



THE CLIMB
written by
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UNIT 3

STAGE
OF
mind

3. SCRIPT COMPREHENSION AND MEMORIZING

This unit will focus on the critical skills of script comprehension and memorization, which are fundamental to creating and delivering an effective performance. A script is the foundation of any performance, and the ability to comprehend and memorize it is crucial to bringing it to life on stage. Without comprehension skills, performers may struggle to understand the nuances of the script and fail to deliver a convincing performance. Similarly, without effective memorization skills, performers may struggle to remember their lines or miss cues. Moreover, developing script comprehension and memorization skills can also improve individual's confidence and ability to communicate effectively. This unit is essential to enable individuals to express themselves creatively and confidently on stage and it will propose games, exercises involving music, movement sequences and body memory to develop and practice participants' memorization and comprehension abilities. It should be mentioned, however, that memorization can be challenging for people with mental health issues due to several factors. Some mental health conditions may affect their ability to process information and recall it accurately. Therefore, it is crucial to support them to overcome these challenges and improve their skills as much as possible.

3.1 Learning outcomes

Upon completing this unit, participants of the training program will:

- ▶ enhance their focus and concentration abilities, allowing them to engage in a chosen activity, object or thought with more precision and efficiency.
- ▶ acquire tools and techniques to gain control over their attention, enabling them to focus attention and direct it towards the intended target and avoid/manage distractions
- ▶ develop their stamina, perseverance and commitment, which will enable them to complete tasks and projects with greater efficiency and dedication.
- ▶ strengthen their cognitive abilities in areas such as memory and concentration, literacy and communication.

3.2 Theoretical background / Approach

Through the implementation of the activities proposed in this unit, the facilitator will support the participants to develop their memory and concentration through a holistic approach using games, music and movement.

Memorization is not solely a mental process, but a physical one as well. Mirror neurons, which play a vital role in learning and memory, are located in various parts of the body, including the digestive tract, heart and brain. As such, incorporating techniques that engage the body as a whole, rather than relying solely on an intellectual approach, is more effective in achieving long-term learning outcomes. By utilizing dynamic, whole-body engagement in the memorization process, individuals can create stronger and more enduring connections between the brain and the rest of the body, resulting in enhanced memorization abilities and improved performance skills.



Furthermore, as individuals engage in the process of creating and expressing their abilities, feelings and uncertainties, it is natural for them to experience feelings of frustration and fear. These emotions may arise due to the challenges of the creative process, the vulnerability involved in self-expression or the uncertainty of the outcome. However, by acknowledging and addressing these emotions in a supportive and constructive manner, individuals can overcome these obstacles and achieve their creative goals. With guidance and encouragement from the facilitators, participants can develop the resilience and emotional intelligence necessary to navigate these challenges and emerge stronger and more confident in their abilities.

It is crucial for the facilitator to establish a safe and welcoming environment and foster a sense of trust and collaboration. By doing so, participants will feel comfortable in expressing their feelings and working through any challenges that may arise. The exercises in this unit are specifically designed to help participants develop their memorization and comprehension abilities while simultaneously providing a chance for self-expression and creative exploration.

As the facilitator guides the group through these exercises, it is important to remain attuned to the individual needs of each participant by observing and adapting to each person's learning style and level of comfort.

3.3 Learning and teaching methods

Below are presented various learning and teaching methods that can be employed to deliver the sessions in which this unit's contents will be presented to the participants.

Mindfulness or Full Focus: Participants will be guided through exercises that cultivate their ability to focus their attention in the present moment without judgement. By practicing mindfulness, participants will enhance their capacity to concentrate on the task at hand.

Body focusing: This technique involves paying attention to specific parts of the body and using words to express the emotions and sensations associated with them.

Memory method: Through active reading and repetition, participants will improve their memory retention. This method can be applied to both existing written texts and their own original scripts.

Visualization or story-image: This technique involves creating mental images or stories to help remember data, dates and places. By engaging the imagination, participants can strengthen their ability to recall information.

Syllables or acronyms: Participants will learn a technique for memorizing by using the first syllable of each word they want to remember to create a new word or sentence. This can be an effective way to remember key concepts and details.

LOCI (Location) method: This technique involves associating data with a familiar spatial location. By linking concepts to a particular place, participants can improve their ability to recall information when they return to that location.



3.4 Detailed unit description

The training unit on script comprehension and memorization will begin with Full Focus (Mindfulness) activities to help participants prepare for the proposed tasks calmly. There is evidence that mindfulness reduces stress, stimulates teamwork and promotes learning from a space of relaxation and deep dialogue. This technique can ease the stress of concentration and memorization, allowing participants to play, create and memorize from a comfortable place.

Other techniques will be introduced gradually in the workshops:

Through the use of the technique of Body Focusing, participants will improve their ability to clarify what they feel or want. This technique improves the acquisition of self-knowledge, stimulate change or understanding of a situation.

The Memory Method is a technique based on consciously remembering and it will be used to support participants' comprehension of texts. When studying a text, taking it away for a moment and trying to paraphrase it, it's a good way to be sure to understand what is being said. Active reading, including making questions while reading the text, will support this process.

The Visualization or Story-Image technique is a method to memorize a list of data by making up a story that uses all the information. The key to this memorization technique is visualization and the use of memorable data points. Participants will have the chance to practice this method and notice that, even if the story does not make much sense, it is easier to remember important information through a story than by trying to remember all the details separately.

The technique of the syllables or acronyms involves using the first syllable of all the different words we need to remember to create a new word or sentence. For instance, the words "sandwich", "horrible" and "sensible" can create the word "sand-hor-sen."

Finally, participants will be introduced to the LOCI method. It utilizes spatial memory and is effective for remembering information that has a clear structure or hierarchy. To use this technique, participants imagine a familiar place or physical space and associate the terms and information they are trying to memorize to various locations or points in that place. This process improves retention of the memorized concepts every time the mental itinerary is revisited. This technique can also be applied to creating a story with items, where each item is a part of the story, or with movements, where each body movement is a word.

Using these tools and methods throughout the sessions will support participants in improving their memory and concentration while working in a safe environment to express their feelings.

3.5 Unit assessment

Assessment should be tailored to each individual's competencies, experience and expectations, taking into account the unique challenges they may face. Upon completion of the delivery of this unit, participants should have improved their comprehension and memorization skills. They should have gained more control over their attention and concentration, being able to focus on a chosen activity, object or thought with more precision and efficiency. Additionally, participants should have strengthened their cognitive abilities in areas such as memory, concentration, literacy and communication.



To evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed activities in improving the above-mentioned participants' competencies, questionnaires can be used. These questionnaires can allow the participants to express whether they perceive that they have improved their skills in these areas. Additionally, at the end of each session, time should be allocated to discussing these topics to enable participants to share their experiences with their peers.

In the framework of this training programme implementation, it is expected to have a professional familiar with the participants present during the sessions to support the facilitator and to provide objective assessment to ensure that the training is achieving its intended goals.

3.6 Additional resources

- ▶ Williams, J. M. G., & Kabat-Zinn, J. (2011). *Mindfulness: Diverse perspectives on its meaning, origins, and multiple applications at the intersection of science and dharma*. *Contemporary Buddhism*, 12(1), 1-18. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14639947.2011.564811>
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- ▶ Ravi, S., & Lee, J. Y. (2018). Show me a story: Towards coherent neural story illustrations. Proceedings of the IEEE Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition, 8099-8107. Retrieved from: https://openaccess.thecvf.com/content_cvpr_2018/papers/Ravi_Show_Me_a_CVPR_2018_paper.pdf

3.7 References

- ▶ Cornell, A. W. (1996). *The power of focusing: A practical guide to emotional self-healing*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.
- ▶ Dalgleish, T. (2018). *Method-of-Loci as a Mnemonic Device to Facilitate Access to Self-Affirming Personal Memories for Individuals with Depression*. University of Cambridge, MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit. <https://c2ad.mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/c2ad/sites/4/2018/11/Dalgleish-Method-of-loci-CPS.pdf>
- ▶ Lieury, L. (2011). *Une mémoire d'éléphant? Vrais trucs et fausses astuces*. Paris, France: Dunod.
- ▶ Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Wisco, B. E., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *Rethinking rumination. Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(5), 400-424. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6924.2008.00088.x>
- ▶ Segal, Z. V., Williams, J. M., & Teasdale, J. D. (2006). *Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression: A new approach to relapse prevention*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.



3.8 Unit activities

3.8.1 Introduction exercises

EXERCISE NAME: PRESENTATION

Exercise number: 1

Aims of the exercise:

- Establish personal connections participants themselves and between them and the facilitator.
- Create a safe and supportive environment by encouraging active listening and open communication.
- Practice focusing attention on simple but specific things.

Focus level: Low

Energy requirement: Low

Materials: None

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Instructions:

- ▶ The facilitator will guide the exercise by having everyone sit in a visible loose circle.
- ▶ Everyone will introduce themselves and add a simple concept with the first letter of their name (e.g. Susana, Smile).
- ▶ The group will repeat all the names and concepts together, including the facilitator.
- ▶ One by one, each participant will say the name and concept of each person in the group. For example, Luis Leon names Susana smile, Martin Melody, Elisa elephant, and so on until completing the group (depending of the group size)
- ▶ Participants can help each other remember names if needed.



EXERCISE NAME: MINDFULNESS FROM THE IMAGINATION

Exercise number: 2

Aims of the exercise:

- Foster a calm atmosphere to promote focus
- Establish a comfortable and welcoming environment that encourages active participation
- Generate a collective well-being that supports the dramaturgic comprehension and memorization
- Develop and enhance imagination through various techniques and exercises

Focus level: Low

Energy requirement: Low

Materials: Equipment for playing music, writing materials

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Instructions:

- ▶ The facilitator asks participants to search for a spot in the room to sit down, lie down or lean against the walls. They are invited to close their eyes.
- ▶ The facilitator plays on some relaxing music and guides the participants to focus on points of their body using a storytelling approach.

Example: Now we are going to relax, we enjoy the spot that we have just found. We make it ours. We let the air come in and out freely from our lungs and little by little we are going to free our mind. We are going to focus our attention on different points of the body. As if we have a warm light caressing us, we are going to visualize it. What does it look like? What shape does it have? Does it have texture? Is it soft? Now that we know our light, let it accompany us. We start with our feet. The light contours our soles and helps us to support our weight on the ground. It follows our ankles, knees, buttocks, lower back, arms, neck, back of the neck. We continue through our upper body, upper legs, belly, chest, neck, face, tongue and eyes. Now that we have let our weight take place, we feel that we sink into it, that we blend with it. Little by little, we are going to wake up, moving our toes, fingers, joints, we are going to massage our face and get up without rushing, slowly, including yawns if they arise and exaggerating them, since we have been on the floor for quite some time.

- ▶ From this state, the group may proceed to read some available text or to write about the sensations felt during the process.



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- ▶ From this state, the group may proceed to read some available text or to write about the sensations felt during the process.

EXERCISE NAME: READING COMPREHENSION

Exercise number: 3

Aims of the exercise:

- Improve reading comprehension by practicing fluid reading of a text and understanding the topic and characters involved.
- Gain confidence and practice in front of an audience.

Focus level: Medium

Energy requirement: Low

Materials: A text for each participant and writing materials

Duration: 20-30 minutes



EXERCISE NAME: READING COMPREHENSION

Instructions:

- ▶ The facilitator provides the participants with a text to read, it can be a poem, a scene from a theatrical piece, or a fragment from a novel.
- ▶ Each participant takes turns reading the text aloud. If a participant struggles with reading, the facilitator can help.
- ▶ After the reading, the facilitator pairs up the participants. Each pair have to identify the characters in the text, the location, the time of the day (if specified) and the activities performed by the characters. They can write it down if possible.
- ▶ The pairs are invited to summarize the scene while walking and sit down once they have finished the task.

EXERCISE NAME: THE SYLLABLE TECHNIQUE

Exercise number: 4

Aims of the exercise:

- Develop practical tools to boost self-confidence.
- Enhance the ability to associate and chunk words into smaller parts.
- Strengthen listening skills through pair exercises.

Focus level: Medium

Energy requirement: Low

Materials: Writing materials

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Instructions:

- ▶ The facilitator asks the participants to pair up.
- ▶ Each pair will name themselves as A and B.
- ▶ A tells B various words, and B notes them down. Then B tells A various words, and A notes them down.
- ▶ Each of them will have to combine the words into one longer word by chunking them together.
- ▶ Example: "Wall", "room", "couch" and "cat" becomes "wallroomcoucat."



EXERCISE NAME: THE SYLLABLE TECHNIQUE

- ▶ The pairs share their created words with each other.
- ▶ After successfully learning each other's words, they can then share their words with the rest of the group.

3.8.II Core exercises

EXERCISE NAME: NUMBERS TOGETHER

Exercise number: 1

Aims of the exercise:

Guide participants to close their eyes and turn their attention inwards

- Foster an environment of shared listening and collaboration
- Promote a sense of teamwork and cooperation

Focus level: High

Energy requirement: Medium

Materials: None

Duration: 5-10 minutes

Instructions:

- ▶ The facilitator invites the group to sit and close their eyes and prepare to call out numbers.
- ▶ The facilitator explains that the objective is for each participant to say their own number without coinciding with another participant.
- ▶ Participants begin to call out numbers in order from one to ten, without advance notice of who will start. If more than one participant calls out the same number, they stop and restart back at one.
- ▶ Once the first objective is achieved, the group can challenge themselves to continue to 20 or higher.

It is recommended to repeat the game in consecutive sessions to experience improvement over time. If an individual participant says more than one number, they must not be one after another. For example, if they say one, they cannot follow and say two; they must wait until three or the subsequent numbers.

The facilitator decides when to end the game, either when the desired number is reached or when the game is stuck and they need to move on.



EXERCISE NAME: THE IMAGE STORY

Exercise number: 2

Aims of the exercise:

- Enhance participants' ability to organize concepts and ideas.
- Cultivate and expand imagination and creativity.
- Encourage free-flowing thoughts without fear of judgment.

Focus level: Medium

Energy requirement: Medium

Materials: Writing materials and a container

Instructions:

- ▶ The facilitator gives out paper sheets and pens and asks the participants to come up with a concept or idea and write it on a sheet of paper. Another possibility is to ask them to write about a specific topic, so to bring the session in a particular direction.
- ▶ The participants give their paper to the facilitator who places them in a container, and when they are all gathered, the facilitator reads them out loud.
- ▶ The participants take another sheet of paper and write down all the words and use them to create a story that will be shared in the circle with the rest of the participants.

Example: If the words are "dog", "bird", "pencil", "tree", "football player", "motorbike", "banana", "cap" and "cup", they could make up a story like the following: "A dog was chasing a football player riding a motorbike, wearing a cap, and with a cup on one of his hands, and a pencil on the other, the motorbike rode on to a banana, slipped, and hit a tree, where there was a bird that got startled and flew away."

EXERCISE NAME: SPATIAL MEMORY

Exercise number: 3

Aims of the exercise:

- Encourage participants to focus on the space
- Increase task efficiency by combining several activities
- Foster personal growth and team collaboration

Focus level: High

Energy requirement: Medium

Materials: A text for each participant

Duration: 20-30 minutes

Instructions:

- ▶ The facilitator distributes a text. Each participant will receive a text to read either individually or as a group, depending on whether it is a monologue or a dialogue.
- ▶ Participants will move around the room while holding their texts. They will read one paragraph in a designated corner of the room and then, they will then take some steps and read the next part of the text in another corner, going on in this way until they have read the whole text with each part in a different spot in the room.
- ▶ Once the participants have memorized their texts, they repeat out loud the text in a specific spot.

The objective is for participants to acquire tools to memorize the text. Mentally reviewing the places previously walked through while the text is spoken aloud will facilitate the memorization of the text.

EXERCISE NAME: TEXT AND MOVEMENT

Exercise number: 4

Aims of the exercise:

- Explore the use of movement and physicality to learn and embody a text.
- Work on the internal and external focus
- Engage the group's collective imagination to memorize a section of the text

Focus level: High

Energy requirement: High

Materials: A text for each participant

Duration: 30 minutes

Instructions:

- ▶ The facilitator distributes a text to each participant. It could be a long poem so that each participant has a piece to learn and then they can recite it together.

For example, Walt Whitman's "Song of myself, 21".



EXERCISE NAME: TEXT AND MOVEMENT

"I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,

The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me,

The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue..."

- ▶ Participants are invited to read their texts, assimilate them and, word by word, create a movement that reminds them of the text. The word "torments", for example, could be a large upward movement of the hand. And so on with the whole piece.
- ▶ Participants stand in a circle and they perform the sequence of movements: each one shows their sequence of wordless movements in the order of the written text.
- ▶ They do the round again, this time saying the text with the movement and, finally, they say the text without movement.

3.8.III Closure exercises

EXERCISE NAME: REFLECTION

Exercise number: 1

Aims of the exercise

- Improve self-perception and emotional intelligence
- Learn to be concise and express complex concepts with one or few words.

Focus level: Low

Energy requirement: Low

Materials: None

Duration: 10 minutes

Instructions: At the end of the session, each participant shares one word to describe how they felt, transforming complex emotions into specific concepts. This exercise promotes communication within the group and helps participants to bring a conclusion to the process and reflect on their emotions.



EXERCISE NAME: WRITE TO ONESELF

Exercise number: 2

Aims of the exercise

- Improve critical thinking
- Develop the ability to set aside dedicated time for oneself
- Develop the ability to choose what to disclose to the group

Focus level: Low

Energy requirement: Low

Materials: Equipment for playing music, writing materials

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Instructions:

- ▶ The facilitator hands out writing materials to the participants and tells them to find a place in the room.
- ▶ The facilitator plays some relaxing music and invites participants to write down how they felt during the session, how they were focused on their task, if anything important happened during the session, any new discoveries, or what they enjoyed or did not enjoy during the session.

These reflections are personal, but they can share them with the group if they wish.

EXERCISE NAME: CLOSE ALL TOGETHER

Exercise number: 3

Aims of the exercise

- Foster group cohesion, strengthening the group's sense of connection
- Learn to find one's place within the group dynamic
- Reflect on the meaning of collaboration towards a shared objective

Focus level: Low

Energy requirement: Medium

Materials: Writing materials

Duration: 15 minutes



Instructions:

- ▶ The facilitator hands out writing materials to the participants and tells them to write a sentence (if possible, in a poetic way) that either explains how they have felt during the session or captures in that sentence something in particular that they have liked in the session.
- ▶ All the sentences are then put together – one person can write the sentences in some sort of order. Pronouns are put in the plural (“I” becomes “we”) and the facilitator gives participants time to practice the full text together.
- ▶ Example: “We felt peace at the beginning, we liked playing in space, we are happy to be together..”
- ▶ When they know the complete text, they speak it at the same time, as if they were a kind of chorus, bringing the session to an end.



END OF THE UNIT



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