

CVM Teaching Academy members and friends,

I've shared this with a few of you already but was encouraged to share it more widely.

If you have a minute, you may be interested in the evidence-based essay below. It discusses the reasons why many of our teaching strategies (and our students' study strategies) don't lead to retention and mastery.

This short essay is based on the work of two giants in the field of cognitive psychology - Robert Bjork and Dan Willingham. And it has a couple of particularly enlightening figures.

Here's a few quotes that might resonate with you:

- *"If you're in teaching, you'll have had the frustrating experience of seeing a class grasp and understand a concept perfectly in lessons, only to have completely and utterly forgotten it when you mention it later on in the year: they assure you they've never heard of it before in their lives."*
- *"Don't forget that just because pupils don't know something ...), it doesn't mean they haven't been TAUGHT it."*
- *"In short, we don't remember things because of insufficient focus, time or attention spent on them, and because of insufficient practice, usage, revisiting, consolidation or application."*
- *"If we want our students to automate complex concepts, we need to ensure sufficient time, focus, attention, revisiting, application, consolidation, practice, usage and eventual mastery."*
- *"If this diagnosis is right – that the main reason pupils find it so hard to remember subject content is that our curricula and assessment aren't designed with memory in mind –"*

Bjork and Willingham's work addresses the question: **So how can we help students remember what they've learned?**

You might note the recommended strategy of "*study – test – test – test → test*", which I might reframe as "*study – drill/practice – drill/practice – drill/practice → test*". The drill/practice represents short, active learning exercises. These could include short quizzes, working with old exams as unknowns, etc. etc.

Anyway, a quick recommended read. Let me and/or the group know what you think of it!

ESSAY: <http://pragmaticreform.wordpress.com/2013/11/16/memory/>

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"Everyone leads: It takes each of us to make a difference for all of us."