USC Center for Excellence in Teaching

# Activating prior student knowledge

## WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

A selection of literature resources discussing the impacts of activating prior knowledge on student learning.

**Bransford, J., & Johnson, M. (1972). Contextual prerequisites for understanding: Some investigations of comprehension and recall. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, 11*(6), 717–726.**[**https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-5371(72)80006-9**](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-5371(72)80006-9)

Prior knowledge and context provided before a learning experience impact a student’s ability to later recall learned information.

**Kole, J., & Healy, A. (2007). Using prior knowledge to minimize interference when learning large amounts of information. *Memory and Cognition, 35*(1), 124–137.**[**https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03195949**](https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03195949)

Associating new information to be learned with pre-existing knowledge can strongly improve learning in situations requiring the acquisition of large amounts of information.