Making It Stick: Using the Science of Successful Learning in Legal Writing Classrooms

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To learn legal research and writing, old ways must die
They often die hard
New lessons must nestle in students’ minds
Nestling takes so darn long

Students nod: I got it
Their work says:
    . . . not quite

New concepts just won’t stick
Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning

Peter C. Brown et al., 2014
Topics:

2 Challenges
6 Strategies
1 Tool
Lots of Sharing

In order:

- *Indiv.* Challenge
- Strategies
- *Try the Tool*
- Collective Challenge
- Sharing
Challenge 1: Applicable Foundational Knowledge
6 Strategies to make it stick

Spaced Retrieval: not mere fluency
Interleaving: distinguish types
Generation: try 1st; struggle
Calibration: align own replies with best replies
Elaboration  find *layers* of meaning

Reflection  retrieval + elaboration (metacognition, *transfer*, theorizing)
Try it: Team Quiz

1. Individually Answer (2 min.)

2. Team (4-5 min.)
   - Discuss
   - Answer as Team
   - Use Scratch-Off Card
Strategies: Specifics

Retrieval

Quiz

Spaced

Long-term path-setting

Interleaved

Varied leaves, not blocks

Generation

Fill in blanks; ‘awful blurting’ + engagement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calibration</th>
<th>Develop judgment; remove illusions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elaboration</td>
<td>Explain; relate; form images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Free recall; summarizing; planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Challenge 2: Professionalism
Team-Based Quizzing

‘TBL’—teambasedlearning.org

Melissa Weresh JLWI (2014)
Sparrow & McCabe, JLWI (2012)
Sparrow (2011)

Perma-Teams

Sequence:

Indiv. → Team → Answer → All
“You → Y’all → We”

(not ‘I → You → We’)

spaced/interleaved retrieval

- **You**—alone generate; **struggle**
- **Y’all**—teams elaborate; calibrate
- **We**—all further elaborate; reflect
Avg. Test Scores:
Indiv. 79%, Team 96%
17% Difference
To make it stick:
Daring,
Reflective
Perseverance

in Community
Other Resources

Elizabeth Green, “Why Do Americans Stink at Math,” July 23, 2014, NY Times:

http://www.cappress.com/books/isbn/9781611638127/The-Complete-Legal-Writer