UNIT 5: REMEMBERING: ACCESSING WORKING MEMORY

Why this unit?

The ability to learn often depends on students' ability to incorporate new information into their pre-existing mental frameworks in order to create lasting memories. We often think about long-term and short-term memory and overlook working memory, a critically important executive function process. Working memory refers to the ability to hold information in mind in order to manipulate or "juggle" the details mentally. It is an active memory system that acquires information from both short-term and long-term memory and holds the information in mind for a short time while a task is being completed mentally. For example, a student would use working memory in reading when he/she must recall how many pages should be read, while also determining which motifs to search for/underline, while also trying to recall the details he/she is reading. Each students' ability to store and manipulate information in working memory can vary widely. Students with weak working memory may struggle to hold information; thus, it is critical to teach students strategies to access and develop working memory.

What is in this unit?

Lesson 1: Why is Memory Important? (1 hour): Each student will learn about his/her own memory system and how this works. Activities focus on the basic types of memory (short-term memory, long-term memory, and working memory) as well as exercises for accessing working memory.

Lesson 2: Using Cartoons and Associations to Remember (1 hour): Students will be introduced to two memory aids that help support working memory, using their pre-existing knowledge to make verbal and visual connections.

Lesson 3: Using Crazy Phrases and Stories to Remember (1 hour): Students will learn two strategies that require them to use working memory to build stories and phrases in order to lock information into long-term memory.

Lesson 4: Creating Strategies for Remembering (1 hour): Students will combine the memory strategies they learned in previous sessions to create study tools to help them review for tests.