




LARGS ACADEMY



EFFECTIVE STUDY STRATEGIES

INEFFECTIVE STUDY TECHNIQUES

High Utility <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distributed practice• Practice testing 
Moderate Utility <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elaborative Interrogation• Self-explanation• Interleaved Practice 
Low Utility <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summarization• Highlighting/underlining• Keyword mnemonic• Imagery use (for text learning)• Rereading 

We all have our favourite study techniques but often these are a force of habit or the ones we find the easiest or like the most rather than being the methods that have been proven by research to be most effective in getting learning to stick. It is important that we know not just 'what' to learn but 'how' to learn. The most extensive study on learning techniques was carried out in 2013 by J Dunlosky, a professor of Psychology at Kent State University. This list shows the most effective strategies, not just in terms of exam revision but in terms of creating better learners.

Source: Dunlosky, et al, 2013 'Improving students learning with effective learning techniques'



Re-reading

Recent research found that 84% of students re-read their notes when revising, whilst 55% claimed this was their number one strategy. Reading pages of notes or chapters from a textbook may give you the impression you have learned lots but unless you test yourself on this information, it will not stick. A study showed that pupils who just re-read notes did 30% worse in a final test compared to those who had tested their knowledge and understanding through self- testing.



Highlighting

Highlighting is another popular, yet largely ineffective strategy. Students tend to highlight too much and not just the most important information. Highlighting can also make pupils focus on individual concepts/ideas and prevents them from seeing the bigger picture and making connections. You don't need to throw out your highlighter pens but highlighting should just be the start of the journey and should be used along with other, more effective strategies.



Copying out / Summarising

This strategy can give the illusion that you have made a lot of progress as you have written proof of your efforts. However, copying is a passive activity which does not engage your brain. You will remember things better when you are forced to think hard about them. Summarising can be slightly better but it is a skill in itself and if you have not been taught to do this properly, there is a risk you will not focus on the right material.

INEFFECTIVE STUDY TECHNIQUES



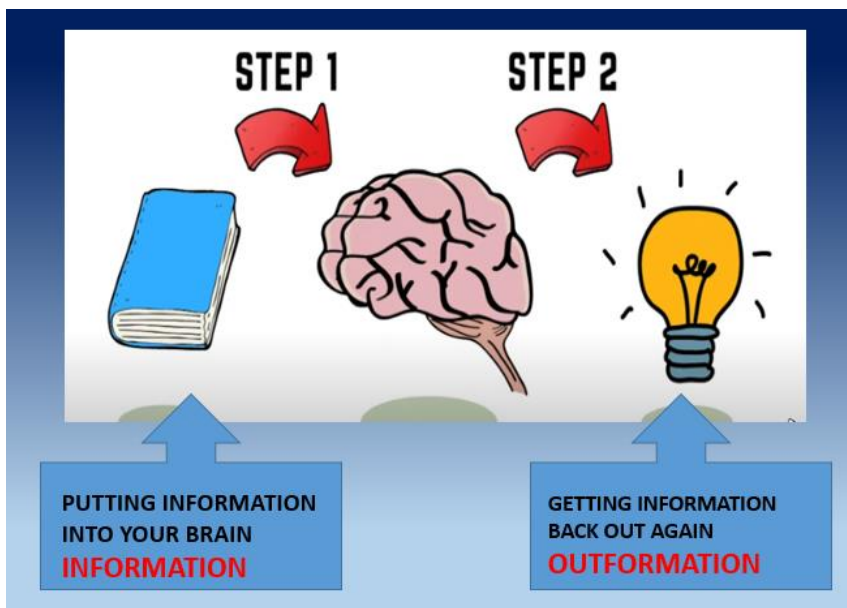
Cramming

The science of learning shows that your short term memory has limited capacity and trying to cram in lots of information in a short space of time can lead to cognitive overload, resulting in you not learning anything at all. Cramming is also detrimental to your wellbeing, can affect your sleep and can result in increased stress and anxiety.



Comfort Zone Revision

Comfort zone revision is when you focus your revision on topics/subjects you like or you are already good at, mainly because it makes you feel better about yourself. However, the problem here is that you are avoiding all of the areas which really acquire your attention. To make improvements to your performance, you need to push yourself outside of your comfort zone and revise the areas you find difficult, boring etc.



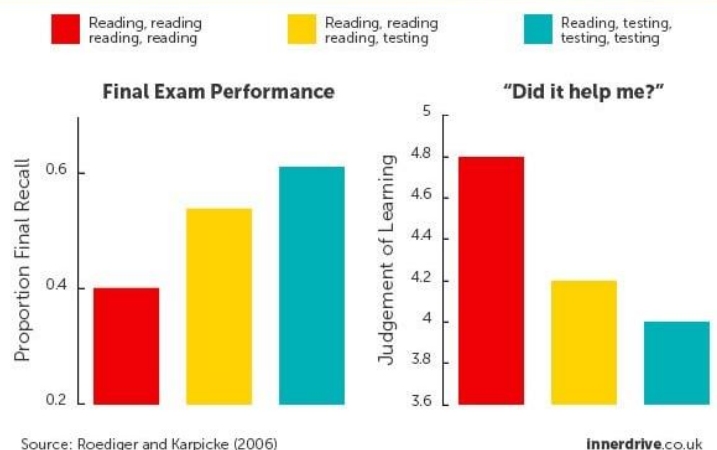
The reason that the above strategies are not very effective is that learning is a **two stage process**. To really learn something, you need to:

1. Put information into your brain
2. Get information back out again

Therefore, the most effective learning or revision strategies will help you to retrieve the information that you have in your memory.

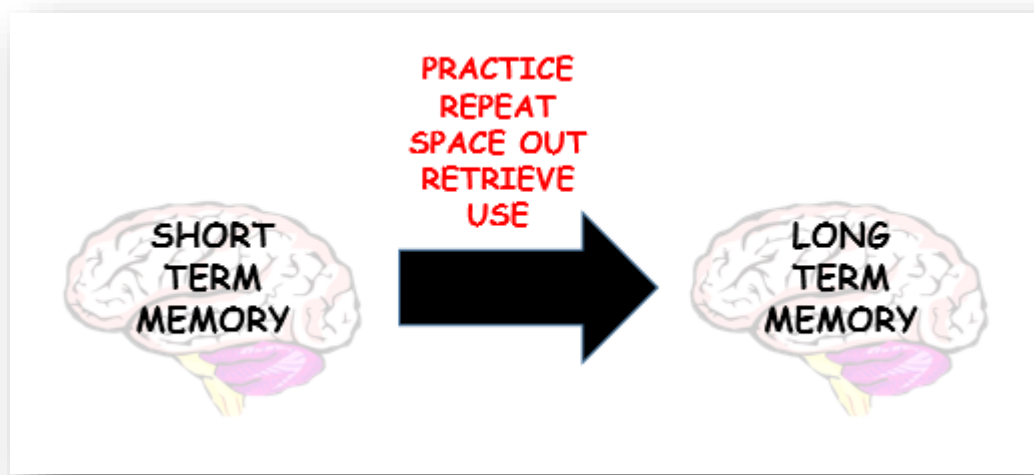
The key message is that students don't always know what is best for them in terms of improving their exam performance. Look at what the evidence tells you.

Re-Reading v Testing



THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMORY

- To learn is simply to be able to **remember** something
- All information starts in your **short term** memory, but will be lost if not transferred to your **long term memory**
- To move information to your long term memory, you must **PRACTICE, REPEAT, SPACE OUT, RETRIEVE** and constantly **USE** the information
- Improving these skills can improve your memory and can **improve your ability to learn**

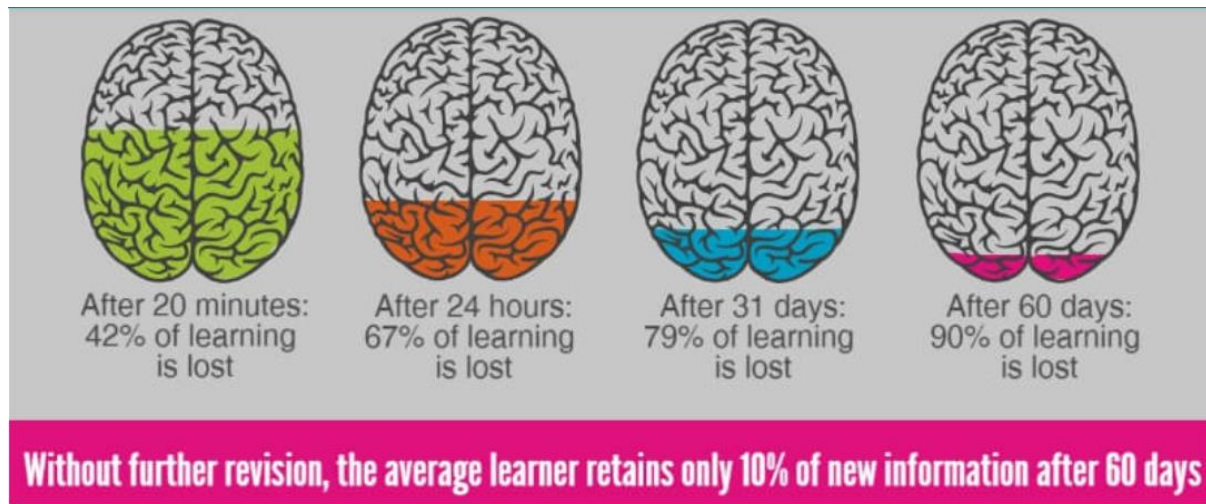


THE FORGETTING CURVE

Ebbinghaus, a German psychologist, proposed that humans start losing 'memory of knowledge' over time unless the knowledge is consciously reviewed time and time again. He conducted a series of tests on himself which included the memorization of a meaningless set of words. He tested himself consistently across a period of time to see if he could retain the information. He found that:

- Memory retention is 100% at the time of learning any particular piece of information (in the moment). However, this drops to 60% after three days.
- A range of factors affect the rate of forgetting including motivation, the meaningful nature of the information, the strategies for revision and also psychological factors (sleep for example).
- If each day, repetition of learning occurs and students take time to repeat information then the effects of forgetting are decreased. According to research, information should be repeated within the first 24 hours of learning to reduce the rate of memory loss.

Practice and retrieval help to break this ‘forgetting curve’ as it strengthens the long-term memory and stops information from fading.



In summary, what do we know about memory?

- Consistent practice and revisiting previous material strengthen memory and boosts learning.
- Our working memory is finite and limited and so overloading this or cramming for revision doesn't work.
- Information, if not revisited, is 'lost' from our memory.

15 ways to improve memory

by @inner_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk

Writing things down

Read more

Chunking

Little and often

Acronyms
BTW
KISS
OMG
S.C.U.B.A.

Make it a story
Blah, blah, blah, blah,...

Practise, practise, practise

Silly sentences

Superior focus

Teach it to someone else

Test yourself

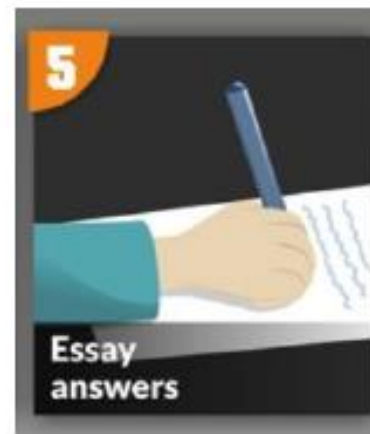
Drink water

Get enough sleep



EFFECTIVE STUDY TECHNIQUES: RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

Retrieval practice is one of the most effective ways to revise. “Retrieval practice is a learning strategy where we focus on getting information out. Through the act of retrieval, or calling information to mind, our memory for that information is strengthened and forgetting is less likely to occur. Retrieval practice is a powerful tool for improving learning”. (Kate Jones Lovetoteach87.com) By testing yourself rather than merely reading or highlighting information, you are much more likely to remember key facts and knowledge and therefore, you are more likely to succeed in your exams. There are various different ways you can test yourself but the 9 methods below are the most common and all work well.



RETRIEVAL STRATEGIES



Brain dump

Choose a topic and write down as much as you can remember, without referring to your notes. Check your notes and see what you missed then try to fill the gaps without the notes. Check your notes a third time and add the missing information.



Flash cards

Write flashcards for each topic, in all subjects, then mix them up for the most effective revision. Check out the Leitner System for effective spacing and interleaving. Keep your flashcards simple – one question, one answer per card.



Map it out

Take an essay question or writing question and map out your answer, without writing a full response. Look at the mark scheme and decide if your plan meets the criteria. Do this for a number of questions, then choose one and write the full response.



Past papers

Ask your teacher for practice questions or exam papers. Complete them without notes in exam conditions, then check your answers and identify the gaps in your knowledge, so you can target your revision.



Quizzes

Write a set of questions and answers and ask someone else to test you. It's important to either write or say your answers aloud. Reading through quizzes in your head can give you a false sense of security.



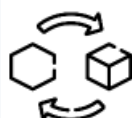
Practise introductions

For essay subjects, take a past exam question and practise writing effective introductions and conclusions. Look back at your notes and remind yourself of the important things to remember. Practise for different topics, texts and papers.



Thinking hard: reduce

Read a section of your notes then put them aside and reduce what you read to 3 bullet points, each one no more than 10 words. Look back at the notes and decide if you missed anything important. Hide the notes and write a fourth bullet point.



Thinking hard: transform

Read a paragraph from your notes or a text book and transform it into a diagram, chart or sketch – no words allowed. Look at a diagram in Science, for example, and transform it into a paragraph of explanation.



Thinking hard: connect

For each subject, consider the exam papers and group together questions that require the same technique to answer. Write down the requirements of each type. Find a previous example you've completed and identify where you've met the criteria.



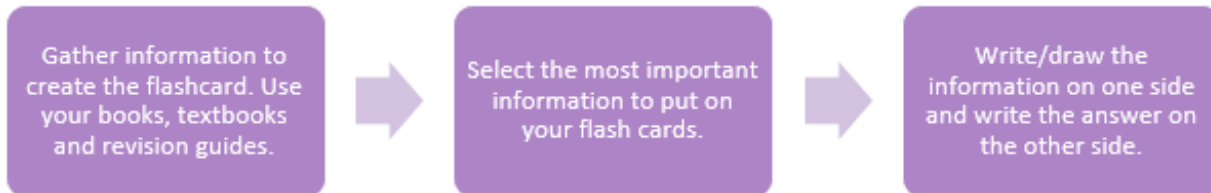
Key vocabulary

For a particular topic, make a list of key vocabulary, then do the following: define each word; use each term in a sentence; create a question where the key word is the answer; identify other words which connect to each of the words in your list.

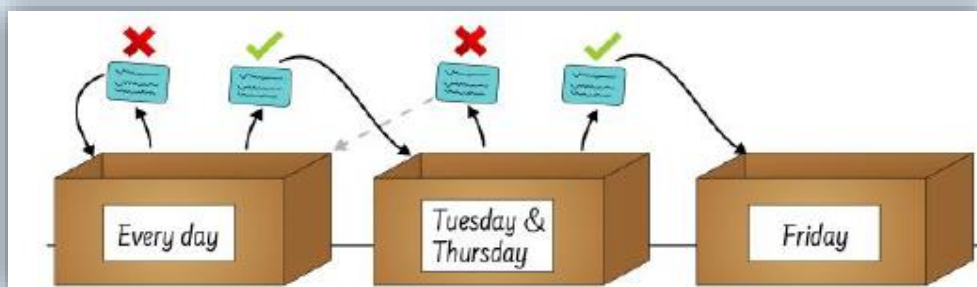
USING FLASHCARDS

An effective flashcard may include the following (*in each subject they will be used in a different way*):

- A key term/key word with definition on the back.
- A key date with the event on the back.
- A key equation with its use in practice on the back.
- A past paper question/plan and a model answer on the back.



THE LEITNER SYSTEM



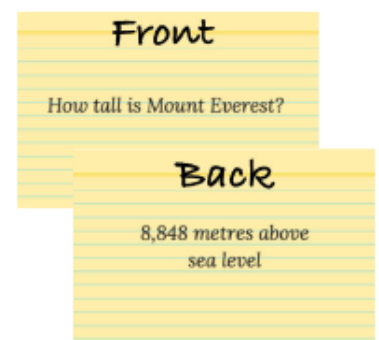
In order to use flashcards most effectively, the **Leitner System**, is a desired strategy for spaced testing. Once you have created a set of flashcards, create three boxes, areas marked as the following:

BOX 1: Every day	BOX 2: Twice a week	BOX 3: Once a week
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- Test yourself on the flashcards in the Box 1 pile. If you get the answer correct on the flashcard, move it to the Box 2 pile. If you get it incorrect, it stays in Box 1.
- Twice a week, test yourself on the flashcards in Box 2. If you get the answer correct on the flashcard, move it to the Box 3 pile. If you get it incorrect, it stays in Box 2. The aim is to get all of the flashcards to Box 3.

Flash card top tips

- The most effective flashcards include one question followed by one answer (or one term followed by one definition).
- Don't force your brain to remember a complex and wordy answer. It's easier for your brain to process simpler information so split up your longer questions into smaller, simpler ones.
- You will end up with more flashcards this way but your learning will be a lot more effective.








SELF-QUIZZING

1. Identify knowledge	2. Review and create	3. Cover and answer	4. Self mark & reflect	5. Next time
 <p>Identify knowledge/content you wish to cover.</p>	 <p>Spend around 5-10 minutes reviewing content (knowledge organisers/class notes/textbook).</p> <p>Create x10 questions on the content.</p>	 <p>Cover up your knowledge and answer the questions from memory.</p> <p>Take your time and where possible answer in full sentences.</p>	 <p>Go back to the content and self mark your answers in green pen.</p>	 <p>Revisit the areas where there were gaps in knowledge and include these same questions next time.</p>

Ensure that you complete all subjects and all topics – not just the subjects you enjoy the most of find easiest.
Practice makes perfect!

BRAIN DUMP

1. Identify knowledge	2. Write it down	3. Organise information	4. Check understanding	5. Store and compare
 <p>Identify the knowledge/topic you want to cover.</p>	 <p>Take a blank piece of paper and write down everything you can remember about that topic (with no prompt).</p> <p>Give yourself a limited time (e.g. 10 minutes).</p>	 <p>Once complete and you cannot remember any more, use different colours to highlight/underline words in groups.</p> <p>This categories/links information</p>	 <p>Compare your brain dump to your notes or book and check understanding.</p> <p>Add any key information you have missed (key words) in a different colour.</p>	 <p>Keep your brain dump safe and revisit it.</p> <p>Next time you attempt the same topic, try and complete the same amount of information in a shorter period of time or add more information.</p>

Brain dumps are a way of getting information out of your brain.

MIND MAPS

HOW TO CREATE A MIND MAP



1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Identify knowledge	Identify sub topics	Branch off	Use images & colour	Put it somewhere visible
Select a topic you wish to revise. Have your notes ready.	Place the main topic in the centre of your page and identify sub topics that will branch off.	Branch off your sub topics with further detail. Try not to fill the page with too much writing.	Use images and colour to help topics to stick in your memory.	Place completed mind maps in places where you can see them frequently.

Avoid using too much information: mind maps are designed to summarise key information and connect areas of a topic/subject. If you overcrowd the page, you lose the point of the mind map and will find it harder to visualise the information when trying to recall it

6 Mind Mapping Mistakes

by @inner_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk



Mistake #1 Using only words

Students should combine words and pictures. Giving two representations of the information helps to cement it into long term memory.



Mistake #2 Using too many words

Rather than copying everything down, students should prioritise information, and only include the stuff they really need to know.



Mistake #3 Wasting time making it too pretty

Students should get onto testing themselves and actively using their mind map, instead of spending hours perfecting it.



Mistake #4 Not using elaborative interrogation

Students should ask themselves questions like 'why is this true?' about mind map content, to get them thinking deeply about the information. Re-reading just won't do.



Mistake #5 Not utilising retrieval practice

Don't forget to test yourself! Try to re-create the mind map from memory, get a friend to test you, or teach the mind map information to a friend.



Mistake #6 Not transferring mind map knowledge

Students should use the mind map to answer quizzes and past paper questions, and be sure to transfer mind map knowledge so that they truly understand and can apply it.

DUAL CODING

Dual coding is the process of blending both **words** and **pictures** while learning. Viewing those two formats gives us **two different representations** of the **same** piece of information.



1. Drawings

These boost learning by getting you to think deeply about information.



2. Diagrams

These are helpful for breaking down complex concepts to make them easier to understand.



3. Posters

These are great for combining writing, pictures and diagrams all within one page of information.



4. Timelines

These can be used for information that happens in a particular order or sequence.



5. Graphic organisers

These organise verbal and visual information by the relationships between different concepts, e.g. mind map

4 Key Principles for using dual coding



Cut - Reduce the amount of content, be selective and only use the most important information.



Chunk - Divide the content into groups of related information;



Align - Make sure that words and pictures are neatly ordered, making them easier to read;



Restrain - Avoid "overdoing" it. In other words, don't go crazy with different colours and fonts.

5 Ways to Use Dual Coding

by @inner_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk

Dual coding is the process of blending both words and pictures while learning, but what are some specific different ways you can do this?



1. Drawings

These boost learning by getting students to think deeply about information



2. Diagrams

These are helpful for breaking down complex concepts or processes to make them easier to understand



3. Posters

These are great for combining writing, pictures, and diagrams all within one page of information



4. Timelines

These can be used for information that happens in a particular order or sequence



5. Graphic Organisers

These organise verbal and visual information by the relationships between different concepts. Examples include tree diagrams, mind maps, and Venn diagrams

6 DUAL CODING Mistakes

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Mistake #1 NOT LEARNING HOW TO DO IT

Knowing the theory isn't everything. After this, you need to actually learn ways to do dual coding, for example, making drawings, diagrams and posters.

Mistake #2 USING ONLY PICTURES YOU LIKE

What's much more important is using pictures that are meaningful and that represent the information you need to know.

Mistake #3 SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME MAKING IT LOOK PRETTY

Colouring, highlighting and styling everything wastes time, these things should be reserved to help make key concepts stand out.

Mistake #4 OVERDOING IT

Be selective and choose visuals that enhance the meaning of written information, rather than covering the page with an explosion of pictures and text.

Mistake #5 FAILING TO ORGANISE IT

Words and pictures should be neatly aligned and well-organised, to make the content easier to read and remember.

Mistake #6 ASSUMING THAT'S IT

To get the best out of a dual coding resource, students should re-study it, think deeply about the information, make memory connections, jot it down from memory, and make new resources from it.

INTERLEAVING

Interleaving is a theory that revising more than one topic in each session will help you make better links between them.

A → B → C → D

B → D → A → C



1.

Switch

Switch between topics during each session.

It allows you to think about what you are doing with your time when you are revising.

2.

Review in different orders

When reviewing make sure you do it in a different order that you learnt them, or previously revised them.

By revisiting material from each topic several times in short bursts, it **increases the amount of information you can recall in your exams.**

3.

Make links to remember more.

Try to make links between ideas and review your revision notes.

This helps you make connections between topics and forces you to think harder about which strategies need to be applied to which problems.

Applying interleaving to your revision

1. Break units down into small chunks and split these over a few days rather than revising one whole topic all at once.
2. Decide on the key topics you need to learn for each subject.
3. Create a revision timetable to organise your time and space your learning.

Blocking



Interleaving is for topics within one subject – not subjects themselves.

Interleaving



You can apply this in your revision timetable.

When revising science, mix up the topics that you study in that session, don't just focus on one.

The Do's and Don'ts of Interleaving

Don't: Interleave subjects instead of topics



Don't: Interleave too many topics



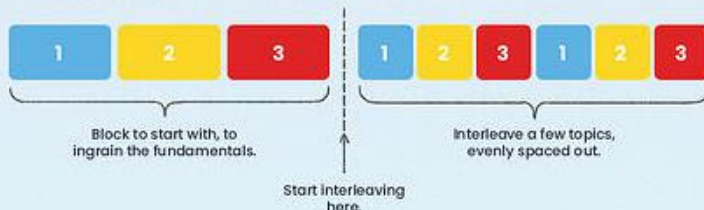
Don't: Leave too long between interleaving sessions



Larger gaps make it hard to make connections between topics

If the gap is too long, too much forgetting happens.

Do: Master the basics first, choose a few related topics, and leave consistent gaps between sessions



LISTEN TO THE EVIDENCE

Some benefits of using interleaving include:

- Improved academic performance – students who use interleaving perform better than their peers who block their learning
- Improved memory – using interleaving makes connections between topics, strengthening their memory associations
- Comparing and contrasting - interleaving prompts students to focus on the differences in a topic which helps them ingrain the information into their memory

SPACING

The spacing effect is one of the most enduring and effective research findings when it comes to study techniques. People tend to forget large amounts of information if they only learn something once. Spacing your learning allows you to forget and relearn the information. This process allows you to cement it into your long-term memory. The key points are:

- Spacing is regularly revising material so that you are doing little and often instead of all at once
- Doing a little amount regularly is more effective than doing a lot all at once.
- To commit something to memory, it takes time and repetition

OPTIMUM SPACING



THE MAIN FINDINGS

- ✓ Spacing is more effective than cramming.
- ✓ The optimum gap to leave before you revisit the same material depends on how long you want to remember the material for.
- ✓ The further away the test, the longer the gaps between study sessions should be.

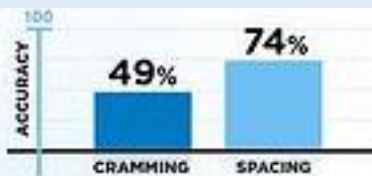
Time to the test	Revision Gap
1 Week	1-2 days
1 Month	1 week
3 Months	2 weeks
6 Months	3 weeks
1 Year	1 month

SPACING VERSUS CRAMMING

Spacing out your revision into smaller chunks over a period of time helps you to remember the material better and ensures you are less stressed with your revision. Cramming will overload your memory whereas leaving time between revising and testing will make your brain work harder and increase your chance of remembering.

THE MAIN FINDINGS

In the final test, students who **spaced out** their revision sessions got an average mark of 74%, whereas those who crammed their revision got 49%



THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE



The **Pomodoro Technique** is a good technique if you struggle with focus. By chunking time up into manageable revision sessions, this technique can help you to establish more effective work patterns and help to give you a sense of accomplishment.

EFFECTIVE STUDY CHECKLISTS

14 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILST STUDYING

by @inner_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk

Improve your learning by asking yourself...

- 01 Why does it make sense that...?
- 02 Why is this true?
- 03 What is the main point being made here?
- 04 Why would this fact be true for X and not for Y?
- 05 What are the similarities between X and Y?
- 06 What are the main differences between X and Y?
- 07 What would have happened if X did not occur?
- 08 Why does X cause Y to happen?
- 09 How does this link to what I learnt last week?
- 10 What part of this topic do I still not understand?
- 11 Do I agree with X's opinion (and why)?
- 12 How would I argue against what Y said?
- 13 What solutions or strategies would fix this situation?
- 14 What might have been going through their mind when they said that?

8 WAYS TO CHECK IF YOU REALLY KNOW SOMETHING

by @inner_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk

How many of these can you do?

- 1 ANSWER A MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ ON IT
- 2 EXPLAIN IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS
- 3 TEACH IT TO SOMEONE ELSE
- 4 APPLY IT TO A DIFFERENT CONTEXT
- 5 COMPARE AND CONTRAST IT WITH SOMETHING ELSE
- 6 ANSWER A QUESTION ON IT UNDER TEST CONDITIONS
- 7 RECALL THE INFORMATION WHILST UNDER PRESSURE
- 8 REMEMBER IT AFTER A LONG TIME

GROWTH MINDSET

Having a growth mindset or a belief that you can get better and that your abilities can grow is key to the effectiveness of any revision strategy. If you learn from your mistakes and can deal with failure and setbacks, you are much more likely to learn better, remember more and achieve better marks in exams.

 FIXED MINDSET	 GROWTH MINDSET
<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Success comes from talent.> I'm either smart or dumb.> I don't like challenges.> Failure means I can't do it.> Feedback is a personal attack.> If you succeed, I feel threatened.> If something's too hard I give up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Success comes from effort.> I can grow my intelligence.> I embrace challenges as a chance to grow.> Failure means I'm learning.> Feedback helps me grow.> If you succeed, I'm inspired.> I keep trying even when I'm frustrated.

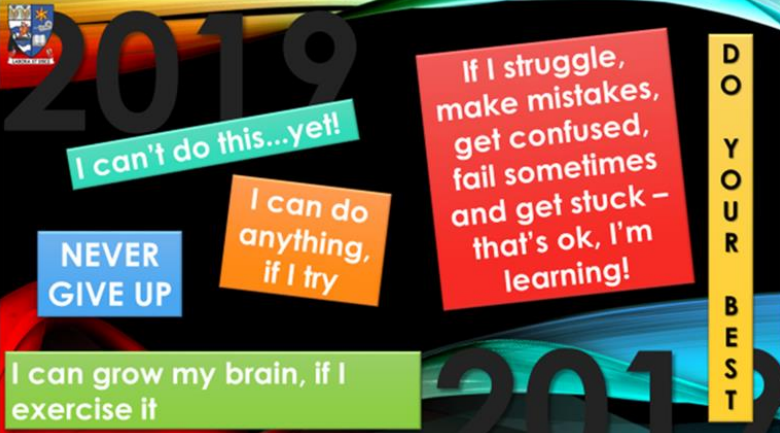


10 Growth Mindset Sentences

by @inner_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk



- I believe I can get better** 
- I am not good at this... yet** 
- I need to figure out what I'm missing** 
- I am going to learn how they do it** 
- What other strategies can I use?** 
- Mistakes can help me learn** 
- Today's effort is worth tomorrow's reward** 
- I need to keep trying for a little longer** 
- Who can I ask for feedback/advice?** 
- Minor setback? Major comeback!** 



2019 DO YOUR BEST

- I can't do this...yet!**
- NEVER GIVE UP**
- I can do anything, if I try**
- If I struggle, make mistakes, get confused, fail sometimes and get stuck – that's ok, I'm learning!**
- I can grow my brain, if I exercise it**

5 TOP TIPS TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE STUDY PLAN



Make a list

What do you need to know? Break it down into topics and units. When you can retrieve it without effort, cross it off the list. It might help with motivation and organisation to have a 'to do' and 'have done' list.



Timetable a spaced schedule

Look back at the notes about spacing and interleaving. Study each topic little and often and mix up subjects and topics so you are revising a mixture each day. Be sure to leave yourself enough time to cover everything.



Use effective study strategies

That's what this booklet is all about. Keep re-reading and highlighting to a minimum. Highlight what you need to learn – but that won't make you learn it. Test yourself, using retrieval strategies. Think twice before loading up your favourite playlist!



Identify the gaps in your knowledge

Having used the retrieval strategies, where are the gaps? What are you confident with? What do you need to go back to? What do you need to study more? Be honest with yourself – don't just focus on what you *do* know.



Close the gaps

Repeat the third and fourth steps of the plan until you are confident with everything. Some parts will be difficult, but don't give up. The harder you have to think, the more likely you are to remember in the end. 'Memory is the residue of thought.' (*Dan Willingham*)

WELLBEING

Look after yourself. Being kind to yourself every day can have a big impact on your performance during revision and exams.

9 Ways to Beat Revision Stress

by @inner_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk

- 

1 Do the actual work - revise!
- 

2 When really stressed, talk to someone about it
- 

3 Get some fresh air each day
- 

4 Stick to regular mealtimes
- 

5 Do something to switch off an hour before bed
- 

6 Don't dwell on worst case scenarios
- 

7 A good sleep the night before is better than last minute cramming
- 

8 Once you've done the exam, move on to the next one
- 

9 Don't aim for perfection - it's a myth and doesn't exist

SLEEP – A POWERFUL REVISION TECHNIQUE



Students who sleep better have been found to get significantly higher grades than their sleepy peers, with the amount you sleep making up to half a grade's difference. The National Sleep Foundation recommends that a teenager should get on average 10 hours sleep each night.

Not getting enough sleep can impair attention and memory. When we sleep, new connections are made between our brain cells. A good night's sleep helps us not only understand new material better but research has also shown that it significantly improves our ability to apply knowledge to new problems.

Excessive sleep loss can also result in recalling negative memories rather than positive ones, impacting on mental health and stress levels.

REVISING TO MUSIC



Many students do their homework and revision whilst listening to music. It is true that listening to music whilst performing certain tasks can be beneficial such as motivating you at the gym or cheering you up when you're having a bad day. However, research has shown that when trying to learn new material, listening to music is more of a hindrance than a help. In fact in one study, students who revised in a quiet environment performed over 60% better in an exam than their peers who revised listening to music that had lyrics. Students who revised whilst listening to music without lyrics did better than those who revised to music with lyrics. This is because music, especially with lyrics, can take up processing space. This conflicts with the material you are trying to learn, effectively creating a bottleneck in your memory, as there is less space to process what you are revising.



LIMIT YOUR SCREEN TIME

This should be an obvious one, but it isn't for many. Mobile phones are links to fomo (fear of missing out, and evidence suggests that undergraduates who spend more time texting and using social media get lower grades. In another fascinating study, researchers found that the mere sight of a phone was enough to reduce a person's ability to focus. Having a mobile phone out whilst revising causes a decrease in concentration and a reduction of 20% in performance. The implication couldn't be clearer: out of sight really is out of mind!

6 Reasons to Put Your Phone Away

by @Inner_Drive
www.innerdrive.co.uk

Lowers Concentration
Having your phone out while doing homework or revision has been shown to reduce performance by 20%.

Warps Your View of Reality
Nobody is as happy as they seem on Facebook or as wise as they appear on Twitter.

Reduces Memory
Instant messages are distracting, which often leads to forgetfulness.

Increases FOMO
Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), or the compulsive need to know what others are doing, leads to worse moods and increased anxiety.

Increases Stress and Anxiety
Over use of mobile phones leads to increased anxiety, feelings of loneliness and low self-esteem. Reliance on mobile phones can cause irritation, frustration and impatience.

Makes You Sleep Worse
Prolonged use of a mobile phone leads to poor sleep quality and duration. The backlight on your phone delays the release of Melatonin, which is a hormone important for sleep.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

Eat your way to good grades

Certain foods increase your memory retention, energy levels and wellbeing. Unfortunately, your favourite fast food and energy drinks are not going to boost exam performance. Leafy greens such as broccoli and kale as well as protein-rich foods such as nuts, dried fruits, oatmeal, eggs and yoghurt are proven to improve brain functioning. Too much sugar can make you feel sluggish and impair cognitive skills. It is important to stay hydrated by drinking lots of water – this accelerates chemical reactions in our bodies and can quicken the rate at which our brains process information. Caffeine should be avoided – it can lead to alertness in the short term but then follows fatigue and potentially migraines.



Students should try not to skip breakfast. Researchers found that students showed a natural decline in cognitive performance throughout the morning. However, this decline was reduced by more than half when students had breakfast. Therefore, having breakfast not only helps students stay more alert, but also have improved memory throughout the day.

Tidy Desk, Tidy Mind

Working in a cluttered environment can affect our ability to focus and unconsciously takes up some of our brain's attention. Research shows that people with messier desks tend to procrastinate more. It has also shown that students with cluttered workspaces have higher stress levels.



Take a walk

Research shows that students who took a 12 minute walk reported a 20% increase in happiness, attentiveness and confidence compared to those who spent that time sitting down. Even taking a 5 minute walk resulted in similar benefits. Try to break up your study sessions with a quick stroll. If you enjoy exercise, even doing a little bit can help people to deal better with stressful situations: it reduces anxiety and increases self-esteem.

Relax and switch off

You cannot work all day, every day. Nor should you. Revision has to be about quality, as well as quantity. Taking planned breaks from your revision to do something you enjoy can help you feel refreshed and allow you to focus better afterwards.

