



Hi graduate friends,

Happy new year! I hope you've enjoyed your holidays and are feeling ready for the winter term. If you don't have any new year's resolutions in mind yet, I'd like to propose a simple one for you: Giving yourself more time before assessing a strategy you've used.



Research shows that students struggle with choosing learning strategies that benefit them the most. One reason could be that they are overconfident in what they've learned so they make misinformed decisions on what to do and how to study (Dunlosky & Rawson, 2012). Another reason can be that monitoring the link between the difficulty of a task they are doing and the learning they experience in the end isn't easy (Baars et al., 2020). Hence, you might spend a lot of effort on something and as soon as the task is done, feel like it just wasn't worth it, and decide not to use that strategy again. The problem with this type of decision-making is that it doesn't consider the fact that one's actual learning usually shows itself after a delay, or even in a different context (Bjork & Bjork, 2011). Although research shows that if you highly value the goal or the task you have at hand, you may be more open to experiencing difficulties and viewing them as beneficial (Baars et al., 2020). Having said that, just keep in mind that your immediate performance and feelings are not the best pieces of information for evaluating the strategies you have been using. Once you've used a difficult strategy, give yourself some time before you decide whether that approach was worth it or not. Or perhaps even try it again as repeating a good but difficult strategy can help you realize the benefits better (Onan et al., 2022).

For example, for a week, when you learn a new concept, you might go to your whiteboard one or two days later and practice teaching the concept out loud to an imaginary audience. This may be difficult as you may have forgotten some things and it may be time consuming as well. It's easy to put this strategy aside, especially if you realize you've forgotten all the concepts you taught one week later. But perhaps 3 weeks later you may realize that when you want to simplify another concept in an essay you're writing, you're doing it with much more ease than you used to.



Perhaps, the whiteboard teaching practices have been beneficial? Just give your strategies some time, and reflect back on things often, that's all 😊

Best,

Najmeh



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Reference:

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