THE PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY

William James (1890)

Things learned thus in a few hours, on one occasion, for one purpose, cannot possibly have formed many associations with other things in the mind. Their brain-processes are led into by few paths, and are relatively little liable to be awakened again. Speedy oblivion is the almost inevitable fate of all that is committed to memory in this simple way.

Whereas, on the contrary, the same materials taken in gradually, day after day, recurring in different contexts, considered in various relations, associated with other external incidents, and repeatedly reflected on, grow into such a system, form such connections with the rest of the mind’s fabric, lie open to so many paths of approach, that they remain permanent possessions.

This is the *intellectual* reason why habits of continuous application should be enforced in educational establishments.