Julie Dirksen shares with her readers in Thinking Through Design: Using Technology for Learning how “memory is the foundation of learning.” I’m always quoting to my adult children “reading is the foundation of all learning.” However, if we think of Dirksen’s quote and mine as well, are they really that different from one another? Dirksen continues in her writing explaining how retrieval is the process of recalling and bringing back stored information; we do the same when we are reading - we read and recall the story in our minds – our memory is always at work.

Dirksen writes about how our brain is like a self-organized closet; creating new connections and strengthening and/or weakening data through filters. As a graphic facilitator, I listen to the discussion, synthesize what’s being said into key ideas and themes, visualize it into powerful imagery and metaphors so that the group can see connections between ideas and understand the bigger picture. In essence, I am helping my clients “organize their closet.”

Dirksen explains how to use “chunking in learning” referring to the strategy of breaking content into bite-size pieces, so that it is easier to digest. I work with high-level teams, to assist them to make sense of complex concepts and problems – the more information, the more complex the problems, the harder it is for the client to manage the information; and their recall capabilities significantly decreases. As we develop the graphic templates for real-time recording, we chunk our information in various buckets on the visual chart and as a group we are able to see the development of the strategy session evolve; as a result of this chunking process, we engage in a rich discussion and the memory recall of the information shared, recorded and discussed increases significantly.

How do we get their attention? Dirksen explains that we can grab the learner’s attention with logical flow - use the logic to recall the flow of story to retell. My job, in addition to capturing the content, is to listen for connections, cluster similar ideas, and try to make some sense of what I know to normally be a messy, all-over-the-place discussion. After each session ends I stand back, make connections, create buckets, add lines/arrows and colors. The completed visual charts offer logical flow of the information shared in the meeting and the chunking of information on the visual chart is much like organizing our closet - by putting the information “on our shelves” we can manage the information more effectively and improve our memory recall.

Source: