



Why Can't I Remember? (🧠 A Cognitive Health Story)
(3rd Grade – 8-9 yrs.)
Physical Activity: From Boring to Brilliant



STORY CONNECTION – SLIDE 10 (Approx Time: 15-20 mins)

Now, to be honest, sometimes you will have to learn things in school that are hard to understand, and you feel like your brain is working too hard. Sometimes what you are learning is just not interesting to you and your brain feels bored. You find yourself asking, why do I have to learn this stuff? You feel like you will never have to use it – so why learn it? The answer is that most of the time, these topics that you are learning about are not about learning the information – but about learning how to think. As a student, your job is to expose your brain to as many different things as possible when your brain is developing. Yes, some of the topics are not going to be fun for you to learn and trying to understand this material may be really hard – but, in trying you are thinking. The thinking that you are doing is helping your brain. It is also possible that it is preparing your brain for things you will need to learn when you are in college or working at your job. The topics that you are learning that are hard or not interesting are getting your brain ready to live in the real world.

Materials needed:

- Cards with Brilliant Strategies (included below) or paper to make strategy cards
- Markers (needed if making your own strategy cards)
- Tape
- “Boring” Activities (included below- optional)

Preparation needed:

- Print or create the Brilliant Strategy cards (1 set)
- Hang the Brilliant Strategy cards around the room so that student(s) have room to move to different areas as the “boring/hard” activities are read.

Instructions:

1. In this activity, student(s) will learn strategies for making boring or difficult tasks more enjoyable. They will be presented with a variety of activities, and they will have to choose how they could make it more enjoyable for them so that they can learn and remember the information.
2. Begin by going over each of the Brilliant Strategy cards and make sure the student(s) understand what they mean.

Suggestion: You can even write or draw notes on each card to help student(s) remember each strategy

The strategy cards are listed below. Here is a description of each:

- **Reward Yourself**-give yourself a little reward after working on the task for a certain amount of time. For example, study your spelling words for 20 minutes, play your video game for 5 minutes.
 - **Accountability Friend**-find a friend who you can count on to remind you to do your tasks. For example, have your older sister ask you at dinner if you studied your spelling words yet.
 - **Break it Up**-work on the task you do not like, do something else, then finish the task. For example, study your spelling words for 10 minutes, read for 10 minutes, go back, and finish your spelling words.
 - **Add Music**-turn on the music to help motivate you to do the task you do not like. For example, listen to music while cleaning your room and try to organize all your games before the song is over.
 - **Add Movement**-make up movements for the tasks you must do. For example, when studying your spelling words clap the vowels and jump up for each consonant.
 - **Chunk It Up**-break huge tasks down into smaller ones over time. For example, you must make a book poster and do an oral report on it. Start by looking at your timeline and when it is due. First, read the book. Next, work on the poster pictures, Then, work on the poster writing. After that, start working on your oral report notes. Lastly, practice your report and put final changes on your poster.
 - **Race the Clock**-set a timer and try to get the task finished before the time goes off. For example, you are good at math but must do three pages of math fact worksheets a week. Try to get the facts worksheet finished before the timer goes off. Remember, do not sacrifice accuracy for speed!
 - **Work With a Friend**-work with someone who can help you stay motivated and help when needed. For example, do your homework with your classmate at afterschool care before you choose games to play.
 - **Nature**-go outside. For example, take your homework, book, or project outside and work on it. Sometimes a change in scenery does a brain good!
 - **Listen to a Story**-listen to an audio book. For example, reading is difficult for you, but you really want to read Harry Potter. Download the audio book and listen to it while you clean your room, walk around the track, or relax before bed.
3. Tell the student(s) they will hear about an activity that some might find boring or hard. They will think about which Brilliant Strategy would make that boring/hard activity better for them so that they can learn and remember. Then, they will move to where that strategy is posted in the room.
 For example: Read Activity #1 to student(s): "Your teacher insists that you study your spelling words every night and complete an activity from a tic-tac-toe board." I do not enjoy doing homework. Therefore, if I am able to complete my tic-tac-toe activity each night I am assigned, I will reward myself after. I love to read so I will give myself 5 extra minutes of reading time for each night I complete an activity. That is my reward. I would move to the "reward yourself" area.
 4. Remind student(s) that everyone is different and how everyone reacts to the "boring/hard" activities is going to be different. Even if they do not think the activity is boring or hard, they are still going to move to a strategy they could use to make it even better/easier for them.
 5. Ask student(s) if they have any questions or need any clarification. Clear up any misunderstandings.
 6. Read one activity at a time and give the student(s) time to move to the Brilliant Strategy they would use to make the activity easier for them so that they will learn and remember it better.
 7. Have 1-2 student(s) share their reasons for moving to that particular strategy before moving on.
 8. Continue until all activities are read.
Note: Feel free to substitute or supplement the activity cards and/or strategies to best meet the needs of your student(s).
 9. In closing, remind student(s) that there are always going to be times when they have to do things that are difficult or boring for them, especially in school. They must also remember that being a student is their job and learning to think is part of that job. They need to learn to find ways to make these difficult or boring tasks better for themselves so that they can be engaged and learn and remember the information. The information and process of thinking will help them as they grow up, get older, and go out into the real world.

Strategies Ideas Credit: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/may-i-have-your-attention/201612/9-ways-make-almost-any-task-fun>
<https://vidaaventura.net/5-tips-on-making-boring-tasks-more-engaging/>

Reward
Yourself

Accountability
Friend

Break
It Up

Add
Music

Add
Movement

Chunk
It Up

Race the
Clock

**Work With
a Friend**

Nature

**Listen to a
Story**

“Boring/Hard” Activity Cards

EXAMPLE: Your teacher insists that you study your spelling words every night and complete an activity from a tic-tac-toe board.

You must practice your multiplication facts each night for 15 minutes.

Part of your homework is to read for at least 30 minutes every night and record a summary in your reading log.

Every Wednesday, you must clean your room and cannot play video games until it passes inspection from your parents.

You begged your parents to let you start playing an instrument, and now you do not want to practice but you already committed to 20 minutes a day.

You won the spelling bee class and now you are going to compete for the school winner. You are nervous and do not want to practice the words the teacher gave you, but you want to do well.

In PE, the Pacer running test is coming up again. Running is hard for you, but you want to improve your laps this quarter and earn the reward.

Social studies is so boring for you, but you have a big project about a famous historical figure due in a month. You have not even started and do not really want to.

You and your friend tried out for the play, and both have parts. You do not have anyone to help you with your lines, and the director is unhappy with you.

Each Saturday, you must entertain your little brother/sister while your parents work or do things around the house.