may not have much meaning at first. But when children write stories incorporating certain words, they often find it easier to read and recognize these words later. Similarly, mnemonics such as ROY G BIV or "My Very Earnest Mother Just Showed Us Nine Planets" serve to aid in the learning and recall of the colors in the spectrum and the planets in our solar system (see reviews of mnemonic strategies by Higbee [1979] and Bellezza [1981]).

Finally, imagery can be a very effective means of encoding information. Studies have shown that pictures suggesting visual images (Levin & Kaplan, 1972) or simply instructions to form images related to text material (Kulhavy & Swenson, 1975) are effective in facilitating learning. Some teachers now find that combining this method with story creation, as described, can be a very powerful means for facilitating not only learning but motivation (D. Cooper, personal communication, September, 1992). Children "publish" their stories by drawing illustrations to accompany them. In so doing, they strengthen their understanding of words in a very personal, meaningful way.

Before leaving this topic, it is perhaps wise to point out that nearly any method of elaborative encoding is better for learning than is mere repetition of information. But which approach is best depends upon the learners and the material to be learned. Moreover, learners who have developed idiosyncratic but effective encoding strategies will not necessarily benefit from some strategy imposed by the instruction. For this reason, there has been considerable interest in determining how learners may be taught to develop and use their own strategies effectively (cf. Pressley & Levin, 1983; Levin & Pressley, 1986; Segal, Chipman, & Glaser, 1985).

Learners may be encouraged to invent their own mnemonics, for example. Instructors in a driving-under-the-influence program who attended a workshop I presented invented the acronym VOMIT to remind themselves of the effects of drinking on the driving task. (I no longer recall what the individual letters stand for, but no doubt they do! This just illustrates how individually effective mnemonics can be; what works for one learner may not for another.)

Self-questioning has also been investigated as a means for learners to encode information they hear in lectures or read in printed instructional materials. Sometimes learners ask themselves questions to aid in comprehending material, such as, "How does the meaning of this concept differ from what was discussed on the previous page?" Other questions, which call for drawing inferences, should help learners to integrate new information with what they have already learned.

In reviewing research on self-questioning as an encoding strategy, Snowman (1986) pointed out that some learners must be taught how to frame good questions if the strategy is to be effective. Some teachers do this as early as the second grade by asking their students, "What could you ask yourself to be sure you understand ___?," and then providing feedback on the students' responses (S. Briggs, personal communication, October, 1992).