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Effective study plan

5 research-backed learning techniques and a spaced revision plan – for students and for teachers who want to teach them.



InspirED • strengths-based training and coaching
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what research says

Are you learning effectively?

The most popular ways of studying – re-reading and highlighting – perform poorly in research. A large review (Dunlosky et al., 2013) assessed 10 techniques: practice testing and spaced practice came out on top.

61%

of the material was remembered after a week by students who tested themselves – compared with 40% among those who only re-read the text (Roediger and Karpicke, 2006).

2 of 10

popular learning techniques received the highest effectiveness rating (Dunlosky et al., 2013).

Myth

Matching learning to a "learning style" (visual, auditory…) is not supported by research.

5 techniques that work

1 **Test yourself**

Instead of re-reading your notes, close them and try to recall the material: flashcards, questions, a blank page. It's one of the best-researched techniques.

2 **Space it out**

Short sessions over several days work better than one long night before the test.

3 **Mix topics**

Mix different types of tasks in one session instead of doing 20 of the same kind in a row.

4 **Ask "why?"**

Explain to yourself why something works and how it connects to what you already know.

5 **Combine words and images**

Draw diagrams, timelines and maps – and describe them in your own words.

printable

My revision plan

A sample revision rhythm: the next session after a day, then after a few days, after a week and longer. Start each revision by checking what you remember – only then look at your notes.

Topic / subject: .....

When?	What am I revising?	How? (technique)	✓
Day 1 – learning			
Day 2			
Day 4			
Day 7			
Day 14			
Day 30			

Sources: Dunlosky et al. (2013), Psychological Science in the Public Interest; Roediger and Karpicke (2006), Psychological Science; Newton and Salvi (2020), Frontiers in Education.

what's next?

Ready to take the next step?

This resource is a good start. If you want to bring about change across your whole team, we can help.

Effective learning →

Workshops for students: facts and myths about learning styles, motivation, time management and learning techniques tested in practice.

Individual coaching →

Mentoring for teachers and methodologists, and individual learning sessions for students.

Other trainings for schools →

Gallup strengths, effective learning, mental resilience and teaching methodology training.

Not sure where to start?

Book a free 30-minute online consultation. We'll talk about your needs and suggest the best first step.

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Book a consultation

See our offer for schools