GESTURING IMPROVES

Recent research by Cook, Yip and Goldin-Meadow (2010) has found that using hand gestures during the learning process significantly increases long term recall of that information. This supports other studies in which it has been found that information which is acted out is more likely to be subsequently recalled than information that is just verbally encoded into memory. Even seeing someone else perform actions or gesturing can facilitate subsequent recall.

Cook et al.'s findings are consistent with previous research in which they found that children are more likely to remember a mathematical concept when they gesture while learning. Similarly, Allen (1995) found a similar improvement in memory for learning a foreign language amongst adults who were instructed to gesture during the learning process.

The researchers suggest that gesturing and enactment during encoding may influence the way that information is *stored* in the memory which then subsequently enhances future recall of this information. It is hypothesised that the brain maybe more efficient at encoding and retrieving the motor coding involved in gesturing compared to the coding associated with auditory information.

So, make sure your child is using his/her hands when learning new material. You can use the hand movements suggested in the Cracking the ABC Code material (www.crackingtheabccode.com) or devise your own.

References

Allen, L.Q. (1995). The effects of emblematic gestures on the development and access of mental representations of French expressions, *The Modern Language Journal*, **79 ,** pp. 521–529.

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