Busting the myths of how pupils learn- Student Version

1. Learning is hard!

Highlighting, rereading, and cramming feel good because it makes you feel productive but in reality this is ineffective for long-term retention. Learning actually feels tougher when using effective strategies.
If it doesn't feel tough it isn't working.

2. Practice makes perfect

Those past papers aren't a waste of time, in fact recalling information from memory actually boosts long-term memory. They show you exactly what you know and what they still need to study. You need to reflect on exam papers and not just look at the grade and throw it in your bag. What went well? What topics should you do more on?

3. It might be worse before it gets better

New study methods might feel frustrating, you have little notes in a book or mind maps on a page but it is the recall that counts. It feels more difficult and you may perform worse during the initial practice, but studies show if you keep at it you could perform three times better on actual exams!

4. Not knowing is good.

Thinking you know it all is dangerous! It leads to over confidence and a false sense of security. Embracing the fact that you do not know something is actually a powerful learning tool, as failing to retrieve an answer during practice is a vital signal that highlights exactly what you need to restudy.

The Illusion of Fluency (The 'Easy' Way) / Active Retrieval (The 'Robust' Way)
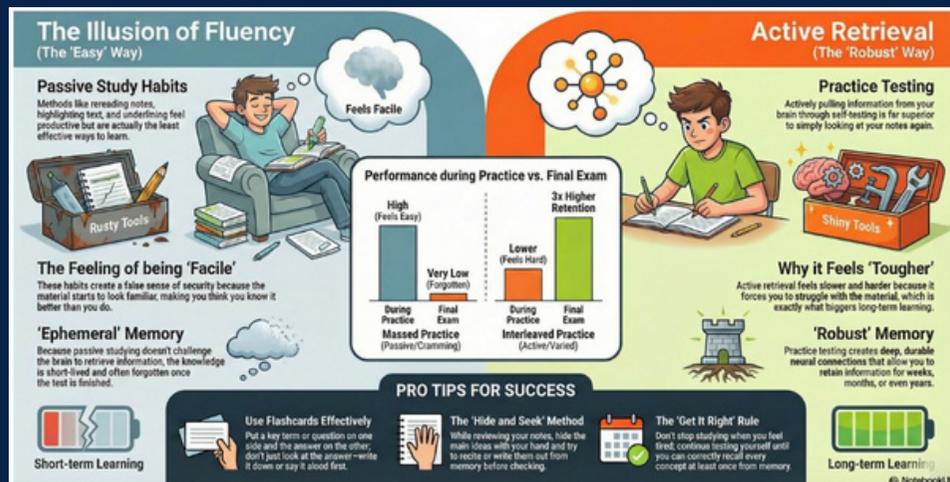
Better ways to work - Flash cards

Active Recall: Actively try to remember the answer before looking, which strengthens neural pathways.

Spacing: Review cards at increasing intervals (e.g., daily, then weekly) to prevent forgetting.

Generation Effect: Writing your own cards encourages deeper, more effective cognitive processing.

Interleaving: Mix up topics within the deck to prevent relying on order or context.

Retention: Keep all cards, even those answered correctly, to ensure long-term mastery.

Oakgrove Integrated College
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Pod cast

Info graphic

Helping Pupils understand the science of learning to make real life difference!

Ditch the highlighter!