

The 3Rs - Consolidating Learning

I don't know what you think of when someone mentions the three Rs. Is it the view from the Victorian classroom of education consisting of reading, writing and 'rithmetic? Or the environmentally-engaged amongst you may think of 'reduce, reuse, recycle', the mantra of waste management strategies. In this short piece I will show how an adapted version of the second of those three Rs can help with consolidating learning in the first three Rs, adapted for our 21st Century schooling, of course. So consolidating learning not only in English literature, English language and Maths but also in Sciences, History, RS and all the other subjects studied at school. So what am I suggesting and how will this help with achieving good results?

Firstly, **Reduce**.

Turn your class notes into flash cards, mindmaps, info diagrams or revision notes (the Cornell method is a good one to use <https://blog.innerdrive.co.uk/how-to-cornell-note-taking-method>). Albert Einstein is reputed to have said "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough". I would add that if you can't summarise your notes and turn them into revision materials, then now is the time to make sure you understand what you have been taught. Do this by asking your teacher or by re-reading your text books or by talking to a trusted friend, your siblings or your parents. Going through your notes now, not just on the night before an exam, will mean you have worked through and overcome any problems or difficulties more than 12 hours before the big day.



Secondly, **Reuse**.

Look back at the feedback your teachers have written on your work. Is the same thing repeated again and again? If so, have you addressed this? If the answer is now 'yes' then great. Remember to keep on doing these and other things you're doing well as you continue your work. You can also reuse exercises and tests you have done previously and redo them to ensure that this time, you get them all correct. (And, students, when looking at your feedback, think about those four other Rs - review, reflect, respond, remember).



Thirdly, **Recall**.

Tests and exams are all about retrieving and using facts and information you have learned, so practise doing this. Use past papers, text book questions and online resources. Make up quizzes and share them with your friends to see if you can answer each other's questions. Students think that revision consists of re-reading notes over and over again but research has shown that active revision - reading then testing yourself - is most effective (<https://blog.innerdrive.co.uk/are-students-doing-revision-wrong>). And this recall should be spaced over time to address the 'forgetting curve', which illustrates the all too familiar fact that, after we have learnt something, we forget it, unless we go back over it again and again. (There is much discussion and many articles about this on the internet - take a look)



So, finally, to follow my own advice and summarise this article so you can remember it.

Reduce your year's work, checking your understanding. **Reuse** feedback and class materials. Practise **Recall** so you can use what you have learnt under exam conditions.

Then you should be able to achieve the **Results** you deserve.

