can be driven so hard to achieve by their parents that educational results become charged with emotion, and the child may cease to achieve as a form of rebellion, or develop a neurotic guilt complex as a result of failure. At school, the child is vulnerable to the disciplinarian teacher who uses sarcasm and ridicule to bring children to heel. This tends to bring out defiance in the poor performer, resulting in the conscious decision to act dumb.

In later years, at work and in adult education, similar problems with inadequate teachers in combination with poor study skills may lead to making a conscious 'decision to fail' in a particular subject: based on the feeling that the subject is impossible to succeed with and should be avoided in the future.

Decisions to fail may also be a result of achievements that are felt to be unrecognized. This is particularly the case if a large part of the motivation for the activity was to please another person. Lack of acknowledgement when an ability has been achieved may also lead to over-running the study, so that enthusiasm wanes and turns into protest.

Another factor is the application of an unrealistic measure to success in an activity. A perfectionist compulsion will make any achievement seem inadequate. If one thinks one has to become a world-class musician to have succeeded in the study of playing an instrument, this unrealistic expectation will invalidate the actual accomplishments and lead one to consider the study a failure and to give up on the subject in the future.

There may be fears related to actually applying the skills being learned, to do with confronting real-world and potentially stressful situations. This may be rationalized by making justifications for not continuing with the study.

Conscious decisions to fail may be remembered by the student and re-assessed. It may be realized that the situation leading to that original decision is not the same as the current situation, and that what seemed impossible then may be accomplished now by the application of sound study skills and with the proper motivation and mature approach.

Furthermore, it may be recognized that perceived inabilities probably stem from decisions to fail in early childhood, and that although these decisions may be subconscious and buried under layers of later emotions and intentions so that they are not directly perceived now, nevertheless a re-assessment is possible: the feeling of inability can be replaced by an up-to-date, objective view.

## What's Next?

We hope you enjoyed your first run through Super Student. Remember that the 'cyclic' approach to study is a good one - if you go back to earlier exercises now, you'll see them in a new light and get much more out of them. It's a good idea to choose a particular lesson and concentrate on practicing its principles in your life for a few days, until it is completely mastered and assimilated. For each exercise, consider: How can I use this for work/rest/play?

You now have practical experience of how effective studying enables you understand, remember and apply detailed information, and how important such knowledge is in equipping you for the challenges of life. The next course in Mind Development builds on what you have learned in Super Student to provide a full education in how to read both quickly and in depth over a wide range of subjects, and then to be able to appreciate, analyze and apply what you have read with clear and incisive intelligence.

### ***Power Reading***

This home study course can double your reading speed and *supercharge your brain's capacity* to digest, remember and implement huge amounts of information... essential ingredients to success in your professional and personal life.

We all learn to read at school, after a fashion. But for most of us, this is not an optimal use of our brain power. In this course you will learn to better use the left brain's focused attention combined with the right brain's peripheral attention, in close harmony. Good communication between the brain hemispheres is a prerequisite for creative thinking and also a sense of well-being, where thoughts and feelings are integrated.

Reading may be defined as an individual's total inter-relationship with symbolic information. Reading is a communication process requiring a series of skills. As such reading is a thinking process rather than an exercise in eye movements. Effective reading requires a logical sequence of thought patterns, and these patterns require practice to set them into the mind. The methods currently used in schools do not touch on the issues of speed, comprehension and critical analysis and indeed all those skills which can be described as advanced reading techniques. In short, most of your reading problems have not been dealt with during your initial education. By using appropriate techniques, the limitations of early education can be overcome and reading ability improved by 500% or more.

The course teaches in-depth reading techniques that greatly improve literary intelligence, so that you can clearly perceive the ideas and values that the writer is expressing and relate them to those of other authors and so be better able to make objective conclusions. The course is available in September 2004.

[Click here to order the Power Reading Course](#)

Tools for Transformation offers further excellent courses in the Mind Development series to radically boost your progress on your path of personal growth. You can obtain fulfillment of your mental potential, a new clarity of your purpose and identity in this life, and tremendous spiritual enlightenment, if you choose to really follow through on these courses!

### ***Educating the Will***

The Mind Development Course which precedes Super Student is “**Educating the Will.**” This course teaches the skills of concentration as a means of educating the will. Often, when we put our mind on something, we think of something else and this, in turn, reminds us of something else. The mind wanders from one thing to another by associations, until the original thing is forgotten. 'Concentration' means putting all one's attention on something, and keeping it there for as long as one wishes to. So if you concentrate on a book, you are aware of the book and you are not thinking, looking or listening to anything else. If you are concentrating you are awake and aware. In much of everyday life, most people are effectively day-dreaming - at worst they are sleep-walking automatons. Their minds flip mechanically from one thing to another, never resting on anything for very long or intentionally. This process may go on for the whole of their lives and they never learn or achieve anything of consequence.

Unless we can wake ourselves up from this mechanicalness and sleep, we cannot begin work on ourselves and we cannot get things done in life. We must learn the mood of concentration - of actually BEING in the Here-and-Now, noticing and observing, and focused on our actions.

Concentration is a means to develop the will, so that life may be lived purposely and creatively, rather than as a reaction to the flow of sensations. Because you will not flit from one thing to another, like a butterfly, you will be able to choose to focus your mind on things, e.g., study or work, and will increase your skills and knowledge in these areas. Most importantly, you will be able to focus more clearly on your vision of what you want to achieve.

In short, your mental life is both intensified and broadened. The ability to concentrate is, therefore, a valuable skill which will enhance all other skills. Almost all the drills and exercises of Mind Development help develop your ability to concentrate. But are there are ways to improve your concentration directly? Yes, and this course teaches the best of them.

**[Click here to order the Educating the Will Course](#)**

## ***Effective Communication***

The Mind Development Course which precedes Educating the Will is “**Effective Communication.**” This course teaches powerful communication skills that enable you to be more effective at work and in those situations of everyday life where better communication can make all the difference.

The **Effective Communication** course offers a series of practical exercises which develop the skills of communication and help the student to apply the fruits of his or her learning *here and now* - both to his or her personal growth and to the practical issues of personal relationships and business.

Improvement in our ability to communicate externally is reflected by a similar gain in communication between parts of the brain. The practice exercises enable development of *all areas of the brain*, even those which have been long under-used. They affect, particularly, the integration of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Each hemisphere governs a different way of thinking and seeing the world. By doing the exercises thoroughly, the student can bring both halves of the brain *into mutual communication*, so that he or she is freer to think holistically and experience the world from an expanded point of view.

Communication is the vehicle for all further techniques, so communications skills are a vital aspect of Mind Development. The **Effective Communication** course includes practical exercises to enhance the person's capacity to listen attentively and comprehend. Following that, questioning skills are practiced, which have relevance to communication, memory and understanding. This will help the student to *maintain control of communication* in practical, social and business situations. You will also learn about practical problem solving and how to achieve your goals in life.

[Click here to order the Effective Communication Course](#)

## *Super Vision*

The first course in the Mind Development system, preceding Effective Communication, is “**Super Vision**,” a home-study course to improve the mind's capacity for visualization and integration between left and right brain, boosting memory, creativity, natural eyesight and drawing ability. This is a new way of seeing - and being.

The practical exercises offered in this course help to develop visual perception, which is one branch of non-verbal communication, and address the subject of breathing and relaxation. Adequate oxygenation of the brain and a relaxed state of being is necessary for further developing the mind.

The eyes and the ears are the main channels through which one gains information about the world. As with listening skills, training in visualization and looking makes you more aware. When you are more aware, the subconscious mind has less influence. This means you are more relaxed, less anxious, less easily upset, a better memorizer - and your vision is improved.

[Click here to order the Super Vision Course](#)

No one need accept that they must remain as they were shaped, by the conditioning of their childhood and culture. The benefits of Mind Development are all-encompassing and life transforming. There will be 12 courses in total in the Mind Development series. Click here to read about what is in store...

[Further Mind Development Courses...](#)