



The RISE Project:

Evidence-informed school improvement

The RISE Project has been funded by the EEF to test whether a research-based school improvement model makes a significant difference to classroom practice and student outcomes.

The project is led by Huntington School in York and is being conducted as a randomised controlled trial involving 40 secondary schools. Each school has appointed a 'research lead' who is responsible for implementing the improvement programme in their school, with a particular focus upon improving student attainment in English and Maths at GCSE (The primary attainment measure will be GCSE results in maths and English, collected in summer 2016 and summer 2017).

The Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University has supported Huntington to develop and deliver the content of a thorough programme of workshops delivered by the team from Huntington School, to the research leads, alongside a collaborative network-based approach to support. Schools follow a 5-step school improvement model to decide what they want to achieve, identify possible solutions, implement a solution, evaluate, and mobilise the findings.

If the project shows a positive impact on research use and pupil attainment, it is suggested that it could be replicated by teaching schools, leading their alliance schools in appraising, implementing and embedding research. The evaluation report will be published in Autumn 2017.



Tried and Tested



Participating in the RISE Project is Meols Cop High School in Merseyside. They have several successful projects running across the school and for next year have pre-set parallel student groups into the timetable to make trials more possible.

One area of enquiry has been developed by subject leader for maths, Jen Filson, from a research paper they received from the RISE project: 'The shuffling of mathematics problems improves learning' (Rohrer and Taylor, 2007). The paper looks at spreading teaching topics over time - not in one single session and challenges how textbooks are split into increasing difficulty.

Following the media response to a 2015 maths GCSE question 'Hannah's Questions', Filson made a connection between the research and a potential solution to the issue of students connecting different topics in maths.

Two parallel groups were created by combining maths sets. Each set used shared planning, teaching materials and homework. The control group were taught with a traditional 'one topic each week', and the experimental group received a lesson on each topic (plus revision session combining all topics).

	Week 1				Week 2				Week 3			
Lesson	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Control	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red
Shuffled	Yellow	Blue	Red	Yellow	Blue	Red	Yellow	Blue	Red	Yellow	Blue	Red

Following feedback from pupils that they felt they were just getting into a topic before they moved on, and difficulties posed by student absence etc. a change was made that pupils in the shuffled group had two hours on each topic.

They have found the shuffled lessons have had a positive effect, particularly on weaker students, and recognise the need for further investigation especially with the new GCSE. All they need now are this year's GCSE results!

INSIDE



Edu-blog spotlight:

Carl Hendrick looks at stress



RISE Project:

Evidence-informed school improvement



Tried and Tested:

Meols Cop High School maths trial



Westbury School Learning and Development Bulletin



Relay

Improving Memory

Issue 9, July 2016

In his 2008 article, 'What Will Improve A Student's Memory?', Daniel T Willingham explores how the mind works, how it learns, and how we can use this information to help improve students' memory.

Willingham breaks his discussion into three parts: 1) How can I commit things to memory? 2) How can I avoid forgetting the things I have committed to memory? and 3) How can I be certain that I have actually committed to memory the things I want to know?

Wanting to remember something doesn't necessarily mean you will remember it. Willingham explains that we remember the things we *really* think about and we should think of memory as the 'residue of thought'.

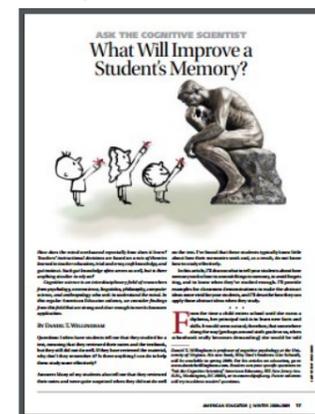
His advice to teachers, who will usually want students to know what things mean, is to offer advice and study methods that are centred on meaning.

Committing things to memory is one thing, but how can students avoid forgetting them? Willingham states that a key to recalling our memories is cues.

(continued inside)

3 Principles of Memory

- Memories are formed as the residue of thought.
- Memories are inaccessible mostly due to missing or ambiguous cues.
- People tend to think their learning is more complete than it really is.





BBC Radio 4 The Educators

If you're feeling at a loss over the Summer break and fancy a little bit of self-led CPD on the beach, why not listen to The Educators...

In this Radio 4 programme, Sarah Montague interviews the people whose ideas are challenging the future of education and the way we teach and learn. Starting in 2014 and now in its third series, *The Educators* is a varied collection of interviews with a wide range of key figures such as former headmaster of Eton College, Tony Little, on his 'formula for success', or teacher and writer Daisy Christodoulou on how children are being taught the 'wrong things'. Later programmes focus on wider issues such as 'What Finland Did Next' and 'Turning Schools Around'.

Whether you're on the beach or wait until you get home, it's an opportunity to hear from leading voices in education; about the changes they are making and why, both here and across the globe. Hear them explain the impact their ideas are having and how we might benefit from them.



Improving Memory cont'd

Cues are 'the starting point for retrieval'. They could be environmental cues like a picture or going back to a particular place, or self-generated cues such as retracing your steps mentally. For cues to be successful they need to offer the right detail and enough of it. Students quite often have a problem when 'some to-be-remembered material interferes with other to-be-remembered material'. Studying subjects together that are very different may minimise this interference and ensure students have distinctive cues for recalling material.

So how can we be sure that even if students have *thought* about things and got the right cues that they have actually committed the right things to memory? Sometimes if we are asked a question we can't answer it but we have a *feeling* that we know. Researchers have shown that 'most adults think they know more than they do' and the same goes for school-age children. A problem with this is that people tend to be over confident about how much they know, and in the case of studying students, they will therefore not study enough. Willingham reports that in one experiment, students allocated just 68% of the time they needed to study. If you think you've done enough, keep going.

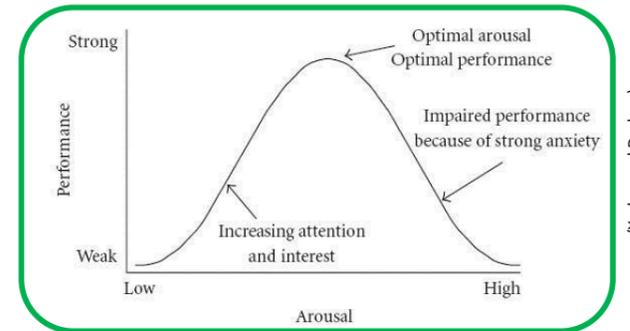
Willingham writes about ways in which we can apply his principles to classroom work (including examples) and addresses these as two categories: Forming Memories, and Retrieving Memories. His advice is that if we want students to remember what things mean, select a mental task that ensures they think about meaning. Mnemonics are useful, particularly if what you want to remember has little meaning. Help ensure students develop good cues by making memories distinctive, get students to distribute studying over time and 'plan for forgetting' by continuing study beyond knowing the information. Let students know how their mind works. Remind them that their internal gauge of whether they have studied enough is unlikely to be correct and what they think is sufficient probably means they need to do more. Get students to test themselves with the same type of test they will be taking, and get them to explain the information to someone else who can ask sensible follow up questions.

Full article available from BG or at: <http://goo.gl/BU4gxV>

Edu-Blog Spotlight

Carl Hendrick is head of Learning and Research at Wellington College. He is also an English teacher completing PhD at King's College in English education. He blogs at chronotopeblog.com and tweets as @C_Hendrick.

In a recent post, he writes about stress in education and that 'Not All Stress is Bad. The Benefits of Eustress or 'Good Stress' For Learning'.



Hendrick suggests that whilst we should of course monitor the stress levels of staff and students, we should differentiate between the two types of stress - distress and eustress. Whilst we want to avoid anyone being in distress, we need an optimal amount of stress in order to get things done.

He wonders if it is 'possible to imagine a more 'stress-tolerant' culture where students embrace a 'sweet spot' or optimal level of stress, one where we could engender a atmosphere of positive challenge and agency?' and draws on evidence that suggests adopting a "stress-is-enhancing" mindset may have a positive impact where pupils may seek more help, be more open to feedback, which lead to lower levels of distress overall.

Hendrick suggests we ask two questions:

1. Are the kinds of tasks we are asking students to do *genuinely* placing them in a state of distress or could they be seen more positively as a potential state of eustress?
2. Are we focusing on teaching methods that actually increase distress such as a focus on the storing of information as opposed to the retrieval of it?

He recognises that 'stress' is a highly subjective area but thinks by not trying to harness the hidden benefits of eustress, we might just be missing a trick.

Full post with comments at: <https://goo.gl/94RZh4>

You've been asked for some information or a pupil report for a meeting, but what do all those letters mean?

Decoding the Diary Sheet

MAT

A multi-academy trust one of several different academy models and is where a group of schools is governed through a single set of members and directors. There are two forms of multi-academy trust:

- Schools join an existing multi-academy trust, or chain.
- Schools come together and form their own multi-academy trust

Schools can join an existing MAT either by electing to join or through being sponsored.

Where a MAT sponsors a low-performing school they are expected to lead on improvement and challenge the ways in which they are run.

There are many different ways in which MATs are structured. A board of directors, or trustees, has a responsibility for all academies in the trust and, usually, a 'local governing body' is established for each academy.