Mnemonic strategies supported by MemoryLifter

No matter why you decide to learn a foreign language, it always requires a commitment of time and effort. However, if you know some tricks, learning will become easier AND funnier!

People spend hours learning vocabulary, managing to recall most of the words on their list. Nevertheless, there are always some words, which you just cannot keep in mind for some reason. Sometimes even repeating them over and over again does not help and leads to frustration. But sometimes after having travelled to a country, in which the language is spoken, or after having heard songs or having watched movies in this language, you suddenly are able to remember these difficult words. You have experienced them in a real world situation and you have been able to associate them with something tangible.

Learning vocabulary is often a matter of associating a meaningless collection of syllables with a word in your own language. But it is scientifically proven that the human mind can remember sensual, spatial, personal, surprising or humorous information much more easily than meaningless sequences. If we take this into consideration, how can we adapt our learning processes to the needs of our brain to achieve greater learning efficiency?

One way to reach this goal is to incorporate multisensory and mnemonic strategies into our learning processes. Whereas the multisensory approach generally entails including images, audio and video data, for example, to support the memorization of text, the latter strategy goes a step further. It relies on associations between easy-to-remember constructs, which can be related back to the data that is to be remembered.

The Modules for foreign languages of the learning software MemoryLifter represent a practical application of multisensory and mnemonic learning techniques. They already include images, audio data, and example sentences which serve as multisensory learning aids.

Depending on your learning type audio files might help you in the best way to remember words. Our user Jacky for example wrote to us: "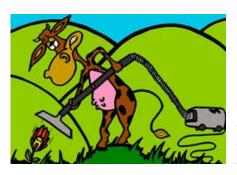I love the fact that I can now add audio to my dictionaries, as I use your program mainly so that I can learn Spanish vocabulary. It makes studying Spanish much more effective now that I can hear how the words are pronounced."

Images can also be an effective memory aid. Our "Basic Vocabulary Flash Cards Dictionary" available for various language combinations includes an image for each word.

To associate the spanish word "amarillo" for "yellow" with a beautiful yellow rose, can help hobby gardeners or flower lovers to easily recall

the word. Mnemonic strategies can be very individual, since they depend on your personal background knowledge. Let's look at another example for the use of multisensory and mnemonic items:

"Vaca" is the Spanish word for "cow". If you have difficulties remembering this word, you can look at a picture of a cow or listen to a corresponding recording, either of someone saying the word or of a cow mooing, while learning this word. Thus, you are involving various senses during the memorization process. Furthermore, you could try to memorize the word by – let's say - visualizing a cow that is VAC(A)uuming its field. Sounds odd, but try it out – it works – and after all: Who *would* forget a cow vacuuming its field anyway?

With MemoryLifter you can adapt your Learning Modules to the needs of your learning type. Add any information which helps you to remember the material you would like to learn. Add audio files, add videos, add photos of your last vacation, add selfmade images like the above mentioned "vacuuming" cow. Make it "your own" Learning Module.

Our user Scott, who has been "a Spanish language buff for quite some time" and has used other software to memorize words and phrases, points out, what - in his opinion - is special about MemoryLifter: "This software is well thought out and offers many features I have not seen before." He refers to the features which let you customize your learning session. Adapt it to your preferences and needs. To make learning more interesting and fun, you can select different learning modes, like "Listening Comprehension" or "Multiple Choice", change the learning direction, display or hide the images.

Go ahead and have fun learning!