**Supporting your learner**

**Some key revision strategies you can help with**

**Revision: Key Principles**

There are many strategies and tactics used to help strengthen knowledge and skills to prepare for assessments and exams. As our children develop through secondary school parents/carers do not always have the knowledge to support learners with increasingly difficult and specialist subject knowledge, but there are many strategies parents/carers can employ to help support their learners without having to know anything about the subject being learned.

The table below and over the page shows some of our most effective study strategies that our learners are regularly exposed to in lessons. It explains what they are, why use them, some examples, and what you can do to help. There is also a short list of strategies that are ineffective and should be avoided by learners, which you can help keep an eye on!

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| **Study Skill** | **What is it?** | **Why use it?** | **Examples** | **How can I help?** |
| **Retrieval Practice** | This is retrieving knowledge from memory, **without any cues, notes or support.** Once a retrieval task is completed the learner then looks at notes, or other texts on the revision topic to identify gaps in their knowledge. | This is **the single most effective revision strategy there is**. It strengthens memory traces in the brain by repeatedly putting the information in but also pulling it back out again. By identifying gaps in the knowledge then the learner can hone in on areas that are being forgotten in order to revise them again and strengthen the learning. The identifying of gaps is a crucial element in this process and makes revision much more efficient – no more cramming if this is done regularly. | * Brain dump – write down everything you know about …
* Self-quizzing – asking yourself specific questions about a topic by using a pre-prepared mind-map flash-cards
* Flash-cards – write down questions, themes, concepts, vocabulary on one side and then answers or definitions on the other
* Making mind-maps with key words and images only. Select a topic and some categories and create a mind-map from memory. Use only key words and add images (see dual coding below)
* There are examples of retrieval practice strategies used in every lesson – many class Teams will have templates of different exercises
 | * Ask for a list of topics your child finds challenging then select a random one for them to do retrieval practice with. Then help them to identify gaps using their notes or a textbook they provide. Or use the Achieve website for information support.
* Ask the questions from the mind-map (what does this ‘key word mean?) or the flashcards.
* Talk to your child about retrieval practice and its benefits. There are many website that provide information on it’s worth and some strategies to use.
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| **Spacing** | This is leaving a gap between learning information and revisiting it. | This makes retrieval more difficult, but in a desirable way by retrieving information just before we forget it, this then strengthens the memory traces that commit information from working memory to long-term memory | * Complete a brain dump on a previous topic during a revision session for another topic
* Include questions from previous topics in your current topics self-quizzing
* Use flashcards with different topics in them
 | * Ask random questions from different sets of flashcards
* Ask for a list of topics being studied and some questions or flashcards to go with them. Time your learner to study one topic for one hour, then do a brain dump, then time them doing another topic for an hour then ask them questions about the first topic they studied.
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| **Interleaving** | Retrieving information from different topics or subject areas | Mixing topics and/or subjects makes retrieval harder but more effective in the long-run just like spacing which helps to strengthen memory traces. | * Complete a brain dump on two different topics or in two different subject areas.
* Include questions from different topics/and or subjects in self-quizzing or flashcards
 | * Ask for a list of topics and randomly select the brain-dumps. Flashcards or self-quizzes that they must do from 2 different subjects
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| **Elaboration** | This is using ‘how and ‘why’ questions to explain what has been learned | This helps to improve understanding by adding detail to explanations with reasons and make deeper connections to the information being learned | * Create ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about a topic – then answer the questions
* Use a pre-prepared mind-map with key words and images only and ask ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions of the information
* How does X work?/Why does X happen?/Why does it make sense that \_\_\_\_\_?/Why is this true?/Why is X true and not Y?/When did X happen?/What caused X?

/What is the result of X? | * Ask for the list of ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions and ask your child to answer the questions. Teaching someone else and elaborating on the information is a sure fire way to make it stick. Teachers become experts in their areas by teaching the same information over and over, your child can become more confident in their knowledge by teaching you!
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| **Dual-coding** | This is using images/visuals along with text to help remember learning. | This helps boost learning providing a ‘double memory trace’ into long-term memory. | * Draw a picture to go with a vocabulary word
* Create flashcards with images and key words on one side and more elaborate definitions/explanation on the other
* Mind-maps – use keywords and images, no full sentences or paragraphs, then use as a retrieval practice tool by elaborating on the key words and meaning of the images
 | * Ask for a collection of key words or terms and play Pictionary with your child where you have to match the key word to the image they have drawn
* Point to words or images on a mind-map created by your child and ask them to elaborate
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| **Metacognition** | This is about learners understanding how they learn as well as whattheir strengths and gaps are. | Learners need to be able to evaluate their own learning and next steps without a teacher or other adult telling them what needs to be done. | * Before completing a task, the learner should ask themselves about a time they completed a similar task and what strategy they used that worked well, or did not work well
* After completing a task, label or explain the steps taken to complete it, rank the effectiveness of the steps
* After you have completed a task, check it against class resources (in the class Team) or a modelled example and make a note of your successes and areas to revise and develop next time
 | * Ask a series of questions about a revision session:
* Are you doing well so far?
* How do you know?
* Are you finding this easy or difficult? (if easy – move to the difficult)
* Could I do anything to improve my work so far?
* Did X strategy work? Why/why not?
* Are there any strategies or techniques that could be better?
* How would you rate the learning Red/Amber/Green – why?
* Which part of your work are you mist proud of and why?
* Do you know what you have to do to get better? - explain
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**Strategies that are not effective**

* **Reading over or highlighting notes** – both can be done on auto-pilot and therefore the learner is not engaging with the material. Something needs to be getting done with the information to make it effective e.g. making a mind-map, or a set of flashcards, or a knowledge organiser etc
* **Studying whilst listening to music** – studies show that those who studied listening to no music in quiet environments performed over 60% better in an exam than their peers who revised listening to music that had lyrics

**Useful Resources**

* <https://www.innerdrive.co.uk/> Inner Drive website has useful infographics and information based on research and science about effective strategies for learning and looking after learners’ mental health and wellbeing as well as motivational tips and support
* Book: Parent’s Guide to the Science of Learning: 77 Studies That Every Parent Needs to Know. From the Inner Drive Team
* <https://achieve.hashtag-learning.co.uk/> Achieve website – most learners are signed up to this subscription service for a variety of subjects across the school. Ask your learner to show you how it works and how you can help them use the site.
* Microsoft Teams – all classes will have a Team where resources are stored. You can ask your child for access to this by logging on through their Glow long-in details.