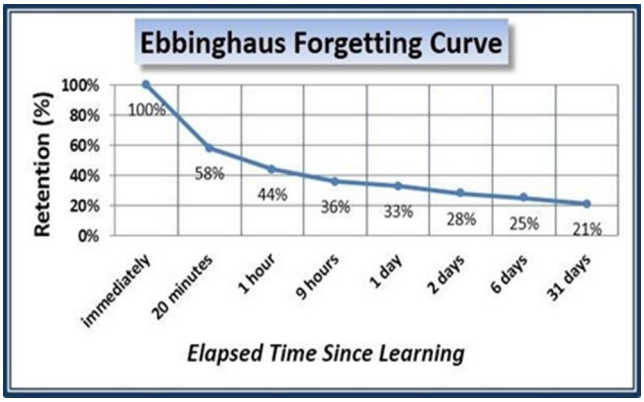
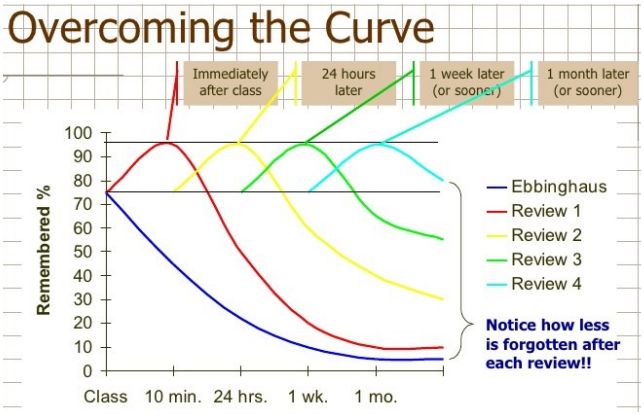
Effective Study Skills & Revision Strategies

Psychological research has repeatedly demonstrated that our memories for information learnt is not very reliable. For example, Ebbinghaus' forgetting curve shows that we will forget over 60% of what we have learnt after just one day. It is therefore essential that teachers plan lessons and revision activities with memory in mind. This must involve:

- ***Spreading learning over time***
- ***Retrieval practice***



Cognitive research has shown that when we spread learning out over time (e.g. 6 half hour sessions) we actually learn more than when we study the same amount in one



How to help students to study effectively

1. Teach them HOW to revise using research informed practice

Dunlosky's (2013) research showed that students often use revision strategies that do not work and avoid strategies that do. For example, they avoid low-stakes testing, use highlighters with no purpose, re-read material and rely on cramming. Instead, we have to teach students to use strategies that have been repeatedly shown by research to be effective. For example, flashcards and other forms of testing, spreading learning over time, summarising and thinking deeply. Dunlosky recommends teachers spend more time teaching students *how* they learn, not just *what* to learn.

Speak to CLT about how to teach for memory if you need more information.

2. Plan for spaced learning

Within the curriculum there should be opportunities for students to regularly review previous learning. Revision should occur throughout the year and not just before assessments, this applies at all key stages and not just KS4/5. When planning lessons and home learning tasks, provide lots of opportunities for students to retrieve information from memory e.g. if introducing content that links to previous learning, ask students to recall this information first, set flashcard making as a HL activity after each sub-topic and include recall questions during the Do Now Task. Home learning at GCSE/A-Level should include some kind of activity that involves summarising key content on a weekly basis.

3. Encourage them to retrieve information regularly

To 'beat the forgetting curve' students need to regularly practise retrieving information from memory. For example, quizzes, flashcards, paired-talk about a topic from memory, keyword tests, free recall etc. Students and teachers can use these forms of testing as a diagnostic tool, identifying weak areas that need more attention. These activities can be planned into lessons and home learning activities. When designing revision lessons and tasks, ensure they start with some form of recall e.g. a key word recall grid. This will identify which topics need revising most and ensure that time is spent most effectively. The method of ***test-revise-test*** is highly effective and involves students engaging in self-testing and identifying gaps in their knowledge. They then spend time going over this content to close the gaps. Finally, they complete further testing e.g. exam questions or quizzes to track progress.

If you would like more information on retrieval strategies please speak to CLT.

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