

EDUCATION WEEK

Published Online: February 25, 2013

Published in Print: February 27, 2013, as **'Permission to Forget' Should Be Forgotten**

LETTER As first appeared in Education Week, February 27, 2013. Reprinted with permission from the author.

'Permission to Forget' Should Be Forgotten

To the Editor:

[← Back to Story](#)

Regarding the recent Commentary by Gary Huggins, **"It's Time for Summer Learning"** (Jan. 16, 2013): Summer forgetting is a problem. However, it is not even close to the problem of forgetting during the school year.

Starting in 1st grade with spelling tests, students in the United States are taught the cram/get-a-grade/forget process. They are given "permission to forget" the words from prior weeks, and this process continues through high school and college.

This is the bad news; the good news is that permission to forget can be removed without adding extra school days.

I am not criticizing today's educators. This cram/get-a-grade/forget process was inherited from prior generations of educators. I have interviewed hundreds of teacher-candidates, and when I asked them, "Why do you want to be a teacher?" none ever answered, "I want to help kids cram and get good grades." However, the current education system rewards good crammers.

It is easy to research this premise. Have teachers give a chapter test, and then make up a story about somebody breaking into their car and stealing all its contents, including their exams. Then give the chapter test again. Teachers can compare the results from the two exams, then give the chapter test again, next month, next semester, next year.

The solution to permission to forget is to have a policy that every graded and every nongraded exam is to be approximately 30 percent content from prior grade levels. For example, an Algebra 2 exam could be 70 percent Algebra 2, 10 percent geometry, 10 percent Algebra 1, and 10 percent middle school math.

Kids will realize immediately that they cannot obtain good grades through cramming.

Lee Jenkins

Founder

LtoJ Consulting Group Inc.

Scottsdale, Ariz.



**UNLOCK
ESSENTIAL
CONTENT**
Open your
team's potential

+ Click here for more info

