DAS3H: Modeling Student Learning and Forgetting for Optimally Scheduling Distributed Practice of Skills

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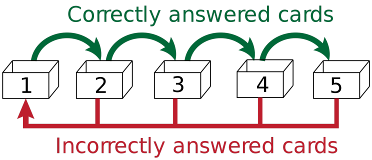
Mitigating human forgetting with spaced repetition

- Human learners face a constant trade-off between **acquiring new knowledge** and **reviewing old knowledge**
- Cognitive science provides simple + robust learning strategies for improving LT memory
  - Spaced repetition
  - Testing
- Can we do better? **Yes**, by providing students with an *adaptive* and *personalized* spacing scheduler.

Mitigating human forgetting with spaced repetition



Ex. select the item whose memory strength is closest to a threshold θ [Lindsey, Shroyer, Pashler, and Mozer 2014] $\rightarrow$ "almost forgotten"

Beyond flashcard memorization

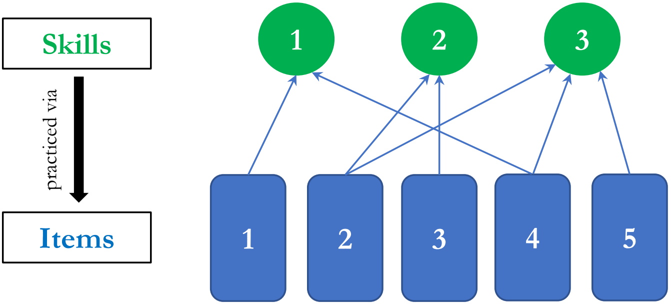
Problem: these algorithms are designed for optimizing *pure memorization* (of facts, vocabulary,. . .)

- In real-world educational settings, students also need to learn to master and remember a set of **skills**
- In that case, specific items are the only way to practice one or multiple skills because *we do not have to memorize the content directly*
- Traditional adaptive spacing schedulers are **not applicable for learning skills**

Extension to skill practice and review

Item-skill relationships require expert labor and are synthesized inside a binary q-matrix →

	skill 1	skill 2	skill 3
item 1	1	0	0
item 2	0	1	1
item 3	0	1	0
item 4	1	0	1
item 5	0	0	1



Limitations of student models

We need to be able to infer skill memory strength and dynamics, however in the student modeling literature:

- some models leverage item-skills relationships
- some others incorporate forgetting

But none does both!

Our contribution

We take a model-based approach for this task.

1. Traditional adaptive spacing algorithms can be extended to review and practice skills (not only flashcards).

2. We developed a new student *learning* and *forgetting* model that leverages item-skill relationships: **DAS3H**.
    - DAS3H outperforms 4 SOTA student models on 3 datasets.
    - Incorporating skill info + forgetting effect improves over models that consider one or the other.
    - Using precise temporal information on past skill practice + assuming different learning/forgetting curves for different skills improves performance.

Outline

1. Our model DAS3H
2. Experiments
3. Conclusion

DASH

$\rightarrow$ DASH = item **D**ifficulty, student **A**bility, and **S**tudent **H**istory

DASH [Lindsey, Shroyer, Pashler, and Mozer 2014] bridges the gap between *Factor Analysis models* and *memory models*:

$$\mathbb{P}\left(Y_{s,j,t} = 1\right) = \sigma(\alpha_s - \delta_j + h_\theta(\mathrm{t}_{s,j,1:l}, \mathrm{y}_{s,j,1:l-1}))$$

where:

- $Y_{s,j,t}$ binary correctness of student s answering item j at time t;
- σ logistic function;
- α_s ability of student s;
- δ_j difficulty of item j;
- h_θ summarizes the effect of the $l-1$ previous attempts of s on j at times $\mathrm{t}_{s,j,1:l-1}$ + the binary outcomes $\mathrm{y}_{s,j,1:l-1}$.

DASH

Lindsey et al. chose:

$$h_\theta(\mathrm{t}_{s,j,1:l}, \mathrm{y}_{s,j,1:l-1}) = \sum_{w=0}^{W-1} \theta_{2w+1} \log(1 + c_{s,j,w}) - \theta_{2w+2} \log(1 + a_{s,j,w})$$

where:

- w indexes a set of expanding time windows;
- $c_{s,j,w}$ number of correct answers of s on j in time window w;
- $a_{s,j,w}$ number of attempts of s on j in time window w;
- θ is *learned* by DASH.

Our model DAS3H

We extend DASH in **3 ways**:

1. Extension to handle multiple skills tagging: new temporal module h_θ that also takes the multiple skills into account.
    - Influence of the temporal distribution of past attempts and outcomes can differ from one skill to another.
2. Estimation of easiness parameters for *each* item j and skill k;
3. Use of KTMs [Vie and Kashima 2019] instead of mere logistic regression for multidimensional feature embeddings and pairwise interactions.

Our model DAS3H

→ DAS3H = item **D**ifficulty, student **A**bility, **S**kill and **S**tudent **S**kill practice **H**istory

For an embedding dimension of $d = 0$, DAS3H is:

$$\mathbb{P}\left(Y_{s,j,t} = 1\right) = \sigma(\alpha_s - \delta_j + \underbrace{\sum_{k \in KC(j)} \beta_k}_{\text{skill easiness biases}} + h_\theta\left(\mathrm{t}_{s,j,1:l}, \mathrm{y}_{s,j,1:l-1}\right)).$$

We choose:

$$h_\theta(\mathrm{t}_{s,j,1:l}, \mathrm{y}_{s,j,1:l-1}) = \sum_{k \in KC(j)} \sum_{w=0}^{W-1} \theta_{k,2w+1} \log(1 + c_{s,k,w}) - \theta_{k,2w+2} \log(1 + a_{s,k,w}).$$

→ Now, h_θ can be seen as a sum of *skill* memory strengths!

Experiments

1. Experimental setting
2. Contenders & datasets
3. Main results
4. Further analyses

Experimental setting

- **5-fold cross-validation** at the student level: predicting binary outcomes on unseen students (*strong generalization*)
- Distributional assumptions to avoid overfitting:
  - When $d = 0$: L2 regularization/$\mathcal{N}(0,1)$ prior
  - When $d > 0$: hierarchical distributional scheme
- Same time windows as Lindsey et al.: $\{1/24, 1, 7, 30, +\infty\}$

Contenders & datasets

- 5 contenders (DAS3H, DASH, IRT/MIRT, PFA, AFM) $\times$ 3 embedding dimensions (0, 5 & 20)

	users	items	skills	wins	fails	attempts	tw [KC]	tw [items]
DAS3H	×	×	×	×		×	×	
DASH	×	×		×		×		×
IRT/MIRT	×	×						
PFA			×	×	×			
AFM			×			×		

- 3 datasets: ASSISTments 2012-2013, Bridge to Algebra 2006-2007 & Algebra I 2005-2006 (KDD Cup 2010)
  - Data consists of logs of student-item interactions on 2 ITS

Dataset	Users	Items	Skills	Interactions	Mean correctness	Skills per item
assist12	24,750	52,976	265	2,692,889	0.696	1.000
bridge06	1,135	129,263	493	1,817,427	0.832	1.013
algebra05	569	173,113	112	607,000	0.755	1.363

Table 2: Datasets characteristics

Main results

model	algebra05	bridge06	assist12
DAS3H	**0.826** ± 0.003	**0.790** ± 0.004	**0.739** ± 0.001
DASH	0.773 ± 0.002	0.749 ± 0.002	0.703 ± 0.002
IRT	0.771 ± 0.007	0.747 ± 0.002	0.702 ± 0.001
PFA	0.744 ± 0.004	0.739 ± 0.003	0.668 ± 0.002
AFM	0.707 ± 0.005	0.692 ± 0.002	0.608 ± 0.002

Table 3: AUC comparison between the different student models for an embedding dimension $d = 0$ (all datasets, 5-fold cross-validation).

$\rightarrow$ On every dataset, **DAS3H outperforms** the other models (between $+0.04$ and $+0.05$ AUC compared to DASH).

Importance of time windows

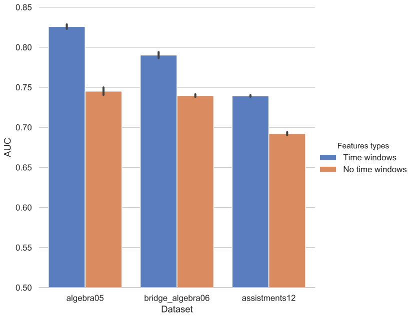


Figure 1: AUC comparison on DAS3H *with* and *without* time windows features (all datasets, 5-fold cross-validation).

Without time windows, h_θ counts past wins and attempts in DAS3H.
$\rightarrow$ Using temporal distribution of past skill practice instead of simple win/fail counters improves AUC performance: the ***when*** matters.

Importance of different learning/forgetting curves per skill

	d	bridge06	algebra05	assist12
DAS3H	0	**0.790** $\pm$ 0.004	**0.826** $\pm$ 0.003	0.739 $\pm$ 0.001
	5	**0.791** $\pm$ 0.005	0.818 $\pm$ 0.004	**0.744** $\pm$ 0.002
	20	0.776 $\pm$ 0.023	0.817 $\pm$ 0.005	0.740 $\pm$ 0.001
DAS3H$_{1p}$	0	0.757 $\pm$ 0.003	0.789 $\pm$ 0.009	0.701 $\pm$ 0.002
	5	0.757 $\pm$ 0.005	0.787 $\pm$ 0.005	0.700 $\pm$ 0.001
	20	0.757 $\pm$ 0.003	0.789 $\pm$ 0.006	0.701 (<1e-3)

Table 4: AUC comparison between DAS3H and DAS3H$_{1p}$ (all datasets, 5-fold cross-validation).

$\rightarrow$ Assuming **different learning and forgetting curves for different skills** in DAS3H consistently yields better predictive power: some skills are easier to learn and slower to forget.

In a nutshell

- Human forgetting is *ubiquitous* but luckily:
  - Cognitive science gives us efficient and simple learning strategies
  - ML can build us tools to **personalize these strategies** and further improve LT memory retention
- Adaptive spacing algorithms have been focusing on *pure memorization* (e.g. vocabulary learning)
  - They can be used for optimizing practice and retention of skills
- Our student model **DAS3H**
  - incorporates information on *skills* **and** *forgetting* to predict learner performance
  - shows higher predictive power than other SOTA student models
  - fits our model-based approach for optimally scheduling skill review

Thanks for your attention!

A longer version of our paper is available at:

`https://arxiv.org/abs/1905.06873`

Python code is freely available on my GitHub page:

`https://github.com/BenoitChoffin/das3h` !

To send me questions about our paper or my research work:

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Lindsey, Robert V, Jeffery D Shroyer, Harold Pashler, and Michael C Mozer (2014). "Improving students' long-term knowledge retention through personalized review". In: *Psychological science* 25.3, pp. 639–647.

Vie, Jill-Jênn and Hisashi Kashima (2019). "Knowledge Tracing Machines: Factorization Machines for Knowledge Tracing". In: *Proceedings of the 33th AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence*, to appear. URL: http://arxiv.org/abs/1811.03388.