

Leave a Lasting Impression.

By Christopher Huston

Some of the greatest classes I have attended were taught by instructors that did not just know the information, but ensured I left understanding it. Did they have magical powers or did they simply understand presentation arrangement for lasting impressions?

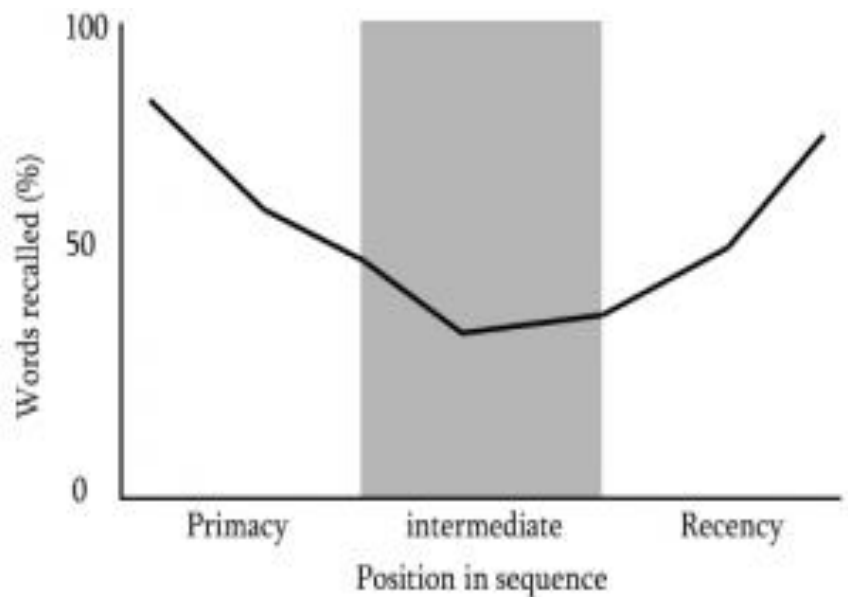
*Before you read on, please ensure you have read the Instructor Knowledge Series posts on Objective Design.*

When designing a presentation that will leave a lasting impression on the students, you do not need magical powers or be a world class showman. You simply need to understand this basic formula. **State the objectives, teach the objectives, and review the objectives.** Not only does this format your presentation into a comprehensive medium, but it also is based on the human brains ability to learn and recall information.

### The Serial-Position Effect

This interesting phenomenon explains how our memory works best when presented new information. According to Bennet Murdock furthering the studies that Hermann Ebbinghaus started, suggest that words taught early in the session and those at the very end were stored to memory more often than those in the middle. Our two types of memory Long Term and Short Term are able to commit lessons to memory based on this phenomena.

In the graphic you can clearly see that when words are taught in the beginning they are stored in the long term memory. As the course moves forward the words are not able to be recalled as often. Yet, once the course comes to a close the short term memory kicks in and words are committed to short term memory.



In other words the **PRIMACY EFFECT** stores information for the long term and the **RECENCY EFFECT** keeps the information fresh for immediate use.

So how does this apply to ensuring a lasting impression is created for the student? **Presentation arrangement!** When designing your course you will need the terminal and enabling objectives. These are the main ideas of what you are trying to convey. These both need to be stated at the beginning and the end, so both the Primacy Effect and Recency Effect can commit the lesson to memory for recall later.



As your presentation wages on keep in mind that the information contained in the middle, although much can still be committed to memory, retention will be substantially less in many cases.

Another method to “reset” the primacy and recency effect is tactically scheduled breaks. Allowing the brain to take a time out could restart the sequence leading to greater retention and ensuring a lasting impression.

Using this strategy is even more pertinent when dealing with students who lack self-efficacy as well as in the Flipped Classroom setting.

**References:**

Murdock, Bennet B. (1962). The serial position effect of free recall. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 64(5),482–488.