Mind Sciences And Law School Success

2008-09-05 17:13:01

One element for law school success presented in The Law School Mastery Method is to train your mind to prepare for success. While most people consider this aspect of the approach to peak performance fairly obvious, the fact is that most law students undermine themselves with sloppy, negative thinking and counterproductive belief systems.

The thing is, remedying this limitation isn't terribly difficult at all, for those who decide to take the steps and follow the simple drills. By following the drills, negative thinking is replaced with productive thinking, and poor belief systems are replaced with better belief systems.

One of the steps I outline is to perform constructive mental exercises that will prepare you for success, rather than set you up for failure. One of the methods is vivid visualization, as a very detailed, multi-sensory visualization is indistinguishable to the subconscious mind from a real event. As such, it forms a powerful frame of reference for your mind to use when dealing with new situations and circumstances.

So rehearse success, and the physiological states present when you are successful – relaxed, confident, etc. – will be available to you more easily than if you don't rehearse success.

Well, some folks might snicker and find this a bit esoteric. The fact is, some cultures had knowledge of the benefits of this approach 1,000s of years ago. So i was very pleased today to read this article in the New York Times that validates some of that method. It's not news to us, but it's good to see it in print once in a while!

Read the whole article in The New York Times…

For the Brain, Remembering Is Like Reliving
By BENEDICT CAREY

Scientists have for the first time recorded individual brain cells in the act of summoning a spontaneous memory, revealing not only where a remembered experience is registered but also, in part, how the brain is able to recreate it.

The recordings, taken from the brains of epilepsy patients being prepared for surgery, demonstrate that these spontaneous memories reside in some of the same neurons that fired most furiously when the recalled event had been experienced. Researchers had long theorized as much but until now had only indirect evidence.

Experts said the study had all but closed the case: For the brain, remembering is a lot like doing (at least in the short term, as the research says nothing about more distant memories).

The experiment, being reported Friday in the journal Science, is likely to open a new avenue in the investigation of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, some experts said, as well as help explain how some memories seemingly come out of nowhere. The researchers were even able to identify specific memories in subjects a second or two before the people themselves reported having them.

"This is what I would call a foundational finding," said Michael J. Kahana, a professor of psychology at the

University of Pennsylvania, who was not involved in the research. “I cannot think of any recent study that’s comparable.

“It’s a really central piece of the memory puzzle and an important step in helping us fill in the detail of what exactly is happening when the brain performs this mental time travel” of summoning past experiences.

The new study moved beyond most previous memory research in that it focused not on recognition or recollection of specific symbols but on free recall — whatever popped into people’s heads when, in this case, they were asked to remember short film clips they had just seen.

This ability to richly reconstitute past experience often quickly deteriorates in people with Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia, and it is fundamental to so-called episodic memory — the catalog of vignettes that together form our remembered past.

In the study, a team of American and Israeli researchers threaded tiny electrodes into the brains of 13 people with severe epilepsy. The electrode implants are standard procedure in such cases, allowing doctors to pinpoint the location of the mini-storms of brain activity that cause epileptic seizures.

The patients watched a series of 5- to 10-second film clips, some from popular television shows like “Seinfeld” and others depicting animals or landmarks like the Eiffel Tower. The researchers recorded the firing activity of about 100 neurons per person; the recorded neurons were concentrated in and around the hippocampus, a sliver of tissue deep in the brain known to be critical to forming memories.

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Some scientists argue that as humans evolved, these same cells adapted to register a longer list of elements — including possibly sounds, smells, time of day and chronology — when an experience occurred in relation to others.

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“The exciting thing about this,” said Dr. Kahana, the University of Pennsylvania professor, “is that it gives us direct biological evidence of what before was almost entirely theoretical.”