Repetition's Dual Edge: Pleasure, Pressure, and Authentic Learning in the Classroom

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Abstract

This chapter explores the paradoxical role of repetitive teaching in education, weighing its potential as a source of pleasure against the pressure it exerts on students, and evaluating its impact on authentic learning. Drawing on cognitive science and classroom dynamics, it elaborates how spaced repetition fosters neural reinforcement and confidence, transforming rote practice into engaging mastery, while unchecked drilling breeds boredom, disengagement, and superficial recall. Teaching without pleasure and fun will not bring the expected results, in the meantime there is also a need for mild pressure or optimal stress for making the process into fruition. Understanding human brain is also considered as very important in this process. Repetitive teaching makes the learners to remember for a long time and also they will understand the difficult and critical concepts easily. Proper motivation and igniting the interest among the students too mandatory.

Keywords

Repetitive Teaching and Learning, Rote Learning, Human Brain, Cognitive Psychology, Curiosity

Introduction

Teaching again and again is like tilling the soil repeatedly before sowing the seeds. If we need good harvest, it is necessary to till the soil consistently. Similarly repetitive teaching has become mandatory for the teachers to disseminate their knowledge and objectives to the students. In a classroom, we can find myriads of student community on the basis of knowledge quotient. The acceptability and learning depends upon the individual, some are quick and while others are slow learners. It is a cornerstone of traditional pedagogy, elicits divergent responses from students, often balancing reinforcement of knowledge against potential overload (Asrifan etal, 2025). This chapter throws more light getting better understanding on the concepts of repetitive reaching upon the learners and their interest and concentration in learning the topics vividly. It also analyzes whether the outcome from the students related to rote or repetitive learning leads to pleasure or pressure.

Repetitive Teaching and Learning

Repetitive teaching involves reiterating concepts, drills, or practices to embed information in students' memory. It manifests in rote memorization, spaced repetition, or looping with the same teacher, aiming to solidify foundational knowledge. It is like a project of teaching individuals or group again and again till the objective is attained. Teacher has to use this technique in order to

accomplish his task and bring out the desired outcome. In contexts like Indian higher education, it aligns with exam-oriented curricula emphasizing recall over analysis. While proponents view it as essential for mastery, critics argue it risks superficial engagement without conceptual depth. Each and every students' need is different in learning (Zhan etal, 2018). One may understand the concepts in the first time of teaching, on the other hand others may need repeated times of explanation. Each and everyone's brain is wired differently, so the requirements are also different. Repetitive teaching helps the learners to get into deep understanding of the concepts thoroughly. This will pave room for learning the difficult concepts easily without much difficulties.

To understand this concept, it is must for everyone to learn the nuances of our human brain.

Human Brain

The human brain functions as an ultra-complex, energy-efficient electrochemical organ, acting as the central processing unit of the nervous system. Operating through roughly 86 billion neurons and trillions of synaptic connections, it integrates sensory input, cognitive processing, motor output, and homeostasis. Learning is a process of physical brain change called neuroplasticity, where neurons (brain cells) form new connections and strengthen existing ones through repetition. When learning, the brain uses neural pathways—often referred to as a "spider web" of connections—to transmit information via electrical and chemical signals. This strengthens synapse connections, turning complex tasks into automatic ones. The mechanism of learning happens in three ways. First because of neurons and synapses join and fire to strengthen their communication at the synapse (the junction between nerve cells). Then by the state of neuroplasticity, brain's ability to change and adapt in response to new experiences while learning. The brain is not static; it constantly reorganizes itself by forging new neural connections while weakening inactive ones, allowing for learning and forgetting and the third important part is repetition**,** frequent practice strengthens these connections, making the neural pathways more efficient and the learned skill more durable. (Cleveland Clinic, 2026)

Benefits of Repetitive Teaching

It is no doubt that the repetitive teaching helps the learners to learn and understand the concepts clearly and easily. As science explores that it strengthens neural pathways, leading to improved memory retention, deeper comprehension, and faster skill mastery. It transforms new, challenging information into automatic knowledge while building learner confidence and providing emotional security, essential for long-term proficiency (Sudheer, 2023). The following are observed as the benefits of repetitive teaching.

Improved Retention and Memory: Repetition combats the "forgetting curve," ensuring information moves from short-term to long-term memory.

Skill Mastery and Muscle Memory: Regularly practicing a task helps develop automaticity, allowing learners to perform skills like reading or physical movements without conscious effort.

Deeper Understanding: Revisiting concepts from different angles builds a more comprehensive understanding of the material.

Boosts Confidence and Security: Familiarity with a subject reduces anxiety and makes learning less overwhelming and creates learning a pleasure and not pressure.

Corrects Misconceptions: Repeating key points ensures that all students, regardless of their initial attention level, grasp the fundamental concepts.

Challenges in Repetitive Teaching

Teaching the students interestingly will not be an issue for the teachers. Whereas, making the students to accept and learn is considered as the major challenge. Any communication without response and feedback will not last for long and this weak method is highly applicable for teaching. Teachers may take many steps and find different ways to confront their objective of making students learn and get qualified in their subjects. Getting students to stay engaged with repetitive teaching—especially if they've heard the material before or if the delivery feels "recycled"—is one of the toughest hurdles in the classroom. Students have a high "novelty requirement" for attention, and when that isn't met, their brains naturally tune out (Zieher et al, 2024). So to attain the objectives, they have to cross various hurdles to achieve their goals. The major challenges in this strategy are discussed here.

Here are few challenges students face when listening to repetitive teaching, along with the psychological reasons behind them.

1. The "I Already Know This" Filter

The moment a student recognizes a topic, their brain often performs a "selective filter." They decide they have mastered the concept and stop processing new details. This is because the brain is designed to ignore "redundant" information to save energy. If a student feels they've achieved the "gist," they stop paying attention to the nuances or deeper applications you might be presenting.

2. Loss of Curiosity (The Novelty Gap)

Curiosity is driven by a "gap" between what we know and what we want to know. In repetitive teaching, that gap feels closed. This happens of dopaminergic response. Novelty triggers dopamine, which aids in focus and memory retention. Repetitive content lacks this chemical "spark," making the lesson feel physically draining or "boring" to a student's nervous system.

3. Passive vs. Active Participation

When a lesson is repetitive, the teacher often defaults to a lecture format (passive), and the students default to "sponge mode" (also passive). So it will be student easy for a student to predict what teacher is going to say next, they don't feel the need to listen actively. They feel safe "zoning out" because there is no perceived risk of missing something unexpected.

4. The "Charlie Brown" Effect (Auditory Fatigue)

If a teacher uses the same tone, pace, and examples again and again, the voice eventually becomes back ground noise—like white noise or a fan. So this sensory adaptation will make the students to stop listening after ten minutes. So it is difficult for a teacher to stay "performative" and dynamic when they are bored with their own script.

Psychological Foundations

In repetitive teaching and learning process, brain paves an important role. Numerous changes happen inside the brain while the repetitive learning happens. Lastiri, Lorea (2022) explains vividly in the following pattern.

Long-Term Potentiation (LTP): This is the fundamental mechanism where repeated activation strengthens synapses (the spaces between neurons). Think of it as strengthening a bridge: the more often you cross it (repeat), the sturdier it becomes.

Myelination: Repeating a skill or action encourages the growth of myelin, a protective layer around neurons. More myelin allows electrical signals to travel faster and more efficiently, which makes the learning process feel faster and better over time.

Transition from Short-Term to Long-Term Memory: Initial learning often relies on the hippocampus, but repeated review moves information into the cortex for long-term storage.

So it is scientifically understood that the process of repetition is the best way to make the teaching efficient. Now it is equally important to understand the need of making students happy while teaching them in a rote or repetitive manner.

Learning with Happiness

Brain is always happy to learn new things, it sparks in joy when new information enters inside. Meanwhile learning the things again and again makes it boring or it creates pressure or load in its synapses. The monotonous learning creates discomfort and brain will try to avoid the same. Eventually once it is ignited to learn deeply it accepts and often rejoice (Brown, 2014). So now it has become teachers' responsibility to motivate the students to learn efficiently.

The way of teaching shall be changed from conventional methods and the following can be practiced in the class room.

Reframe and Gamify Learning

Instead of being compulsive in teaching, reframe the objectives and methods into a fun and game oriented manner. This will make the learner curious and participative while learning. The process of repetition in this way also make the learner happy.

Use the 5-Minute Rule: Even at the time of repetition, the time limit is very important. Inform the learner that he or she has to study for only twenty five minutes and give them five minute rest after the same like pomodoro method. This lowers mental resistance, and often, once you start, momentum takes over.

Gamify the Process: Break large topics into levels, give rewards for finishing sections, and track progress with visual charts to trigger dopamine, which makes learning feel like a fun, high-reward activity.

Cultivate a Positive Mindset: Keep a habit of nurturing your learners with positive mindset. In case of repetitive teaching this is very important. The poor mood and stress can reduce the impact of learning. Teach the student to be grateful to the people and things that they got and feel embraced.

The positive mindset and better environment also play a key role in the process of repetitive learning. Making the learner happy is vital for promoting his learning process.

Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology reveals that repetitive teaching is the most effective one in making the learners motivated and interested by utilizing spaced repetition and active retrieval rather than passive cramming. Spacing out material allows the hippocampus (a small, curved, seahorse-shaped structure in the brain's medial temporal lobe that is essential for consolidating short-term memories into long-term storage) to strengthen memories, reducing long-term forgetting, while varied, active retrieval practice reinforces encoding and improves retention over time (Gao, 2025).

It is mandatory to understand the role of cognitive psychology in perceiving the working mechanism of brain while adopting the knowledge through repetition.

The notion of this chapter is provide pleasure rather than pressure during repetitive teaching. Let us see in detail about creating pleasure and conducive environment.

Benefits as a Pleasure

When structured effectively, repetitive teaching delights students by building confidence and mastery. In lab settings, repetition of techniques improves procedural skills and conceptual grasp, allowing self-directed exploration. Students report pleasure in progressive proficiency, for educators in English Language Teaching, it is targeted drills on grammar reinforce without tedium, turning routine into rewarding familiarity (Purje, 2025).

The objectives of the class should be clearly outlined before starting the teaching process. The pre-requisites of learning platform to be framed wisely in the means of proper lesson plan. Make sure that the students are getting interest in learning the topic. It is better to teach them by compassion and not compulsion. Inform the learners about learning in depth, it will ever stick on their brain and will be very useful in their later lives. Learning the fundamentals deeply is very important for the students, however it is not easy to keep them attentive. The fundamentals are the foundation for the

future avenues. It requires learning rules and formulae without any changes. The minds of the students should not get deviated while learning the same. Until learning becomes pleasurable, it is not easy to catch their attention. Scoo News (2023) clearly points the below to make learning process joyful and interesting.

Break down the complex topics (Chunking): Divide large, complex topics into smaller, manageable, and digestible pieces. This allows students to focus on one aspect at a time and reduces cognitive overload.

Use Visual Aids and Metaphors: Incorporate diagrams, graphs, flow charts, and mind maps to illustrate relationships and processes. Use analogies or metaphors to compare new, abstract ideas with familiar everyday experiences.

Relate to Real-World Examples: Connect theoretical concepts to real-life situations. For example, explain economic inflation using a classroom "mini-economy" with play money.

Employ Active Learning Techniques: Move beyond lectures by having students summarize information in their own words, use flashcards, or teach the concept to a peer.

Utilize Multisensory Instruction: Engage multiple senses (seeing, hearing, touching, moving) to help students grasp concepts. Use physical manipulatives (like blocks) for math, or have students act out a process.

Proceed from Known to Unknown: Start with what students already know and build upon it, ensuring a solid foundation before introducing new, complex information.

Incorporate "Catch and Release" Structure: Introduce a concept ("catch"), work through examples together, and then have students practice independently or in groups ("release").

Sort with Examples and Non-Examples: Create charts or sorting activities that force students to categorize examples vs. non-examples, helping them define the core attributes of a concept.

Drawbacks as Pressure

In the contrary, if the teaching is done under pressure, the desired objectives will not be attained. Students may listen to the teacher in fear and compulsion, but it is equal to the noise they hear from outside, will not make any prospects. This sort of learning is highly dangerous and will not bring any sorts of development. So unplanned repetitive teaching will cause stress, especially under high-stakes pressure. Many students learn today through memorization for the sake of getting good marks in examination. This will not make them to understand the concepts thoroughly during the learning process. Similar to repetitive teaching, rote learning is also prevalent in exam-driven systems, overwhelms working memory, leading to anxiety, burnout, and diminished performance. Repetition under stress exacerbates overload, as additional input floods limited cognitive capacity, worsening compliance and engagement. Short-term retention fades post-exam, revealing shallow understanding unfit for real-world application (Deng etal, 2022).

Learning Outcomes

Repetitive teaching will make the brain to acquire and accept the concepts in depth and prolific manner. This way of study will remain for a long time and helps the learner to overcome the difficulties in the process of learning. The following are considered to be the learning outcomes in repetitive teaching (Kooloos etal, 2020).

Long-Term Retention: Repetition is crucial for cementing knowledge in long-term memory. Studies suggest that without repetition, significant knowledge is lost (up to 50% within an hour), but spaced repetition stabilizes this memory.

Skill Acquisition and Fluency: Repetition builds muscle memory and automaticity in tasks, freeing up cognitive space for higher-order creativity.

Improved Academic Performance: Studies in anatomy and language learning showed that repetition (via lecture, e-learning, or test) results in significantly better retention compared to no repetition.

Task Repetition in Writing: In addition to learning the new concepts effectively, repetitive teaching will also improve students' writing performance and competence by allowing them to apply feedback from a first attempt to a second.

Balancing Pleasure and Pressure

Teaching without motivating the interest of learners will not pave the way to reach the objectives. Students should understand and accept the way of being taught. They need to be kindled and initiated to learn the subjects precisely and remember for a long time. Balancing the pleasure and pressure is very important for the teachers to confirm the success of learning process. The students should not feel that they are in stress or anxiety while learning in repetition. They need to accept the core values of repetitive teaching and adapt to it. Without the mild pressure (optimal stress) it is impossible to teach and get expected results. (Falcone, 2021)

The Times of India article (2025) has rightly pointed out that curiosity is the axle for igniting the passion of learning among students.

The Role of Curiosity in Enjoyable Learning

Brain Preparation: Curiosity puts the brain in a state that allows it to learn and retain information, even subjects that might otherwise seem dull.

Deeper Engagement: Curious learners don't stop at surface-level knowledge; they dig deeper to understand the "why" and "how," leading to more profound, long-lasting knowledge.

Active Reward System: Curiosity activates the same reward circuits as eating a favorite food or receiving money, making the pursuit of knowledge intrinsically enjoyable.

Reduces Fear of Failure: A curious mindset turns mistakes into clues rather than failures, making the learning process a fun, investigative "puzzle".

In 1908, famous psychologists, Robert M. Yerkes and John Dillingham Dodson said that a moderate level of stress helps to improve performance, while too little leads to boredom and also too much leads to anxiety. So it is must for the teachers to maintain the stress optimally with deadlines and not beyond the limit of exerting much pressure on the learners.

Conclusion

In conclusion, repetitive teaching straddles the fine line between pleasure and pressure for students, ultimately determining whether genuine learning occurs depends on its execution and context. When thoughtfully integrated, repetition serves as a powerful tool for mastery, reinforcing neural pathways to embed knowledge deeply into long-term memory, much like spaced practice in language acquisition where revisiting grammar rules through varied exercises builds fluency and confidence without monotony (Sterling, 2017). Students often experience this as pleasurable when it yields visible progress, reducing anxiety during assessments and fostering a sense of achievement, particularly in subjects like English where iterative practice hones skills in syntax, vocabulary, and composition. However, unchecked repetition—mere rote drilling without variation—transforms into pressure, breeding boredom, frustration, and disengagement, as learners perceive it as drudgery rather than discovery, leading to superficial memorization that evaporates under real-world application. Thus, repetitive teaching is neither inherently pleasurable nor burdensome; it becomes a catalyst for profound learning when educators prioritize variety, relevance, and responsiveness, empowering students to not just remember, but truly internalize and apply knowledge for lifelong growth.

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