

as assessment and evaluation. At the structural level, the division of chapters into three distinct sections seems vague, as the concepts discussed across sections overlap significantly and do not fit neatly into separate categories. Despite these limitations, the work remains a valuable contribution to advancing inclusivity and diversity in English language education.

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Chip Heath & Dan Heath (2007). *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*. Random House, pages 336, ISBN: 978-1-4000-6428-1, Rs. 699.

Reviewed by Sajit M. Mathews

Chip and Dan Heath's seminal work, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, offers a practical framework to design episodes of communication that are "understood and remembered, and have a lasting impact". The book might seem like a guide for managers and marketers. But it holds profound and actionable insights for every communicator including us English language teachers, researchers, and students across all academic fields. The book became an instant success because the authors successfully reverse-engineered the attributes of

'sticky' messages, ranging from ephemeral urban legends to enduring biblical parables. They proved that the fate of an idea is determined not by resources or inherent sensationalism, but by its design. Language use is the key here.

The core challenge addressed by the book is the tricky and all pervasive phenomenon termed the 'Curse of Knowledge.' Once an individual masters a subject, they find it nearly "impossible for them to imagine what it is like to lack that knowledge". In academia, this curse manifests in the lack of clarity with which we teach concepts, facilitate learning and communicate meaning. As experts, we frequently "share data" but fail to create a conducive context within which ideas are found useful and lasting, because we take our audience's readiness to grasp for granted. The authors offer the SUCCEsS checklist (Simple, Unexpected, Concrete, Credible, Emotional, Stories) as an essential tool to bypass the Curse of Knowledge. For us, it is a tool to ensure that critical academic content "sticks."

One of the goals of English language teachers is to enhance their students' communication skills by improving their communication skills. With enhanced skills, learners will be able to convey their ideas with impact. In our classrooms that are increasingly becoming dynamic with new generation learners and new age technologies, the SUCCEsS principles offer a grounded approach to enhancing communication. After all, our communication is with the human beings—not with the façade created by generation gap or technology that hides the learners' human face. This review therefore examines the book, explores its relevance in the Indian ELT context, and seeks its utility as a guide to effective communication in and beyond the classroom.

S: Simplicity or Finding the Core

The foundation of stickiness is simplicity. It is not equal to "dumbing down." Here, simplicity means discovering and articulating the 'core' of an idea. This requires "relentlessly prioritis[ing]" and becoming a "master of exclusion". In an academic environment saturated with complex information, we often suffer from indecision, tempted to "linger" in the nuance. The solution is forced prioritisation, akin to the military's Commander's Intent—a crisp, plain-talk statement of the goal. For academics, this means avoiding the common journalistic mistake of "burying the lead".

A research proposal, a thesis statement, or a lesson's objective must reflect the core of the goal. It must be stated with the simplicity and elegance of a proverb. An example is the mantra of Southwest Airlines—"We are THE low-fare airline." It served as a "Commander's Intent" that cleared all doubts about how to do business. This simple one-liner is more useful than a 100-page strategy document. Likewise, your core message must provide a clear direction, enabling students to improvise around your intent.

U: Unexpectedness

To overcome apathy or boredom, ideas must be unexpected. Unexpectedness begins where you break a pattern, jolting the audience's attention. The authors emphasise that such surprise must relate directly to the core message. One must not create surprise for the sake of it. Instead, the surprise must lead to insight, making the idea "post-dictable" (making sense once revealed).

For educators, this means re-working our defective schemas. Imagine telling your students 'There is no class today' on a Monday morning and then going on to analyse expletive construction or parts of speech. Once attention is captured, it is sustained through curiosity. Curiosity is the "intellectual need to answer questions and close open patterns". We can maintain student and reader engagement by systematically "open[ing] gaps" in knowledge before closing them, framing complex language patterns as mysteries or puzzles.

C: Concreteness

The third principle is perhaps the most essential anti-Curse of Knowledge weapon: concreteness. Abstractions are ambiguous to the point of being meaningless and are difficult to remember. Conversely, concrete messages are cognitively tangible and are available as relatable realities around us. A neighbourhood example is always better than an unfamiliar one.

Concrete messages create higher levels of understanding, memory, and coordination. Concrete ideas stick better because they have more "hooks" to cling to our existing knowledge. In teaching language, bringing tangible examples can help us bring concreteness. For researchers and academics, communicating concretely means avoiding the abstract language of expertise and providing a real-world context. Using concreteness is to create a shared intellectual space where experts

and novices can collaborate and apply their knowledge. As teachers, this is exactly what we are expected to do: make knowledge accessible.

C: Credibility

Ideas must be credible or believable, especially when the communicator lacks intrinsic authority. The authors identify several key sources of credibility. Anti-authorities are sources who possess integrity, trustworthiness, or highly specific experience, often proving a point more powerfully than traditional experts. Sometimes students' favourite animated characters can create a deeper impact than a 30-minute lecture. Additionally, adding concrete details, human scale statistics, and examples from what goes on around students will definitely make learning relatable, relevant and real. For us, being creative language users itself is a source of credibility. We can up the game by bringing relevant current sources like books, movies and other resources to class.

E: Emotional

To drive action, ideas must connect with human beings at an emotional level. People have to care. We are "wired to feel things for people, not for abstractions". Lessons relying on dry facts are less effective than when resting on stories that appeal to what we feel. 'What we feel' most often wins over 'what we think.'

As teachers, we should appeal to higher levels of Maslow's pyramid to maximise impact on our students. Tapping into higher motivations such as self-actualisation or identity gives us the opportunity to 'touch' human lives. The book illustrates this through the "Don't Mess with Texas" campaign which appealed to the audience's identity by saying "Texans don't litter," rather than using the fear of fines to prevent littering. Appropriate framing of lessons helps us make an emotional connect with our learners.

S: Stories

Finally, stories are the most powerful sticky device. They function as an autopilot mode assistant, taking the audience through deep experiences. Stories combine all the SUCCEs principles: they are often concrete, unexpected, and emotional. They offer knowledge of how to act, and the motivation required to do so. The story of a teacher identifying and correcting a critical flaw in a student's presentation, leading to the student securing a job not only teaches presentation skills, but also inspires trust in the teacher-student relationship.

As practising teachers, we already know that stories are infinitely more valuable for teaching than abstract tips or slogans. We can use stories to overcome the dullness that abstract concepts often provoke. The authors identify three key inspirational plot templates often found in published inspiring works:

- **Challenge Plot:** The protagonist overcomes formidable obstacles. This plot inspires perseverance.
- **Connection Plot:** A relationship bridges a significant gap. This plot encourages tolerance and empathy.
- **Creativity Plot:** Someone achieves a mental breakthrough or solves a long-standing puzzle in an innovative way.

We should actively seek out specific anecdotes that allow our students to see how an existing communication issue might change, moving them towards solutions.

The Academic Utility of Stickiness

For English language teachers, researchers, and students, a book like *Made to Stick* is a boon. It is useful for both arriving at the answer and communicating it effectively to others. By rigorously applying the SUCCEs principles, academics can ensure that language lessons as well as complex research findings become alive in their learners' mental space.

The book does not have a complicated plot but provides a practical checklist. It offers a methodology for taking interesting and important ideas and transforming them into memorable messages that resonate and compel action. Whether the goal is to enhance student learning, improve research uptake or motivate a change, the SUCCEs framework provides the architecture for achieving a lasting impact. And since all these principles are fundamental to human nature, they work across the different generations we face in our classrooms.

The ultimate takeaway is inspiring: "A sticky idea is an idea that is more likely to make a difference". This book is a must-read for anyone in education dedicated to mastering the art of communication.

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