

Why we do what we do

SEMESTERS

THE SCIENCE:

GCSE, A Level and BTEC exams are challenging - they assess the sum of knowledge and understanding that students have acquired over many years in many subjects. The main challenges include: initial learning of subject content; long-term retention of information; organisation of revision; and motivation to revise.

Feedback:

Feedback after an assessment has a significantly positive impact on students' learning, when students are given advice on how to improve and the opportunity to act on that advice.

Tests:

Students who take a test shortly after studying material do significantly better on final tests than those who do not. This also allows students to see how well they have performed over a time period on a set of learning goals.

Retrieval practice/Interleaving:

Repeatedly **retrieving** key words and information (up to three times during the learning phase) produces a 150% improvement in **long-term retention**. This is enhanced when students **interleave** retrieving material which they have most recently learnt with previously learnt material.

Metacognition/Self-regulation:

Effectively teaching students specific strategies for planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning results in students making on average seven months of additional progress.

THEREFORE:

Our **Semester** model is designed to help prepare students to overcome these challenges.

Knowledge Organiser

The Knowledge Organiser provides students with all of the key words and knowledge for every subject, each Semester. This is the basis for all learning, homework and assessment.

Homework

In **Weeks 1-7**, students follow a homework timetable and homework is based on **retrieval practice** - repeatedly processing, memorising and then recalling information to improve **long-term retention** of material. In **Weeks 8 and 9**, students plan their own homework schedule based on the timings of their assessments. This helps students develop their **independent learning skills**.

Assessments

In **Weeks 8 and 9**, students complete an assessment in each subject. The **feedback** enables them to evaluate their own learning against specific learning goals and **dedicated improvement lessons** (which follow each assessment) provide students with the time and support to improve their work.

The assessments are **interleaved** so that students are tested on (and revise) material which they have learned most recently as well as topics from previous Semesters.