

So... you've heard of Cognitive Load Theory...?

The thing about answers is they often create more questions. The great thing about Teacher Tapp is that it is easy to ask follow-up questions!

On Thursday 14th March, a teacher studying for a middle leadership qualification, asked our panel whether they had heard of a set of concepts from cognitive science.

The results prompted us to wonder what, exactly, the teachers had heard, particularly about cognitive load theory (CLT), which was developed in the late 1980s and is considered the most controversial of the list below.

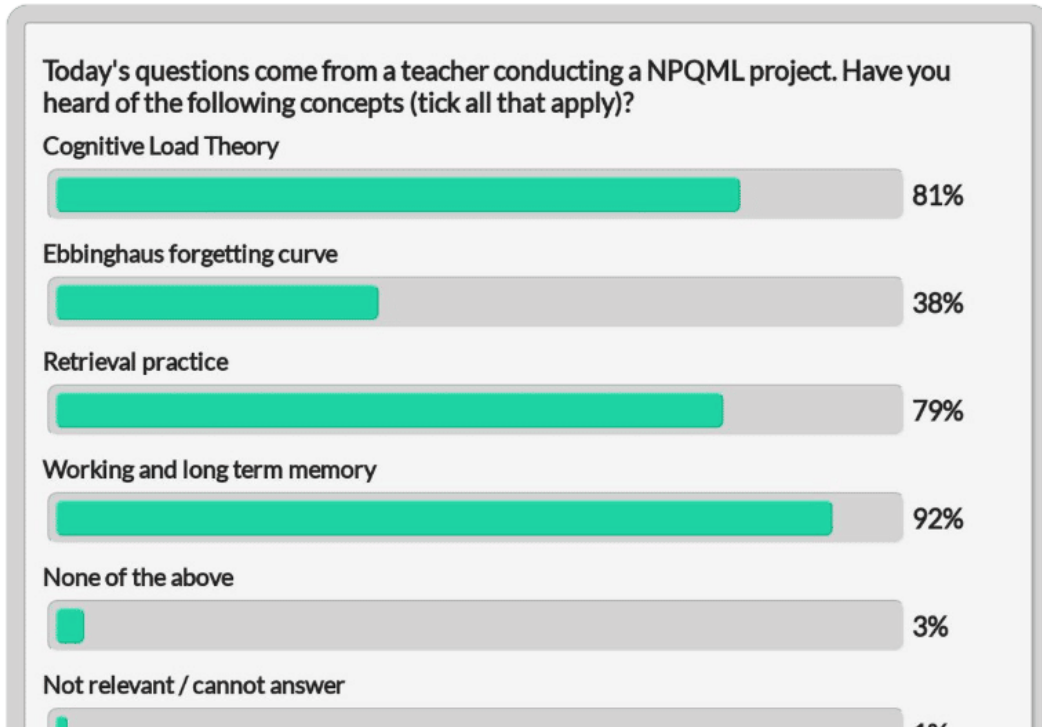


Mark Enser 
@EnserMark

Following

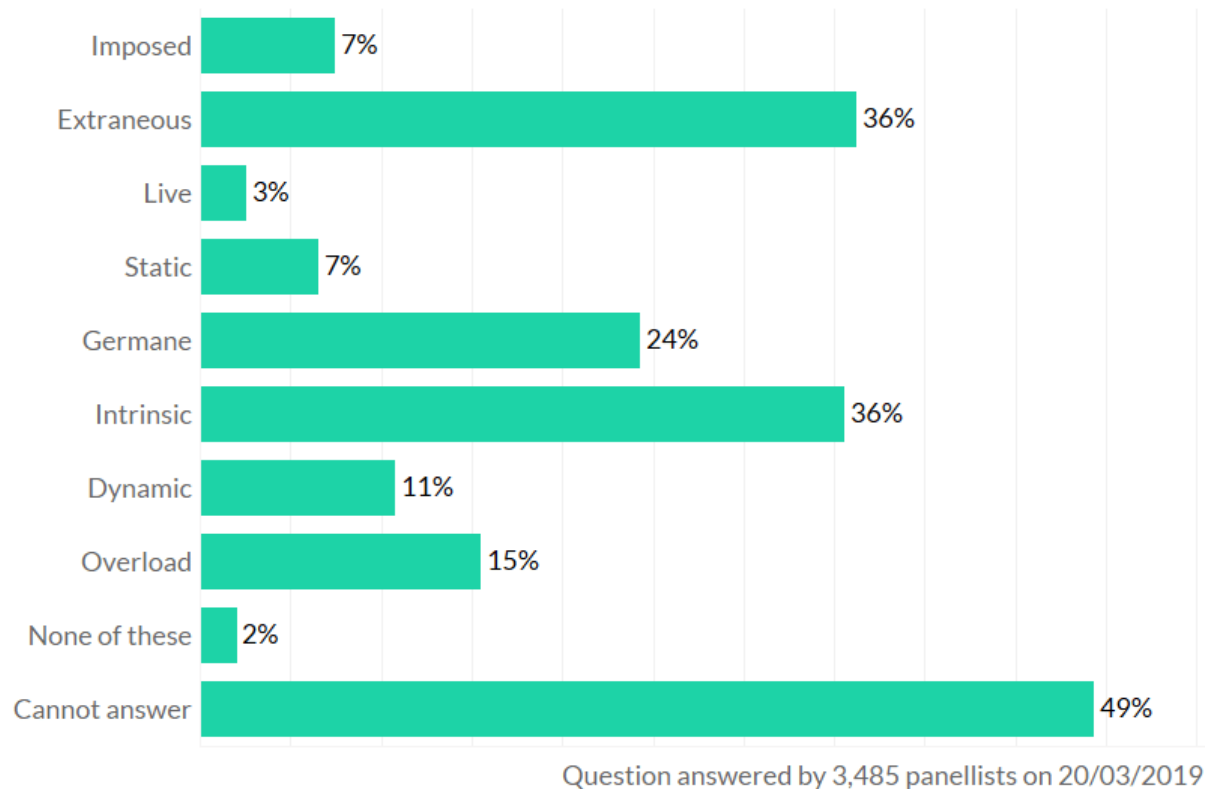


Surprised about the low score for Ebbinghaus and curious WHAT people have heard about CLT 🤔 @teachertapp



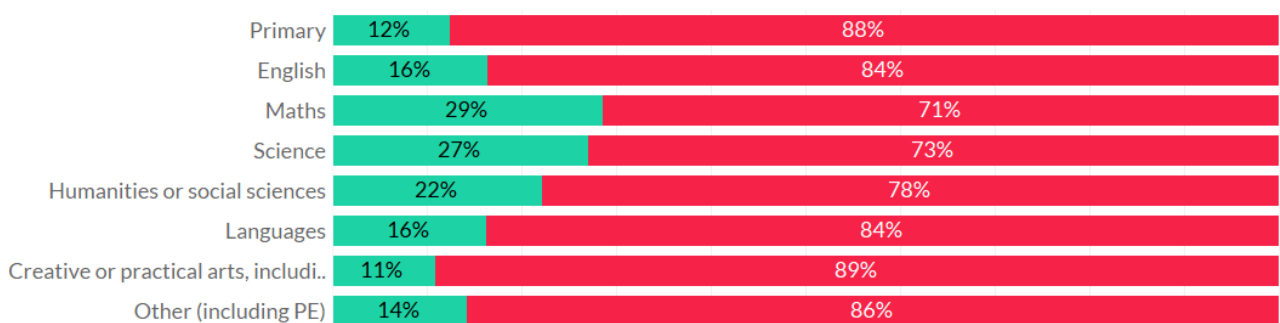
So we asked. And it turns out that although a majority of teachers have heard of cognitive load theory, few could correctly identify the three types of cognitive load mentioned by Sweller – which are: intrinsic, extraneous and germane – and only 15% of teachers could identify all three.

Which of these is mentioned in Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory?

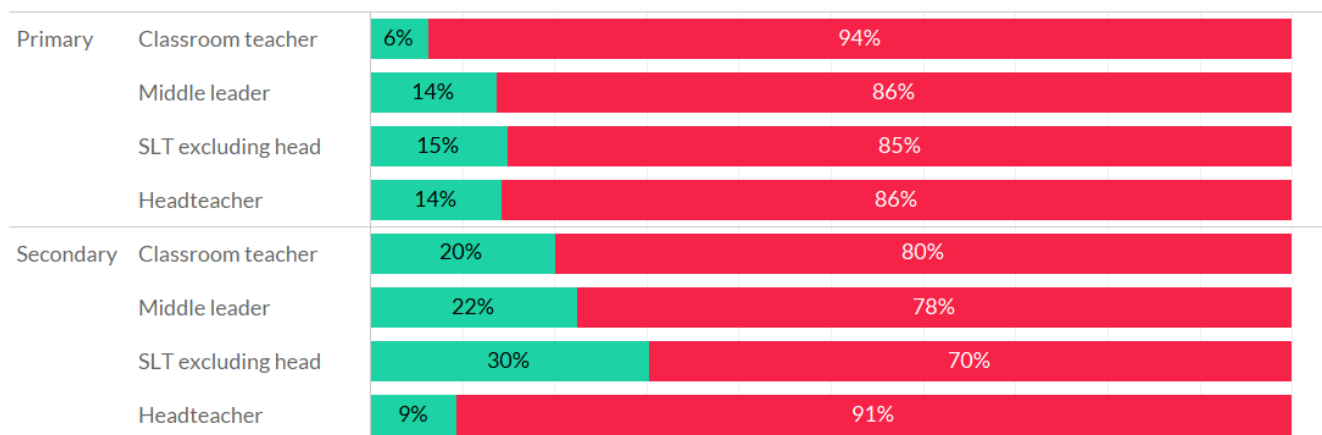


Now, we make no judgement as to whether or not this is a problem. Some (e.g. Dylan Wiliam) believe it is the most important theory for teachers to learn about; others think the evidence base for CLT still isn't secure enough.

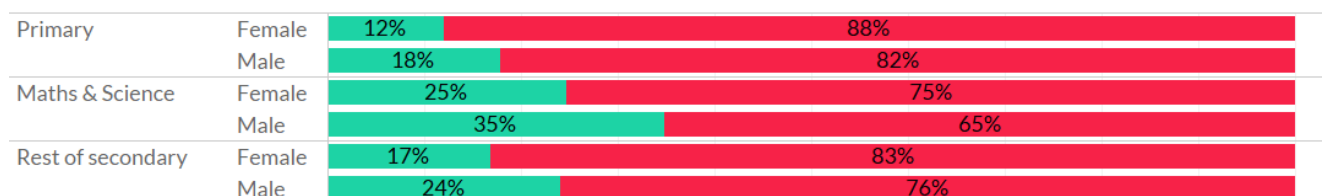
It was no surprise to us that our maths and science teachers were the most likely to have learnt about it and answered the question correctly since so much of the CLT research has been in these fields.



We also learned that teachers in more senior roles were more likely to know about it, unless they were headteachers who are presumably busy reading about management rather than learning theories! (And it was teachers in the South West who were most likely to answer the question correctly, with teachers in the North East at the bottom of the regional league table.)



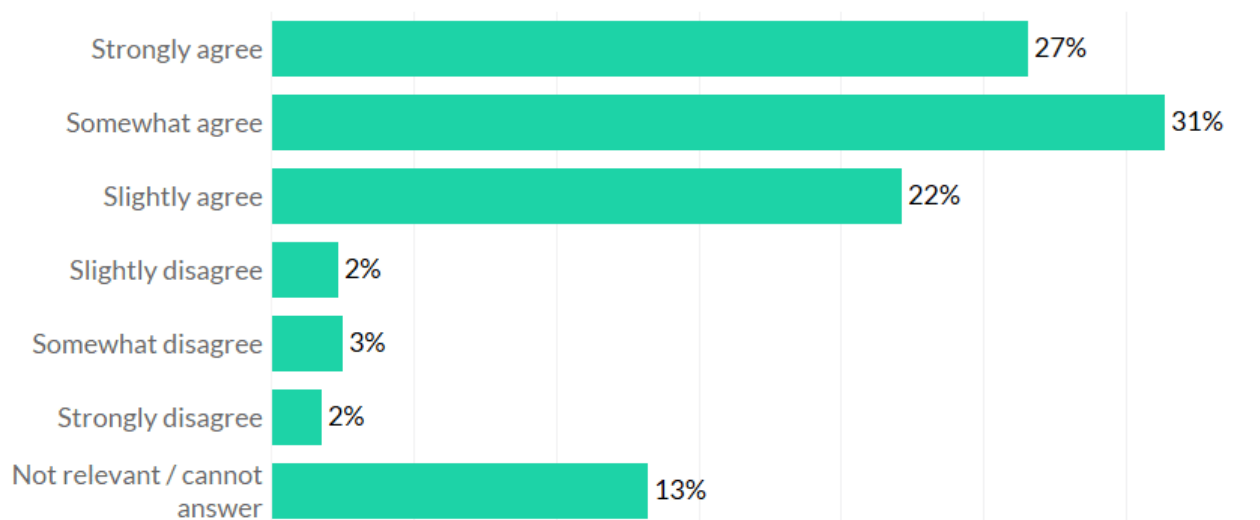
Curiously, male teachers seemed more likely to have answered correctly than their female peers. We're not quite sure why. Time for more questions?!?



Do you want to learn more? Well..

We put lots of cognitive psychology articles into our daily Teacher Tapp read, which you can see on the last page in the app, and our users seem keen to learn more about the field.

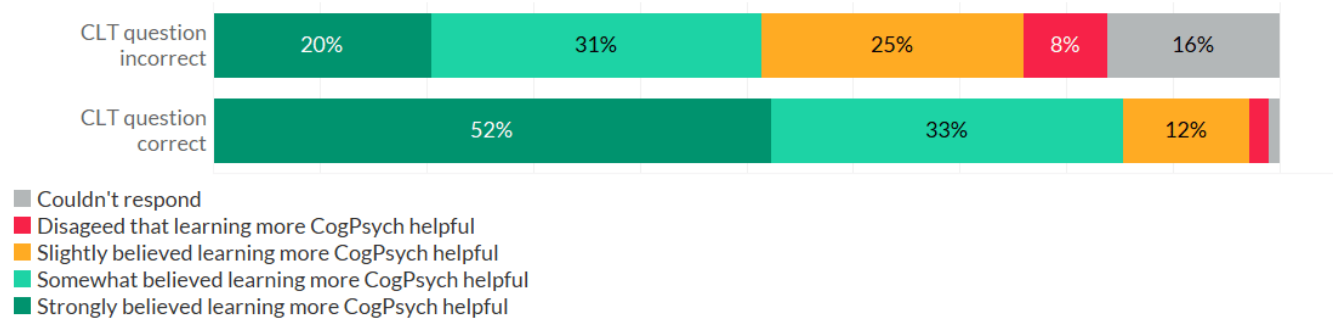
I feel that learning more about cognitive psychology would help me improve my teaching



Question answered by 3,486 panellists on 20/03/2019

But who is keenest to learn about cognitive psychology? It seems the more you already know, the keener you are to keep learning!

Those who got the CLT question correct have far stronger beliefs that learning more about cognitive psychology will help their classroom practice.



And, on the day of these questions we posted an introductory article on cognitive load theory for our panel to read. Who chose to read it? Just 26% of those who had answered the CLT question incorrectly and 39% of those who were correct!

That's right: people who already knew about cognitive load theory were more likely to also then read about it.

This echoes the 'Matthew effect' as described in education by Keith Stanovich, who pointed out that children who can read earliest go on to have a greater advantage because they enjoy and like reading more, so get more knowledge, and then want even more. It builds a virtuous cycle. Could it be that in teacher development, if you believe that knowing more is important, then you tend to read more, and so you know more, which further convinces you that knowing information is important!

The big challenge for us now is: how do we get more people reading the tips even if they don't already know a topic or think that it's important?!

Please email us your thoughts at hello@teachertapp.co.uk or use the Feedback button in the app.

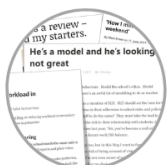


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