

Myth 2: “Knowledge isn’t important – we don’t need to remember facts now that we’ve got the internet”

The Truth

The truth is that, despite the internet giving us the ability to look up facts and figures quickly and easily, committing certain knowledge to memory is still crucial. This is because knowledge stored in the long term memory helps us to form a mental ‘map’ of a particular area or subject: we call this ‘core knowledge’. Having the core knowledge that enables us to build this mental ‘map’ means that we find it easier to add more knowledge to it, because we have a framework to ‘hang’ the new information upon. Essentially, the more knowledge we have, the easier we find it to acquire even more: knowledge begets knowledge and “the more you know about a thing, the better your understanding. The more you understand it, the better you know it.” (David Didau).

Knowledge is still important even though we have the internet because we actually need certain pieces of knowledge to make sense of the information we can find on the internet, and to critically evaluate the reliability and validity of the information that search engines present to us. Furthermore, the curriculum and public examinations that students take at school are linear and knowledge based. As teachers, we need to ensure our teaching incorporates techniques that support the acquisition and retention of knowledge in order to fully prepare students for the demands of the new curriculum.

Creativity is also impossible without first establishing a sound knowledge-base. Research has shown that “it is impossible to think creatively without a sound basis of knowledge to work from, as the working memory is flooded with new information to process, and it becomes incapable of innovative thought. This is where the learning of facts and the understanding of concepts becomes all the more important.” (Gary Bryant) An excellent example of this is in Music; to reach the level where you might be able to compose original and creative symphonies you must first have mastered the knowledge of how to read music, how to play notes and chords, and various different types of harmonisation.

Did you know?

Students in The Four Stones MAT receive 100% sheets at the start of each topic which identify the key knowledge for the specified topic. 100% sheets are referred to by teachers in lessons, in order to recap quickly and easily, and are revisited as part of revision homework to help students retrieve prior learning from their memories. In lessons, we use a variety of techniques to support students in memorising core knowledge:

- Low stakes quizzes
- Retrieval practice starters
- Revision homework
- Success criteria
- Spelling and vocabulary tests/glossaries
- Look-say-cover-write-check learning

Further info

Click the images below for more information.

