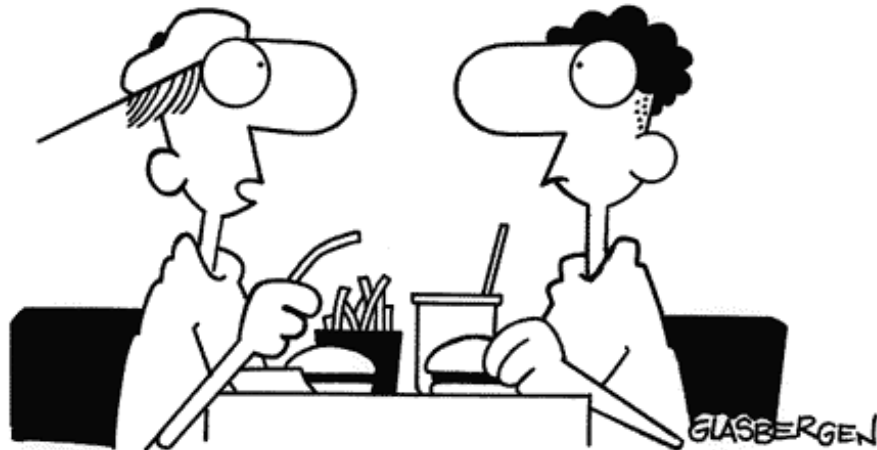


Distributed Practice

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“I forgot to make a back-up copy of my brain, so everything I learned last semester was lost.”

Geoffrey Keppel, a noted psychologist, once did an experiment in which students had to memorize nonsense words. One group studied them all at once, the other studied with breaks in between. The first group did great on the test, but horrible on the final. The second group did great on the test AND the final.

I know how most of us got away with just cramming for tests the night before, but that definitely changes in high school. It took me until my junior year to realize that I actually have to study more than one time to keep getting A's and B's. “Distributed practice,” or spacing out your studying, allows time for information to be stored.

- Take 15 minute breaks after each hour of study and review what you just learned before you begin again.
- Have a scheduled time to study each subject.
- Make use of daylight hours and time that you normally waste.
- Use flash cards
- Mark each paragraph of your textbook with a question or label.
- Don't read challenging books for more than 30 minutes at a time (This is to prevent those times when you're reading a paragraph over and over and it never sinks in)

New information takes time to soak in. Most people agree that normal people can remember anywhere from five to nine pieces of information at one time. We must give ourselves time to learn and soak in this material, otherwise we will forget it. Here are a few ways to help soak in the material.

- Taking notes in class
- Asking questions in class
- Reviewing Notes
- Stopping after each paragraph you read and writing a question in the margin which identifies what the paragraph is about
- Visualizing
- Reciting
- Making flash cards
- Do practice tests



Sources: www.mtsu.edu/~studskl/mem.html
www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/summer2002/askcognitivescientist.html