

Learning, Memory, Wellbeing and Older People: lessons from AEA's three European projects



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Three EU Grundtvig - funded Projects

The Association for Education and Ageing (AEA)
is/has been involved in 3 Grundtvig Projects:



1.(3 yrs. 2012 – 2014): **ForAge for Later-life Learning: Building on European Experience** - 16 partners in 14 countries.



2. (2 yrs. 2012-2014): **Memory in Later Life: learning, supporting, developing** - partners in Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy & Poland.



3. (2 yrs.2013- 2015): **Wellbeing in Later Life: education, creativity and physical activity** - partners Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey.

Discussion Point



Why, do you think, an organisation such as the AEA might want to participate in international projects?

Three EU Grundtvig- funded Projects

- Through these projects, and *the IJEA*, the AEA now has a significant international presence
- AEA has benefited financially through income for management costs and overheads
- Members of AEA have worked with European colleagues
- AEA has facilitated ‘mobilities’ (travel abroad) for c. 15 UK older learners engaged in the projects
- AEA has played a leading role in all 3 projects
- AEA has developed some expertise and many contacts in certain fields which it can now exploit

European Partners

In the three Projects, the AEA has worked with

25 organisations

(adult education; centres for older people; universities; ngo's; colleges; care organisations; national agencies)

in **17** countries

AEA has European partners in

Austria

Cyprus

Czech Rep

Finland

Germany

Greece

Hungary

Ireland

Italy



Netherlands

Poland

Portugal

Roumania

Slovakia

Slovenia

Spain

Turkey





Aims of ForAge for Later-life Learning Project

- to spread information about later-life learning
- to review research and experience
- to help raise standards of practice and to influence policy throughout Europe and beyond
- to build upon the large quantity, in the last 20 years, of later-life learning programmes, training events, conferences and projects
- to disseminate and to create networks
- to promote dialogue and policy debate

How does the ForAge project work?

- CREATE INTERACTIVE **WEBSITE** AND COMPREHENSIVE **DATABASE** <http://www.foragenetwork.eu/>
- ANALYSE **KEY PROJECTS**
- DOCUMENT **SIX NEW DEVELOPMENTS, DIALOGUES OR EXPLORATIONS**
- OPERATE **ON-LINE FORUM** FOR DEBATES
- COMMUNICATE AND REPORT TO **KEY STAKE-HOLDERS**
- COMMUNICATE AND DISCUSS WITH **KEY DECISION-MAKERS**
- ACCESS **OTHER DATABASES** IN RELATED FIELDS
- MAKE LINKS TO **KEY EU NETWORKS**, PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES
- PROMOTE **COLLABORATION ACROSS DISCIPLINES**
- DISSEMINATE **NEWSLETTERS**
- HOLD THREE PAN-EUROPEAN **CONFERENCES**





What was the Memory in Later Life Project about?

The Memory in Later Life Project had the aims of encouraging older people in the 6 countries to

- think about memory and learn more about it from many different perspectives
- discuss together and apply what they learned
- become more confident about their memory
- make recommendations which would be brought together in a Handbook

How did the Memory project work?

- Common programme of local activities in each partner country for older learners leading to international meeting of learners and tutors
- 5 phases of local activities and 6 international meetings
- Local activities included meetings and workshops, discussions and surveys, reading and internet searches
- UK local activities have been based on groups of older learners mainly at Lancaster but also at Strathclyde
- Key output is a Project Handbook which has older people as the main target audience

Memory in Later Life: Local Activities

Main topics:

“Personal” knowledge- personal ways of coping with memory difficulties

“Cultural” knowledge - assumptions ,attitudes and stereotypes about older peoples’ memories found, e.g., in proverbs, advertising, films, books, plays etc.

Mnemonic Techniques

Autobiographical memory

Attitudes, beliefs and memory

Aesthetic learning and memory

WELL-BEING IN LATER LIFE
EDUCATION, CREATIVITY
and
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY







Discussion point

How would you define “wellbeing”?

Project definition

“Many positive states such as happiness, pleasure, contentment, serenity, good health, life satisfaction, good career, life balance may contribute to “wellbeing” but none of them is exactly it...

The common factor for all kinds of well-being is a feeling of being ‘in control of’ one’s own life, being the subject of one’s own existence, feeling a kind of autonomy, being the boss of one’s own destiny”.

What is the Wellbeing in Later Life Project about?

The Wellbeing in Later Life Project has the aims of

- considering the meaning of wellbeing in later life
- comparing older learner and tutor perspectives
- comparing perspectives from classroom learning; creative activities; physical activities
- considering the contribution of different teaching and learning methods

How does the Wellbeing in Later Life Project work

- Common programme of local activities in each partner country for older learners leading to international meeting of learners and tutors
- 5 phases of local activities and 6 international meetings
- Local activities include discussions and surveys, reading and internet searches
- UK local activities are/will be based on groups of older learners at Lancaster and elsewhere
- Key output will be a Project portfolio

The remainder of the lecture returned to the content of the Memory Project and, in particular, refers to mnemonic techniques, senses and memory & memory knowledge embedded in culture-e.g. sayings, films, painting , advertising

Discussion Point



Complete the sentence

“I think of my memory as.....

This is an example of using mnemonic techniques to assist memory – put together by AEA (Lancaster) older learners for use in Szeged (Hungary), June 2013

The next five slides demonstrate how techniques of visualisation, acronym, mind mapping and rhyming can assist memory

The task was to remember 9 eccentric terms from the game of cricket, even if you knew nothing about cricket

Look at the next slide. What are the 9 cricketing terms represented by the images?



Cricket words

Bat



Bowl



Run



Chinaman



Third Man



Long

Leg



Duck



Maiden over



Hat

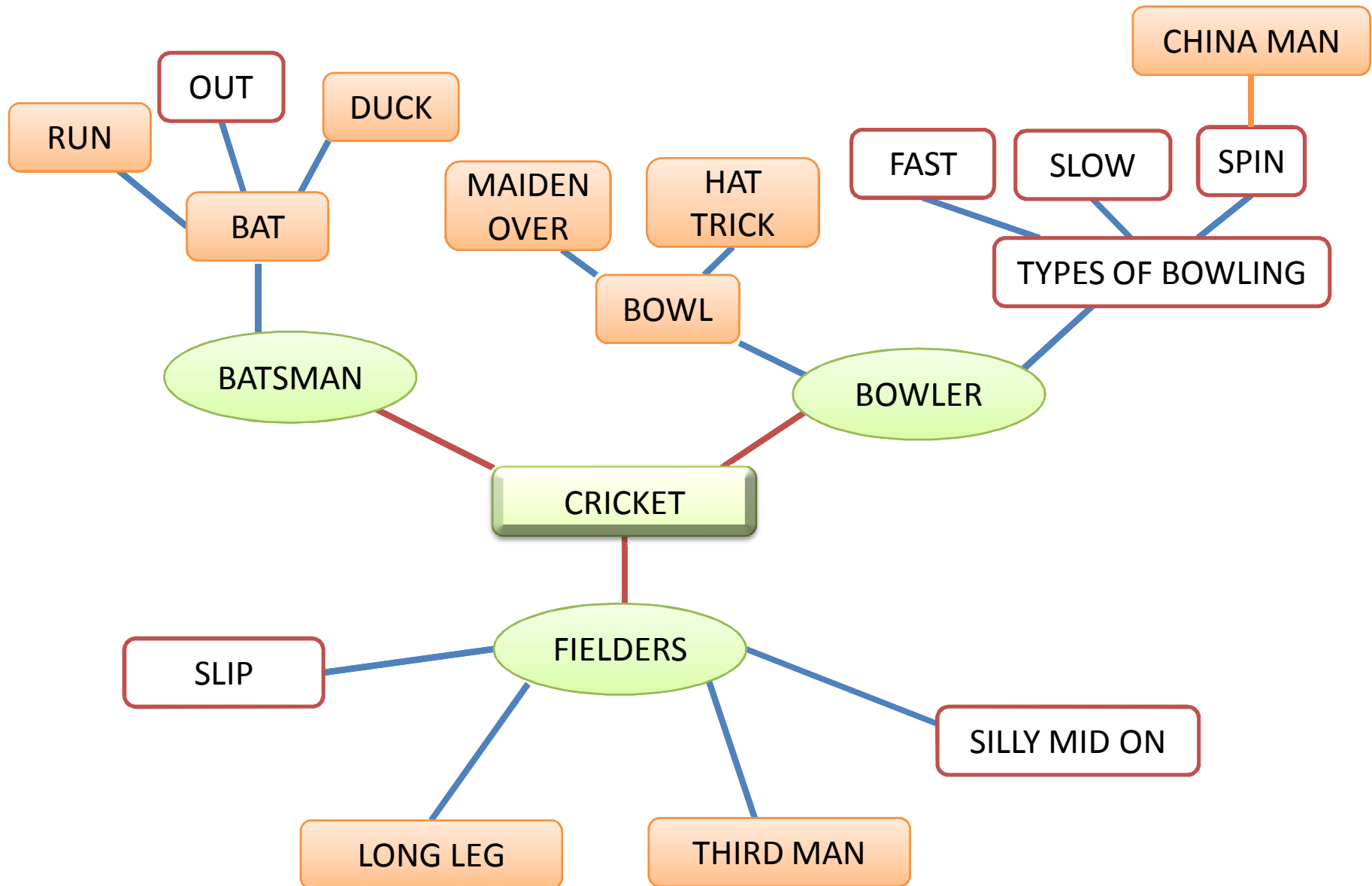
Trick



Extended acronym

Run	R	Real
Maiden over	M	Memory
Third man	T	Techniques
Hat trick	H	Help
Duck	D	Desperate
Bat	B	British
Bowl	B	Boys
Long leg	L	Learn
Chinaman	C	Cricket





Rhyme

“Only a Chinaman with a soul
Can cook bat and duck in a bowl”
Said the Third Man, “I’ll run to invite
That maiden over, for a bite.
She has a long leg and will be quick
To show us, after dinner, her hat trick.”



Sample of Visual Memory - visual sense



Sample for Echoic memory - sense of hearing



Sample for Haptic memory - sense of touch



Sample for hearing and smell memory - senses of hearing and smell



Sample for Taste Memory - sense of taste

VISUAL SENSE

VISUAL MEMORY

SENSE OF HEARING

ECHOIC MEMORY

SENSE OF TOUCH

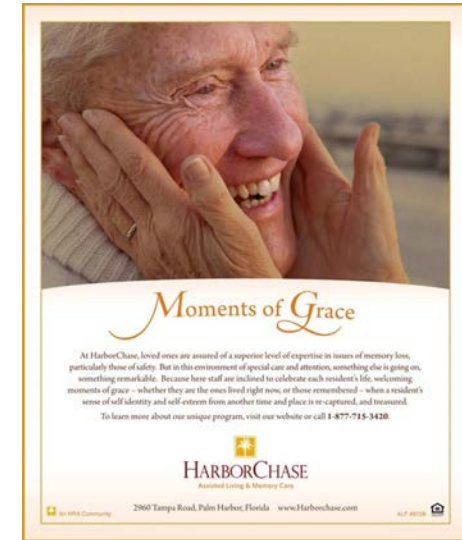
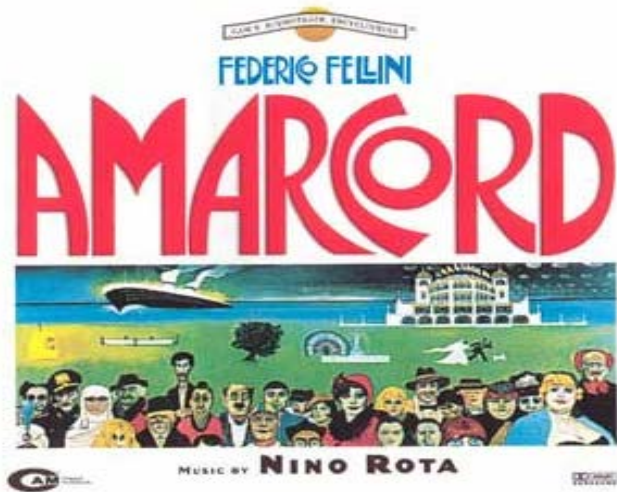
HAPTIC MEMORY

SENSE OF SMELL

SMELL MEMORY

SENSE OF TASTE

TASTE MEMORY



Cultural “knowledge” of Memory

- assumptions, attitudes and stereotypes to be found, for example, in jokes, proverbs, novels, poetry, drama, films, songs, art, advertising etc.

Literature, poetry, sayings, proverbs, jokes....

Remembrance of things past is not necessarily the remembrance of things as they were Marcel Proust

Remember the evil you have done and forget the evil you have received.

Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn Benjamin Franklin

Footfalls echo in the memory ... towards the doors we never opened T.S. Eliot

Memory is what tells a man that his wedding anniversary was yesterday

FILMS

MEMORY LOSS:

- Spellbound
- Regarding Henry
- 50 first dates
- Facing window

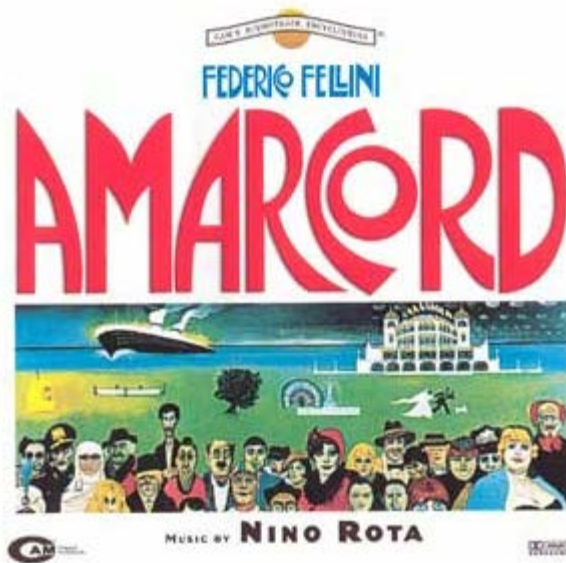
FORGOTTEN THINGS (AND PEOPLE!) :

- Bread and tulips
- Home alone



MEMORIES AN EARLIER LIFE:

- Cinema Paradiso
- Amarcord



MEMORIAL CULTURE :

- Schindler's list
- Life is beautiful



“Hope and Memory”

Kenyon C. Cox, 1900





Moments of Grace

At HarborChase, loved ones are assured of a superior level of expertise in issues of memory loss, particularly those of safety. But in this environment of special care and attention, something else is going on, something remarkable. Because here staff are inclined to celebrate each resident's life, welcoming moments of grace – whether they are the ones lived right now, or those remembered – when a resident's sense of self identity and self-esteem from another time and place is re-captured, and treasured.

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FROM THE MEMORY PROJECT 5th ACTIVITY: answers from partners
Which memory activities, approaches or methods covered by the Project were liked most by your seniors and/or are regarded as the most useful?

- Autobiography
- Memories linked with senses
- Visualisation
- Mind map
- Art and Memory / Learning through aesthetic experience
- Interactive learning
- The association chain
- Use of technology
- Games: Sudoku, crosswords, board games
- Acronyms
- Personal strategies to remember

Coordinators' answers

- Autobiography
- Mnemonics (e.g. rhyme and visualisation)
- Mind map
- Personal strategies
- Memory as a social, cultural, even literary construct
- Ageism/False beliefs
- Metaphors



FROM THE MEMORY PROJECT 5th ACTIVITY: answers from seniors

**What advice would you now give to other seniors
who want to improve their memories?**

- Enrol in courses at your local adult education centre, community college or other community group
- Play games, do crosswords
- Volunteer
- Practice several mnemonic methods and find the one or two which work best for you.
- Find people who are also interested in improving their memory. Learn something new!

Memory in Later life Project Handbook

can be accessed at:

www.memoryxl.blogspot.com and

<http://www.associationforeducationandageing.org/news-views.html>



Are there any “lessons” from these 3 Projects?

- ForAge Project does show that there is a great deal of data, research, evidence, experience, opinion, analysis and testimony about learning in later life available across Europe and that it is necessary and possible to bring it together in a form in which it can be analysed.
- ForAge Project shows the complexity of managing a project of 16 partners from 14 countries and one model of how to do it.
- ForAge Project raises interesting questions about the methodology of influencing ‘stakeholders’ and ‘decision-makers’ which merit more examination
- Memory Project indicates that although there may be physical changes to memory associated with age there are plenty of practical ways of assisting memory and that an active intellectual, physical and social life will strengthen and improve memory.

Are there any “lessons” from these 3 European Projects?

- Memory Project suggests that stereotypes and inaccurate beliefs can adversely affect some older peoples’ memory function and that discussion and knowledge may change this.
- Wellbeing Project is likely to suggest that different areas of learning for older people may have different wellbeing benefits because of different ways of teaching and learning
- All of these projects show evidence of older people as active not passive; having commitment to learning as opposed to being negative about it; able to participate and to be constructive.
- International cooperation in projects like these provides new perspectives and a challenge to established ideas and methods.

Discussion Point



The final project ends in July 2015. What, if anything, should AEA do next to build on its experience of these three projects?