

MARCH 2023



THE TATTLER

The Training Future Faculty program's monthly newsletter



Photo credit: OHSU

MARCH 2023

Hello Future Faculty,

New faculty typically teach introductory science courses. Students in these courses often struggle to manage the amount of material and keep up with the pace. In this issue, we'll focus on information retention and give you some strategies you can use to make your content memorable. For those of you who attended the Professional Development Group in March, this is a continuation of the cognitive load material you received.

By the way, this being a newsletter, we'd love to hear what's happening with you! Do you have any news related to your teaching and learning journey or your research that we can share in the next issue? Drop us a line at tff@ohsu.edu

Best,

Amy, Brenda, Graciela, Justi, Larry, & Jennifer

TEACHING TIPS

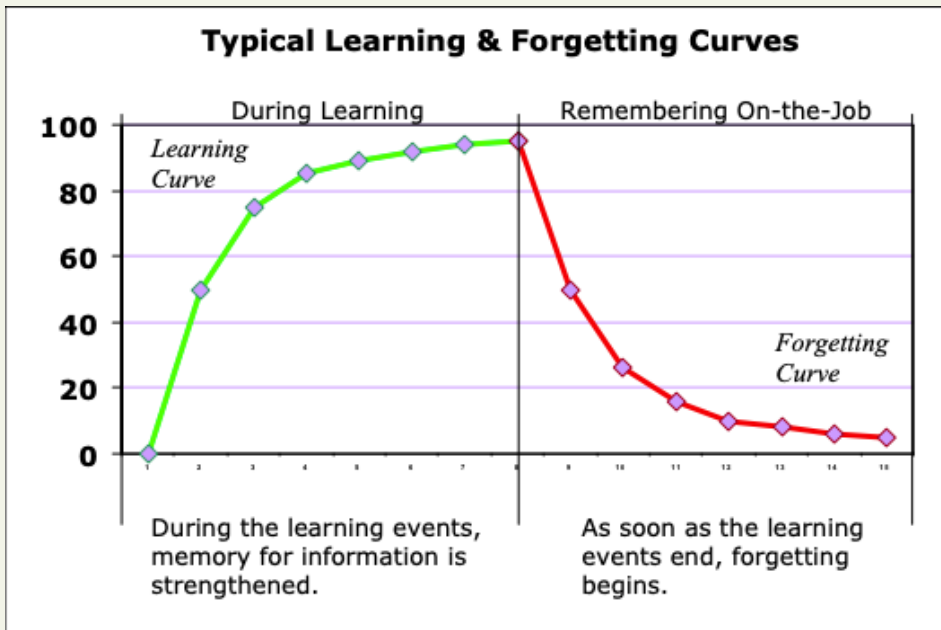
MEMORY AND RETENTION

Researchers have so far not found any limit to the amount of information we can store in our long term memory. That's kind of mind-blowing, right? The hard part is getting the content in there, and then retrieving it later. But before information can get into our amazing, immeasurable long term memory, it has to go through our working memory first, which is quite limited and easily overloaded. (For more information on limited capacity and cognitive load, check out this [three minute video](#).) Whether or not something makes it into our long term memory depends on many factors, but there are some specific intentional things that can be done to help. Here is what you can do as an instructor:

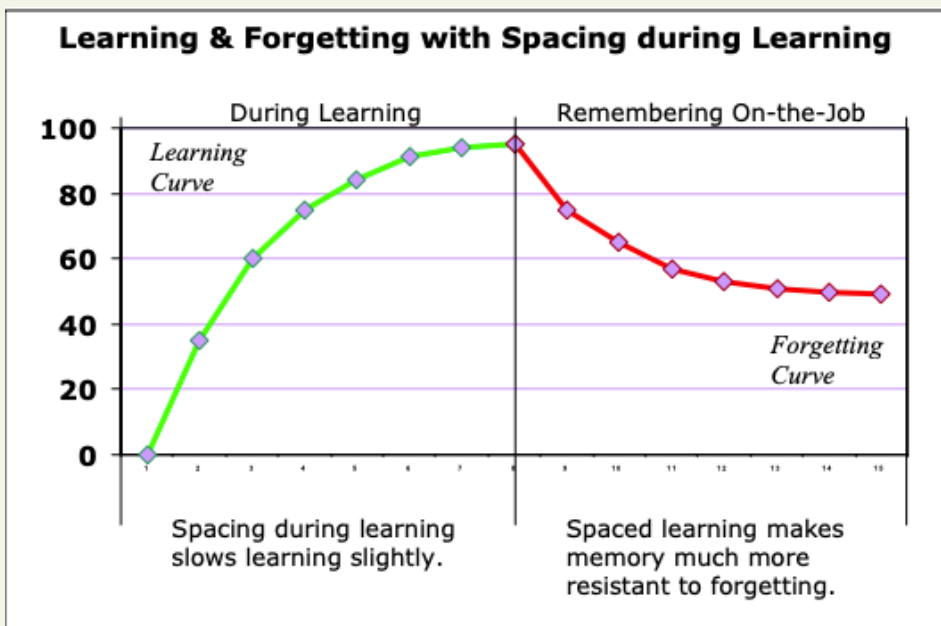
Strategies for Retention	
Pre-train	Give your students some key terms or concepts ahead of time. Having this pre-exposure will not only make it easier for them to learn the content, but it will also help them remember it
Use stories	Stories engage us and elicit emotion, which in turn helps create memories. We are hard-wired to remember stories. Using stories and real-world case studies can help make the information "stick."
Align contexts	Align the learning and performance contexts as much as possible. When people learn in the same context that they will have to perform in, they can generalize and remember the content better.
Spaced learning	True learning usually requires repetition. Spaced learning is when you present content, wait some amount of time, then revisit the material. Spacing these learning events apart widely, on the order of weeks or even months, is the most effective for long term retention.

WANT MORE? EXPLORE THE [TEACHING RESOURCES ON SAKAI](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON SPACED LEARNING



These graphs show how spaced learning reduces the amount of forgetting



Source:
Research psychologist Will Thalheimer's report, "[Spacing Learning Events Over Time: What the Research Says](#)"

YOUR ROLE AS INSTRUCTOR

Given limited time and a large amount of content, you may or may not be able to provide spaced learning, also known as distributed practice, in your teaching. However, as instructors you can play an important role in helping your students develop their **metacognition**, or thinking about thinking. For example, you can inform your students about the importance of repetition in learning, and encourage them to create their own retrieval practice opportunities by revisiting the material periodically, or using online tools like [Quizlet](#) to create flashcards and quizzes. By doing so, you will help your students gain insights into how they learn (and remember) best.

EVENTS

RECAP, TFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP

We met in LBRB 381 on March 14. Jennifer Jordan-Wong shared strategies for managing cognitive load to promote learning and retention. Justi Echeles and Graciela Vidal presented recommendations for course design and delivery through a DEI lens to support an equitable learning environment. It was great seeing some of you there!

COMING UP

[Building My Networks and Engagement in Communities](#)

Part of the event series "Be Your Own Driver: Imagining Post-PhD Career Versatility"
Tuesday March 28, 10:30-12:00pm. Online.

TFF Professional Development Group
Tuesday April 11, 9:00-12:00pm. LBRB 381.

[Putting it All Together: How do I Articulate and Implement a Career Development Plan?](#)

Part of the event series "Be Your Own Driver: Imagining Post-PhD Career Versatility"
Tuesday April 11, 10:30-12:00pm. Online.

[How CIRTLL Has Impacted My Career: Faculty Careers at Research Universities](#)

Thursday April 13, 11:00-12:00pm. Online.

TFF Spring Social: Game Day
Friday April 21, 2:00-4:00pm. AUD 211.

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Hearing about people's successes or even hiccups is helpful for all of us. Do you have any news related to your teaching and learning journey or your research that we can share in the next issue of the newsletter? Send us an email at tff@ohsu.edu

PAST NEWSLETTERS: [OCTOBER](#) [DECEMBER](#) [JANUARY](#) [FEBRUARY](#)