

RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT
REVIEW INTERVALS

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Very little of an experimental nature has been published on the question of when one should review. Lyon's work included no experiments on this question.¹ Our own are but a beginning.

(1) *Comparison of a two-day with a seven-day interval.* Here we compared the effects of a review placed two or three days after learning with one seven days after learning, the tests having been given on the 10th and 21st days after learning. The subjects were freshmen in elementary psychology at the Illinois State Normal University. The equivalent group method was used, there being three groups of 14 each in the first trial, and 21 in each of three groups in the second trial. Two trials were made to increase reliability. One of these groups reviewed two or three days after learning, the second, seven days after learning, and the third had no review. The materials were 6-page passages of historical and psychological reading matter of suitable difficulty. The directions were to study them in the manner customary in social science classes. The study time was 50 per cent more than the reading time of the selection. At the close of the study time a question-and-essay-answer test was given. The reviews were duplicates of the original learning conditions, except that there was no test. Ten and 21 days after learning all of the groups were tested, using the same test as on the previous occasion.

Results. In general there was a slight advantage for the shorter interval, but the difference was not great enough to be significant. We think that what happened was that the advantage of an early review before much fading out had occurred was about compensated for by the advantage of a review near testing time.

(2) *Comparison of a one-day and a nine-day interval.* Here each advantage was increased in intensity. The result was the same as before; the reviews after these intervals were approximately equally effective. In this experiment the subjects were sophomores, and the materials were of the ordinary sociological reading matter variety. One of them was 11 pages long and rather difficult.

Conclusion. While of course memory fades in the manner depicted by the usual curves of forgetting, the situation is complicated by the relation of the reviews to both learning and the times of reproduction. A review that occurs soon after learning rescues more from oblivion than one that comes later, but it is also longer in advance of the time when the information will be used than is the later review. In the cases tested above these advantages appear to be about equal in strength.

¹Lyon, D. O., *The Optimal Distribution of Time*: Jour. of Ed. Psych., 1914.