



Make Language Learning Funnier and More Efficient by The REMEMASU Method



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ST-Postline Language Services

**Make Language Learning Funnier and More Efficient by
The REMEMASU Method**

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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever had to struggle with teaching grammar when the grammar rules of the language you are teaching don't want to go into the heads of the students? Have you had to fight with bored teenagers who prefer to spend their time by playing on the computer, instead of doing exercises in the class? Would you rather show music or videos in the class than preach about focusing to the ADHD youngsters who are jumping on the walls? If your time is spent in repeating words and grammar rules, or the first ten minutes of your lesson are spent in restoring discipline, this book is for you.

Do you want to teach languages in a little easier way than by filling in words one after the other? Do you suffer from concentration difficulties yourself? Would you like to walk in nature and smell flowers while you teach or listen to music while preparing for the lessons of the next day? Do you want to start the morning online course by lighting a candle or settling down on the couch?

As a teacher of using the **REMEMASU** method, you use different methods so that you can take a breath for a while and let the students listen to music or let relaxation take care of some of your tasks and answer "Yes" to any of the questions above. The most important thing is to not faithfully follow the methods or given instructions, but to follow your own understanding of how things should be taught, or which method feels the best for you in any given situation. The idea is to make your work as a teacher more meaningful and help you to cope better with it. You can think about of which method you really enjoy using, and what interests you the most and choose your favorite method according to it.

Language learning can be much more than just filling up words or grammar rules. It has been researched, that information goes to the head best when all of the senses, sight, hearing and touch are involved. That's why teaching and listening the words together with concrete doing of the tasks are more effective than just listening or reading. It has also been researched, that the use of relaxation, music, art or exercise in teaching improves learning results.

I have worked for 21 years as a language teacher in educational institutions of various degrees and taught students of all ages, from 4 years old to over 80 years old. Among my students, there have been top-talented students, students with various degrees of learning disorders, immigrants, students suffering of dementia and those in need of special support, as well as students with disabilities. You can imagine that such a thing has required a lot of flexibility and adaptation to changing situations, in which case special methods are also really necessary in teaching. Since I myself have a disabled daughter, and I have taught students who need special support, different teaching techniques have become familiar in practice.

The **REMEMASU** method is a combination of letters that I have developed by myself, which come from the words **relaxation**, **meditation**, **mandalas** and **suggestopedia**. The method is based on the scientific research I have made at the University of Turku on the use of special methods in language teaching. I have used different methods for my students in several educational institutions. I would like to thank the principal of the Lapua secondary school, Petri Saunamäki, for free hands in trying out the methods, the former line manager of the Kauhajoki Evangelical College, Sirkka-Liisa Havunen, for encouraging the use of the methods, and the former principal of Kurikka Civic College, Jukka Ala-Luopa, with whose generous help we participated in the Foreign Language Drama Festival -Grundtvig project, Eija-Irmeli Lahti From the Seinäjoki City Theater for directing our Kalevala performance, the belly dance teacher Marita Koskiniemi for directing our belly dance

performance, and the secretaries of the Kurikka Civic college, Leena Koivusaari and Johanna Rantamäki, for their exemplary assistance in the implementation of the project. The project has helped me in the development of this method, thanks to my foreign colleagues from the Grundtvig project, who are teachers and staff from six other language schools, Martha Patino de la Garza, Maria Fanizza, Ahmet Yavuz, Raquel Sanchez-Gomez, Justyna Limon and Anna Storck. My friends and colleagues have given me a plenty of ideas and inspiration for my teaching.

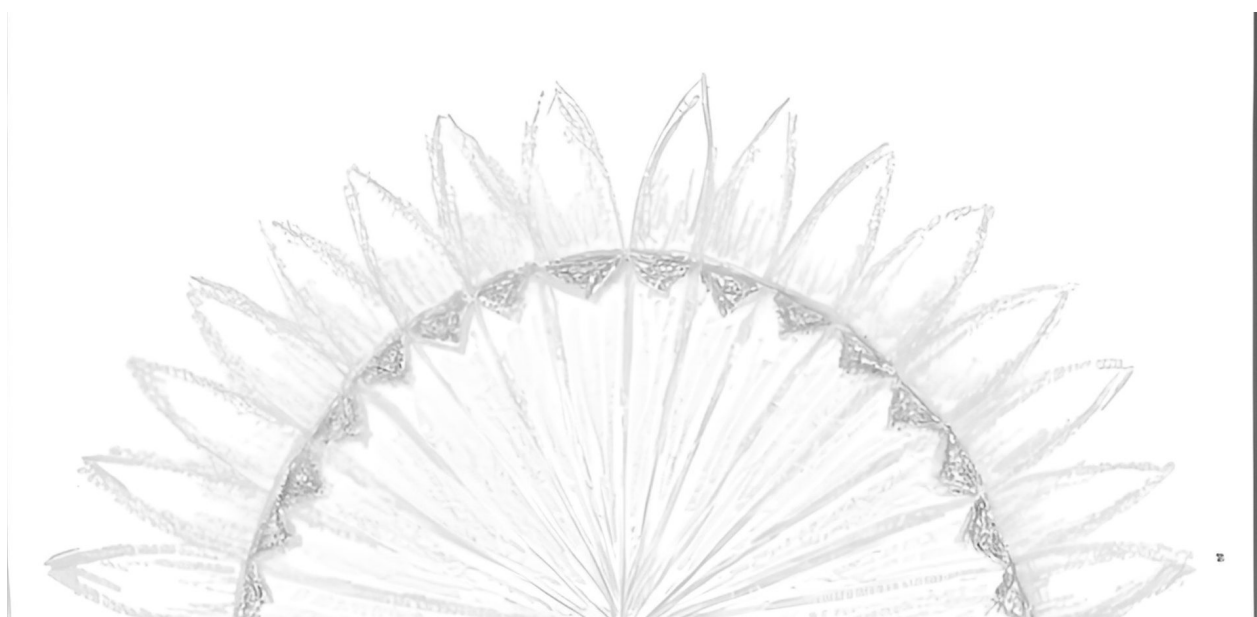
The purpose of the **REMEMASU** method is to help students to relax before the actual language learning situation, when the information obtained sinks in the head best. How can you leave the class with a smile on your face and return home relaxed after the class? How can you get your students to draw and color cool pictures, instead of flipping through dry grammar charts? How can you use the **REMEMASU** method in your own teaching? If you want an answer to your questions, check out the basic principles of the **REMEMASU** method in the **Chapter 1**.

In the **Chapter 2**, I tell about my own path of becoming a teacher and the use of different relaxation methods, how I ended up researching special methods and trying them out in my teaching. Could you imagine taking a step to become an expert in special methods? What methods would you like to use in your teaching? How does it feel to start teaching a variable group of students of different levels with new methods?

In the **Chapter 3**, I tell about my own path in experimenting with special methods over the course of a few years and what kind of problems I have had to face in different educational institutions. At the end of the book there is a workbook that you can use to plan your teaching by using the **REMEMASU** method. I hope these experiences will be useful to you, whether you are just starting your teaching career or a teacher with more experience.

In the **Chapter 4**, in turn, you can create your own plan for using the **REMEMASU** method by filling the **REMEMASU WORKBOOK**.

Sirkku Tunkkari-Yli-Suomu, MA



CHAPTER 1

The **REMEMASU** method consists of the words: **relaxation, meditation, mandalas** and **suggestopedia**. Getting the desired best learning result requires complete relaxation. One method alone is not always enough, because for some, even thinking about relaxation can make them tense up and try too hard, making relaxation completely impossible. Meditation in the rhythm of calm music leads the thoughts somewhere else. If that doesn't help either, drawing or coloring mandalas will eventually make you forget other things. This is combined with passive listening to the words of the language, which may not even be actively practiced, but a large part of the information is still possible to remember and can be recalled later. Jose Silva has developed the Silva method, where the principle is to bring the patient to the so called Alpha state, which corresponds the moment before falling asleep. It has been established that this particular state of consciousness is important for learning, because then things stay in the mind better than in the normal Beta state, i.e. waking state. With relaxation and meditation, the state is reached where a part can be dozed off, but this is not dangerous for learning, because it has been proved that a person can hear what is being said, even in a dream. In the following paragraphs, I will tell you more about the different parts of the **REMEMASU** method.

Relaxation

I myself use the relaxation technique taught by Jose Silva, but you can also use other relaxation techniques. In Silva's technique, you lie down with your head against a pillow or some other support so that it is slightly raised upwards. You can use a yoga or a pilates mat or a chair that allows you to lean back. You can take a deep breath and count on your mind from one hundred down to one, but not to zero. The first time you count from one hundred to one to achieve sufficient relaxation, but you can slowly reduce the number at a time, first to fifty, then to twenty-five, ten and finally to five, because at first relaxation can be more difficult and require more time, but once you get used to it, it will happen faster every time. I count from five to one these days. You should bring a device or a music CD with you to the class, from which you can play calming or meditative music on the background. You can also find relaxation music on the YouTube. However, the music should not be too loud, because your voice must be heard clearly, and the music should not disturb the listeners. It would also be better to place the device at least a couple of meters away from the listeners. You can also use candles or incense, but when using them, it would always be good to check that someone is not asthmatic or allergic to scents. In this case, you can use just a white, unscented candle. The room should also be warm enough, because if it's too cold, it's hard to relax. You can reserve blankets in the case of cold, or ask your students to bring them with them.

When you have reached the lying position and you have counted the numbers until one, say and visualize on your mind how relaxation descends on the top of your head, from where it flows down to the back of your head, your ears, your neck, your spine, your sacrum and your buttocks. Imagine how it slowly descends on the front of your forehead, your eyebrows, your eyes, your nose, your cheeks, your chin, your neck, your chest, your stomach. All the muscles in your face relax. Relax your shoulders, upper arms, elbows, forearms, wrists, palms and fingers. Continue to relax by relaxing your buttocks, thighs, stomach, hamstrings, calves, ankles, feet and toes. When listing body parts, try to keep your speaking pace calm and controlled at all times, so that your students feel completely safe and unhurried. When you feel completely relaxed, you can repeat: "Every time when I relax like this, I'll go deeper and faster. Positive things are good for me and they give me the benefits I hope for. Day by day I'll make this world a better place to live. Day by day all the people of the world are getting richer". You can also invent your own affirmation. They say that even a

couple of minutes of relaxation can do wonders and bring to mind things that you wouldn't have thought of otherwise.

You can lie down in a state of complete relaxation for as long as you want and meditate. In normal meditation, I would continue with additional exercises in this state, but in language learning, relaxing for a couple of minutes is probably enough. After you have relaxed for a while and relaxed your student, this is the phase when the meditation begins.

Meditation

When starting the actual meditation, make sure that your students are lying down and in a relaxed state. Take out a book and start reading the words of the language you are teaching at a leisure place while the music is played in the quiet background. It is the most important that your students feel safe, and that no outside noise should disturb the meditation. You can read paragraphs or individual words. You can also use a ready-made language learning CD or an online recording. At this point, the students don't have to do anything else than listen. The information goes to the head passively, and it doesn't matter if someone falls asleep. The information goes to your head even in the sleep.

When you have read enough (the appropriate amount is the words of one paragraph), you can return to the relaxation phase and gradually bring your students back down to the Earth. You can, for example, ask them to take a few deep breaths and shake their limbs, in which case attention is drawn to the body's functions and shakes them out of a sleepy state. At this point you can take a short break. If you have, for ex. homework, you can check them before or after the meditation.

Mandalas

The next phase is to draw mandalas. Stock up on ready-made handouts with mandalas to color, or clean white drawing paper, pens and crayons. If you are using blank paper, you can ask your students to write the words they read on the paper as they draw the mandala. The technique is completely free and the students can draw whatever mandalas they want, but it would still be good for you to show them a model and tell them what a mandala is if they don't know it. They can draw, for ex. colors, and associate a certain word with a certain color or shape. It has been said that the learned information remains in the head most effectively if as many senses as possible are connected to it, and it has been studied, that if the words are heard, read aloud and then written, they are learned the most effectively. Colorful pictures also enhance learning and activate color memory.

Suggestopedia

The method was developed by Georgi Lozanov (1978). It uses many different methods to achieve the best learning result, and it is well suited as a learning method for our language studies.

You can also use various objects, scents and tastes as help, so learning becomes comprehensive, for ex. a banana that you can touch, taste and smell. When you repeat the word banana in your preferred language, it goes to your mind more effectively than just showing a picture of a banana. This kind of method can be used in teaching Finnish to immigrants when you want to teach concrete words. You can also use picture cards, which are either just pictures without words, word cards or cards with words or phrases under the picture. The idea is that you first show the picture and repeat the word. If you teach children in the nursery, no words yet need to be learned, just remembering is enough. You can make pictures with your students, read rhymes, sing or show



Do you want to teach languages in a little easier way than by filling in words one after the other. Do you suffer from concentration difficulties? Would you like to walk in nature and smell flowers while you teach or listen to music while preparing for the next day's lessons? Do you want to start the morning online course by lighting a candle and settling down on the couch or lying on a sunny beach in the south?

Relaxation and letting go are important in language learning, when new things go best on the mind, and you can let yourself go into the so-called flow state, where you can gain insights. A stressed person does not learn much when his/her thoughts are connected to something else than the subject being studied. It is known, that the most effective learning happens when all of the senses of sight, hearing and touch are involved. In the REMEMASU method, different means of relaxation are combined to achieve the best result. The method is based on the scientific research, made at the University of Turku, on the use of special methods in language teaching. In this book, I present the basic principles for using the REMEMASU method in language teaching, which you can use to make your teaching more meaningful and relaxing.