

## New Strategies For More Efficient Learning

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### Abstract

*Speed of learning is not the only important factor; however retention, recall and transfer are also critical part of it. Students need to be able to accurately remember the information they learn, recall it at a later time and utilize it effectively in a wide variety of situations. The emphasis of this article is on advance and innovative techniques for purposeful and efficient learning. The strategies introduced are the one which emerges from a common core of research based learning principles and comprise an integrated strategic approach*

### Introduction

Learning is a life-long process and a skill. From birth throughout life, a person goes in journey of acquiring knowledge. How this knowledge is gained varies from one individual to another because each one is created unique.

Some students seem to be through their school years, where as others struggle, putting them at risk for getting lost in the educational system and not their full potential. Parents and teachers want to help students succeed, but there is a little guidance on which learning techniques are the most efficient for improving educational outcomes. This leads the students to implement studying strategies that are often ineffective, resulting in minimal gains in performance.

To learn effectively, students must make connections between what they already know prior and new content to which they are exposed. The opening of a lecture should facilitate these connections by helping students exercise their prior knowledge of the day's subject matter.

**Pay attention towards subject matter** Attention is one of the major components of memory. In order for information to make from short-term memory, they need to actively attend to this information and try to

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study in a place free from distractions such as television, music and other diversions

**Avoid cramming by establishing regular study sessions** According to Bjork (2001), Studying materials over number of sessions give students the time they need to adequately process the information. Research has shown that students who study regularly remember the material far better than those who do their routine study in one marathon session.

**Structure and organize the content** Researchers have found that information is organized in memory in related clusters. Students can take advantage of this by structuring and organizing the materials they are studying. They should try to group similar concepts and terms together or make an outline of their notes and textbooks reading to help group related concepts

**Utilize mnemonic devices to remember information** Mnemonic devices are a technique often used by students to aid in recall. A mnemonic is simply a way to remember information. For example students might associate a term they need to remember with a common item that they are very familiar with. The best mnemonics are those that utilize positive imagery, humour or novelty. It may come to their mind with a rhyme, song or a joke to help remember a specific segment of information

**Elaborate and rehearse the information contained in the context** In order to recall information, they need to encode to recall information; they need to encode what they are studying into long-term memory. One of the most effective encoding techniques is known as elaborative rehearsal. An example of these techniques would be to need the definition of a key term, study the definition of that term and that read more detailed description of what that term means. After repeating this process a few times, they probably notice that recalling the information is much easier.

**Relate new information to things they already know** While studying unfamiliar material they should take time to think about how this information relates to things that they already know. By establishing relationships between new ideas and previously existing memories, they can dramatically increase the likelihood of recalling the recently learned information.

**Visualize concepts to improve memory and recall** Many people benefit greatly from visualizing the information they study. Students should pay attention to the photograph, charts and other graphics in their textbooks. If they do not have visual cues to help, they should try to create their own and draw charts or figures in the margins of their notes or use highlighters or pens in different colours to group related ideas in their written study materials.

**Teach new concepts to another person** Research suggests that reading out materials loud significantly improves memory of the students. Educators and psychologists have also discovered that students actually teach new concepts to others that enhance understanding and recalling power. They can use this approach in their own studies by teaching new concepts and information to a friend or other student.

**Devote extra time to difficult information** Researchers have found that the order of information can play an important role in recalling, which is known as the serial position effect. While recalling middle information can be difficult, students can overcome this problem by spending extra time rehearsing this information. Another strategy is to try restructuring what they have learned so it will be easier to remember. When they come across an especially difficult concept, they should devote extra time to memorize the information.

**Introduce variations in study routine** The students should change their study routine to increase their memory occasionally. If they are accustomed to studying in one specific location, they should try to move to a different spot during their next study session. In case they study in the evening they should try to spend a few minutes each morning reviewing the information that they had studied the previous night. By adding an element of novelty to their study sessions, they can increase the effectiveness of their efforts and significantly improve their long-term memory.

**Keeping learning and practicing new things** Learning and practicing new skills helps the brain to retain new information. One sure fire way to become a more efficient learner is to simply keep learning. If you are learning a new language, it is important to keep practicing the language

in order to maintain the gains you have achieved. This “use-it or-lose it” phenomenon involves a brain process known as ‘pruning’. Certain pathways in the brain are maintained, while other are eliminated. If you want the new information to be memorized, keep practicing and rehearsing it.

**Learn in multiple ways** Focus on learning in more than one way instead of just listening to a podcast, which involves auditory learning; find a way to rehearse the information both verbally and visually. This might involve describing what you learned, taking notes or drawing a mind map. By learning in more than one way, the students are further cementing the knowledge in their mind. According to Judy Willis, “The more regions of the brain that store data about a subject, the more inter connections there is. The redundancy means students will have more opportunities to pull up all of those related bit of data from their multiple storage areas in response to a single use. The cross-referencing of data means we have learned, rather than just memorized.”

**Teach what one has learned to another person** Teaching can improve one’s learning. Educators have long noted that one of the best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else. . By teaching to the rest of the class the student gains more confidence from the assignment. The students should translate the information in their own words. This process alone helps solidifying new knowledge in their brain. They should try to find some ways to share what they have learned. Some ideas include writing a blog, post or participating in a group discussion.

**Utilize previous learning to promote new learning** Another way to become a more effective learner is to use relational learning, which involves relating new information to things that you already know. For example, if students are learning about Romeo and Julliet, they may associate it with their prior knowledge of Shakespeare and other relevant information.

**Gain practical experience;** For many of the students, learning typically involves reading textbooks, attending lectures or doing research in the library or the web. While seeing the information and then writing it down is important, actually putting new knowledge and skill into practice can

be one of the best ways to improve learning. If students are trying to acquire a new skill or ability, focus should be on gaining practical experience. If it is a sport or athletic skill, perform the activity on a regular basis. If they are learning a new language, they should practice speaking with another person and surround themselves with immersive experience.

**Look up answers rather than struggle to remember** Of course, learning isn't perfect process. Sometimes students forget the details of the things that they have already learned. If they find themselves struggling to recall some tit-bit of information, research suggests that they have better option simply looking up the correct answer. One study found that the longer students spends trying to remember the answer, the more likely they will forget the answer again in future because these attempts to recall previously learned information actually results in learning the 'error state' instead of the correct response.

**Recognize the best way to learn** Another great strategy for student's to improve their learning efficiency is to recognize their learning habits and style. There are a number of different theories about learning styles which can all help them to gain a better understanding of how they learn best. Gardener's theory of multiple intelligence, describes eight different types of intelligence that help the students to reveal their individual strength of retaining power.

Knowing how to learn is an important part of the learning process. Unfortunately the educational curriculum has placed a little emphasis on teaching students how to learn. In contrast to this practice, each student is held accountable for his or her own learning. Strategies for efficient study empower the individual in the learning process by teaching simple, easy strategies that can be used to improve performance. However, it is abundantly clear that learning things off by heart alone is not enough, as the brain is designed to work efficiently. Learner needs to learn things in context with and points of reference. Effectiveness, adherence and efficiency refer to the 'what' and 'how' of learning a target content; respectively. In simple terms learner first decides what to learn, based on usage frequency (priority) then filters material based on the likelihood

of continued study and review or adherence (interest), lastly determines the effective ways (to process) learn the material more effectively.

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