

6 Most Effective Learning Strategies

There are six key learning strategies that cognitive science research has shown to be highly effective. Each strategy can be used in various ways, so it's important to think about how each one works and how you might apply it to your own courses.

Spaced Practice

Review material multiple times, spreading your study sessions out over time. Short breaks of a few days between reviews are often most beneficial.

Retrieval Practice

Be an active learner! Engage with your learning by using techniques such as asking yourself questions, making connections, rephrasing information in your own words, and practicing out loud. Simply re-reading your notes repeatedly often leads to surface-level memorization, not deep understanding.

Practice recalling information without referring to your notes. You can do this by writing it down, sketching diagrams, explaining concepts out loud, or testing yourself with flashcards or practice quizzes.

Elaboration

Go deeper by explaining concepts in detail. While you study, ask yourself the who, what where, why and how questions. Making links between ideas or relating them to your own life or prior knowledge can strengthen your understanding. If you're a visual learner, try using mind maps to highlight these connections.

Interleaving

Mix different topics or types of problems during your study time instead of focusing on just one for long periods. This approach may feel more challenging, but it enhances learning. Make sure you grasp each concept before moving on to the next.

Concrete Examples

Use clear, specific examples to help make abstract ideas easier to understand. Whenever possible, draw from examples shared in class. If you're unsure whether an example is accurate, don't hesitate to ask your instructor for guidance.

Dual Coding

Combine visuals and words to represent information. Redrawing diagrams from class or creating mind maps can help you process and remember concepts more effectively.

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