

Spaced Repetition Overview

Use the following overview of spaced repetition as a handy reference or share it with your team.

What is it? Spaced repetition is the idea of revisiting a learning target multiple times over time. As opposed to cramming, spaced repetition encourages multiple short study sessions spread out over days, weeks, or months instead of one massed session.

Why use it? Spaced repetition increases a student's ability to remember information over time. It builds retention, application, and transfer skills (Emeny, Hartwig, & Rohrer, 2021; Gluckman, Vlach, & Sandhofer, 2014; Karpicke & Bauernschmidt, 2011).

How to use it: Instead of devoting a single day to a single learning target, introduce the learning target and revisit it over time. The following is a guide for when to revisit a learning target after initial exposure.

Initial exposure
One day
One week
One month
Six months
One year

Boundary conditions: The first time to revisit a topic should be at least one day and not longer than two days after initial exposure (Carpenter, Cepeda, Rohrer, Kang, & Pashler, 2012). While students often prefer to mass their study instead of spreading it out over time (Biwer, de Bruin, Schreurs, & oude Egbrink, 2020), repetition within a single learning session does not show this to be very beneficial (Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsh, Nathan, & Willingham, 2013).

Other similar terms: distributed practice, spacing effect, spaced practice

References

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