



From Neuroscience to the Classroom

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Retrieval-Based Learning Strategies from the Laboratory to the Classroom

Abstract:

Practicing retrieval, or bringing information to mind by taking a test or quiz, or some other retrieval-based activity, improves learning. Further, retrieval practice does not just improve rote memorization of facts, but improves meaningful learning. The learning benefits of retrieval practice have been established across a number of different researchers, in both the laboratory and live classroom settings, and with a wide range of students from college age to students in elementary school. However, the utilization of retrieval-based learning activities is not as widespread as it could be, and a recent report of teacher-training textbooks (Pomerance, Greenberg, & Walsh, 2016) indicates teachers are not likely learning about the benefits of retrieval during training. During the lecture, Dr. Megan Smith will present experimental evidence demonstrating the power of utilizing retrieval practice to improve meaningful learning. She will then discuss ways that she and her colleagues have worked to help bridge the gap between the research on effective learning strategies and practice through The Learning Scientists. Through this project, they have created free materials for teachers and students about retrieval practice and other effective learning strategies.

About:

Megan Smith is an Assistant Professor at Rhode Island College. She received her Master's in Experimental Psychology at Washington University in St. Louis and her PhD in Cognitive Psychology from Purdue University. Megan studies human learning and memory, specifically applying the science of learning in educational contexts. Megan is passionate about bridging the gap between research and practice in education. In an effort to promote more conversations between researchers and practitioners, she co-founded The Learning Scientists (www.learningscientists.org). Her research program focuses on retrieval-based learning strategies, and the way activities promoting retrieval can improve meaningful learning in the classroom.