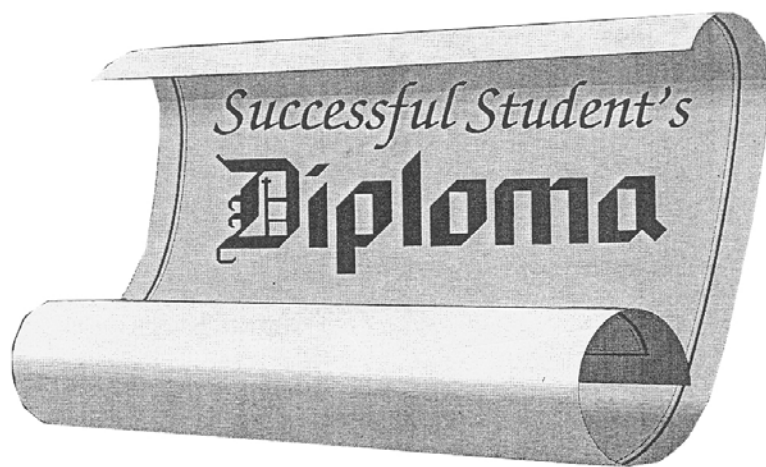


Learning Well

Strategies for Adult Learners



A Teacher's Guide to Processing
That Produces Learning

Rosalie A. Pedder

This booklet is dedicated to John Kuhne, who believes in me as a teacher and who has encouraged me to keep going and growing in training.

Thanks, John.

Learning Well

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Many educators and their teachings, both published and unpublished have influenced my thinking for this booklet, especially the works and practices of Howard Gardner, Thomas Armstrong, David Lazear, Stephanie Burns, Robin Fogarty, Julia Harper and many others. My own classroom experiences with both high school and university students over more than 25 years have convinced me that the best learning is achieved with the greatest variety of approach to teaching and processing activities.

INTRODUCTION

PROCESSING STRATEGIES

BOOK REPORTS

REVIEW STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

This small volume is designed to be a companion to my first booklet, *Teaching Well* (1994). That booklet offered to lecturers and speakers 208 ideas for getting the students actively involved in the learning process during the lectures. This booklet, *Learning Well* (1997), has been created to help fill a need I perceive amongst many of our school staff and teachers for activities designed to process lecture or reading material in small-group situations.

In the course of my travels, particularly within Youth With A Mission (YWAM), I am often asked for ideas for integrating the content in ways that are both manageable and effective for long-term learning. I'm also asked for alternatives to the few over-worked book report options we offer. And I'm asked for ways to review material without re-teaching it. So here, in this booklet, I've offered some samples in each of these fields—65 small group integrating activities, 40 book report options, and 26 review strategies for “revisiting” material so that it is refreshed in the memory and so that gaps in understanding can be filled. Adapt them all to be appropriate for your own courses.

The more I study issues of learning, the more convinced I am that we can do a better job in the classroom. Our learning is a full-time job, not restricted to our classroom hours, but those classroom hours we do have could be somewhat reshaped to give a richer learning experience, especially for those who do not learn well in the conventional Western style, including some Westerners!

Eager as I am to develop classroom styles that match the strengths of those from other cultures, I do not subscribe to the view that we must create Latin or Island or African classrooms in order to honor those students.

Rather, those countries have strengths where Westerners tend to be weaker, and Westerners have strengths where the others are weaker. All of us should benefit from the learning strategies of others, and so a wider range of classroom activities should make it easier for everyone. I firmly believe it is in the best interest of all of us to aim for competence in all sound learning strategies rather than being experts in a few and unable to function in others.

I also believe that we have a wonderful opportunity to produce effective tertiary education (though these principles actually hold well from preschool to university) that differs from the “norm.” Being different is not the magical answer, but that we produce learners who have really made the teaching they have received their own, and who have woven it appropriately into their world view. This will make us stand apart from the rest.

Thank you for your faithful input into the lives of students destined to be thoughtful world-changers. They do need you. I trust the ideas in this booklet will help you do your job a little more confidently.

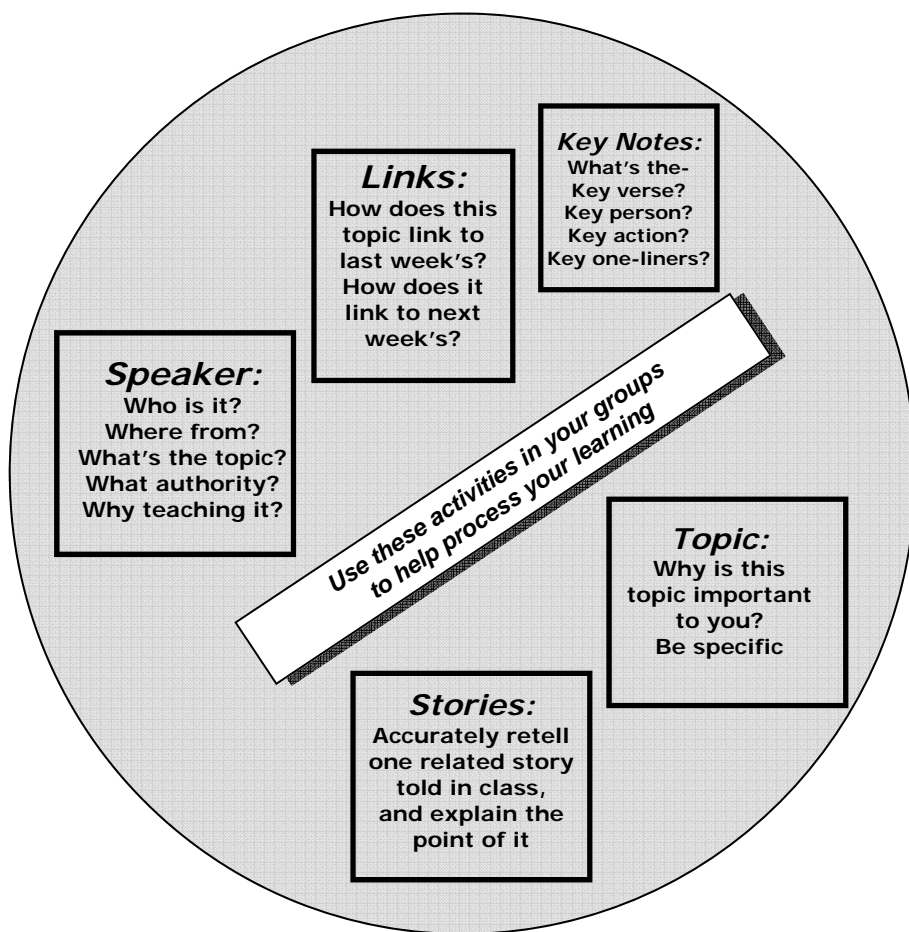
Rosalie A. Pedder
New Zealand, 1997

SECTION 1

Group Processing Strategies

65 Activities for Integration

SET #1



Models:

Describe someone you know who lives the message

In short...

Each reduce the topic to a 10-word theme. Agree on a final one.

World View

How does the world show it doesn't follow this teaching?

Use these activities in your groups to help process your learning

Impact 1:

What would happen if we all acted on this now?

Impact 2:

How would you pass this understanding on to teenagers?

SET #2

SET #3

Judge:

Out of 10, what would you give yourself in this area? Why?

Analogy:

Learning this topic is like... (Why?)

Create:

Design a lapel badge for those who live this out

Labels:

List and define 6 key terms of the topic

Sing:

Together write a song about the topic to tune of *Amazing Grace*

Use these activities in your groups to help process your learning

SET #4

Share:

Discuss 5 ways to use this topic on outreach

Map it:

Together make a wall mind-map of the topic so far

Note It:

Each write a private letter to the Lord about this week's topic

Discuss:

How do your group's different cultures reflect this topic?

Debate:

Split the group and argue for/against including this topic next time this course runs

use these activities in your groups
to help process your learning

SET #5

Crossword:

Create a crossword puzzle on the topic for another group

Models:

Use pipe cleaners or modelling clay to make something that reflects your understanding

Use these activities in your groups to help process your learning

Rap up:

Write a rap to perform for others about the importance (not content) of the topic

Charts:

Create a chart of the topic's content that can be copied, cut up and restored

Reword:

Play a silent video of a TV drama. Take different roles and create appropriate conversation

Replay:
Take an outreach drama you know and redesign it to suit this topic

Symbols:
Brainstorm key words of the topic. Agree on one real item that has the most similar features, e.g. a telephone can be likened to the brain.

Use these activities in your groups to help process your learning

Research:
Take a key word from the teaching and use dictionary and concordance to enrich the topic

Survey:
Design and do a survey about this topic with staff not involved with the school

Koosh Tag:
Toss a koosh ball to each of the group who add new review information about the topic

SET #6

Questions:

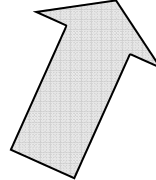
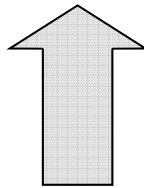
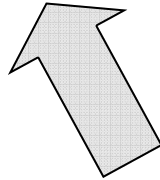
Write down 4 topic questions:
What? Why? How?
What if? Ask the group

Ranking:

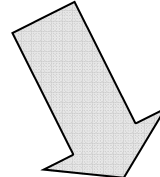
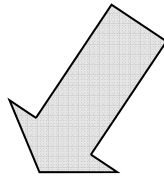
List all the course's topics so far in order of importance to your own life.
Explain your list

Sing up!

Together list 6-10 related songs, christian or secular, you all know



Choose one or more of these activities for the group to do together (or separately) as a review of the teaching.



Sell it!

Create a topic ad or poster to be included in a new class's welcome pack

Goals:

Write or draw (and share) one clear goal you have, related to this topic

SET #7

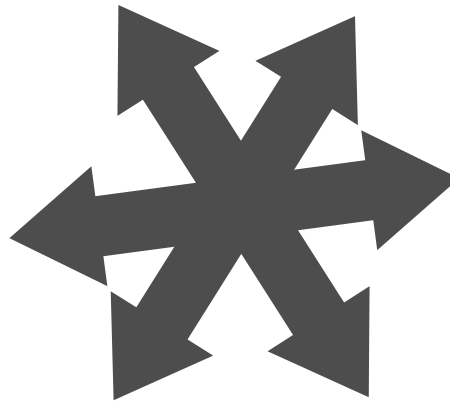
SET #8

Choose one or more of these activities for the group to do together (or separately) as a review of the teaching.

Reflect:
What has been new to you in this topic?

Next Time:
In this course, why should this topic be included or excluded?

Vocab:
What terms have been new or hard to understand this week?



Analyse:
How could knowing this material have affected your life a year ago?

Key Words:
Create a related sentence using the initial letters of the key word(s)

**S
E
T
#9**

Show off:

Design a business card for yourself that shows you're an expert in this field

Force it:

Create a plan for using a tie, fish, and cup to teach this topic

Brainstorm:

List all the words you can about the topic, then categorise them

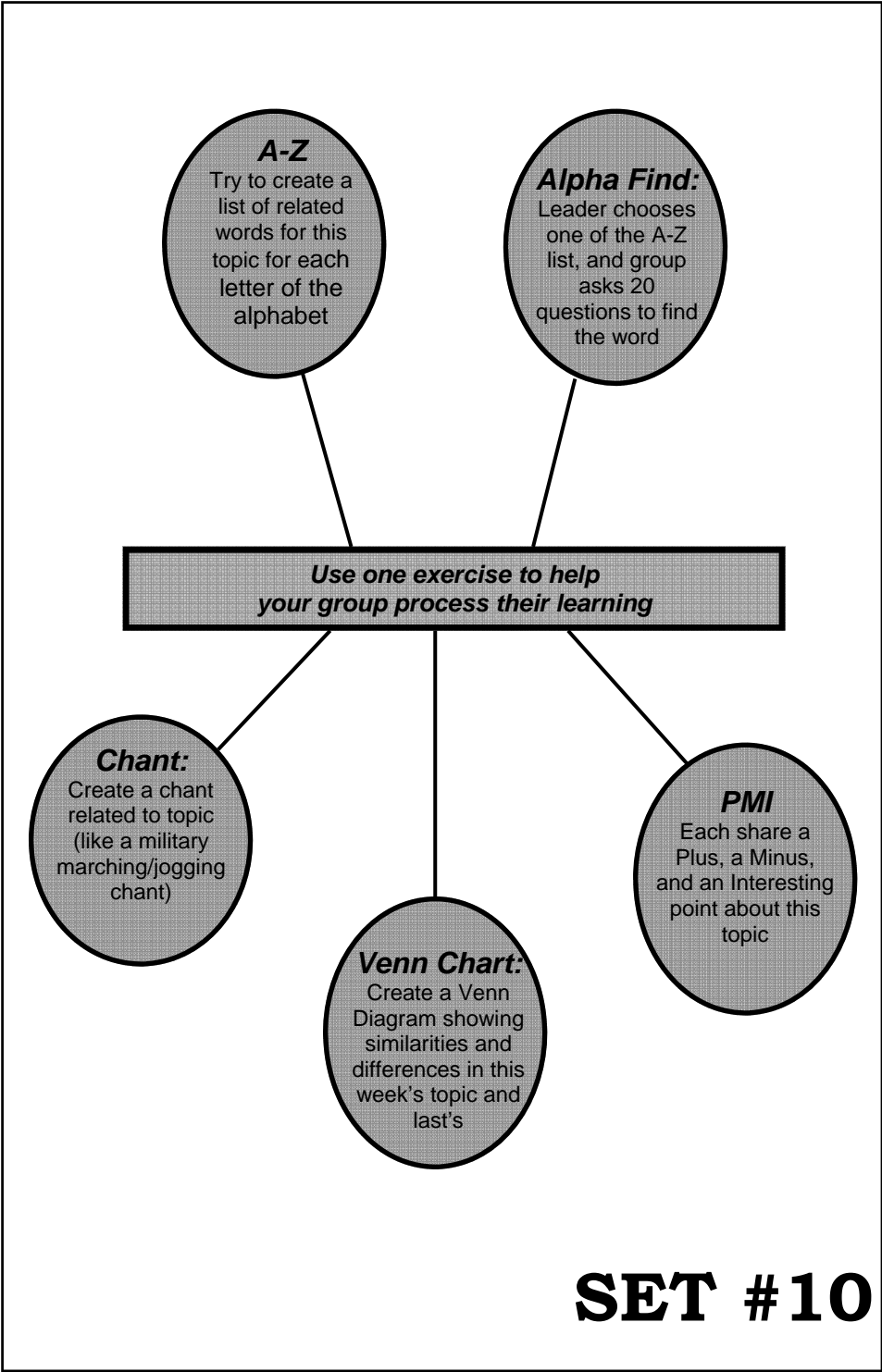
Use one of these exercises to process your classes

Graph it:

Join a line of your group, putting yourself where you feel you fit on a topic continuum

Reference:

Write a group reference for someone who has real strength in this topic



SET #10

SET #11

Compare:

How is this topic like a fire/tree/book/lake/fork/eye?

Review:

Design a quiz on this week's topic for some other group as review

Plan:

How will this teaching change your life?

Impact 3:

What would happen if no one ever acted on this?

Act it:

Create a skit to show other groups about this topic

Reflections:

What aspects of the topic conflicted with your current beliefs? Why?

Verses:

List all verses used in topic on separate slips of paper. Put in bible sequence.

Reference:

Write a reference for someone very weak in this topic. Use quite different words from the exercise in Set #9

Describe:

Describe aspects of the topic and have group guess the word or concept.

Wow!

Each share 1 "wow" from this week's teaching

SET #12

What are the things that this speaker emphasizes in all his stories? Faith? Courage? Creative thinking? What else? If you eliminated any one of them, what would the result have been?

Reflect on your own life—what story do you have of similar experiences of your own? In what field would you like more stories of your own like these?

If the stories are about the speaker's own experiences, analyse the character and spiritual qualities they indicate
a) in the speaker
b) in the people or events of the stories



Use this set to process story-tellers' messages

From the stories you have heard, identify 5 principles that were important to the successes or failures described in the situations

Identify the skills or qualities the speaker mentioned that
a) you already have
b) you would need, to be able to have similar stories of your own

SET #13

SECTION 2

Book Reports

40 Varieties of Reports

Book Report Variety

Book reports can be a delight or a disaster! If there's any book report I detest, it's the old one about taking three principles from the book and applying them to one's life. I haven't yet found a course leader who has taken time to teach the students what a principle actually is and how to word their understanding of one. (For instance FAITHFULNESS is not a principle but a topic. However, that those who are faithful in the small things will be trusted to take care of greater things is a principle.) Here's a set of alternative book report topics you can use. Perhaps you could give students a selection from the list and let them choose different (but appropriate) review styles for each book.

1.

Defend the inclusion of this book in this course.

2.

Argue for or against the inclusion of this book as mandatory reading for all literate Christians within a year of salvation.

3.

Write a series of diary entries after each chapter that is a response to what you have read.

4.

Design 5 interview questions you would like to ask the author OR a main character. Have someone else who has read the book answer them.

5.

Describe an incident from your own life that would have been different had you lived out the principles of this book.

6.

Create a 3-D model of a key part of the book.

7.

Remove (or secure) the last chapter. After reading the rest, write your own final chapter in keeping with the tone, style and direction of the book. Check the original later.

8.

Design a tract based on the book's concepts suitable for non-Christians.

9.

Design a teaching flier/ brochure/ tract based on the book applying it specifically to nurses or teachers or laborers or teens or seamen or office workers or managers.

10.

Create an advertising poster or radio/ TV ad to sell the book.

11.

Choose a particular incident or argument in the book and write 2 Letters to the Editor of a Christian newspaper or magazine, one supporting the piece and one opposing it.
(Both writers are Christian)

12.

Choose a particular incident or argument in the book and write 2 letters to the Editor of a secular newspaper or magazine, one supporting the piece and one opposing it.
(only the second writer is Christian, and he/ she replies to the first letter)

13.

Draw the storyboard for a TV advertisement to sell the book.

14.

Design the outline of a movie to be made of the book's story/ theme.

15.

Defend the inclusion of this book in the course BEFORE this one or the NEXT more advanced course.

16.

Write a song that tells the story OR the theme of the book.

17.

Draw a series of illustrations (either all in color or all in black and white) that capture the development of the book.

18.

Tell the basic points of the book in a comic strip.

19.

Write a character reference for someone who lives out the thrust of the book.

20.

Rewrite the point of the book as a poem (not just the story.)

21.

Imagine you are the author, and write to your mother/ pastor/ old friend explaining your purpose in writing the book.

22.

Write to the author (if living!), explaining which parts of the book particularly had an impact on you and why they affected you. Send the letter directly to the author or through the publisher.

23.

Use the letters of the title to create a sentence that effectively summarizes the book.

24.

Use the book's theme as the basis of a 5-minute devotional for your class, but don't use the author's exact words.

25.

Create a review of the book for radio.

26.

Create a new dust jacket for the book making it attractive for an entirely new group. Include blurb, publisher's comments on the author, and critics' comments (from your class.)

27.

Remove (or secure) the middle chapter book. After reading the rest, write what was probably in the missing chapter. Check against the original later.

28.

Rewrite the basis of the book so that it is suitable for 12 year-olds (an age at which many children make a serious commitment to the Lord).

29.

Create a mind-map for each chapter and a summarizing one for the whole book.

30.

If appropriate, draw a map of the setting of the action and show the movements of key characters.

31.

Design 10 questions that cover understanding of the book's material (avoid yes no questions) and interview two very different base staff members about their awareness of these issues.
Write up your findings.

32.

Together with someone else, survey your class about 5-10 points raised in the book. Write up your findings and add a recommendation.

33.

Suppose the book had been written 50 years earlier (or 50 years later if it's pre-1950). Explain why it would or wouldn't have been popular then.

34.

Read just the odd chapters while a friend reads the even chapters. Share with each other after each 2 chapters read, and keep a story line or other record of the whole book. Ask the questions necessary to ensure you fully understand the parts you haven't read yourself. Use your record as the basis for a formal review.

35.

Create a chart showing the similarities and differences between two of your assigned books. Invent your own headings to demonstrate your understanding of the books' themes.

36.

Prepare your review as a teaching for your group, making sure that you cover at least six different points the author makes. Deliver your teaching in a format that makes it possible for the group to grasp and apply it without having to read the book themselves.

37.

Write about three incidents from your own life that demonstrate points from the book, either positively or negatively. Clearly relate them to the book.

38.

Create a list of ten quite different reasons this book should be read before your course begins or in some other course instead.

39.

Respond to the book you have read by evaluating in a chart your own life, your church's life and you family's life in light of it. Create your own categories to compare/contrast. Look for the positive but be honest about the negative rather than critical.

40.

Formal review: record the author, title, type of book, date of publication, publisher. Briefly summarize the story (a synopsis) and comment on setting, characters, tone, style theme and intended audience. Finish with a paragraph of critical appreciation (you may either express your approval or your disapproval of the book or parts of it).

Be sure that your students know what is expected in terms of length, presentation, and what particular things you are looking for in each type of review. Create your own assessment keys that students see before they begin the review/report.

Notes and Ideas

SECTION 3

Review Strategies

26 Activities for Spiral Learning

REVIEW

“But there’s so much to get through!”

Much of our struggle to produce students who really know their stuff and who can modify what we teach so that it’s useful for the new situations they encounter is the result of heaping content upon content, without reviewing what has been already taught. Retention is significantly increased each time we “revisit” information or concepts to which we’ve been introduced. I think I’m a cyclical or spiral learner - the more often I hear or see or experience material presented in different ways, the more easily I retain it and it becomes useful to me. I’m actually quite well endowed with brain cells, I think, but I can forget fascinating material and ideas between my desk and the classroom door! The more I “revisit” it in helpful ways, the more it becomes my own and not just a teacher’s good stuff. If we agree a teacher’s job is mainly to facilitate learning, then providing review strategies is part of that job. Review may happen in the classroom, or it may happen in the student’s private study time, but it has to happen. Here are some review ideas for you to try.

1.

RENAME/REWORD

When you have a set of numbered points or headings that go together, ask the students to individually reword the headings with their own appropriate synonyms. Check for accuracy.

2.

PEER QUESTIONS

At the end of a lesson, have students draft 5 questions about the material for peers to answer tomorrow. No more than 3 questions should be binary or knowledge level ones. The others should test understanding.

3.

PICTURE ANALOGIES

Using interesting newspaper photos or pictures from some other source give each student one and have them explain how the photo reflects all or part of the topic being studied. Don’t select the photos deliberately - a random sample is better and gives students better scope for create thinking. Just because you can’t see a relationship, don’t think your student won’t be able to!

4.

CUT UP AND RESTORE

If you have used a chart or table or model to communicate information, cut it up leaving the heading intact, and have students restore the original as review on another day. Take it in again and paper-clip the pieces in sets. If students want a copy to keep to practice with, let them copy and cut their own, or you'll have to prepare it again.

5.

BRAINSTORM TERMS USED

Before teaching on day 4 or 5 of a topic, have class brainstorm all they recall from day 1-3. When the list is complete, number the points to match the number of students. (Repeat the numbers if necessary.) In order, around the room, students then give a fact or observation about the numbered item that matches their position in the room, e.g. student #6 answers point #6 on the board.

6.

WORDS IN ENVELOPE

Use words from a class brainstorm session, or from your own headings and topics to make a list. Write the terms out on separate slips of paper and put them in an envelope. Pass the envelope from student to student, each one taking out an unseen slip. The student then gives a fact or observation about the term, passing the envelope to his neighbor who must add one more fact to or observation about the term before taking out one for himself.

7.

KOOSH BALL THROW

Invest in a koosh ball or other light-weight ball. Have a list of review terms and ideas on hand or on the board or overhead. Throw the ball to a student as you call out the term to be defined or commented on. Only the person with the ball may speak. The student throws the ball to a "victim" of his choice who answers the next question.

8.

RELATED ILLUSTRATIONS/ WORDS ON O/H

Put a set of topic-related illustrations or symbols on an overhead. Allow students to each choose one they feel confident they can make an accurate comment about. Don't comment on correctness, but let other class members do that.

9.

TOUCH TAG FOR SEQUENCE

Begin a review of the sequence in which you taught your material by naming the first point. Touch someone else who must provide the next item in sequence. Let class judge whether the topic offered is right or not. The student touches the next one to provide the next item.

10.

MIND-MAPS

Give students 10-15 minutes at the start of a class to mind-map what they have learned so far about the topic. Let them compare their map with others to see if there are major points they have missed.

11.

CODES

Again, this takes a little work but it is worthwhile. There are several common codes you can copy from children's puzzle books, or create yourself. (Deciphering how the code works is not the test, so don't make it too complicated.) Write some of your terms or a paragraph about the topic in code and have students "crack" it. The effort will seal the ideas in their thinking.

12.

GROUP SUMMARY

Put key words on separate slips of colored paper (about 1.25 in/ 3cm wide by 8in/20 cm) in big print. Mix them up and give some to each student. Provide table/floor space for the class to add their slips to a sequential line-up of the topics in the order you taught them, or in groups that relate to each other. Don't interfere till the group assures you they're satisfied with their effort.

13.
BINGO

Create a bingo game (this takes some work but is really worth it!). Select 25 facts from your material, numbering them 1-25. Make Bingo cards that are 4x4 squares, putting the answers to a random 16 of the questions, but making sure no two cards have exactly the same selection. Be sure to put both answers and the question number in the squares. Make a list for yourself of the numbered questions, and a base card that has the numbers 1-25. Make or find counters numbered 1-25 and put them in a small bag where you can't see them. Draw them one by one, reading the appropriately numbered question. Repeat the question, but give no other clues. Place the counter on the base board. When someone has 4 squares in a row marked off, let him call out the numbers he has covered (not the answers.) Check your base board and confirm if all are correct, or how many are wrong, but don't indicate which ones are wrong. When you have asked all your questions (keep your base board hidden from students) ask students to call out numbers of the ones they missed and repeat the question so they learn those ones. Play again.

I suggest making the whole thing on computer but you can do it by hand and photocopy the student's cards. Don't let them write on your masters or you'll have to make them all over again.

14.
SCRABBLE LETTERS

Choose some key word of the topic and give groups of the class envelopes containing the letters for those words. (If there are two or more words, be sure to mark the backs of the letters somehow to indicate which letters go together.) Let groups figure out the words. Ask them to use the words as the centre of a mind-map to recall their knowledge about it.

15.

STRING WRAPS

It is possible to purchase or make small cardboard frames that have either two columns of information, or two rows of information (6-10 items.) You might use words and definitions, concepts and examples, related words, or any other factual material. You can write it on the card or stick computer generated lists on it. Beside (or above and below, for rows) each item make a small notch. Tie a length of string at the top of the card and wind it through the first item's notch from the back. Match it with its answer (placed in random order in the second column/ row) by winding the string through the correct answer notch. Take the string back to #2, and so on. On the back of the card. Draw the lines the string will make when the card is correctly answered. No peeking allowed along the way! This is great for combining auditory, visual and kinesthetic input.

16.

STUDENT REVIEW

Divide the content into sections and ask each student to prepare a 2-5 minute review activity for the rest of the class. Encourage variety of approach. Give class time to this.

17.

WRITE FOR NEW AUDIENCE

One of the best reviews happens when students write or present their understanding to a new audience, e.g. for 14-year old boys, or housewives, or pastors, or another language group where they'd have to use a translator.

18.

WRITE A SONG

Give the group 12 minutes to produce a song to a familiar tune but with their own words that express their understanding of the topic just learned.

19.

CREATE A SKIT

Give 15 minutes or so for groups to prepare skits or mimes that review different portions of the content. Let it be deliberate rather than a mystery to be guessed.

20.

CREATE AN ILLUSTRATION

Allow 30-60 minutes for each to produce an illustration that captures not just details of material being taught, but the interconnected relationships of it. (This is best done at the end of the teaching series.) Let each explain their illustration to the rest of the group, thus giving review of implications, not just details.

21.

NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

Provide a pile of the news portions of old newspapers (the classified advertising section isn't very useful here.) Ensure everyone has scissors. On large sheets of paper or on a portion of blank wall, put up all the headings students can find in 5 minutes that can be directly related to the topic.

22.

PARAPHRASING

Once students are familiar with a model or chart you have used in your teaching, remake it in the same design but with user-friendly words or simply with synonyms of words already used. Provide cut-up sets of the new words and have students reconstruct the original. The new words will force students to understand rather than simply remember.

23.

ANALOGIES

Make a list of 30-40 ordinary concrete or abstract nouns (e.g. bookcase, dream) and put each on a separate slip of paper. Give students one each and ask them to tell the class how the topic is like the word they've been given. For example, "Spiritual Warfare is like a school lunch because..."

24.

HANGMAN

This old favorite is helpful for reviewing one-liners or key concepts or words from a topic. Be sure to describe the complete Hangman before beginning, or you'll find students want to give him eyebrows and pimples to avoid being beaten in the game! Gallows, rope, head, body, arms and legs are enough.

25.

MATCH IT

On separate slips of paper write some key sentences about your topic. Try not to choose simple recall material but sentences that demand understanding of its implications. Cut the sentences between the clauses and hand the parts out to the class. (Make sure that the matching pieces can't be confused, e.g. that Part 2 of Sentence #4 doesn't fit grammatically and sensibly with Part 1 of Sentence #6.) Cut the portions so they can't be put together like jigsaw pieces. Give the class 3 minutes to find the person with the missing part of their sentence. Have complete sentences read out later as review for all. The activity also could be used for matching facts such as verse and reference, though that doesn't require much processing.

26.

CARD GAMES

There are many popular, commercial card games whose rules and content can be adapted to review your material. Ask your students for their favorites and make cards with your own content.

Once you build up a library of review tools, they can be used by students in their own study time, or in class. Review activities can easily show up misunderstandings or poor communication of material and be quickly corrected before it lodges in long-term memory. Less content and more processing will result in more reflective, thoughtful and influential graduates. Small group sessions provide great opportunity to review.

Notes and Ideas

