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Revision Routes to Success!



**12 revision tips for students with Additional Needs
(SEND)**



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Overview

It is a peculiar but common occurrence that when it comes to revision, teachers often forget to differentiate for children with additional needs and disability (SEND). You could have the most inclusive teacher in the classroom, full of excellent strategies to ensure everyone can access the lesson, but as soon as revision tasks are set, they fall back to the generic "revise X".



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Indeed, there are many things that a teacher needs to think about when it comes to revision support for students with Additional Needs. A detailed knowledge of the student in question and the assistance of the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator should be the starting point of any strategy to help the individual succeed. But there are some general tips that will provide a framework for properly supporting the revision of students with SEND. Here are 12 things to consider.



We learn....



10% of what we read

The Learning Pyramid



20 % of what we hear

30 % of what we see



50 % of what we see and hear



70 % of what we discuss



80 % of what we experience

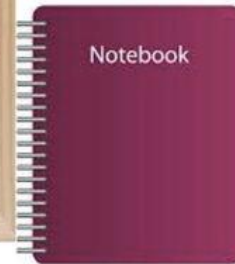


95 % of what we teach others



So...the practical advice

- bag/box
- coloured pens
- post-its
- lamp
- calculator
- pin-board
- diary
- notebooks
- watch
- alarm clock
- highlighters
- computer access
- past papers
- revision guides
- text-books
- index cards
- paper





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1. Break revision down into small steps

For pupils with SEND, we need to push the specificity of revision topic and instructions. Let's take the periodic table as an example: you might set the class the task of remembering a certain number of elements. For those with SEND, you might need to scaffold this further. You could create a resource with a picture of each of the elements down one side of A4 paper and dotted lines next to each. Ask the student to describe the symbols in one or two sentences. Following this activity, give the sheet out again and see if they can repeat the exercise from memory. Such an approach can be adapted for different subjects.

Chunking

- Chunking is breaking up a big piece of information into smaller chunks rather like steps in a ladder.
- It can be used for numbers and words.
- Often students use bullet points to break up information.

Try to remember this by breaking it up into chunks

The average person can take in four numbers or words at a time, can concentrate on revision for a maximum of 45 minutes at a time and remembers information best shortly before bedtime

Chunked:

Remember 4 words/numbers at a time

Revision max 45 mins.

Remember best before bedtime



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2. Visual prompts can be really useful

If you have been studying *Of Mice and Men*, ensure that a student has created lots of images, mind maps and spider diagrams to revise from. Not only is making these visual reminders useful for memory, but for those with additional needs, they can be a comfort blanket to get through what for many feels like an ordeal.

Help students to cluster this information around specific areas. This should be incredibly detailed, not just key quotes or characters, but clearly structured:

what, when, why, where and how?



Mercutio

Romeo

Lord Montague

Lady Montague



Nurse

Juliet

Lord Capulet

Lady Capulet



Friar

Who else is a significant character?

Who else is a significant character?

"It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she."

"Wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name,
Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet."

"For this alliance may so happy
prove,
To turn your households' rancour to
pure love."

aggressive	arrogant	brave	broken down
bullied	competitive	courageous	cruel
desperate	excited	faithful	frightened
frustrated	greedy	hatred	impulsive
insecure	intolerant	irritated	jealous
judgmental	loving	mad	miserable
mistrusting	moody	negative	passionate
powerful	proud	enraged	ridiculous
ruthless	selfish	stubborn	superior
tantrums	unforgiving	vengeful	vicious/violent



"If ever you disturb our streets again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the
peace."

"O, I am fortune's fool! ..."

"I beg for justice, which thou, Prince, must
give;
Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live."

"Why art thou yet so fair? shall I believe
That unsubstantial death is amorous,
And that the lean abhorred monster
keeps
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?"

Analysing (instead of Explaining).

1. Explain what the quote shows,
without using the same words.
2. Explore the words that are significant.
What do they represent?
3. Evaluate why the author used those
words. What did they want us to
think/feel?

Key Techniques

FORESHADOWING	SYMBOLISM
METAPHOR	SIMILE
ADJECTIVE	JUXTAPOSITION
CONNOTATION	ALLITERATION
PERSONIFICATION	REPETITION
IMAGERY	STEREOTYPE
GENRE	IMPERATIVE
HYPERBOLE	PATHETIC FALLACY



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3. Partnerships

Getting students to work in pairs can be very effective. You can do this at home with siblings, grandparents or pets!!

Zoom calls with friends to revise together in the evening can be productive if monitored.

You can use flashcards that pose questions and answers, so that students can quiz each other.





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4. Never underestimate the power of song and rhythm

Making things into songs can be incredibly powerful. For example, learning the parts of the body for PE to the tune of Old MacDonald can work wonders, especially if actions are included. It has to be multisensory: sing it, physically touch the area to feel where the parts are, write it out, say it, put it in a sentence, then answer some practice exam questions. You might observe some students quietly acting out the actions in the exam hall.



Periodic Table Song



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5. Narrative is key

If students can attach a mental hook to something, they are more likely to remember it. A great way of doing this is to create a narrative around the topic.

Visualising conversations may help many students with SEND to memorise information by setting it in real-world context. The lecturer said that the students who found this approach useful would often be seen subtly gesticulating in the exam hall, remembering the conversations they'd had holding cups of coffee.

The memory palace

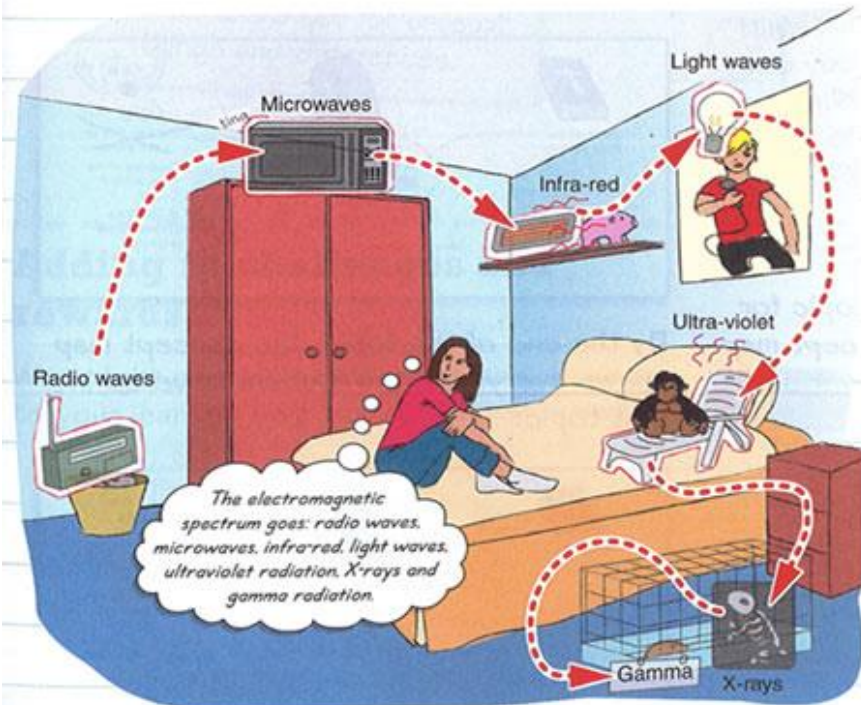
You can also use the journey technique without mentally leaving your house.

Imagine a trip through your front door, into the hall, along to the kitchen ... Note things along the way you could use to stick your list items on to.

Top tip

It's true!

Memory experts can even create whole memory palaces made of imaginary rooms, and mentally walk around them to retrieve vast amounts of stored data.



Try creating a memory palace for yourself starting in your bedroom.

This girl has used objects in her bedroom to help her remember the magnetic spectrum.



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6. Mnemonics are really useful

I still use the phrase "big elephants are ugly" so that I can spell "beautiful" correctly. These little verbal exercises are effective and engaging, particularly for those with SEND, but you could go one step further.

Mnemonics

Mnemonics help you to remember by using short words that stand for something to help you. Here is a Mnemonic for **REVISION**.

Rest

Exercise

Variety

Imagination

Structure

Individual

Ongoing

Not too long





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7. Active listening

As a class, the teacher reads out a section of text but has asked students to listen and feed back on one specific area. If reading Macbeth, for instance, give students different characters to listen out for, or if you are studying a poem, give out different words.

For those with SEND, it can be a useful way of not overloading the student and ensuring they are not intimidated by the need to try to spot everything. This ensures that they do listen to the whole much more attentively than they would have done otherwise.

Active vs. Passive Listening

Active Listening

- Concentrating on what is being said
- Converting what is being said to something meaningful
- Can turn a classroom experience from boring & dry to something personal & useful



Passive Listening

- Mechanical & effortless
- If you are awake & can hear you are listening passively
- You hear what is being said but that is about it





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8. Decoding exam questions

I like to train the students to differentiate between the command words of a question and the subject-specific words. It's worth having two separate colours and getting students to highlight which are which. What should be left is extraneous carrier language that can be ignored. For some students with SEND, this can be important in enabling them to process what exactly it is they are being asked to do in an exam.

An example of somewhere we have studied: Kibera, Nairobi (Kenya)

Squatter Settlement: area of land which people illegally build their own houses

Use a case study to explain how squatter settlements can be improved. (8 marks)

Explain: to give reasons

How have these problems been tackled? Go through each problem and outline the solutions put in place



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9. Making connections

Some students, particularly with autism, might struggle to connect what the exam question is asking them to do with the subject knowledge they possess. Lots of practice contextualising and understanding the question will be required. Again, spider diagrams (linked to the decoding exercise above) may help the students to literally "see" the question and think around the topic.

Association



Association helps a lot of people to remember, because it is much more powerful when we use our imagination. The idea is to link objects and ideas to each other in the craziest way possible.

Mind maps (Also called Spider grams) are good for remembering topics and sub-topics, such as characters in a book.

Concept maps are good for remembering items where the order is important, such as the storyline (plot).



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10. Categorisation

Speech and language therapists will talk until they're blue in the face about this. Pupils may have a raft of knowledge, but can they tell you what topic it is a part of? When studying wind turbines, for example, can the students tell you that the subject is part of "renewable energy"? Without initially learning the category, it's very difficult for students to learn and then retrieve the information correctly. For history, I made flashcards of all the key words linked to an American history unit.

diffusion

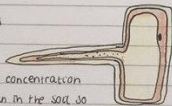
The spreading out of particles from an area of higher concentration to an area of lower concentration.

- Happens in solutions and gases because their particles are free to move about randomly.
- The higher the concentration gradient (difference in concentration) the faster the diffusion rate.
- Higher temperature causes higher diffusion rate because particles have more energy.
- Dissolved substances can move in and out of a cell by diffusion.
- Only small molecules can diffuse through cell membranes e.g. oxygen, glucose, amino acids and water.
- Starch and proteins are too big to fit through the membrane.
- Particles flow through the membrane from a high concentration to a low concentration.
- The larger the membrane surface area the faster the diffusion rate because more particles can pass through at once.

active transport

ROOT HAIR CELLS:

- Each branch of a root covered in millions of hairs giving a large surface area for absorbing the salts mineral ions and water needed for healthy growth. Mineral concentration is usually higher in root hair cells than in the soil so they cannot use diffusion.
- Root hair cells use active transport to take in minerals against the concentration gradient. However it requires energy from mitochondria to work.



HUMANS:

- Active transport is used in the gut where there is a lower concentration of nutrients than in the blood.
- When there is a high concentration of glucose and amino acids in the gut they diffuse into the blood. However when there is a higher concentration of glucose and amino acids in the blood active transport must be used.
- It allows nutrients to be taken onto the blood even though the concentration gradient is wrong.
- Glucose can be taken into the bloodstream even when its concentration in the blood is higher than in the gut.
- It can be transported to cells for respiration.

THE GUT | THE BLOOD

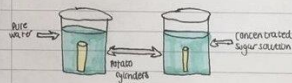
osmosis

The movement of water molecules across a partially permeable membrane from a region of high water concentration to a region of low water concentration.

- A partially permeable membrane has very small holes so only tiny molecules, like water, can get through.
- Water molecules move about randomly at all times so can pass through both ways.
- Steady net flow of water to side with fewer water molecules e.g. stronger sugar solution (which becomes more dilute when more water crosses over).

EXPERIMENT:

- [1] Cut up potato into identical cylinders.
 - [2] Fill beakers with different concentration sugar solutions from highly concentrated (0.3 mol/dm^3) to pure water.
 - [3] Measure the mass of the potato cylinders. Then leave each one in a beaker of solution for around 24 hours.
 - [4] Take them out dry them and weigh them.
 - [5] If their mass increased - water was drawn in. If their mass decreased water was drawn out.
- Independent variables: Sugar solution concentration
 Dependent variable: Potato piece mass
 If some cylinders are not fully dry excess water could give a higher mass.
 If water evaporated from beakers sugar solution concentration would change.





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11. Practise using key vocab in sentences

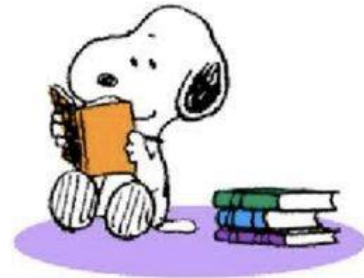
While this might seem obvious, there are many students who have memorised key words, learned to spell them, even say them, but are less comfortable using them in a sentence. Rather than getting students to merely explain what a word means, they need to practise using the words.



Reading out loud

— Read revision notes out loud to a particular rhythm

- Music playing in the background
- Tapping feet
- Walking calmly and steadily. This is a sort of walk and talk





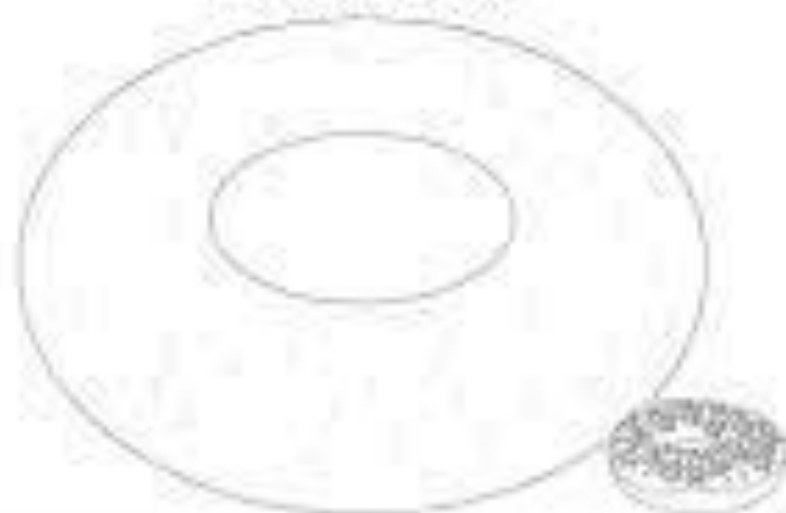
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12. Literacy doughnuts

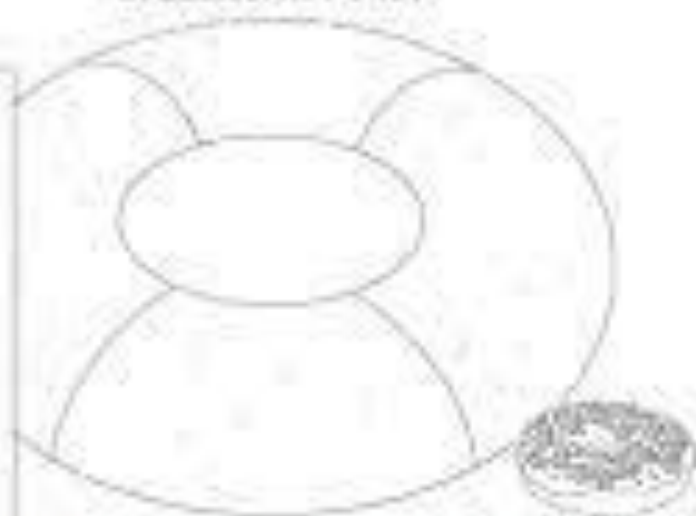
This idea has come from speech and language therapists, too. Using three circles (we've blown them up onto A3 paper), prioritise the important information or words into the inner circle and then, in descending priority, the middle and the outer.

Literacy doughnuts allow students to revise in a slightly different way to concept maps. But they can also prevent some students from panicking, as they can initially concentrate on memorising the inner circle.

Brainstorm Donut



Brainstorm Donut



Ink saving Eco

Exam stress

Resources by
student
minds

Working towards exams can create feelings of worry and being under pressure, especially at university where you're aiming for a degree.

However there are a range of things that you can do to help deal with the stress that you might be feeling...

Find out more about what we mean by the term stress and stress response at <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/11/Stress-Transitions.pdf>



Keep it in perspective

- Lots of people will tell you this, because it's true - exams aren't everything. Whatever happens in your exams, you can still be successful in life afterwards. So if you don't do as well as you'd hoped, try to keep things in perspective.
- Employers don't just look at your exam scores. They're just as interested in your attitude, your transferable skills and how well you'll get on with other people.
- Exam success doesn't define you as a person. Everyone copes differently in different situations and there's so much more to your personality than how well you can respond to an exam.
- Think about how far you've come already. You've already done incredibly well to get to university, and stopping or failing exams at this point isn't 'throwing away' your past success.
- Once you've done an exam, try to forget about it. There's nothing you can do about it, and worrying won't change your mark.

Get into some good habits

- These habits will help you concentrate as well as reducing stress.
- Take frequent breaks. Psychologists say we can only concentrate properly for 30-45 minutes. You could use a technique like Pomodoro, that helps you to take regular breaks. When you do take a break make sure you don't stay at your desk, you could go for a walk or even just make a cup of tea!
- Eat well. Keep a good blood sugars level to avoid highs and lows of energy, by eating slow-release foods like bread, rice, pasta, fruit and veg.
- Drink lots of water. People often underestimate how much hydration helps!
- Think about when and where you work best. Not everyone is a morning person, and some people don't find the library a productive place to work. There's no one best place or time to work - it's about what works for you.
- Keep active. Even a short walk will do. Exercising is one of the quickest and most effective ways to de-stress. Fresh air will clear your head and perk you up.
- Try to get about 8 hours' sleep a night. If you're stressed about not being able to sleep, there are lots of ways to aid a good night's sleep.
- Find activities that help you relax. Maybe it's a hot bath, watching a TV show, or a creative activity. Schedule this down time into your timetable.

Get that organised feeling

- Picture your exams as a time-bound project. Are the exams 60 days away? That's your 60-day challenge. Best of all, there's a definite end point.
- Work out the basics: which exams you have, how the marks are allocated, and how much you have to learn for each one. Don't expect to learn everything, but having in mind where you'll get the marks can help you prioritise.
- Break your revision down into small chunks, and form a plan. Once you've got a plan, you won't have any more dilemmas at the start of the day about what to work on.
- Schedule in plenty of free time to unwind, and protect this time. Nobody can work all day every day. If you give yourself plenty of rest you can do the same amount of work in half the time or less.
- Equally, don't panic if you go slightly off schedule - tomorrow is another day.

Avoid bad habits

- Check out this brilliant article on how NOT to cope with exam stress - <http://www.hypocritics.com/blog/how-not-cope-exam-stress>. Here are some highlights:
- Don't set yourself ridiculous goals. Nobody can revise 10 topics in a day! Avoid setting the day up to be a disappointment.
- Don't cut out all the enjoyment from your life. It's tempting to decide you'll just knuckle down to work and "focus", but this is counterproductive - it's impossible to focus without giving your brain rest by doing other activities.
- Avoid stimulants. Caffeine, alcohol and drugs impede your energy and concentration in the long term. It'll also make it more difficult to get that much needed sleep.

Get support from friends and family

- Don't be put off by friends saying that they are doing huge amounts of revision. As already mentioned, that's probably not actually a productive or efficient way of working long term. One of the key reasons people feel exam stress is due to comparing themselves to other people.
- If you can, discuss with your parents what they are expecting you to achieve. Parents with steep or unrealistic expectations will just add unnecessary pressure. It's helpful to let them know what you think you have the capacity to achieve, and to insist that the best way to get there is to have support from your parents, not pressure.
- If you're feeling really worried or anxious, chat to a good friend, family member, or tutor. It helps to get it out of your system, and they may well be able to help think about practical strategies to deal with exam stress.

For more tips from students check out our blog, <http://studentminds.org.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Exams>

Lastly, if you're feeling overwhelmed or are finding it difficult to cope with the stress around exams, make sure you **get support**. Take a look at our support section for the services you can access nationally and on campus, <http://www.studentminds.org.uk/support/home.html>

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