TEACH IT BACK

EXPLAIN IT OUT LOUD

THE HOPEFULL INSTITUTE



If you can explain it simply, you understand it. If you get stuck, you have found what to study next.

WHY IT WORKS

When you read your notes, everything makes sense because the answers are right in front of you. Explaining it out loud with your notes closed is different. Every time you say “um, it’s sort of...”, you have found a gap.

Say you are studying photosynthesis. Try explaining it to your little brother: what goes into the plant, what comes out, and why it needs sunlight. If you can’t say where the oxygen comes from, that is the part to go back to.

In one study, students who taught a lesson out loud remembered more a week later than students who only studied it for a test.

HOW TO DO IT TONIGHT

1. Choose one topic, such as photosynthesis or the causes of World War I.
2. Close your notes and explain it out loud for two minutes, as if to someone who has never heard of it.
3. Every time you get stuck or say “sort of”, make a mark on a piece of paper.
4. Open your notes, fix those gaps, then explain it again.

WAYS TO TEACH IT BACK

A parent or sibling
Explain today’s science lesson at dinner. If they understand it, so do you.

An empty chair
No audience needed. Explain it to the chair as if it is a Year 7 student.

A study buddy
Take turns. One explains, and the other asks “why?” after every point.

Record yourself
Explain it into your phone’s voice memos, then listen back for the gaps.

The whiteboard
Draw it and talk it through, like a teacher at the front of the class.

The one-sentence test
Sum up the whole topic in one sentence. If you can’t, keep going.

TRY THIS

Tonight, pick one topic and **explain it out loud for two minutes** with your notes closed. Mark every spot where you get stuck. That is your study list for tomorrow.

The research: Fiorella, L. and Mayer, R. E. (2013). The relative benefits of learning by teaching and teaching expectancy. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, volume 38, pages 281 to 288.