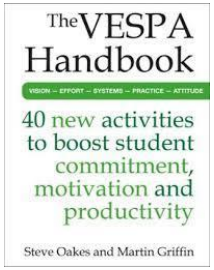


About me

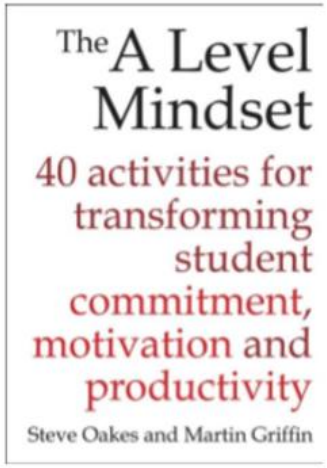
Martin Griffin

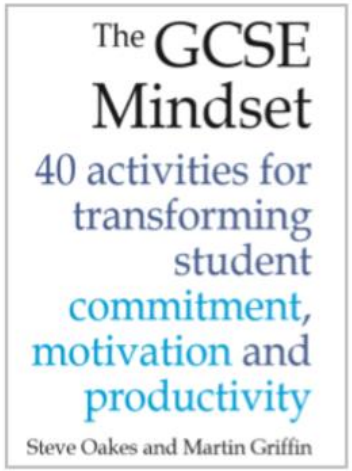
Teacher – GCSE and A Level, 20+ years

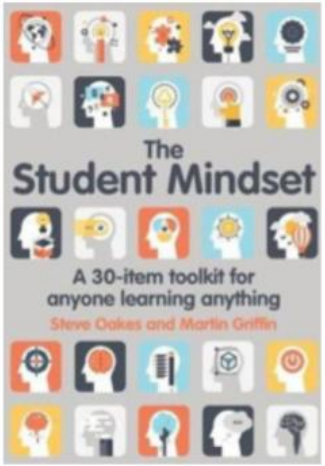
Head of Department, Head of Year, Assistant Headteacher

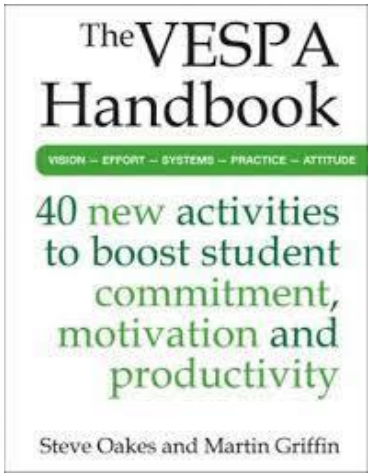
Deputy Headteacher, Director of Sixth Form

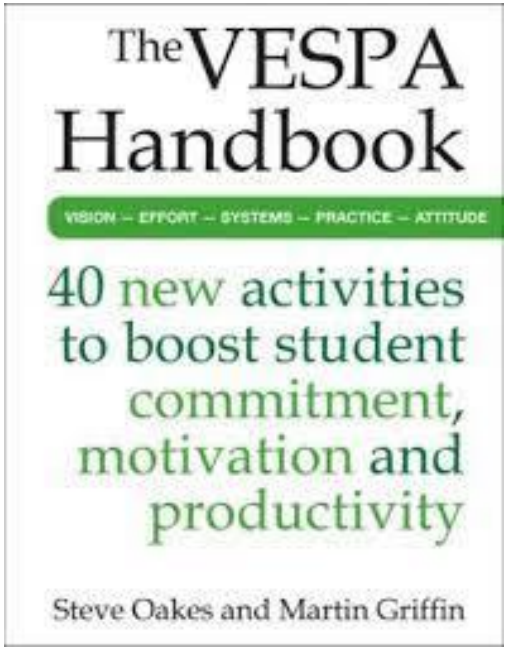
Teacher, Author







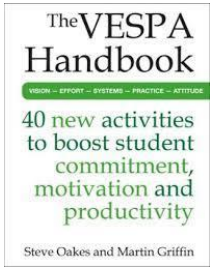




Effective, Evidence-Based Revision

Seven tricks to keep you on top of your studies, reduce stress, and improve your grades

info@vespa.academy

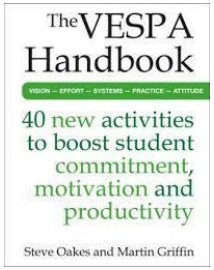


High-flow conditions

1. 25 Minute Sprints
2. If/Then Planning
3. Environment Design

Effective revision strategies

4. High and Low Utility
5. Cog P versus Cog A
6. Closed Book Notetaking
7. Teach your Imaginary Class



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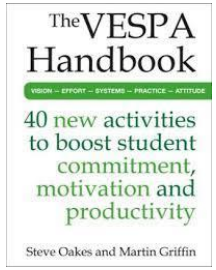
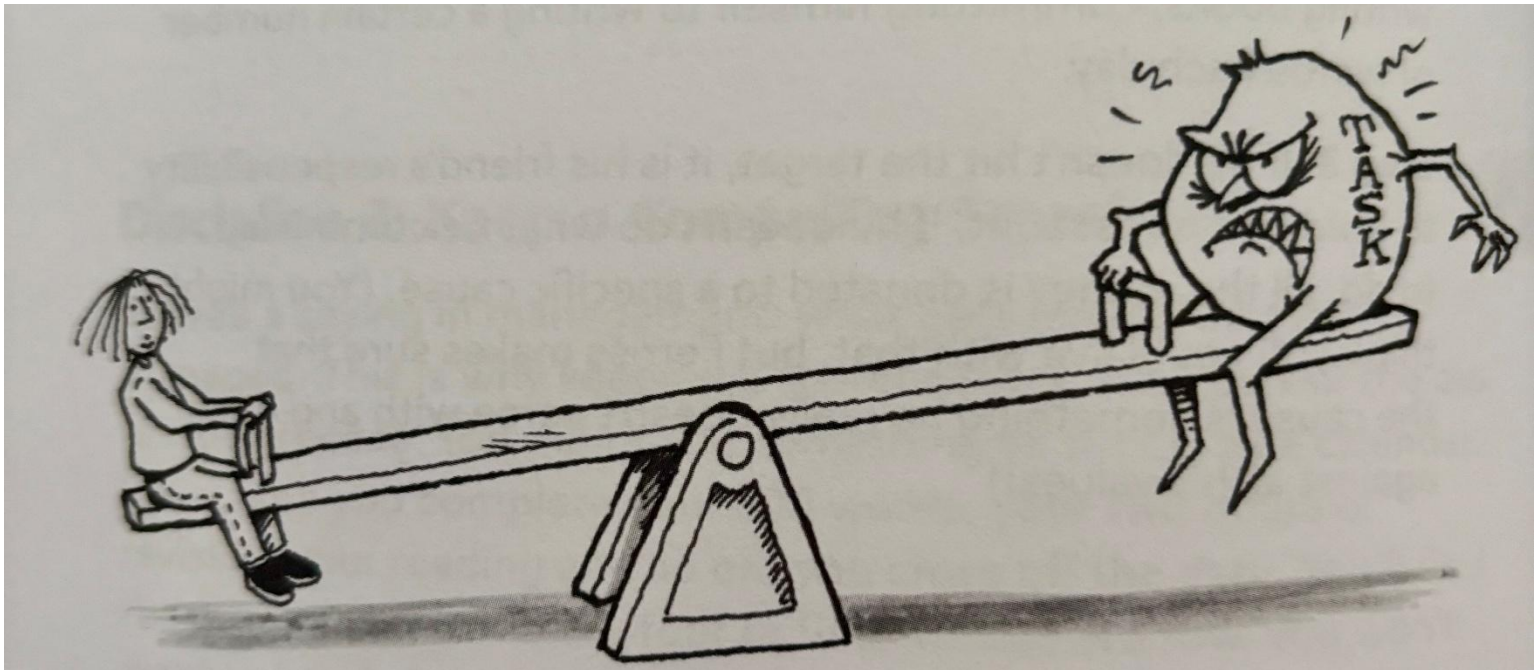
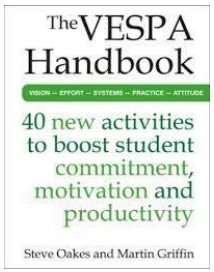


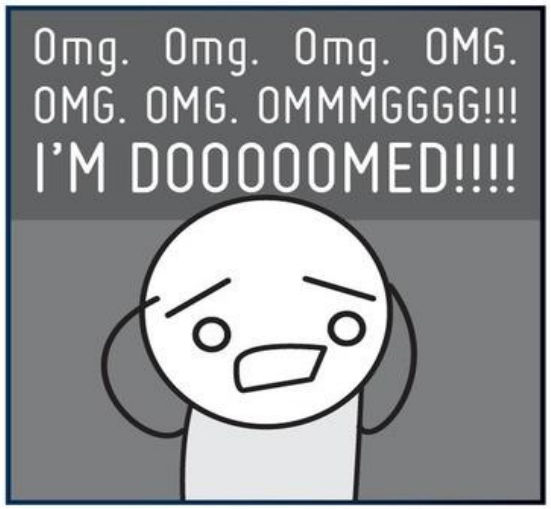


How do we create this situation? It works like any see-saw – we lower ourselves so the task rises above us. It becomes a dominant monster in our minds. Fiore describes how, when you do this, you change an ordinary task – one you are capable of completing well – into 'a test of your worth, proof that you are acceptable, or a test of whether you will be successful and happy or a failure and miserable' (2007, pp. 49–50).



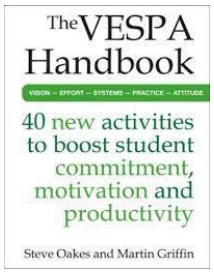
Types of Procrastination…

The Cleaner



The Panicker

The List Maker

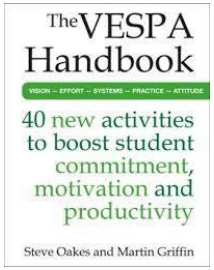


Types of Procrastination…

The Napper

The Sidetracker

The Social Sharer

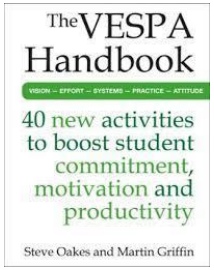


Types of Procrastination…

The Internet Researcher

The Snacker

The Gamer



Light Sprint:

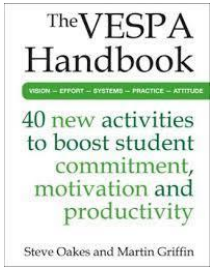
25 on, 10 off, **25 on**

Total time = 1 hr

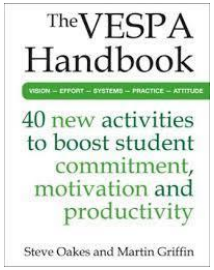
Serious Sprint:

25 on, 5 off, **25 on**, 10 off, **25 on**, 5 off, **25 on**

Total time = 2 hrs



	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-10am							
10-12							
1-3pm							
3-5pm							
6-8pm							
8-10pm							



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8-10am							
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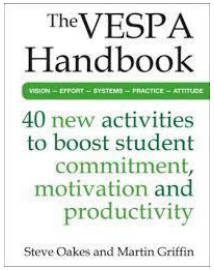
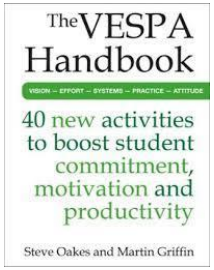
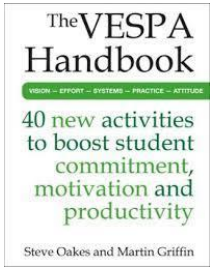


	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-10am							
10-12							
1-3pm						2 x 25	
3-5pm	1 x 25		1 x 25				2 x 25
6-8pm	3 x 25	4 x 25	1 x 25	2 x 25			2 x 25
8-10pm			1 x 25	1 x 25			



20 25-minute sprints in a week: 500 minutes of independent work (8hrs 20 minutes)

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
8-10am							
10-12							
1-3pm						2 x 25	
3-5pm	1 x 25		1 x 25				2 x 25
6-8pm	3 x 25	4 x 25	1 x 25	2 x 25			2 x 25
8-10pm			1 x 25	1 x 25			

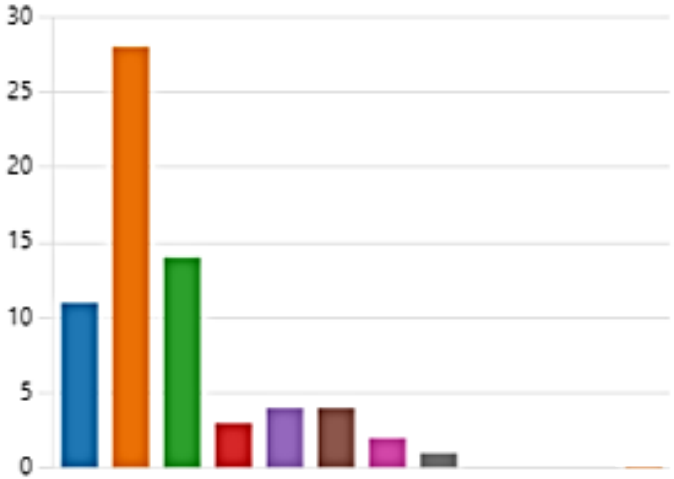


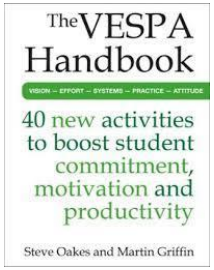
Before 25 minute sprints…

2. How many hours per week do you spend completing additional work that has not been set by your teachers (e.g. revision, practicing questions, wider reading etc)

More Details

0	11
1-2 hours	28
3-4 hours	14
5-6 hours	3
7-8 hours	4
9-10 hours	4
11- 12 hours	2
13-14 hours	1
15-16 hours	0
17-18 hours	0
19-20 hours	0



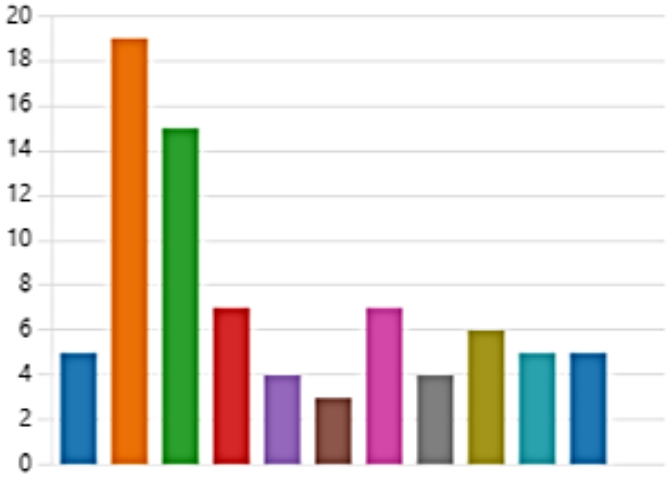


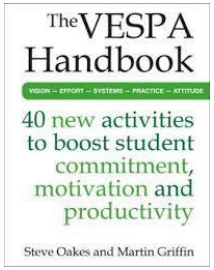
After 25 minute sprints…

2. How many hours per week do you spend completing additional work that has not been set by your teachers (e.g. revision, practicing questions, wider reading etc)

More Details

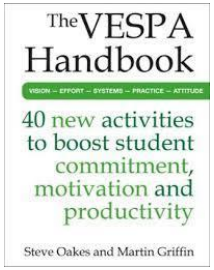
0	5
1-2 hours	19
3-4 hours	15
5-6 hours	7
7-8 hours	4
9-10 hours	3
11- 12 hours	7
13-14 hours	4
15-16 hours	6
17-18 hours	5
19-20 hours	5





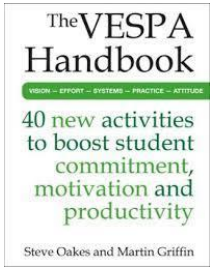
Planning a Sprint

How am I going to work? Imagine the exact strategies you're using and the precise work you're doing	
How long am I going to do it for? Imagine the exact length of session, what you do at the beginning, in the middle, at the end	
How will I know if I've made progress? Imagine how you will assess success at the end. How will you judge quality?	



Planning a Sprint

How am I going to work? Imagine the exact strategies you're using and the precise work you're doing	Transfer one topic onto my flashcards, condensing them as I go Cover up flash cards and recall as much as I can Give the topic a red-amber-green rating
How long am I going to do it for? Imagine the exact length of session, what you do at the beginning, in the middle, at the end	<u>25 minutes, no screens, no distractions</u> Making flashcards for topic – 12 minutes Covering up and testing myself – 12 minutes Giving the topic a RAG rating – 1 minute
How will I know if I've made progress? Imagine how you will assess success at the end. How will you judge quality?	I'll have made new flashcards for the topic I'll have tested my recall so I'll know if I'm any good at the topic I'll prioritise the topic for more revision if it's red or amber



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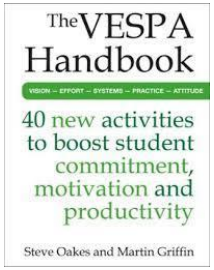
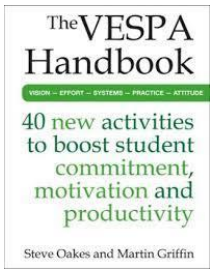


Pre-Mortem Decision-Making



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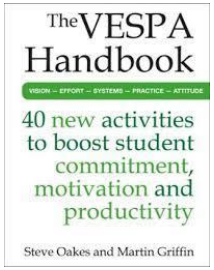

Pre-Mortem Decision-Making

What is a 'pre-mortem'?

The process of *anticipating your future failures*, and planning for them.

List all the ways in which you could fail to study, then make a plan for each. Here's some examples…

Pre-Mortem Scenario:	Pre-made Decision

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You plan on doing some important research, but your internet connection is down.	

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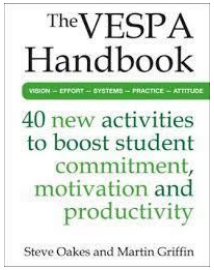
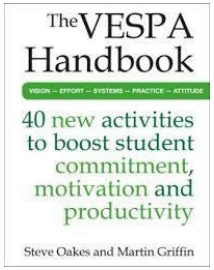
You're planning on working, but there's a noisy debate going on in the canteen.	
You have important tasks you want to get finished but there is something great on TV/social/the internet.	
A close friend suggests grades aren't that important – that classes are boring and school is worthless. They ask you to join them in quitting study, deliberately failing all courses.	



If/Then Planning

If: I know I should revise but I feel tired and demotivated, it's been a very hard day

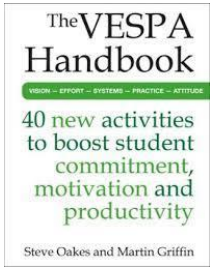
Then: I'll just do one 25 minute sprint and reward myself with an episode of Brooklyn 99



If/Then Planning

If: I know I should revise but I'm always on FC26

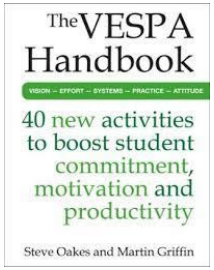
Then: I'll allow myself one 4-minute-a-side match for every 25 minute sprint I do



If/Then Planning

If: I know I should be testing myself but I keep going back to reading my notes and day-dreaming

Then: I'll do one test-myself 25 minute sprint as soon as I get home from school every day without fail



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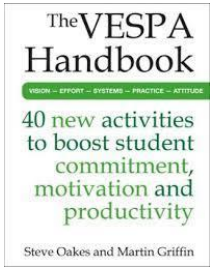
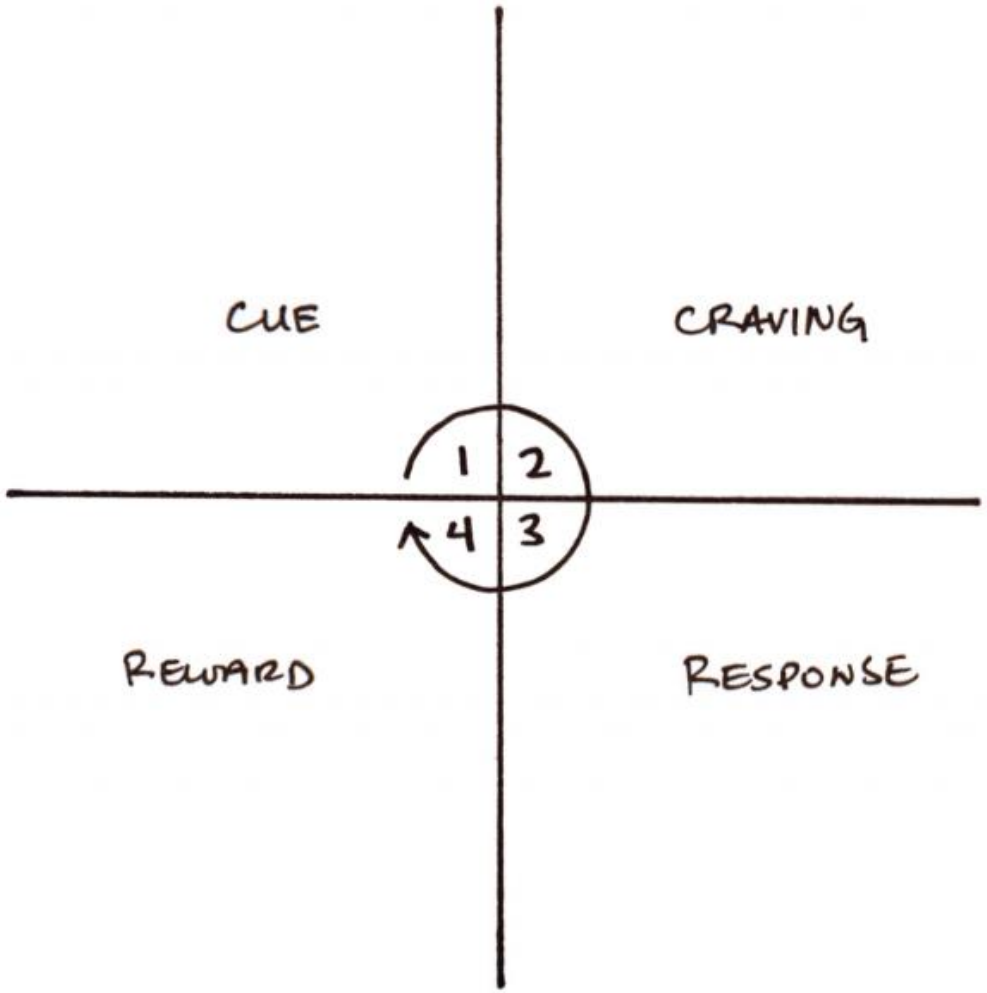
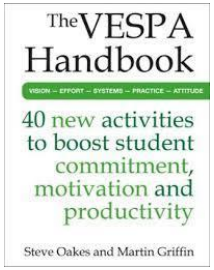
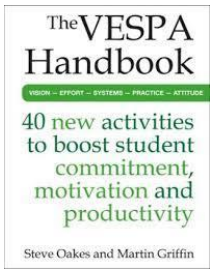


THE HABIT LOOP

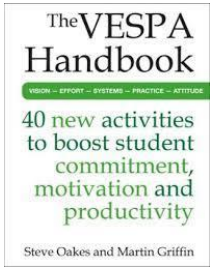




Example of negative cues:



James Clear, Writer, Journalist, Researcher



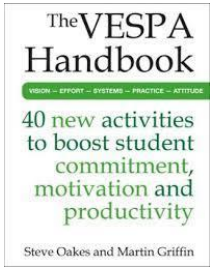
Environment Design

Redesigning your physical environment

Redesigning your digital environment

…to promote stronger levels of concentration.

Where could you begin?



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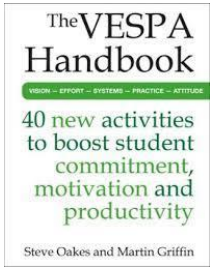
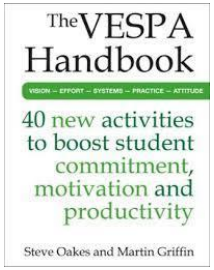


Elizabeth and Robert Bjork

Professors,

UCLA



The Bean Bag Experiment

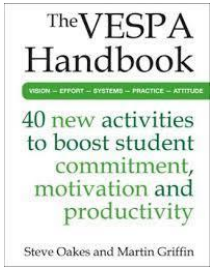
The **first group** of primary kids practised throwing bean bags…

(i) from 4 feet to hit a target

The **second group** practised…

(ii) throwing from 3 feet and 5 feet to hit a target.

The two groups were tested at throwing from 4 feet. Which did better?



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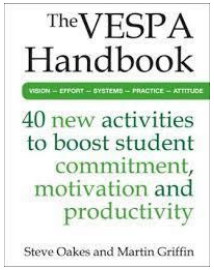
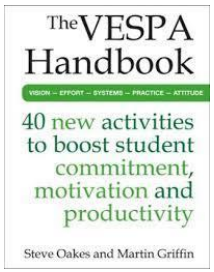


'Desirable Difficulty'

"The most important message is that learners should break away from the misconception that the most effective ways of learning are those that make learning easy. The experience of having to expend effort, generate errors, or work hard to achieve understanding should not be interpreted as evidence of one's inadequacy as a learner, but, instead, as important steps towards actual long-term learning and comprehension."

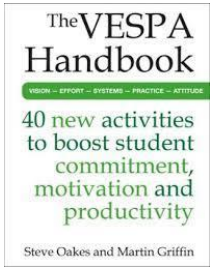
Integrating Cognitive Science with Innovative Teaching, September 2012, Washington University



John Dunlosky

Professor,

Kent State University



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C Writing summaries of information

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G Moving from topic to topic while revising – snacking rather than bingeing

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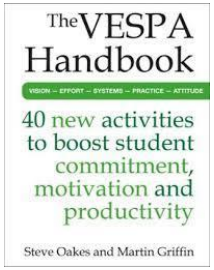

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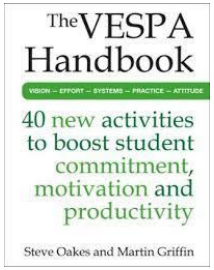

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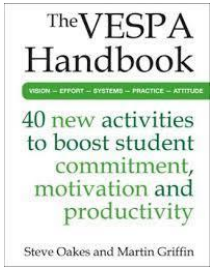

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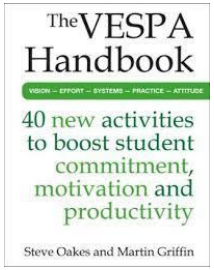

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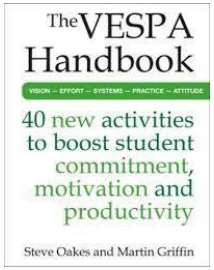

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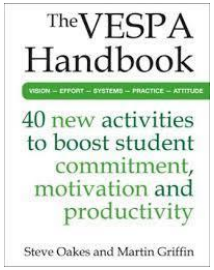

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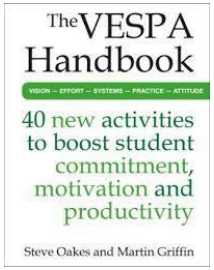

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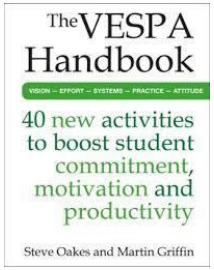

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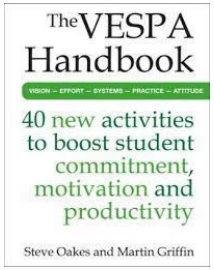

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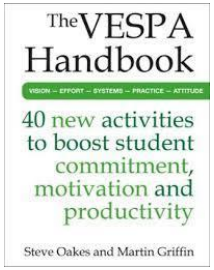

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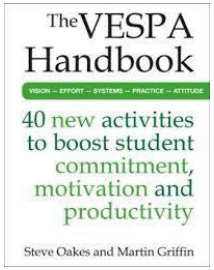

1.	Practice tests (HIGH)
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4.	Writing out explanations of complex ideas (MED)
5.	Moving from topic to topic while revising – snacking rather than bingeing (MED)
6.	Writing summaries of information (MED)
7.	Reading whilst highlighting key terms (MED)
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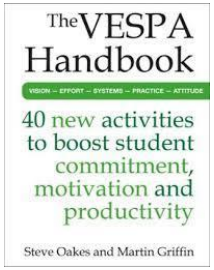
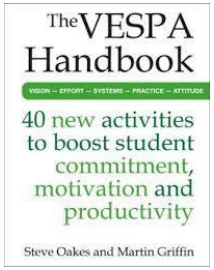
9.	Turning information into images (LOW)
10.	Re-reading notes (LOW)



Performance phase – using information to respond to questions/solve problems under timed conditions, operating at the edge of your ability

1.	Practice tests (HIGH)
2.	Spacing practice out – revisiting topics every few weeks (HIGH)
3.	Teaching someone else the topic (HIGH)
4.	Writing out explanations of complex ideas (MED)
5.	Moving from topic to topic while revising – snacking rather than bingeing (MED)
6.	Writing summaries of information (MED)
7.	Reading whilst highlighting key terms (MED)
8.	Creating phrases, songs or lists to recall information (LOW)
9.	Turning information into images (LOW)
10.	Re-reading notes (LOW)

Preparation phase – gathering notes, organising and revisiting materials, memorising key concepts/ideas



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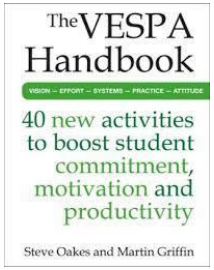
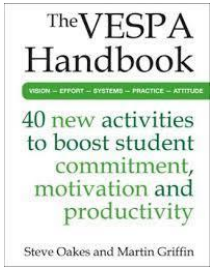


Planning a Sprint

How am I going to work? Imagine the exact strategies you're using and the precise work you're doing	Test myself on an amber topic, using flashcards Write an answer to an 8-mark test question under timed conditions Check it against the mark scheme
How long am I going to do it for? Imagine the exact length of session, what you do at the beginning, in the middle, at the end	<u>25 minutes, no screens, no distractions</u> Covering up flashcards, testing myself – 8 minutes Writing answer to 8-mark question – 10 minutes Checking it against mark scheme – 7 minutes
How will I know if I've made progress? Imagine how you will assess success at the end. How will you judge quality?	I'll have tested myself again on an amber topic I'll have a rough sc core for my 8-mark question (aiming for 5 or above) I'll have looked again at the mark scheme



High-flow conditions

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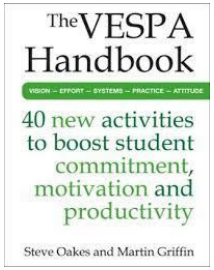

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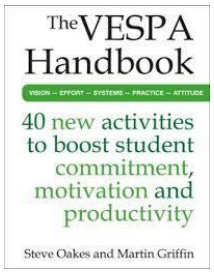
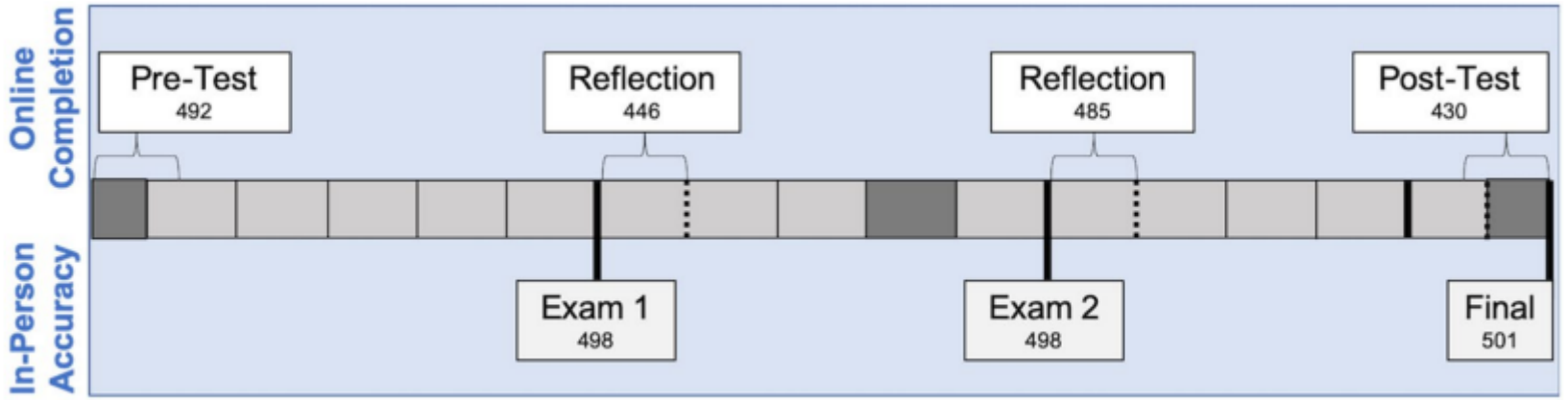
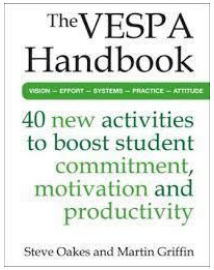


Dr Elise Shannon, Washington University, St Louis

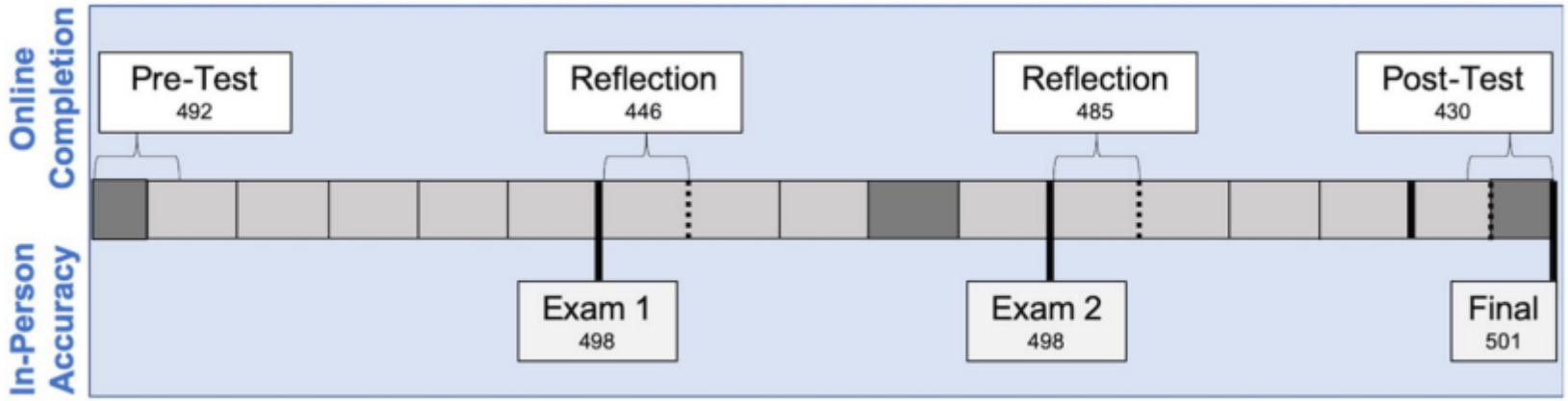
In a 2021 study, Shannon and her researchers tracked 500 Biology students across a whole term, checking in with them as they completed as series of questionnaires and exams:

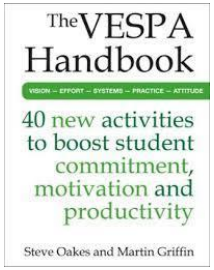




Students were asked:

- How long they spent revising for each exam in study hours
- What revision strategies they used in that time





The range of strategies used:

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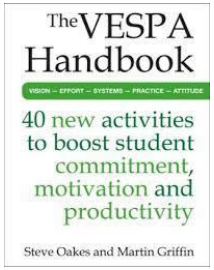

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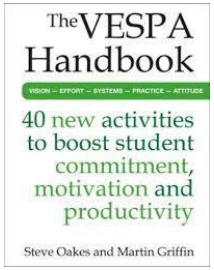

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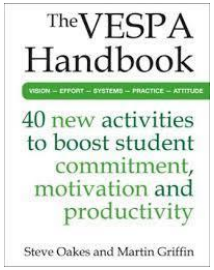

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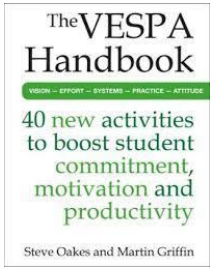
Passive study strategies

Active study strategies

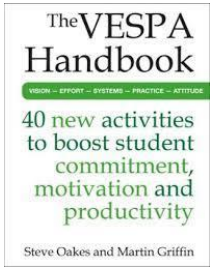


The Findings (Exam 2):

1.

The students who used some active study strategies scored, on average…

7.7% higher on their exam

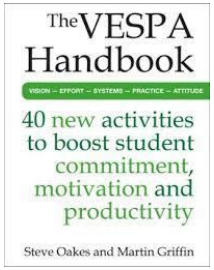


The Findings (Exam 2):

2.

The students who ***only used*** active study strategies scored, on average…

10% higher on their exam

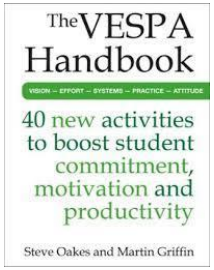


The Findings (Exam 2):

3.

The students who only used active strategies, and used ***the largest number of active study strategies*** scored, on average…

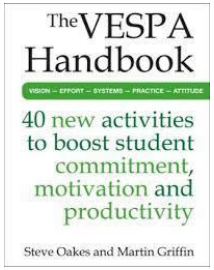
16.6% higher on their exam



Biology

141 out of 200 = 71%
127 out of 200 = 64%
113 out of 200 = 57%

GCSE										
Subject Code	Subject Title	Maximum Mark	Grade Boundaries								
			9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
8461F	BIOLOGY TIER F	200	-	-	-	-	140	121	87	53	19
8461H	BIOLOGY TIER H	200	141	127	113	94	75	56	46	-	-
8132	BUSINESS	180	131	122	114	102	90	78	57	36	15
8462F	CHEMISTRY TIER F	200	-	-	-	-	132	109	80	52	24
8462H	CHEMISTRY TIER H	200	150	132	115	90	66	42	30	-	-
8673F	CHINESE (SPOKEN MAND) TIER F	240	-	-	-	-	139	118	89	61	33
8673H	CHINESE (SPOKEN MAND) TIER H	240	207	174	141	123	106	89	80	-	-
8100	CITIZENSHIP STUDIES	160	137	127	117	103	89	75	56	37	19
8525A	COMPUTER SCIENCE OPT A (C#)	180	155	142	130	111	92	74	55	36	18
8525B	COMPUTER SCIENCE OPT B (PYTHON)	180	155	142	130	111	92	74	55	36	18
8525C	COMPUTER SCIENCE OPT C (VB.NET)	180	155	142	130	111	92	74	55	36	18
8236	DANCE	400	334	309	284	252	221	190	146	102	58
8552	DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY	200	179	165	152	134	117	100	73	46	20
8261	DRAMA	200	167	156	145	129	113	97	72	47	23
8136	ECONOMICS	160	133	125	118	106	94	82	60	38	16
8852	ENGINEERING	200	176	164	152	137	123	109	81	53	25
8700	ENGLISH LANGUAGE	160	119	109	100	91	82	73	54	35	16
8702	ENGLISH LITERATURE	160	136	122	108	92	77	62	46	30	15



GCSE Grade Boundaries:

Edexcel:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/Grade-boundaries/GCSE/grade-boundaries-june-2025-gcse.pdf

OCR:

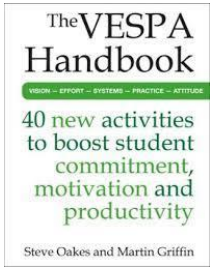
https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/739514-gcse-grade-boundaries-june-2025.pdf

Eduqas:

https://www.eduqas.co.uk/media/g3aohuwq/eduqas-gcse-grade-points-june-2025.pdf

WJEC:

https://services.portal.wjec.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx



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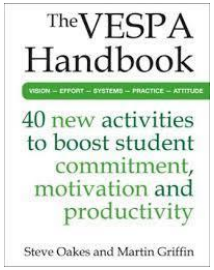

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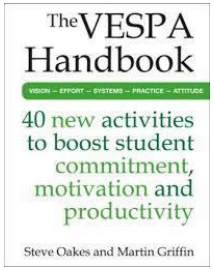
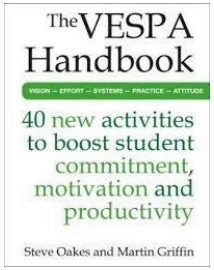


Planning a Sprint

How am I going to work? Imagine the exact strategies you're using and the precise work you're doing	Read textbook, making a mindmap as I go I'll close my book and draw the diagram of the heart from memory I'll speak out loud, explaining why it works this way
How long am I going to do it for? Imagine the exact length of session, what you do at the beginning, in the middle, at the end	Read and mind map: 5 minutes Draw and label diagram: 10 minutes Speak my explanation out loud: 10 minutes
How will I know if I've made progress? Imagine how you will assess success at the end. How will you judge quality?	1. I'll have experienced explaining ideas out loud 2. I'll have a diagram drawn from memory 3. I'll RAG-rate the topic



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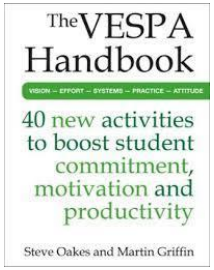

Closed Book Notetaking

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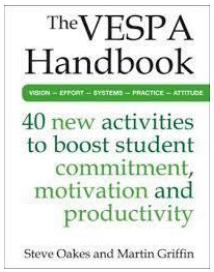
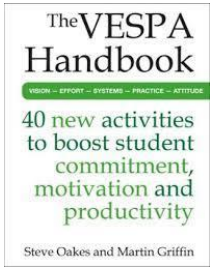


Karpicke and Blunt

Cognitive scientists,

Perdue University,

Anderson University



Closed Book Notetaking

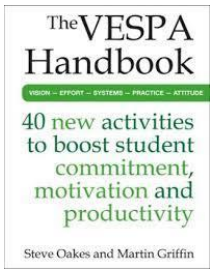
Place these 4 strategies in order of effectiveness!

Reading a text once

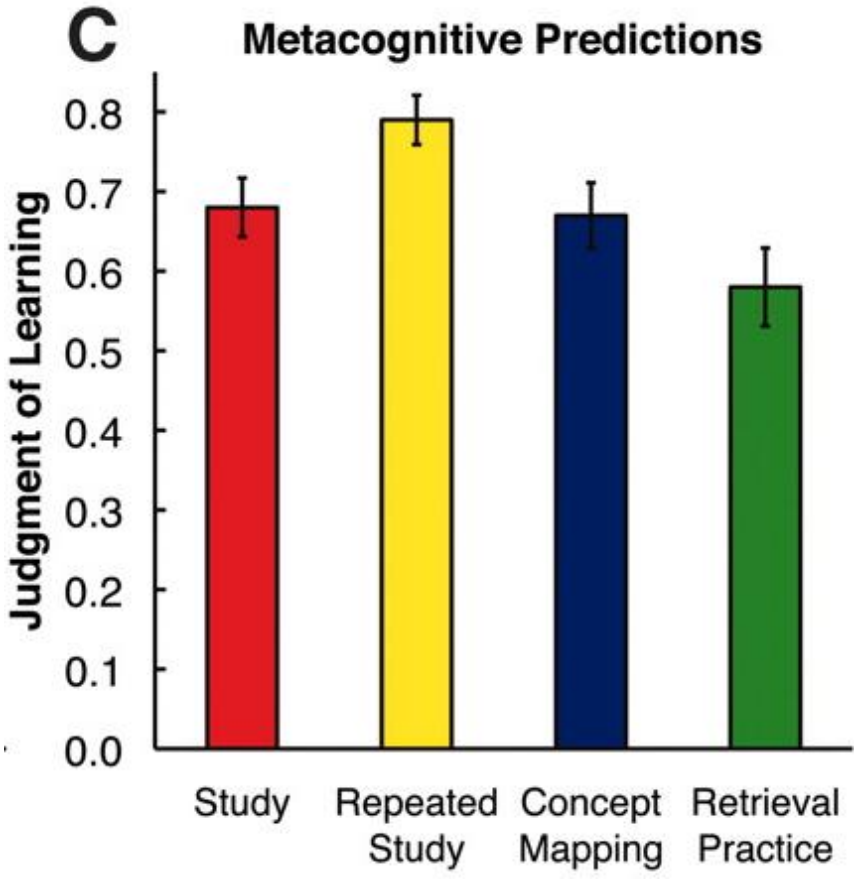
Reading a text once and making a mind map of the content (called 'concept mapping')

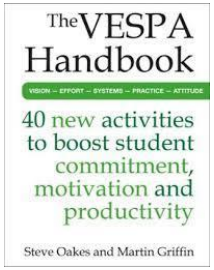
Reading a text once, then taking a practice test to recall as much as possible

Reading the text four times ('repeated study')

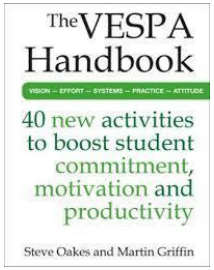


Here's what the researchers found students predicted…

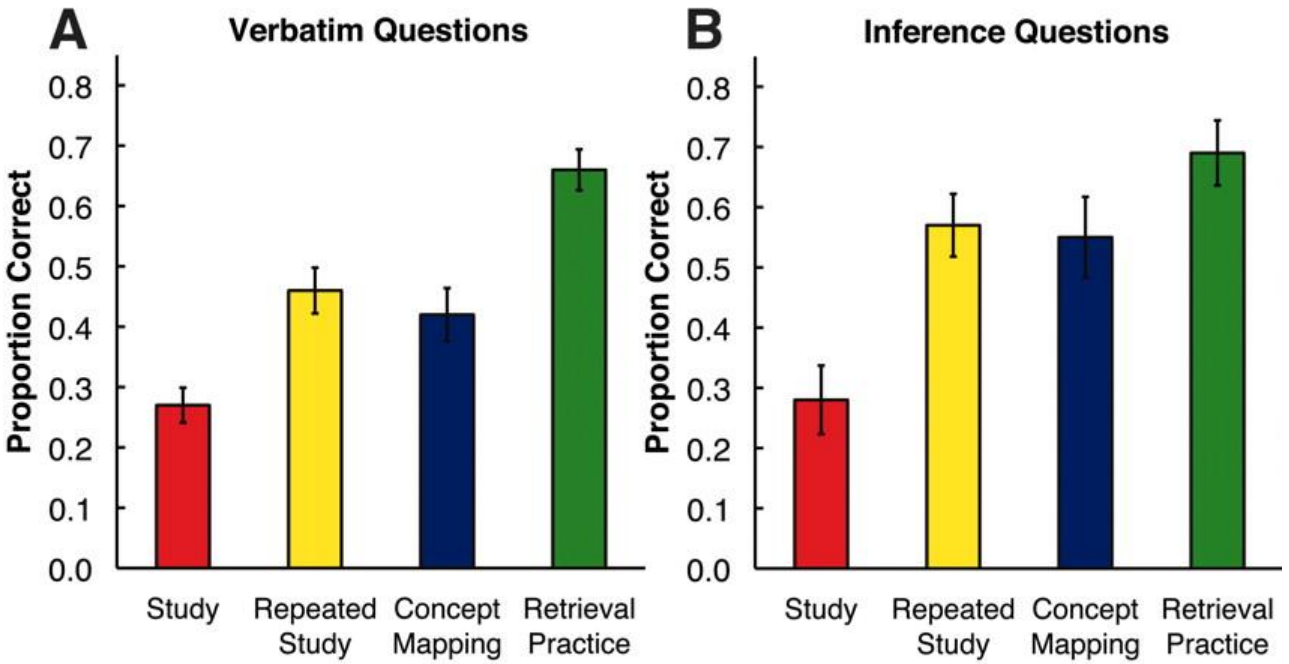


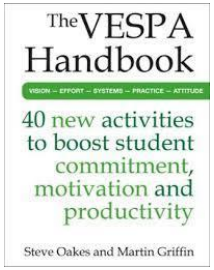


Ali Abdaal – Medic, Cambridge



Here's what really happened…





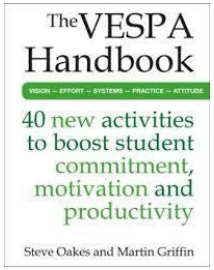
Closed-book Notetaking: a retrieval practice study technique in five steps

First, you'll need to choose something you want to learn. You'll need a section of textbook – not too long – or a study guide or some notes you've already made. Once you've chosen what you're aiming to learn, here's what to do:

1. Read the section of textbook/information *without taking notes*. Just highlight key ideas – really connect and concentrate as you read and highlight.
2. Now close the book/put the notes away.
3. Now write notes on the section you've just covered without looking at the information! It will feel hard. You might get frustrated. You won't be able to remember everything. No problem; leave lots of space to add forgotten information. Scatter the notes around the page with subheadings and leave lots of white paper.
4. When you're done, open the book or turn over the notes. Re-read once, then close the book again. Now note-take for a second time but…
5. …add the stuff you missed or forgot in another colour, filling the white space you left first time around.

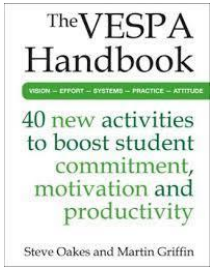
And that's it. This approach will be more effective than reading the material four times. You might even finish more quickly than you would have doing four re-reads.

Of course, it will feel harder than just re-reading. It's not as comfortable, and you might feel exhausted by the end. But you'll perform better in tests and exams if you make this part of your weekly study!



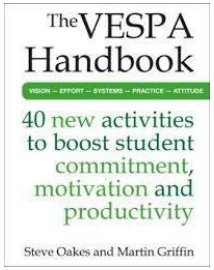
Planning a Sprint

How am I going to work? Imagine the exact strategies you're using and the precise work you're doing	
How long am I going to do it for? Imagine the exact length of session, what you do at the beginning, in the middle, at the end	
How will I know if I've made progress? Imagine how you will assess success at the end. How will you judge quality?	



Planning a Sprint

How am I going to work? Imagine the exact strategies you're using and the precise work you're doing	Read textbook carefully Take notes entirely from memory Check notes against text book, add missing information
How long am I going to do it for? Imagine the exact length of session, what you do at the beginning, in the middle, at the end	Read textbook carefully: 7 minutes Take notes from memory: 10 minutes Check notes and add missing material: 8 minutes
How will I know if I've made progress? Imagine how you will assess success at the end. How will you judge quality?	I'll have experienced writing notes entirely from memory I'll have checked my notes through and corrected them RAG-rate the topic for next time



High-flow conditions

1. 25 Minute Sprints
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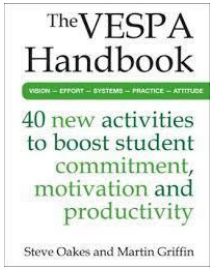

Teach Your Imaginary Class

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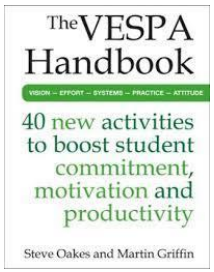
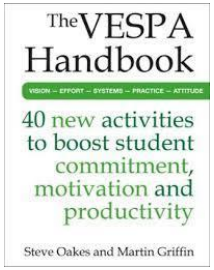


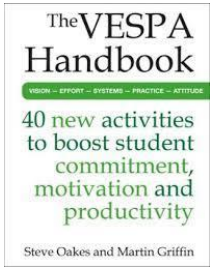
Dr Sarah Wong, Assistant Professor, Psychology Singapore University



242 university students studied a 730-word science text, then prepared for an exam.

They were put into one of **three groups** and given one 24-minute sprint to study, using only one technique…

Study Text (24 min)		
Notetaking	**Explaining**	**Teaching**
• Prepare to be tested: Write study notes (12 min) • Refine and revise study notes (12 min)	• Prepare to explain: Write explanatory notes (12 min) • Write textbook explanation (12 min)	• Prepare to teach: Write teaching notes (12 min) • Write teaching script (12 min)



…then they took a six-question test. Each question was worth 2 marks (total, 12 marks) and included questions like:

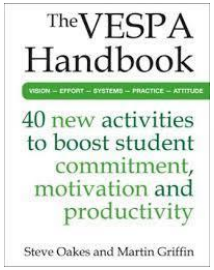
"Describe the double-planet hypothesis…"

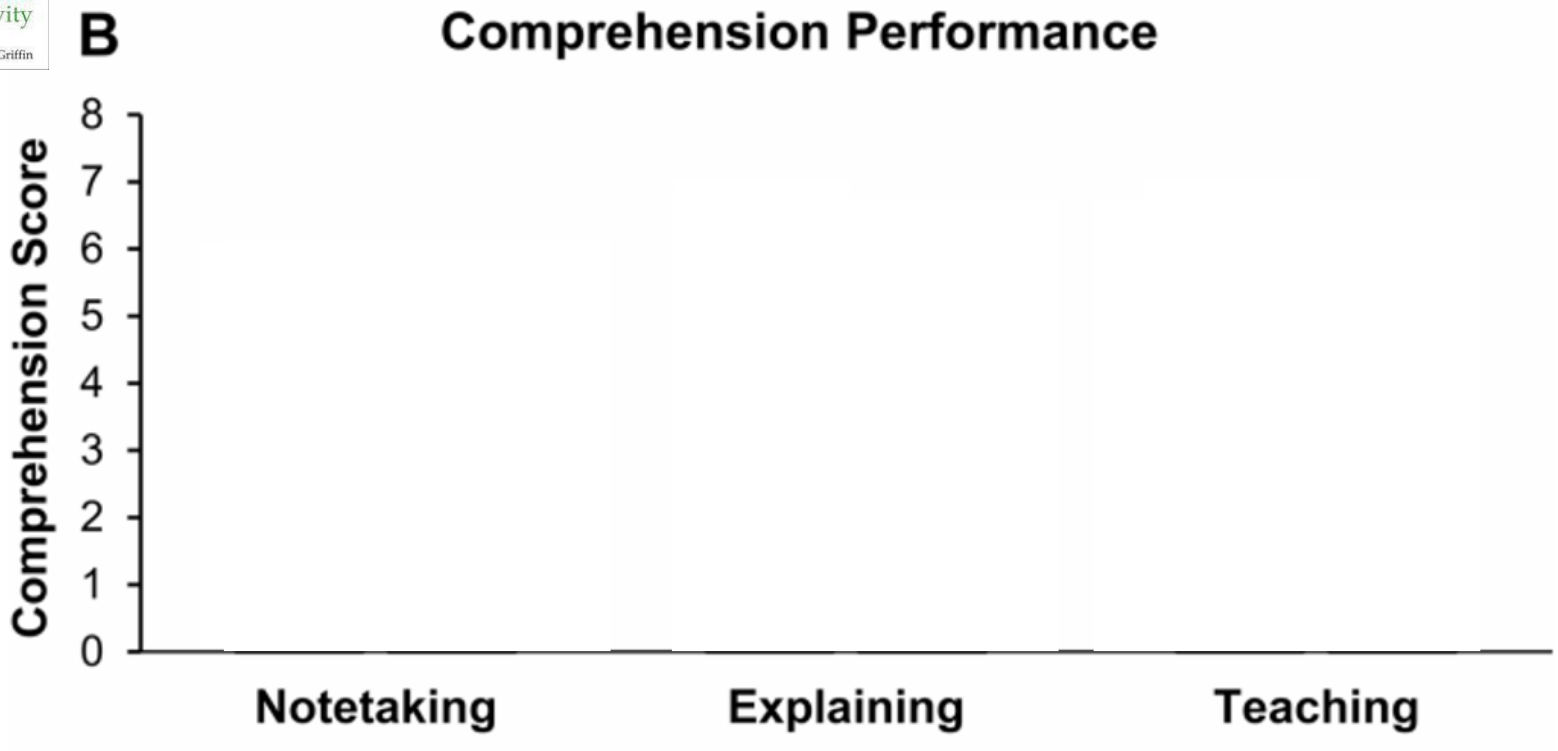
"State one research finding supporting the theory…"

"Explain how parasites…"

"Include one research finding…"

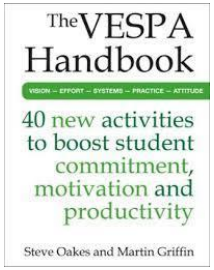
So what happened?





Remember – each group revised for the same amount of time.

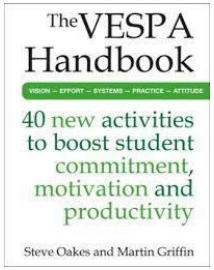
After just **24 minutes**, the teaching group were out-performing the notetaking group by over 1 complete mark – that's an 8% improvement in **less than half an hour**.



…and they hadn't even done the teaching bit yet.

Just the preparation, knowing they were expected to teach it later, gave them enough careful focus to outperform the others.

Of course, if they had taught the material, they'd have done even better.

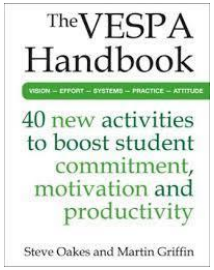


How to do it:

1. Choose a topic or section of a course.

2. Read it through carefully, and turn it into a lesson plan – a series of bullet-points and notes to remind you what to say.

3. Then, using only your lesson plan, deliver your lesson. Speak out loud; use complete sentences and academic language, as if you were a teacher…



Teach Your Imaginary Class

This afternoon I'm going to be talking you through _____.

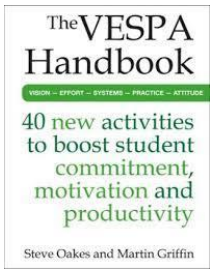
This part of the course is crucial because…

The key definitions you'll need to be able to handle are….

The big ideas that you'll need to be confident about are…

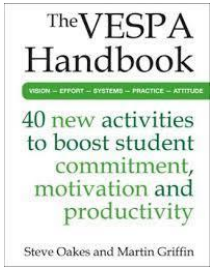
The exam is going to ask you to _____, so pay particular attention to _____

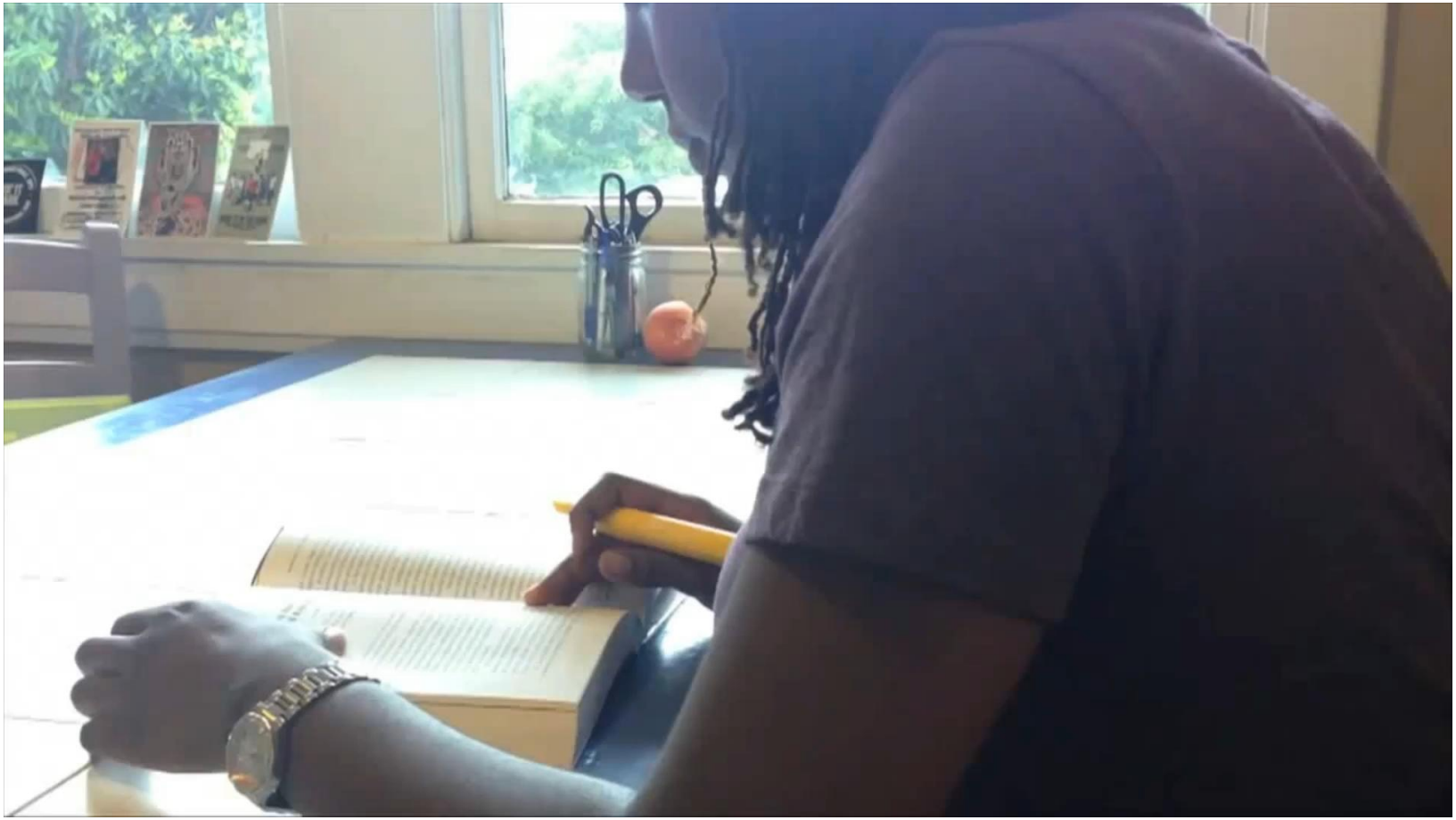
OK. So Let's get started by looking at _____



Cal Newport

Professor, Georgetown University





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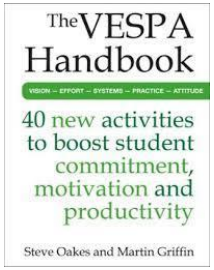

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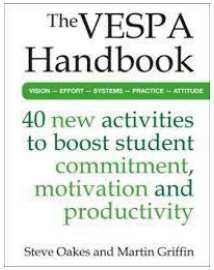
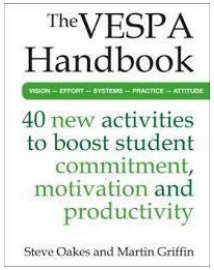


Planning a Sprint

How am I going to work? Imagine the exact strategies you're using and the precise work you're doing	Read my notes/flashcards Create a single flashcard bullet lesson plan Deliver the lesson to the imaginary class, only using the bullets.
How long am I going to do it for? Imagine the exact length of session, what you do at the beginning, in the middle, at the end	Read notes and building bullet point lesson plan: 10 minutes Deliver my lesson: 14 minutes Check notes, add reminders to lesson plan: 1 minute
How will I know if I've made progress? Imagine how you will assess success at the end. How will you judge quality?	I'll have a lesson plan I can repeat I'll have practised explaining using academic language I'll RAG-rate the topic for next time



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