

Midterms/Finals Study Tips

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Spacing Effect/Distributed Practice (Cepeda, Pashler, Vul, Wixted, & Rohrer, 2006)

Intervening days between study sessions result in more durable and accurate long-term memory formation than studying all in one session.

This holds true for all retrieval intervals from less than a minute later ($M_{\text{spaced}} = 50\%$, $M_{\text{massed}} = 41\%$) to 30 days later ($M_{\text{spaced}} = 62\%$, $M_{\text{massed}} = 33\%$)

How to implement it: Create a study schedule. Place all of the exams that you need to study for on a two-week schedule. List out when and for how long you are going to study for each exam. There should be at least one day in between the study sessions for each class.

Testing Effect/Retrieval Practice (Roediger & Karpicke, 2006)

Practicing retrieval by testing yourself results in more durable and accurate long-term memory formation than simply focusing on the encoding of new information. Traditional study methods focus entirely on the encoding process, but we can also practice the retrieval process to get better at retrieving information. At a one-week delay, participants in the retrieval practice group forgot 10% of the information that they originally learned, but participants in the studying group forgot 50% of the information that they learned.

How to implement it: Use flashcards. Look at the cue word on the front of the flashcard and try to retrieve the information from memory without looking at the back of the card.

Criterion Learning (Kornelny & Bjork, 2008)

Most students only answer a question correctly once when studying, but research shows that if you answer a question correctly three times you will remembering significantly more information.

How to implement it: Use flashcards and mark the card each time you answer it correctly. Put the card in the back of the pile and make sure you answer it correctly three times before dropping it.

Transfer Appropriate Processing (Morris, Bransford, & Franks, 1977)

The method of studying that you use should be appropriate with the type of test that you will take. People who study for multiple choice tests by answering multiple choice flashcards do better than those who practice by writing out answers.

How to implement it: If your final is multiple choice, then make practice multiple choice tests. If you final involves writing, then practice writing out your answers in short or long format.

Successive Relearning (Rawson, Dunlosky, & Sciartelli, 2013)

This method combines all of the previous methods. You should space out your retrieval practice by making a schedule. You should be sure to answer each question at least three times, and study in a way that is consistent with the format of your final.