



Sal Piacente ponders an answer to a math problem during a demonstration of how to memorize data as he visited with students at the Ohio County Elementary Middle School on Thursday, March 11.

Melissa Rieman photo

Piacente shares knowledge of how to memmorize data

By Beth Terrill
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Sal Piacente often spends his lunch breaks from a security guard at Grand Victoria at the Ohio County Public Library perfecting his abilities to memorize data.

A true professional in the art of associating fact and figures, and relaying those to remain in his brain, has given him the ability to mesmerize the local middle school students at Ohio County Elementary Middle School.

Piacente entertained Sue Hart's sixth grade math class on Thursday, March 11 and left many students and teachers alike, open mouthed and baffled by his expertise. "Anybody can do what I do," he explained, noting he gets many of his techniques from books and Internet sights.

He started the afternoon session by asking if anyone had a dollar bill. Zack Smith raised his hand, and he was directed to the front of the class room. Sal poked a hole in the dollar bill with a pen, horrifying most of the students. He then pulled the pen through the dollar bill and handed it back to Zack with no hole in the bill. He also rattled off the serial number to his captive audience.

Pointing at Candy Southard, second grade teacher, he asked her to come forward. Telling her to pick a card from his deck of cards, she shuffled, and then chose one, which Sal hid under a book. He then asked her to name all of the cards which were left, which he very quickly responded with the card that was missing, which was the card Candy had chosen.

His next incredible trick was to have each student in the class write on a piece a paper, the numbers 1 to 25, as he was writing those numbers on the blackboard. He then went to each student and asked them to name any kind of object, which he wrote in correspondence with the numbers. He then proceeded to erase the blackboard, and asked several students to name him an object or a number written on the blackboard, to which he was able to give them the answer. Verfyng his response to those written on their sheet of paper, they found him to be absolutely correct.

A magazine was brought in by Sal, which he asked the students to give him a page number and he was able to reveal details of the articles and pictures on the page.

Giving the students hints on the successes of memorization, he used a method of remembering the presidents. He drew a number eight on the blackboard and asked the students to imagine the eight as a race track with a van going around the track. Going one step further he asked the students to imagine the van smelled like urine. "Oooow," and "gross" were their replies. Sal remarked, "that's good, by you telling me what you just said, that's signifying to me, you can visualize what I'm talking about." He then said, "now lets put this together, a 'van' is going around a race track, and it smells like 'urine', put the two together, doesn't that sound like VanBuren, the eighth president of the United States."

Another famous president example

was drawing the letter M on the blackboard. Turning the M to a slanted figure produced a 3. He pointed to the M and asked the kids to imagine a chef going into McDonalds with his son. "Chef and son" he said. "What does that sound like?" Immediately the students answered "Jefferson" which was the third president of the United States.

Many more outstanding tricks were done, leaving both students and Miss Hart amazed and dumbfounded how easy he made the tricks look. Sal was an enjoyment to the students of the 6th grade class and made the afternoon more exciting than math homework.