VCE Exam/Study Tip # 1: The Fastest & Most Effective Way to Learn

Does it take you longer than it should to learn something new?

Do you forget a lot of what you've learned within a few days?

Do you get test/exam marks that don't reflect the effort you put into your studies?

Do you get struck by mind blanks in tests and exams?

If you answered **YES** to any of the above questions, then it's more than likely that you're using ineffective and time-consuming learning techniques!

Would you like to discover a way that let's you memorise more information, more effectively and at a faster rate?
A technique that Harvard & Oxford students swear by and credit for a great part of their learning success?

Let's start by taking a look at how you memorise information when preparing for tests and exams. Think back to your last assessment and answer the following questions:

When you're preparing for a test or exam:

Do you quietly read your notes or text books underlining or highlighting key points as you come across them?
OR
Do you write notes as you learn them?
OR
Do you re-write your notes until you know them "off by heart"?

If you're using any combination of the above methods, you're using the **most ineffective and time-consuming learning techniques known to man!**

> It is better to
> **KNOW HOW TO LEARN**
> than to know.
> -Dr. Seuss

Writing and/or reading silently are relatively simple tasks that don't use many parts of the brain, making it easy to lose focus or think about unrelated matters, reducing how much information can be processed by the brain. This is why we sometimes get to the bottom of a page only to ask ourselves:

"What did I just read?"

Writing, re-writing and silent reading are only effective when materials are of great interest, which usually isn't the case when preparing for tests and exams. Even so, these passive learning strategies are only mildly effective for both short and long-term retention.

So what is the most effective way to learn?

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Research shows that we remember more of what we learn when we involve more parts of the brain. And there's no technique that uses more of the brain than **DOING.** Doing things like:

(a) Working through exam-style questions (80-85% retention rate)
(b) **TEACHING OTHERS** (90-95% retention rate)

When teaching or explaining what you're learning in your own words (and out loud), we're engaging in a technique known as **elaborative rehearsal**.

This technique has been **scientifically proven** to be instrumental in transferring information from short-term memory to the higher levels of long-term memory, as it enables the brain to draw strong connections between what you're trying to remember and what you already know.

Not only will **TEACHING** improve how much you understand and remember, this learning technique improves how effectively you're able to apply learned concepts; which is **really critical** when it comes to answering worded or application-style questions. In addition, when trying to rephrase concepts in your own words, you'll very quickly find out what you do and don't know, and therefore, which topics or concepts need more time and attention.

Learning in this way will also **decrease study time by up to 5-fold**.
This means that you will **learn 5 times more** in any set period of time!

Note: **In general, after 48 hours, people retain:**

- 10 percent of what they read or re-write (typical learning techniques adopted by students)

- 20 percent of what they hear (audiotapes)

- 30 percent of what they see (flip-charts)

- 50 percent of what they hear and see (as in the case of school classes and revision lectures!)

- 70 percent of what they say and discuss

- 80 percent of what they say and do (i.e. questions & teaching)

Unless you have a photographic memory, 100% knowledge retention can only be achieved with regular, structured reviews.

Regards,

The Team at TSFX.
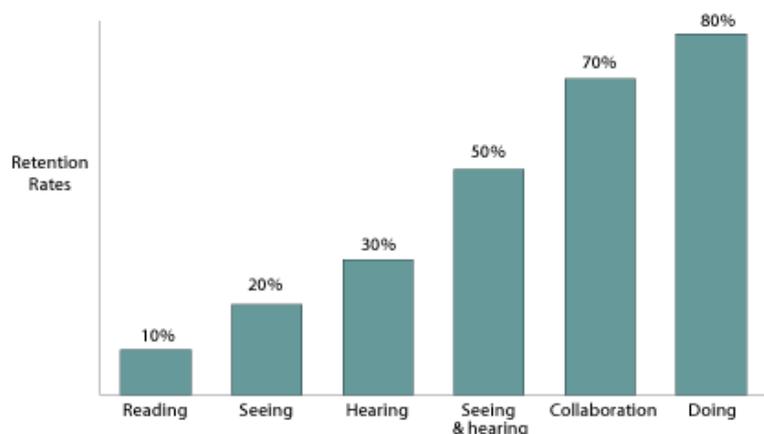
Source: M. Chi, M. Bassok, M. Lewis, P. Reimann, & R. Glasser, "Self-explanations: How to Study and Use Examples in Problem Solving." *Cognitive Science*, 1989, 13, pp. 145-182.