Card Shuffle

by Michael Grinder

From the 4th grade on, a student’s demonstration that he has mastered/learned the school work is by taking a test. Some students do better on daily work than they do on the exam. Why is this and what can be done to help them?

Why? Education presents new information in a certain sequential order. Just look at the end of any chapter. The content of the questions are in the same order that the content was originally presented. A test usually consists of the same ideas but rearranged; therefore, the suggestion is that those students who can see content in their mind’s eye, understand the material and do well on the daily work but poorly on the test have lodged the information in too sequential an order. The exam often is a shock to them. To understand how confusing this experience is for them, think of chunks of information that you have stored in your mind in a certain sequence and notice what happens to you when you are asked to retrieve the content in a different order. For example, if you were asked, “How many days are there in November and May?” Most of us would have to begin by talking to ourselves through the little rhyme of “30 days has September. . ..” Since most tests are timed, “speed” inadvertently becomes equated with “being intelligent.” In essence, school success isn’t based on whether you know the information but how you have the information stored.

Another example of how information which you have stored sequentially becomes confusing when rearranged is a series of questions which asks you about your phone number: “What is the 5th number?” “What is the 2nd number?” etc. You know the information but are not ready for the test. The urge is to write out the phone number and then answer the questions. The students who have an ease with school are able to see the content in their mind’s eye and answer questions. The following is a method for teaching the student to rearrange the information before the test. This is the mental ability that the better students already have.

CAUTION: This approach is designed to be used only after the information is understood in the original form that it appeared. Also the steps listed below are very thorough; often times, once the student has practiced them, they can skip those they perceive as extraneous. Initially, we recommend that each step be successfully done before going on to the next step or skipped steps.

1. Read a passage of information and take the first five major chunks and organize them on cards so that the front of the card has a question and the back side has the answer. Number the cards #1-5 on both the front and back side. Make sure the cards are in the order the information appeared.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Front side</th>
<th>? #1</th>
<th>? #2</th>
<th>? #3</th>
<th>? #4</th>
<th>? #5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Back side</td>
<td>answer 1</td>
<td>answer 2</td>
<td>answer 3</td>
<td>answer 4</td>
<td>answer 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Read the question and verify the answer by turning the card over.

3. While keeping the questions still facing towards you, shuffle the cards and do #2 again.

   Front side  | ? #4  | ? #3  | ? #1  | ? #5  | ? #2

   Back side  | answer 4 | answer 3 | answer 1 | answer 5 | answer 2

4. Turn the card over and put them in order (answer #1 is facing you). Read the answer and verify the question by turning the card over.

   Front side  | answer 1  | answer 2  | answer 3  | answer 4  | answer 5

   Back side  | ? #1  | ? #2  | ? #3  | ? #4  | ? #5

5. While keeping the answers still facing towards you, shuffle the cards and do #4 again.

   Front side  | answer 3  | answer 5  | answer 1  | answer 2  | answer 4

   Back side  | ? #3  | ? #5  | ? #1  | ? #2  | ? #4

6. Put the cards back in order. Turn some of the cards over (e.g. odd numbered ones). Read the question or answer of the card facing you and verify the corresponding answer or question by turning the card over.

   Front side  | ? #1  | answer 2  | ? #3  | answer 4  | ? #5

   Back side  | answer 1  | ? #2  | answer 3  | ? #4  | answer 5
7. Leave the deck like it is and turn it over. You still have the cards in sequential order but the opposite sides are facing you (e.g., the even numbered ones are turned around). Read the answer or question of the card facing you and verify the corresponding question or answer by turning the card over.

Front side  
answer 1  |  ? #2  |  answer 3  |  ? #4  |  answer 5

Back side  
? #1  |  answer 2  |  ? #3  |  answer 4  |  ? #5

8. Shuffle the deck and do #7 again. Read the answer or question of the card facing you and verify the corresponding question or answer by turning the card over.

Front side  
answer 1  |  answer 2  |  answer 3  |  answer 4  |  answer 5

Back side  
? #1  |  ? #2  |  ? #3  |  ? #4  |  ? #5

9. Leave the deck like it is and turn it over. Read the answer or question of the card facing you and verify the corresponding question or answer by turning the card over.

Front side  
answer 4  |  answer 3  |  ? #5  |  answer 1  |  ? #2

Back side  
? #4  |  ? #3  |  answer 5  |  ? #1  |  answer 2