



A good study partner

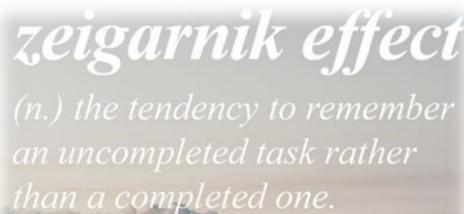
A word of warning: studying with other people can be incredibly distracting. This is probably magnified for teenagers who due to ongoing changes and development in their brain, are more likely to seek novelty and find it harder to manage self-control. However, if chosen carefully, working with the right study partner can have multiple benefits.

One study, for example, discovered that teenagers who had to work through a problem-solving task together “engaged in more exploratory behaviour and learned faster from positive and negative feedback”, compared with working on their own.

The Zeigarnik effect

On average 75% of students consider themselves as procrastinators. In other words, they put off revision for as long as they possibly can. Sitting down and starting the task is half the battle for many students.

The answer to overcoming this may have been found in a café in Berlin almost 90 years ago, where psychologist Bluma Zeigarnik would discuss research with her supervisor, Kurt Lewin. They noticed that the busy waiters appeared to only remember orders that were in the process of being served, but once they were completed, the order disappeared from their memory.



zeigarnik effect
*(n.) the tendency to remember
an uncompleted task rather
than a completed one.*

To study this further, Zeigarnik asked a series of participants to do a series of simple tasks in the lab, like solving puzzles and stringing beads. For some of the time, participants were interrupted half way through and afterwards she asked them which activities they remembered doing.

Interestingly, she found that people were twice as likely to remember the tasks during which they'd been interrupted than those they completed.

So, what does this have to do with procrastination?

The *ZEIGARNIK EFFECT* suggests that not finishing a task creates mental tension, which keeps it at the forefront of our memory. The only thing that will relieve this tension? Closure brought on by completion of the task.

As such, the phenomenon proposes that making a start on something – no matter how big or small – keeps it ticking away at the back of your mind until you reach the end.

And the same goes for your revision. If you can just start the task, then the Zeigarnik effect may take over, increasing your motivation and likelihood of seeing the task through to completion.