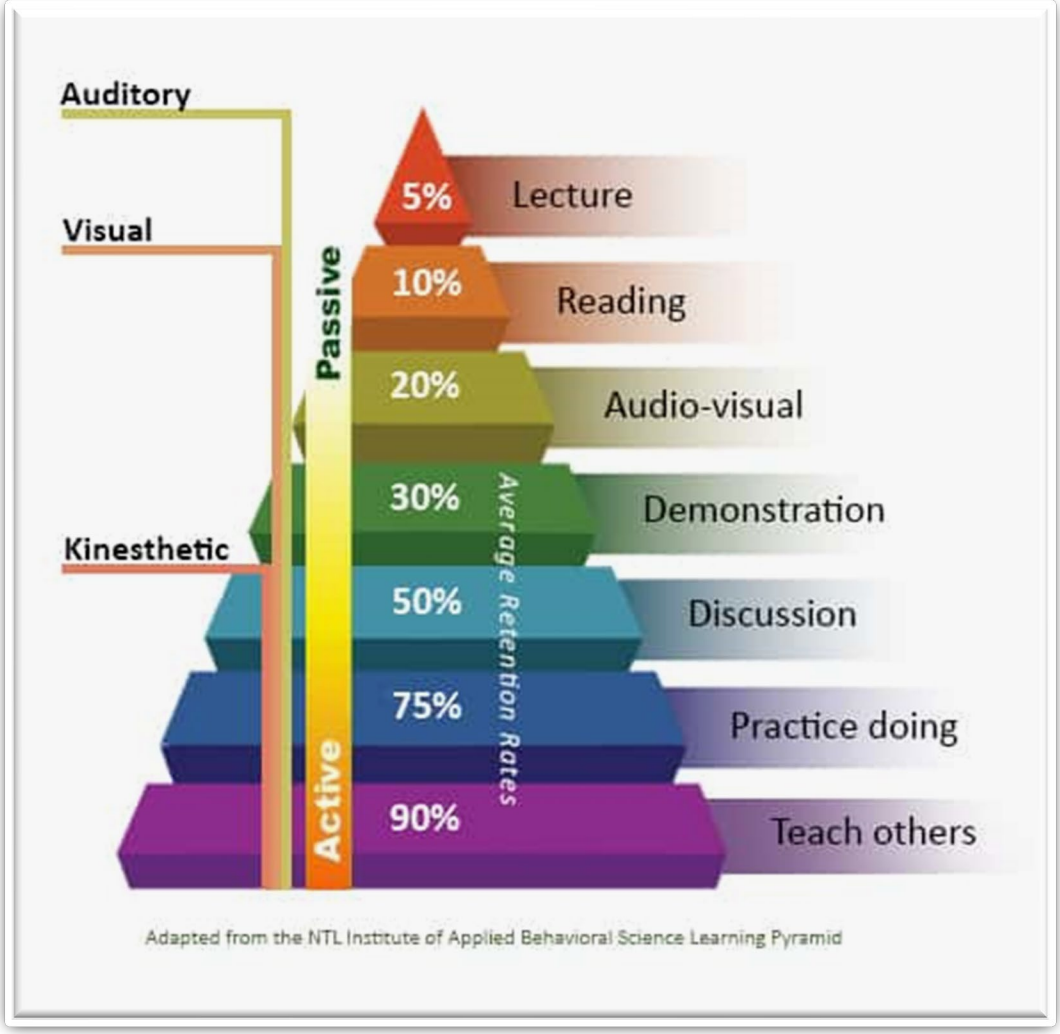
Study Methods and the Learning Pyramid

Focus on active learning—teaching others, practicing, and discussing, since these approaches boost retention more than passive methods like reading or lectures. The Learning Pyramid model below suggests that some methods of study are more effective than others and that varying study methods will lead to deeper learning and longer-term retention.



- **Lecture** – "Lecture" is a passive form of learning and one of the most ineffective for retaining information. However, for auditory learners, lectures are most effective when the student arrives to class prepared, actively participates in class discussions, and takes good notes.

- **Reading** – Reading is still one of the least effective methods for acquiring and retaining information, but not always so for visual learners. Practicing effective reading strategies such as the SQ3R improves the ability to retain and recall read material.

Audio-visual –The audio-visual learning method may incorporate various audio-visual learning/teaching tools including videos, sound, pictures, and graphs. The effectiveness of audio-visual learning and study methods are enhanced when combined with other, more active forms of study such as demonstration and study groups.

- **Demonstration** – ***Demonstration***, along with ***Group Discussion***, ***Practice by Doing***, and ***Teaching,*** is one of 4 study methods that involve active learning, and hence effective especially when information is ambiguous or confusing.

- **Group Discussion** – It is also an active study method that can lead to greater retention of information of study material as it stimulates student thinking, and increases participation and engagement.

- **Practice (by) doing** – Practice by doing is one of the most effective methods for greater retention and better recall, encouraging students to take what they learn and put it into practice, thereby promoting deeper understanding, and moving information from short-term to long-term memory.

- **Teach others/Knowledge Sharing** – The key to subject mastery is teaching it to others, allowing for about 90% of what is being taught to be retained. When able to accurately and correctly teach a subject to others (through study groups and peer tutoring), there is increased mastery of concepts, superior retention, and recall.
- **Principles of Learning Retention:**

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1. **Active engagement –** Students retain information better when they actively engage in the learning process through activities, discussions, and application
2. **Repetition and practice -** Repeated exposure and practice of learned material help reinforce memory and enhance retention
3. **Chunking -** Breaking down complex information into smaller, manageable chunks can aid retention and facilitate understanding
4. **Spaced repetition -** Distributing learning and review sessions over time, with increasing intervals between sessions, promotes long-term retention
5. **Visual aids and multi-modal learning -** Incorporating visual aids, multimedia resources, and multi-modal approaches (e.g., combining text with images or audio) can enhance comprehension and retention.

Conclusion – Each of the learning methods presented in the Learning Pyramid is important. Multi-modal learning explains how engaging with content in multiple forms improves learning – be it through kinesthetic methods such as talking about the material with another person, working out problems, re-writing notes, developing new examples, or relying on audio-visual methods like video watching. Engaging with content in different modalities requires the student to pay attention in different ways, which only deepens understanding and recall.

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Loveless, Becton. "Study Skills for Students", January 2024, Education Corner, https://www.educationcorner.com/study-skills/. Accessed 3 July 2024