

Memorizing vs. Understanding

MEMORIZING	UNDERSTANDING
Tries to learn ideas and concepts word for word only.	Converts ideas and concepts into own words.
Difficult to explain ideas to someone else other than word for word.	Able to use own words to explain something clearly to someone else.
Difficult to see how ideas apply in real-life situations or case studies.	Can apply ideas to real life situations or case studies.
Relevance of ideas outside the classroom is difficult to see and is typically not sought.	Seeks connections between knowledge from the classroom and the outside world.
Does not see differences, similarities, and implications of ideas.	Can identify differences, similarities between ideas and implications of these ideas.
Interprets ideas literally.	Realizes that there can be figurative as well as literal interpretations of ideas.
Strives for rote learning and has trouble solving problems when numbers or components are changed.	Strives for understanding and can solve problems even when numbers or components are changed.
Believes there is 1 "right" answer for every question.	Accepts that there may be more than 1 "right" answer to a question depending on circumstances.
Has trouble seeing beyond the basic concept or idea.	Can see meaning, effects, results, and consequences beyond the basic idea or concept.

You become better at that which you practice. If you practice not doing chemistry problems, you become better at that also.