Revision Workshop-20260325_155806-Meeting Recording

25 March 2026, 03:58pm

31m 34s

https://alecreedacademycouk-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/battersbymatt_alecreedacademy_co_uk/IQAMoM6LWo6-TojmDDmLHhizAftLVAeoziEbc65fxhl3L2g

Matthew Battersby 0:06

The.

Thank you. Hi everyone. Let me just check, any year 11 parents?

Ten, 10.

11, 10, 9, 8. Okay, so we've got a nice range. What I will say is that whatever I'm going to say today is applicable to anybody. All right, whatever year group they are in. My name's Erica and I'm one of the assistant principals in the school.

I look after teaching and learning. So what I'm going to talk to you about today is something I absolutely love. I know it's not everybody's cup of tea, so I might be slightly more excited about it than most people are. But hopefully what we look at today will be useful to you.

in terms of supporting your children with revision. There is going to be a form at the end because I'd be really interested to know what else you would like support with, whether it's talking to specific departments or seeing examples of certain things or having us provide templates of certain things, whatever it might be.

So there will be an opportunity for that at the end. All right. So we're looking at how you can support your child with their revision. And I've split it into two sorts of areas.

Now, this is the part that I meant that I love and that might be, hopefully it's not boring, but I'm going to try and make it as exciting and interesting as I can.

But I really do think we need to have some understanding of how learning works, because that means that you can think of other strategies, not necessarily just the ones that I've mentioned, because you know your child very well as well. So if you understand a little bit about how learning works, that enables you to do that.

But I am also going to mention some practical implications for you and for your child or children in terms of their revision. So hopefully you'll walk away with some really concrete practical ideas.

Now, we're going to start with, and I know this is, I know this is really annoying when you're in a room full of people you don't know, and then you made to talk to them. So, apologies to start with. Actually, Mr. Battersby, could you take part so that we've got at least one pair, a couple of pairs. So, 50 pins, 50 P coins.
I assume we've all touched them. I assume we've all seen them multiple times, like hundreds of times, if we're old enough.
I want you to please, so if I empty a bag of coins over here, I assume everyone will be able to pick out the 50p coins. Is that right? Okay. And you could describe what it looks like to somebody else, right? The difference between a two pound coin and a 50p coin. Okay, brilliant. What I would like you to do
is to just turn to the person next to you. Hello, welcome. Come on in. That's all right. There's a seat for you over here. That's really handy because we're talking in pairs. We're talking about 50p coins. Would you like to sit over here? There we go. It's really exciting.
I want you to talk to the person sitting next to you or closest to you, anyone that you can grab. And I want you to answer these questions about a 50p coin for me. Something you've handled multiple times, something you say you can describe to someone else, something you could pick out from a range of other coins.
So, on many 50p coins, there's an image of Britannia.
I want you to see how many of those five things, five questions you can answer with a person sitting next to you. So what's in Britannia's left hand on the 50p coin?
What's in her right hand?
What's on her shield?
what's on her head and what's by her feet. And it's okay to say if you don't know. But could you talk to the person next to you, please?
Yeah.
Any ideas?
Yeah.
David.
I know someone did this with me. This is really mean. I know how this feels. Someone's done it with me. It's not actually my idea. So.
Mister Battersby looks really uncomfortable as well, so I know he doesn't know.
Yeah, yeah, yeah. So some of them on many 50p coins, it's got that on, but not on all of them.
Someone.

I'm obviously trying to make a point here. I'm trying to make a point. This is something that's very familiar to us, something we've handled. It is something we've seen. It is something we've exchanged. True, true.
But if I was going to give you a test on a 50p coin, and these were the questions, I know I couldn't pass that test. So what's the point that I'm trying to make? Just to put us out of our misery, right? She's holding a trident in her right hand. She's holding an olive branch in her.
left hand. She has like a Roman kind of, what's it called, helmet on. She's got, you can't really see this, but that is a Union Jack on her shield. And there's of course a lion by her feet. I think you're not going to forget it now.
Um...
So why did I do this with you and what does that have to do with supporting your child in terms of their revision? The first key thing that we need to know about learning is if we don't think about it, we won't remember it. Familiarity
is not the same as knowing something. So I've been teaching longer than I care to admit and I teach English and my kids are familiar. Even my children who struggle in tests, they are very familiar with the texts that we are doing. They are familiar with them.
but yet that doesn't translate into the results that they want sometimes. And the reason for that is they are familiar with it, but they do not know it. And then the question becomes, of course, well, how do I move from being familiar with something to actually knowing it? And we're going to talk about that a little bit later.
So the first thing I want you to remember on this journey of ours to support our children is to remember that we remember what we think about. That's the first thing. So whenever I am checking on my child, working out a schedule with them or a routine,
I need to constantly ask myself, what will they be thinking about when they do this? Because that is the thing they will remember.
So that's the first key thing to take away. Now, oh, this one's really mean. This one's very mean. I am going to give you 5 words, very easy words. Okay, are you ready for them? I have to write them down because it's the end of a very long day. So I'm cheating. Here comes the first one, tree.
Hold it in your head, okay? High way.
Mirror.
Saturn.

and electrode.
You have them.
Sold them.
Hold them. Don't lose them. Okay. Now, can you just help me quickly, please?
Can you work out for me what is 28 times, 23, sorry, times 8? You can break it up. I see you can do 3 times 8 plus 20. Okay, brilliant. Now, this is actually a neurological test. Can you go forward?
and move your fingers as you are counting. So one, two, three, 4. Do this on your own. You can count in your head if you want, but go up to 10 and then back to one, please.
Okay. And then I want you on the desk in front, if you just use your finger, imagine you're standing with your back to the front, to the, you are facing our driveway and you've got the school building at the back of you. Can you just draw a map to Northolt Library if you were going to explain to someone around here who's not been to.
Just this Northhold Library, yes, from this door. Yeah, so just draw how to get there.
And the last thing I'd like you to do is just the last five letters of the alphabet. Could you just say them backwards for me, please? So start with Z.
Right, I'm really sorry. Could you now tell the person what the five words were that I gave you?
Hey.
Excellent.
Did that feel comfortable or uncomfortable recalling the five words?
All right.
What I was trying to show you is where all of this happened is your working memory. You've got two types of memory, right? Our working memory and our long term memory. Our working memory is, if your working memory is not switched on, you're basically in a coma, right? It's where everything happens. It's where this conversation I'm having with you now,
This is happening in my working memory. All this that I just gave you landed in your working memory. And your working memory is very fragile.
it is limited and it very easily becomes overwhelmed. So when your child sits in an assessment,
An awful lot is happening in their working memory.
And what just happened to us with something very simple, with something very

simple like a tree or highway, saturn, electrode, mirror, it's far more complex and it's overwhelming, their working memory.
So we need to find ways to free up space in the working memory, and that's the point of revision, to make sure that as much as we can, we put it in our long-term memory so that in the test, we've got space in our working memory and it doesn't become overwhelmed.
But it's hard work getting things into our working memory. Now the 50p coin.
That was not in your long-term memory because you've not thought about it. We only move things into our long-term memory when we explicitly think about it.
Here's an example of how we might do that. So I'm going to give you 5 words again.
This time I don't need to think about it because I've memorised them, right?
And here they come.
Dog.
Battery.
River.
Glass.
And moon.
You have them?
Right.
I want you now to make a silly story with those words. For example, my dog ate my battery and was so thirsty. It ran to the river to have a drink of water, but it was full. It thought the river was glass because it was reflecting light from the moon.
OK, make a silly story with dog.
Glass.
Battersby, River, and Moon, like a stupid, silly story with it.
Okay.
Nahed.
OK.
The sillier the better.
Yeah.
Ohh.
All right, so now if I give you these tasks again, and I say, what's 22 times 4?
If I say find two fingers on your two hands that most resemble each other. So are your pinkies the most, do they resemble each other most? Which one went up, which two went up the best? Decide, decide which ones.

Yeah, but which ones look the closest? Can you find them? Is it your pinkies, full fingers, middle fingers, but rude?
And...
Please draw a map to Tesco. It's a bit more difficult this time. It's not just North Old Library, but from here, could you just draw directions on the table to Tesco?
I see.
And then finally, there are 26, this is also more difficult than last time, there are 26 letters in the alphabet. Find the two that are in the middle.
You can read it.
The Team.
What was it?
M&N. Right. Now I want you to recall the five words I gave you that you made a silly story about.
The door, the reverb, without training, the glasses, and then.
Yeah.
Am I right in thinking it felt more comfortable this time, recalling? It's because we found a way to move something into our long-term memory. And what we actually did, we're not going to spend a lot of time talking about that today. But stories are fantastic ways because we are built for stories, literally.
Our day has a beginning, middle and end, just like a story. Our lives have a beginning, middle and end. The lessons we attend, if we go to church, if we start a shopping expedition, it's got a beginning, middle and end. We are built for stories as human beings. So stories are great ways to
put something in our long term memory. So is making associations with things we already know that are connected. So for example, a story about a dog who eats a battery, wants a drink of water, thinks it's glass because the moon is reflecting, the light from the moon is reflecting in the river, are all references that I already know. And if I was going to talk to you about that today, I would say that's a schemata that already exists. So you latch.
new information onto old information. So that makes it easier to remember. Is it the same with songs? It's the same with songs. So songs tap into different parts of your brain because it's a melody as well. That's why I can say the lyrics. We were just talking about it recently. My mum was visiting and we were talking about how
She was playing music and it was St. Elmo's Fire and I was singing along. I hadn't heard St. Elmo's Fire in years, but I could remember the lines or the lyrics because it's

attached to a melody as well. So it's tapping into another part of your brain and that helps you to remember it.
My daughter loves to listen to music while she learns. And some people say it's good to listen to music because they cannot have a rhythm to. Certain types of music, yes. So Baroque music, for example, is very good for learning. Mozart very good for learning. So some music definitely is good for learning.
So right, so the thing that I want you to remember is that children don't struggle because they're not trying.
They struggle because they're trying to remember too much without doing something with that information. Like we turned information into a story, we thought about it, we did something with it, and then it's easier to recall.
The last bit of information I'm going to give you explains why repetition is important. Now, this is a Victorian gentleman called Herman Ebbinghaus. He was the first person who studied that we know about that studied memory. And what he wanted to work out is how quickly do we forget things? He actually worked
used sounds to test how many things can we hold in our brain, how quickly can we forget them, etc, etc. And his research has been replicated literally hundreds of times and there are still people today who are
experts on memory and on testing that reference Herman Ebbinghaus's research. So what did he find? He found that if I memorise something perfectly now, like the five words, if I give you a telephone number with 7 digits in it,
and you memorise it perfectly, you are going to remember just shy of 60% after 20 minutes. It's called memory decay. It's got nothing to do with intelligence. You're just going to start to forget it. It happens to all of us.
If we memorise something perfectly, we'll remember 33% after 24 hours. So if your child says to you, well, I studied so hard yesterday, you saw me, you saw me, I sat at my desk for hours, I worked so hard yesterday. The answer is, yes, my darling, you did.
But you are only, unless it's in your long term memory, you are only going to remember 33%, 1/3 of what you try to remember in 24 hours time, unless we do something. And that percentage goes down until parents of year 11, unless we do something, if your test is 60 days away,
Even if you work really hard today and you memorise something perfectly, you are only going to remember 10% and that is not enough to cut the mustard in your exam. So what do we do? Loads of studies have found that if you then you start to

forget, you start to forget and at the point where it's
almost just you can almost just wrap your memory around it and pull it back. If you quiz yourself then or you pull it back then you do a practise question or you do a flashcard, it tops it up completely. And then sadly you do start to forget again. But notice
Every time you start to forget, do you see that it slows down how quickly you forget? And there's a researcher, she's actually also, it was an English teacher, but she does a lot of research on assessment. Her name is Daisy Christodulu. She reckons
Seven times where you revisit something at the point of forgetting, then you won't forget it again.
So why am I showing this to you? It's just, even if you forget all of this, cramming the day before does not work.
It doesn't work. You need to work hard, think about something explicitly to put it in your long-term memory, but you are going to start to forget it. Then you need to revisit that same information. Revisit it again, revisit it again. It's a process. And the ideal number of revisiting is 7 times.
That means I need to have a list of everything that I need to know in science.
All my topics in maths, all my topics in English, and I need to work my way through them, but plan to revisit them.
That's what that means. And this is the reason why. Because we're told all the time, but you need to go over that again. But unless you understand why, you're not really that motivated to do it, right? But now we understand why.
So, what does this mean in terms of revision?
We said, if I, to revise effectively, I need to think hard about something. I need to do something active with what I am revising.
And I need to recall things, and I need to repeat things, right? And the ideal number is 7.
So, what should children then do? Like I mentioned already, they have to have a routine. They have to have a routine.
So my child is in year 8, it's donkey years away from, or it feels like donkey years away from doing my GCSEs. But the reality is that what I'm going to learn in year 9 and in year 10 is going to rely on me having the knowledge from year 8 solidly committed to my long term memory.
So I need to know what my topics are in science, MFL, geography, if I'm going to take it at GCSE, and I need to make sure that I revisit it so that I'm confident at the

end of year eight, and I can say I have mastered the
Content for your 8.
You need to struggle.
Oh, and this is a hard one. I say my children are Amazon Prime children. I've got two of them. I think everything happens now, just like Amazon Prime. I order it now, I get it tomorrow. I think life works like that. And half of my job as a mum is to teach them that life is not like Amazon Prime.
Right? You can't just press a button and it comes tomorrow. They have to struggle. That is learning. Thinking about something, working out ways to remember it, struggling and failing to remember it, and then going and having a look, which bits couldn't I remember? And then working to remember that. That's part of learning. Right.
They need regular repetition; that means having flashcards.
either making them, buying them, using them online, or we need to have flashcards that has a question or keyword on the one side and the answer on the other side, because that helps me to test what I know and what I don't know.
I have to practise questions.
That's just the reality of it. And that's the hard work. Explaining it out loud is a fantastic way to learn. If you can explain it, you know it. If you can't explain it, you don't know it. Test yourself with no notes. Highlighting is something we shouldn't be doing. It's passive. You don't think when you highlight.
So you won't remember. But it feels like you're doing a lot. I'm sitting there, it's looking so pretty. I've got my pink highlights. I'm highlighting things. Look, I'm doing stuff. But you're not thinking. You are passively reading and therefore you will not remember, even though you've spent so much time doing that. Passive reading. Copying notes.
It's the same thing. You will not. We think that kind of learning by rote, like I'm going to write it out in times, I'm going to write it, it won't work. And that's not me saying it because I don't like doing that. That is just literally what the research say. So as parents, you are here today to not just understand how your children learn, but also what could you do to help them.
Help them create a routine.
Help them say, on a Monday, I do 20 minutes of this, 20 minutes of that. On A Tuesday, I do 20 minutes of that. Work it out for them. It's A jigsaw puzzle. Put it together. Keep it short. 20 minutes is enough. 20 minutes regularly.

a little bit at a time, but consistently and frequently, that's the way to do it. Not these big chunks that make us all feel just overwhelmed. Because we've got other stuff to do as well. Our whole life is not revising. We've got other things to do too. Ask them questions, test them.
and be happy with them when they get it right.
Test them without their notes and praise their effort, not just results, because often these things it builds. And as you saw from the graph, we do forget. We do forget, but praise their effort because they will be getting there if they do the little chunks frequently. Do not let them just look over their notes.
If they're just reading or looking over it.
They might as well be watching television. They are not going to remember it.
Do not do the thinking for them. So resist giving them the answer, because then you are going to remember it. They won't. And do not allow them to leave it to the last minute, because you saw how memory decay works. They won't remember it. They won't remember enough to do well.
So then I thought, what could I leave you with? Say that I am revising for science, I am in year 10, or year nine, these topics would work for year nine as well, like cell structure, bonding, energy transfers. I've got 20 minutes. What would that look like?
So here are my assumptions just on the side. I can't do any of this if I haven't done the prep work. So I need to know the topics I need to revise. That's my job. I need to make sure our teachers give our students topic lists.
So if they just live in an exercise book and they never go anywhere, well, they are the stuff that we need for revision, so they need a copy of that.
They need to have the resources that they need to revise. So whether that is a CGP book, whether that is a textbook, whether that's online resources that their teacher said, this is what you should use. It's usually a combination of online and physical resources. And they need to have made flashcards.
And that's a session. That's A 20 minute where I go, today I'm making on this topic, I'm making these flashcards. That's my 20 minutes today. Tomorrow I'm going to use the flashcards. And those flashcards, I save them. I keep them the whole year because I'm building my set of flashcards. So I've got all of that. I do 2 minutes. I sit down. So say I'm doing
I'm revising the top Excel structure. We did it in class. I've made my flashcards on it. I write down, I set a timer on my phone, 2 minutes. Everything I can remember about it, I write it down.

Then after the two minutes, I take my flashcards or I take my textbook or whatever my resource is, and I go which key things did I miss.
So I'm not passively reading. I'm actively thinking. And what we think about, we learn and we remember. But now I'm not going to like not remembering. Your brain's not going to like it. What happens in your brain when you do something good, when it's challenging and you get it right, is it releases a little bit of dopamine.
But if you don't get it right, your brain withholds though for me. It's almost like it punishes itself by not giving you that. So then it pays extra attention. So now I cheque for about 5 minutes, I cheque and improve. I use my revision guide, I add the missing facts, the definitions. I got something wrong. I just cheque that I got the definitions right. And if I didn't, I fix it.
Then I've got about 13 minutes after that, and I choose one or a combination of these, depending on how long they're going to take me. I do a couple of practise questions. I label a diagram. I explain the process out loud. That's especially if I don't fancy writing, because that one is just as good as writing.
I draw a picture of the process, like I doodle the process of energy transfer, for example, and I label it because that's me recalling it as well. And that's 20 minutes of really good thinking, which involves also recall. And that is going to help me remember.
But I am going to have to come back to this topic at a different point, in a different way. So I might have drawn a picture of the process today, next time I do a few practise questions.
So that in a nutshell, hopefully explains what is needed from revision. And if you cheque and you apply the principles with your child, hopefully that can help them spend their time really, really wisely. But I do realise that I prepared this not really knowing what you are after.
So if I could ask you to just scan that, and there are, I think I put in six questions or seven, I can't remember. And it's going to ask you, like, what else would you want? What could we send you? What could help you in helping your child? If you could answer that for me.
Really quickly, that would be amazing.

◉ **Matthew Battersby** stopped transcription