



School Bulletin for Friday 4th January 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year and welcome back. I hope that you had a restful break and enjoyed special time with family and friends. Our students had a great start to Term 3 and we have already seen some excellent work and attitude.

Yesterday we met with all our students in assemblies. This is an important moment at the beginning of each term as it offers an opportunity to remind students about standards as well to talk about wider issues that contribute to being a powerful and independent learner.

In our assemblies we concentrated on three elements. I presented students with some recent academic research focused on psychology of effective long-term learning. Our starting point was the statement that if nothing has changed in long term memory then nothing has been learnt. Then, it followed with some practical advice featuring examples of effective learning strategies. I would like to share with you some of the slides that we used to explain some aspects of brain activities behind effective long term learning.

Use Retrieval Practice

Retrieval practice = recalling concepts, facts or events from memory.

- When you periodically test or apply what you know, it reinforces your neural pathways or retrieval routes.
- Instead of re-reading notes, use quizzes, reflection or simulations as they are more effective.

Embrace Desirable Difficulties

Difficulties are desirable if they can be overcome with effort, and if the effort can enhance our skill.

- When you try to recall something from long-term memory or that's partially forgotten, it's more **effortful** and you must reconsolidate the learning. This strengthens neural paths & adds connections to deepen learning and improve mental models.
- When we avoid mistakes, we lose learning opportunities and waste limited working memory capacity on worrying rather than problem-solving.

Use Spacing, Interleaving & Variation

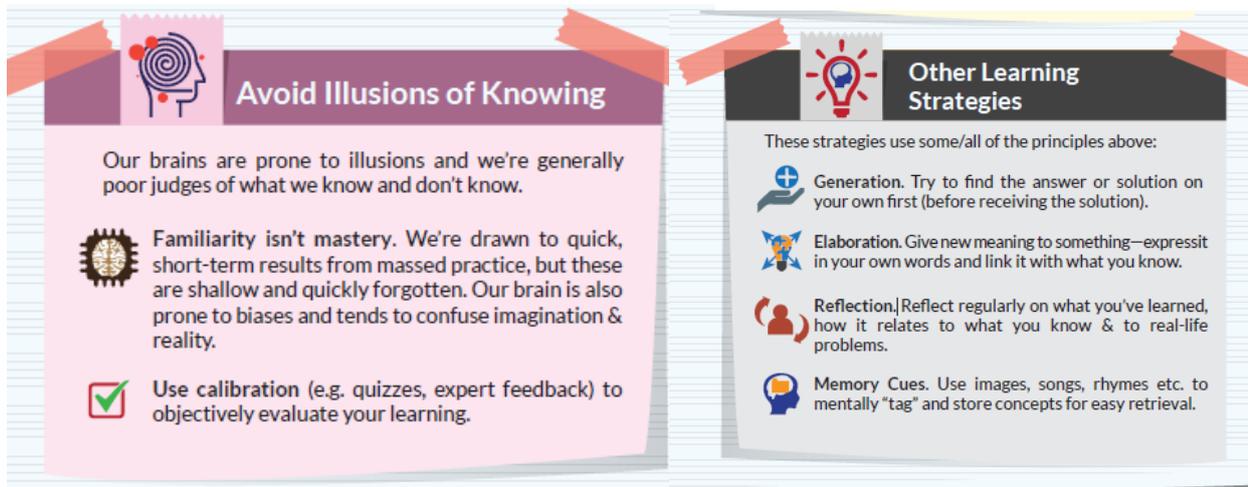
Mix up and vary your retrieval practice to make it more effortful and effective.

- Spaced Practice:** Leave a meaningful time-gap between your retrieval practices. This forces you to tap into long-term memory and expend more effort to fetch & consolidate forgotten info.
- Interleaved practice:** Alternate between topics or sub-topics. This interrupts mindless repetition and boosts the ability to differentiate between problem/solution types.
- Variation:** Vary the type & context of your retrieval practice. It helps you to spot similarities & differences across scenarios, and integrate ideas/skills into meaningful schemas or mental

Focus on Learning Structures

Don't limit yourself to your preferred learning styles (e.g. visual or auditory learning).

- Instead, improve your learning structure, i.e. how you find new material, extract key ideas and construct a coherent mental framework.
- Try to identify underlying principles or rules that cut across different situations and examples.



Mr Prebble and Mr Eede reminded students about the importance of attendance as well as the positive impact of maintaining basic standards. For example, ensuring that school uniform is correct and students carry all relevant equipment.

One of the slides from Mr Eede's presentation shows the long-term impact of weaker attendance on overall grades.

The Importance of Attendance

Research shows:

- 5% attendance lost (e.g. 95% attendance) =
 - 1 academic grade lost, e.g. 5 to 4
- 10% attendance lost (e.g. 90% attendance) =
 - 2 academic grades lost, e.g. 5 to 3
- A 90% attendance from year 7 to year 11 is
 - the equivalent of missing.....
 - 100 days or 20 weeks or 3 terms or half a year!

Finally, a warm welcome to Mrs Clifford who has joined the Design Technology Department. She is an experienced Food Technology teacher and has taken over classes that were previously taught by Mrs Johnson.

Mrs Lawrence, Head of School

Parent Forum – Monday 14th January 2019

A date for your diary. The next meeting of the Parent Forum takes place on Monday 14th January between 6-7pm. The agenda is being finalised and will be included in next week's Bulletin.

Christmas Concert and Future Performances

The Christmas Concert was the first under the leadership of Mr Jones our new Music/ Performing Arts teacher and a large audience were entertained by a variety of student acts all of whom did themselves and their families and friends very proud. The event also included the staff band and its two backing singers – who looked as if they could be the next ABBA!

At the end of the concert Mr Jones announced that the next performance will be in April when the school will present Aladdin.

Dates for this Term

The major events this Term are as follows:

- Thursday 17th January – Sixth Form Information, Advice and Guidance evening
- Thursday 24th January – Year 10 Parents' evening – 4-7pm (see below)
- Thursday 31st January – Year 7 Parents' evening – 4-7pm
- Thursday 14th February – Year 8 Options evening – 4-7pm

Christmas Jumper Day

We raised £274.60 for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital with our Christmas jumper day.

Year 10 Parents' Evening

Advance warning for the Year 10 Parents' Evening on Thursday 24th January from 4pm-7pm. The online appointment booking system will be open from Thursday 10th January at <https://thenorth.parentseveningsystem.co.uk/>

Regards,

Grahame Ward

School Business Manager

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