

Cognitive Load Theory

Education

Working memory is small; long-term memory is not. Teach for the difference.

Three loads. Only one of them is the learning.

The three loads

Intrinsic — the difficulty of the material

Extraneous — imposed by the presentation

Germane — effort spent building schemas

Only extraneous load is pure waste

Intrinsic load falls as schemas form

Cutting extraneous load

Put labels on the diagram, not in a key

Do not read aloud what is already on screen

Remove decorative images from explanations

Complete a worked example before a problem

Segment long sequences into stages

Well supported and widely replicated. Working memory holds roughly four elements for under 30 seconds without rehearsal.