

SCHWARZBARTL METHOD

overview

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*This method is protected under an issued patent,
providing a unique approach to play and learning.*

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THE SCHWARZBARTL METHOD

A new approach
to learning

ABOUT THE CONTEXT

The **SCHWARZBARTL METHOD** represents a groundbreaking **approach to language learning and cognitive development through abstract symbols**. Rooted in years of research and practical application in cognitive therapy and education, the Schwarzbartl Method offers a unique system that enhances memory retention, fosters curiosity, and supports meaningful communication. Designed specifically for children with learning difficulties, autism, and second-language learners, the Schwarzbartl Method creates a bridge between cognition and language, making vocabulary acquisition an engaging and intuitive process. Unlike conventional teaching tools, these abstract symbols encourage deeper cognitive processing, ensuring long-term retention and adaptable learning experiences.

The Schwarzbartl Method evolved from the principles established at **SCHWARZBARTL KINDERLAB**, where a personalized and multi sensory approach to learning was prioritized. Schwarzbartl KinderLab is a **cognitive sensitivity and language learning lab for children**, successfully helping children since 2019. Schwarzbartl KinderLab, as a playroom, was opened in February 2025. By focusing on abstraction and visualization, the method moves beyond traditional rote memorization, allowing children to form their own interpretations of language concepts. This interactive learning process not only enhances vocabulary acquisition but also supports social communication skills, providing a comfortable and effective way for children to engage with new linguistic structures.

More than just a learning approach, the Schwarzbartl Method serves as a cognitive and emotional support system, helping children navigate the challenges of communication in a way that feels natural and empowering. Whether used in therapeutic settings, classrooms, or home learning environments, the method provides a flexible and research-backed strategy for fostering linguistic and cognitive growth. With a strong foundation in psycholinguistics and memory science, the Schwarzbartl Method offers an innovative solution to the complexities of language acquisition and cognitive development, specially focusing on children with special needs and individuals with dementia.

ABOUT THE INVENTION

During a summer study exchange in Helsinki in 2021, the initial concept of the symbol system was developed. The process began with hand-drawn symbols, focusing on maintaining consistency in the number of subsequent symbols. Early drafts were geometrically refined, with meaning derived from the repetition of symbol components based on their global significance, including curves and lines with semantic properties. However, this approach proved too complex and time-consuming. To improve efficiency, a higher level of abstraction was adopted, increasing the number of final symbols while reducing the number of connecting elements between them. This allowed for rapid and adaptable symbol creation, ensuring flexibility in modifying the symbols based on their effectiveness in memory retention testing.

Over the past few years, the framework has evolved into the **SCHWARZBARTL TILETAKS**, a **tool designed to enhance cognitive and language development** through abstract symbol-based learning.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCHWARZBARTL METHOD

Schwarzbartl KinderLab, which operates under the philosophy of the Schwarzbartl Method, was founded on the belief that every child, regardless of their cognitive or linguistic challenges, has the potential to learn and communicate in a way that feels natural and engaging. Traditional educational and therapeutic approaches often rely on rigid structures that may not align with the cognitive needs of children with learning difficulties or autism. Recognizing this gap, the Schwarzbartl Method integrates personalized, multisensory learning experiences that prioritize comfort, curiosity, and connection. By focusing on individual cognitive profiles, the methodology fosters a learning environment where children feel safe and motivated to explore language and communication through play.

At the core of the Schwarzbartl philosophy is the principle that learning should not be forced but should emerge organically through meaningful interactions. The approach embraces visualization, abstraction, and sensory engagement as key elements in cognitive and language development. Unlike conventional methods that rely heavily on direct instruction, the Schwarzbartl Method utilizes the Schwarzbartl TileTak system, allowing children to interact with abstract symbols in a way that stimulates their imagination and cognitive flexibility. By engaging in this process, children actively construct their own meanings, which not only enhances vocabulary acquisition but also strengthens memory retention and problem-solving skills.

Another fundamental aspect of the Schwarzbartl Method is its focus on bridging the cognitive and emotional divide between the child and their environment. Many children with autism or learning challenges struggle with social interactions, often feeling overwhelmed by direct engagement. The TileTak tiles serve as a transitional tool, creating a structured yet flexible medium for communication. By providing children with a tangible and abstract system of interaction, the Schwarzbartl Method facilitates gradual trust-building, enabling children to navigate their surroundings with increased confidence and autonomy. This philosophy underscores the importance of adapting learning strategies to each child's unique strengths, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and empowering educational experience.

APPLICATION OF THE METHOD IN REAL PLAY

FROM THE SCHWARZBARTL METHOD TO TILETAKS

The proposed method enables students to experience words through abstract symbols. Each symbol represents a concept—either concrete or abstract—derived from existing knowledge. When learning a foreign language, students already possess an understanding of the world in their native language. To create new linguistic associations, symbolic representation fosters curiosity and engagement.

Unlike conventional visual aids such as photographs or illustrations, abstract symbols encourage cognitive processing rather than simple recognition. The initial exposure to a symbol generates curiosity, prompting the learner to search for meaning. This process activates imagination and personal interpretation, making the learning experience more interactive.

At first, the unfamiliar symbol presents a cognitive challenge, capturing attention and engaging the brain in meaning-seeking. The learner becomes an active participant in the process, forming personalized interpretations of the symbols. This individualized approach supports deeper memory encoding and long-term vocabulary retention.

CORE PRINCIPLES AND THE SCIENCE BEHIND SCHWARZBARTL METHOD AND TILETAKS

COGNITIVE ADVANTAGES

Vocabulary acquisition is fundamental for sentence construction and the initiation of active language use. From experience in teaching English and knowledge of memory function and human cognition, several key insights were identified:

- Language learning is most effective when it is meaningful and relevant to the learner.
- Memorization should not be forced but should instead emerge through active experience and sensory engagement.
- Visualization plays a crucial role in learning, particularly for children, by enabling them to conceptualize new vocabulary in a personally meaningful way.

Language learning serves the function of communication and connection, both with others and oneself. People learn a language either through immersive experiences or through structured instruction, where motivation stems from a meaningful goal. Since meaning is individually constructed, learning methods should align with personal interests and cognitive characteristics. Incorporating imagination and visualization into vocabulary learning enhances retention and engagement.

PSYCHOLINGUISTIC ASPECTS

MEMORY SUPPORT AND PERSONALIZATION

Memory retention is reinforced through multisensory cues, including auditory and visual stimuli. These cues serve as retrieval aids, strengthening recall beyond mere verbal repetition. The method does not impose fixed interpretations but encourages learners to construct their own mental representations, fostering confidence in self-expression.

By leveraging the natural process of visualization, this approach facilitates associative learning. The brain forms connections between the abstract symbol and the word's meaning, creating strong recall pathways. The abstract nature of the symbols allows for personalization, making the learning process both enjoyable and effective.

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The flexibility of abstract symbols makes them particularly beneficial for students with learning difficulties, including dyslexia and autism. The simplicity of the symbols reduces cognitive load while encouraging individualized interpretations, making vocabulary retention more accessible.

Additionally, this method supports progressive learning, as exposure to abstraction improves visualization skills over time. The high adaptability of the symbols ensures relevance across different learner profiles, allowing for personalized engagement.

Digital integration further enhances accessibility. An online library and application provide a structured platform for symbol review and reinforcement. The method also includes auditory support, expanding its applicability to visually impaired individuals and older adults experiencing cognitive decline. From a research perspective, the symbol system holds potential for applications in neuroscience, psycholinguistics, and cognitive science, including functional MRI studies as visual stimuli for memory and language processing research.

CURIOSITY AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN NATURE

At KinderLab, learning begins with curiosity and unfolds through a balance of abstraction and hands-on experience. Our **TileTalks** – abstract symbol tiles – help children express their inner thoughts and begin forming meaningful ideas.

These ideas take shape in the **KinderLab Garden**, a central part of our environment. Surrounded by wood, soil, stone, plants, water, and animals, children explore freely and connect their abstract thinking to real experiences. The garden is not just a setting – it is a living classroom where curiosity is grounded in sensory exploration.

We present **language as an integral part of life**, giving it meaning through everyday activities: gardening, movement, dance, music, art, sculpture, sewing, cooking, reading, and illustration. Indoors and outdoors, language is woven into action, reflection, and play.

This fluid movement between the playroom and the garden creates a natural rhythm of thought and experience. In this calm, relationship-based setting, children stay curious longer, think more deeply, and learn through all their senses.

At KinderLab, **abstraction begins with TileTalks – and becomes meaningful through experiential learning in nature.**

TILETAKS

A tool for fostering
language learning,
storytelling and
creative play

The Schwarzbartl Symbol Tiles are the result of extensive research and testing **by Ana Lara Schwarzbartl**, a cognitive scientist, educator, and inventor of a **groundbreaking language learning method** that uses abstract symbols as a bridge to mastering new languages. Following successful trials in Helsinki, Ljubljana, and Vienna over a five-year period, the Schwarzbartl Method has been brought to life through the Schwarzbartl Symbol Tiles, making it accessible to everyone.

Each set comes in a box containing **25 wooden tiles**, all featuring a tactile, engraved design that enhances sensory learning. Designed **for children aged 2-12**, this product supports early language development by helping children recognize patterns, form associations, and build vocabulary. Through play, it fosters curiosity, creativity, and cognitive growth, making language learning an engaging and intuitive experience.

Keep reading to discover more about the method, the product and the philosophy behind it. Explore how the tiles work, their various applications, and the educational, psychological, and pedagogical benefits they provide.

THE CONCEPT

BEHIND THE TILETAKS

The TileTak system was developed to bridge the gap between abstract symbols and hands-on learning. Initially, our method used symbols on paper and digital tablets, but to enhance engagement, we transformed the concept into a physical learning tool.

Today, the Schwarzbartl Method incorporates 2,500 tested and finalized abstract symbols in daily practice, with new symbols continually added to our library.

For physical retail, we offer TileTaks sets, each containing 25 symbols. This number was chosen based on our experience at the Schwarzbartl KinderLab and other institutions, where a typical 7–8 minute session involves working with approximately 25 symbols. Each wooden tile set is thematically curated, helping users connect symbols to familiar concepts while maintaining an open-ended approach to interpretation. To keep sets organized and prevent mixing, each has distinct side-coloring—purely for differentiation, without influencing user interaction.

Primarily designed for children and learning, TileTaks is also being explored for use with individuals with dementia. In collaboration with the Department of Neurology at the Medical University of Ljubljana, we are researching its potential benefits, with more details coming soon.

OUR PRODUCTS

AVAILABLE NOW

THE TILETAKS WOODEN SETS

Each TileTak set includes **25 wooden tiles**, each with a precisely engraved symbol for enhanced tactile engagement, neatly packed in a **compact wooden box**.

Each set follows a specific theme or concept, such as animals, sounds, food, household items, adjectives, and emotions. To keep sets organized, every tile has a **distinct edge color**, which is also marked on the box—allowing users to mix and match different sets while easily keeping track of which tiles belong together.

The tiles are made from untreated, uncoated beech wood, ensuring a natural, child-safe surface free from harmful chemicals. The colored edges are finished with toy-safe, non-toxic paint, making them completely safe for children.

COMING SOON

THE TILETAKS APP

We are also developing the **TileTak app** in collaboration with **Outfit7**, set for release soon. This app will expand access to the Schwarzbartl Method, making it more widely available while complementing the hands-on learning experience.

As a special offer, customers who purchase a physical TileTak set will receive free access to the TileTak app for a limited time upon its launch.

ABOUT THE INVENTOR

ANA LARA SCHWARZBARTL



Ana Lara Schwarzbartl is a researcher, educator, and therapist who combines expertise in cognitive science, education, and child development. Her work is based on analytical thinking, creativity, and an innovative approach to learning and therapy. Throughout her academic and professional career, she has focused on researching learning processes, memory, and the neurological and psychological aspects of cognitive development.

Her experience includes research in experimental medicine and psychiatry, teaching, and specialized therapeutic work with children with special needs.

Her academic background includes a master's degree in **Cognitive Science** from the **University of Vienna and the Medical University of Vienna**, as well as a bachelor's degree in **Primary Education** from the **University of Ljubljana**. She completed her studies with a master's thesis titled *Memory Catalyst*, under the mentorship of **Prof. Tecumseh Fitch**, in which she investigated recall mechanisms in short-term memory and access to information in the early stages of processing across

different sensory modalities. Her work contributes to a deeper understanding of memory processes and opens up possibilities for new approaches to cognitive training and learning.

During her studies, she participated in an **Erasmus+ exchange** at the **University of Helsinki**, where she gained in-depth knowledge of educational systems, pedagogy, and neuroscience. Her research extends into the fields of neurostimulation, electroconvulsive therapy, and the impact of different teaching methods on memory processes and language development.

Beyond her academic and teaching work, she develops **innovative learning methods and educational tools**. Her **Schwarzbartl Method**, currently in the final stages of the patenting process, focuses on enhancing cognitive abilities through **abstract play and interactive learning approaches**. A wooden toy *TileTak* based on this method has already been launched in Vienna and will soon be available in Scandinavia.

In Ljubljana, she runs **Schwarzbartl KinderLab**, where she privately provides **cognitive therapy** for children with special needs, autism, and language therapy.

Starting in September 2025, **diagnostic assessments** for children and adolescents will also be available at the center.

Her work bridges research, education, art, mathematics, and nature, as she believes that a holistic approach to learning enables children to better understand the world and develop their full potential. Through **innovative methods, practical learning tools, and therapeutic work**, she strives to enhance educational processes, support children in their cognitive and language development, and help them maintain access to imaginative worlds.

For **further inquiries** or to **place an order**, please do not hesitate to reach out to us using the contact information provided below.

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Join us on this exciting journey at Schwarzbartl KinderLab. It's sure to be a fun, creative, and rewarding experience for everyone involved in the language learning process.

