

Real learning
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[Education](#)



The paper "Real Learning Requirements, the Biggest Misconceptions about Learning amongst Students, Specific of Memorizing Facts and Reflection" is a good example of an assignment on education. Real learning involves acquiring the desired knowledge and the skills to wield it and building the ability to recall and efficiently synthesize this information in different future contexts. This ability to acquire, recall, wield and synthesize knowledge is a critical life skill that can be practiced and strengthened- it is neither intuitive nor innate.

Learning is a valuable skill but, unlike common misconceptions, can be improved over time. Students and their teachers often believe that the harder and slower the process of learning, the easier it is to acquire information. To the contrary, the effortful- the harder, the slower, the more deliberate- the learning effort, the easier it is to acquire said information and retrieve it in the future. An additional misconception is that rapid-fire upfront repetition is most productive. In fact, spaced repetition is far more productive than the "practice makes perfect" call to action.

Another false belief is that learning a solution before trying to solve the associated problem is effective, whereas the opposite is true. This is in keeping with the position that effortful learning is often most beneficial. Additionally, contrary to popular belief in the "personal learning style", the student learns better when s/he broadens the style and medium/form of learning. Moreover, a student is more likely to solve unmet solutions if their practice was varied- interleaving practice trumps massed and upfront practice, leading to better synthesis. Testing should also be used not to celebrate success, but to identify weaknesses in the recall and synthesis

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process.

What is “retrieval practice” and why is it effective? Retrieving information strengthens the neural pathways responsible for memory. The “retrieval practice” strategy activates these pathways better than using rereading material as a recall tactic. Various ways of ensuring that one remembers information from memory instead of from written material include spacing out quizzes and exercises to gauge retention and sustained reflection on learned material by writing self-written essays. This creates an effortful recall.

Are failure and struggle (i. e., when things are hard) good or bad? Efficient learning involves not learning for the sake of performance but learning so as to achieve true expertise. Students whose goal is the former- performance, test scores, recognition- see failure and struggle as undesirable and often, to be avoided at any costs. Students whose goal is the latter- mastery, skill progression- see failure as a good thing, a proxy of effort and a source of feedback on their learning process.

What is the “illusion of mastery” and how does it occur? Repetitive or massed exposure to information and rereading it for recall often give one the false impression that they have a sense of mastery. Conventional wisdom insists that a student should trust this judgment of mastery. This illusion can be effectively counteracted by using tests to calibrate the individual sense of what has been learned and illuminate retrieval weaknesses.

Even eager students falter due to two main reasons. Firstly, even these students are unaware of their weakness in recall and synthesis of information and, secondly, are incapable of calibrating their judgment in the

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level of their skill/mastery.

Memorizing facts is like preparing a construction site and the supplies required to build a house.

This chapter expounded on several best practices for effective learning and, reflecting on it, I believe that there some ways in which I can change my approach to study and recall. Firstly, I will now abandon my steadfast belief that I have a specific learning style and secondly, that I will begin trying out spaced repetition instead of using flashcards.