

Paradigm Trust Pedagogy Newsletter #9

9th November 2018

Dear colleagues,

At IA we looked at desirable difficulties in our teaching and learning briefing this week. This term, coined by Robert and Elizabeth Bjork, refers to learning being improved when it seems more difficult. Initial performance may seem lower but long term learning is more effective. An example of this would be self quizzing in place of copying out facts or spellings. The learner may feel like they are struggling and that they are not performing as well however the long term recall will be more effective.

This [article](#) explores desirable difficulties in more detail. Although it refers to key stage three and four, it is also relevant for primary teachers. In this [video](#) Bjork explains desirable difficulties in his own words.

We have also recently looked at cognitive load theory (CLT). This states that we should reduce the cognitive load (CL) to improve learning. It could be easy to become confused with the need to reduce cognitive load whilst also increasing desirable difficulties. Reducing CL does not mean make the task easy - it means removing all of the distractions, keeping the one thing you want pupils to learn (CLT calls this the Germane Load). This is explored further in this [blog](#).

Keep the desirable difficulties and remove everything else.

Kind regards,

Naomi Shenton
Ipswich Academy