

**The Week At WHMS**  
**(parent edition)**  
 Week of May 9, 2022



**Thought for the week:**

“A mother is she who can take the place of all others but whose place no one else can take.”

– Cardinal Meymillod

**Weekly Calendar:**

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Sat/Sun</u>
5/9	5/10	5/11	5/12	5/13	5/14-5/15
Day 2	Day 1	Day 2	Day 1	Day 2	
<b>NYSESLAT testing begins – see email from Ms. Walker</b>	7:10a – Site-based committee meeting  <b>All day</b> – in-house field trip for 8 <sup>th</sup> grade students  <i>PM</i> – interdisciplinary humanities PD with UVM  3:00p – department meetings  7:30p – Meet the Candidates forum @ HS VCR	7 <sup>th</sup> period – Word Cloud activity culmination  1:15p – PST meeting  <b>Club Meets:</b> Comic Book & Graphic Novel; Dignity & Tolerance	3:00p – Schools-to-Watch committee meeting  <b>Club Meets:</b> Science & Robotics  7:00p – National Junior Honor Society Induction @ HS auditorium	1:15p – PST meeting	<b>Did you submit your Digital Equity Survey yet? See “Items of Importance” below for more information.</b>

**Instructional tips:** (from ASCD) *re-run from last week as it is a valuable reminder*

**Retrieval Practice: One Minute to Better Student Learning** by Sarah McKibben (excerpts)  
*Retrieval practice, says cognitive scientist Pooja Agarwal in this Q&A, is an instructional game-changer.*

*We put a lot of information into our students' heads. But are they retaining it? Pooja Agarwal—a cognitive scientist, founder of [RetrievalPractice.org](https://retrievalpractice.org), and coauthor of [Powerful Teaching: Unleash the Science of Learning](#) (Jossey-Bass, 2019)—says retrieval practice, which can be done in as a little as one minute, makes learning stick. A recent literature review confirms it.*

**Can you briefly describe what retrieval practice is for educators unfamiliar with your work?**

One way that I sometimes frame retrieval practice is to ask, “Do you remember what you had for breakfast yesterday?” When you pause to think about the answer, you’re experiencing the same kind of internal feeling as retrieval practice—*Wait, what did I eat for breakfast yesterday?*

[Retrieval practice](#)—the act of recalling previously learned information—is engaging students to get information *out* of their heads. What I could have done, and what a lot of us do as teachers is, midway through the semester, say: “Here’s a list of all the topics we covered, here are some of the key points I want you to know, and now let me give you a mid-term exam.” When teachers review concepts, we are getting information “into” students’ heads. Instead, we know from 100 years of research that a powerful part of learning is getting information “out” of their heads with retrieval practice. For example, instead of just giving students a review sheet or a list of topics, simply asking them, “What are the topics that you remember?” engages that process in our cognition that helps strengthen that memory.

Teaching and learning are complex processes. At the same time, here’s a simple key to both: remembering. We want our students to remember what they learn. Retrieval practice is one of the simplest, research-based strategies we can use to transform their *long-term* learning.

**Do you collect those sheets of paper?**

No. I don’t collect them and I don’t grade them at all. This emphasizes that retrieval practice is a learning strategy—not an assessment strategy—and also that students can keep their brain dumps as notes or “artifacts” of what they’ve learned.

**Your team worked closely with a classroom teacher for several years to measure whether retrieval practice made a difference in student learning. What did you find?**

One of the most exciting things that my colleagues at Washington University in St. Louis and I found was that we could apply this laboratory-based concept in Patrice’s classroom without an overhaul. We didn’t change her materials, her textbooks, or her style of teaching. Patrice and I simply added in a few quick clicker quizzes, a few brain dumps, and a few additional questions on unit exams to measure long-term learning.

As Patrice likes to put it: “With retrieval practice, students know what they know and they know what they don’t know.” This highlights an additional benefit of retrieval practice: improved metacognition because students reflect on their own learning. In addition to improving long-term learning, we have found over time that retrieval practice helps students remember [higher-order concepts](#)—not just recall facts—and it [reduces student anxiety](#) for unit tests.

**What does it look like in classrooms? How often should teachers use retrieval practice strategies?**

As much as we might want a “perfect recipe” for retrieval practice, recent research suggests that there’s no one optimal approach to implementing retrieval practice. Regardless of timing, frequency,

question format (multiple-choice or short answer), grade level, and content area, the majority of experiments revealed medium to large effect sizes, indicating that retrieval practice improves learning consistently in real world classrooms.

Instead of a perfect recipe, here's my advice: You do you as a teacher. Be creative. If what works in your class is a brain dump every two weeks, and you can keep track of that and build it into your lesson plans, go for it. It helps to have research-based strategies on hand—like the brain dump and “[two things](#)” (at any point during a lesson, have students write down two things about a specific prompt, e.g., What are two takeaways from today?)—but then how you implement them is totally flexible, open, and fair game.

### **What would you ask on an entry ticket?**

One of the easiest questions to ask is, “What do you remember from our last class?” You can have students do the entry ticket on paper or use something like Google Slides so they can look at each other's responses. And then move on. It doesn't have to be a whole-class discussion. I emphasize that this retrieval practice is for *them—to boost their own long-term learning*. Entry tickets are an engaging opportunity to get students warmed up without reviewing what you taught during the last class. Students can retrieve, pull this information out, strengthen their learning, and be ready for more learning.

### **How do you know, in the context of retrieval practice, if a student is struggling productively?**

Struggle is a good thing: Easy learning is like easy forgetting. When we feel like learning is coming easily to us, we remember it in the short-term but not the long-term. What people remember in the long-term is what they struggle with. The phrase we use in the scientific literature is a “desirable difficulty.” Even if a student is struggling, we have to trust ourselves as teachers and encourage that student to just stick with the struggle.

For full article see <https://www.ascd.org/blogs/retrieval-practice-one-minute-to-better-student-learning>

### **Items of importance:**

- The *Digital Equity Survey* has been posted to our website at: <https://www.whufsd.com/article/722387>. Parents who completed the survey earlier this year do not need to complete it again. We ask that all families take the time to submit feedback. Thank you!
- With spring upon us, starting Monday, 4/25, we will resume outdoor line-up in the mornings. Students will need to remain outside until 7:40 unless they are getting breakfast or attending extra help. Thank you for understanding.
- Please see the letter mailed home on 3/30 regarding important footwear and cell phone reminders. The letter can also be found on our APP or website at: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9a4ves>
- **Have you downloaded the West Hempstead App yet?** It is available in the App Store and Google Play, just search “West Hempstead.” This will let you keep track of everything happening in our school and access documents such as this “Week @ WHMS” newsletter.

- Let me know when you have exciting learning taking place that I can tweet out and be sure to tag @WH\_MS RAMS if you tweet yourself

#### Items of interest:

- Our club calendar is available on the website at: <https://www.whufsd.com/o/whms/browse/221769>. Students should listen to AM announcements for the most up-to-date information about meeting dates and locations.
- The **extra help schedule** can be found at: [https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded\\_file/1553808/Extra-Help\\_Schedule\\_MS\\_21-22.pdf](https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1553808/Extra-Help_Schedule_MS_21-22.pdf). Students should take advantage of teachers' availability to do their best work.
- The Homework Center is open after school on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. See details below:

### Homework Center Information: 21-22

Homework Center is open 2:45-3:45 on the following days

<u>Day</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Monday	Ms. Elezi	257	Support available for any subject, or just a quiet place to work after school.
Wednesday	Ms. Geiger	17	
Thursday	Ms. Rogan	16	

#### "COVID Corner" Information:

- NYS has removed the "mask mandate" from public schools and the decision to wear a mask is a personal/family choice. We will ensure that regardless of your family decision, students are treated with dignity and civility.
- ESPECIALLY in light of the reduced mask use, I cannot say how vital it is that **if your child, or anyone in your home, feels sick, your child MUST REMAIN HOME FROM SCHOOL**. Call the nurse or Mr. Murray for advice on when it is okay to return to school.
- **Please send your child to school with a refillable water bottle**. Our water fountains are "COVID-safe" and only the water bottle filler function is available.

#### Looking ahead:

Monday, May 16: *Day 1*

- Equitable TSA representatives available during lunch periods for staff
- PTSA meeting, 7:30pm @ HS VCR

Tuesday, May 17: *Day 2*

- **BUDGET VOTE in MS GYM – ALL DAY**

- Spring concert, 7:00pm @ HS auditorium

Wednesday, May 18: *Day 1*

- NWEA testing for ELA, alternate bell schedule, details to follow
- PST meeting, 1:15pm

Thursday, May 19: *Day 2*

- Humanities team planning sessions with Rachel Mark, professional periods

Friday, May 20: *Day 1*

- RTI meeting, 8:45am