

Is it Better to Learn Something in Small, Frequent Chunks of Information?

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TIME:

It is better to learn small chunks of information, frequently, than big chunks, infrequently. I will explain by presenting several ideas from experts on learning and then combining them.

In 1956, a cognitive psychologist, from Harvard, named George A. Miller introduced a concept in the journal *Psychology Review*. That concept has become known as “*Miller’s Magic Number*” or “*Magic Number Seven (Plus or Minus Two)*“. In that paper he presented the idea that people can only store seven (plus or minus two) chunks of information in their short term memory. Notice that the word chunks is used, and not pieces or bits. When Miller talked about chunks or “chunking” he talked about our ability to merge a number of discrete pieces of information into a smaller number of chunks. For example, we don’t treat a 10 digit phone number as 10 chunks of information because we combine the three numbers that make up the area code into a single construct and we may chunk four digit numbers as two two-digit numbers.

Read the whole story: [TIME](#)