

Welcome to Central Learning and Teaching Newsletter 3!

In this edition, we will explore what is meant by "Testing Effect" and how it can be used practically in lessons to support students' long-term learning.

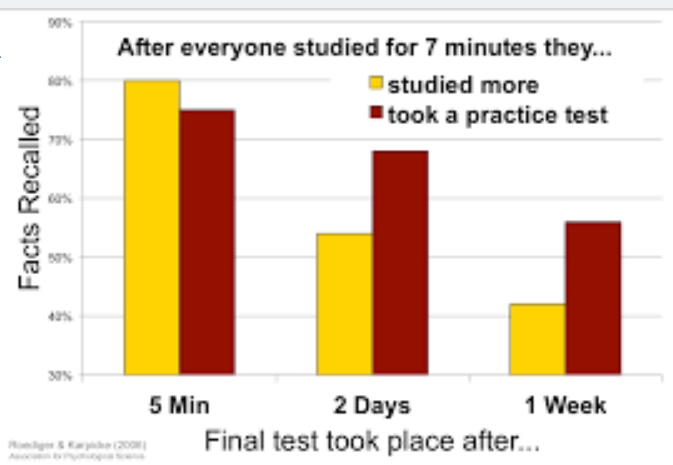
What is the Testing Effect?



- "Taking a memory test not only assesses what one knows, but also enhances later retention, a phenomenon known as the testing effect" (Karpicke and Roediger-Test-enhanced Learning, full research paper [here](#))
- The original research compared reading, concept/mind mapping and test practice as learning strategies. Whilst reading or cramming produced better immediate test outcomes, it was test practice learning over a longer period of time that proved the most effective for longer-term retention and test success.

What are the implications for us as teachers?

- Seeing "testing" as an assessment for learning, not an assessment of learning only.
- Testing out our students' knowledge every lesson by way of low stake quizzes, questions and free-recall tasks is crucial and does not need to be time consuming.
- Students will be more likely to revise and prepare if they know testing happens routinely.
- In order for students to secure a degree of success when "tested", we need to strike a balance between challenging and achievable.
- This may make us consider the number of questions we ask and the use of cues such as visuals, diagrams, sentence starters and mnemonics to aid students' recall, gradually removing this scaffold as time goes by.

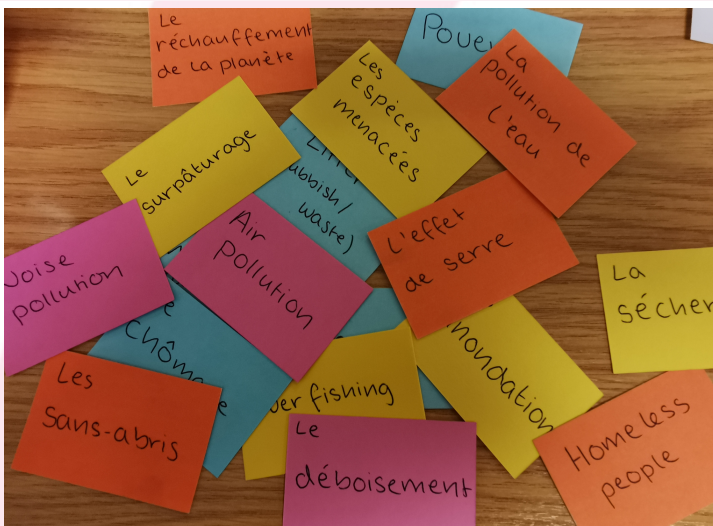


Flashcards or cue cards

- Students can create their own: chop off some card and voilà!
- You can go with text or pictorial cues.
- Some come ready made from educational website such as [Collins](#) and [CGP](#).
- Or use some made by educational free websites such as Carousal or Quizlet.

Benefits:

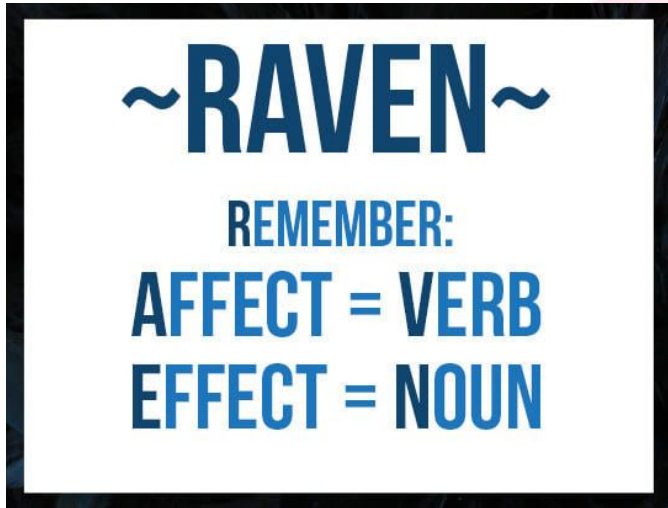
- Students can self-test and peer test, at home or in school, at any point during the lesson.
- This can be as easily done online as in the classroom.
- Designing cards on different topics brings in a desirable difficulty: interleaving = greater challenge.
- Student have more ownership of their learning and this is easy to practise during the lessons.
- An opportunity to teach and practise a revision strategy with students.



Literacy and retrieval practice

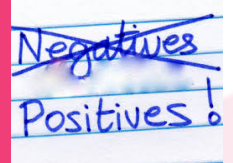
The keyword mnemonic is a memory-enhancing technique that incorporates identification of a keyword and utilization of imagery to create a strong retrieval route. Mnemonics are useful for supporting the knowledge of key materials. See below these English examples. Thanks Lisa!

Share your own mnemonics here: [Padlet](#). Password: Central



Classroom Culture and retrieval practice

Narrate the positive is one of our 5 classroom culture key strategy.



This strategy is used to normalise expected behaviours in the classroom, drawing attention to what we want to see and hear. Narrating the negative on the other side broadcasts and emphasizes poor learning behaviours, making them more visible.

When it comes to Retrieval Practice, we want students to recognise that learning requires effort, that errors are formative and that having a go is an expectation.

Narrating the positive can help us achieve this, virtually or not. Here are a few tips:

- Use names as often as you can; it helps "dissolve the screen" online.
- Get your students participating as soon as you can during the lesson.
- Praise the work and effort not an expected behaviour: just acknowledge the latter.
- As students are completing a retrieval task, narrate the behaviour you are seeing: students focusing, thinking hard.
- Normalise the difficulty and speak positively about it.
- Share examples of great retrieval work with other students, broadcasting the benefits but also improvements.
- Talk more TO students than ABOUT students.
- Here is a really interesting blog from Teach Like a Champion website.