



Brain tips for more effective learning.

– train to gain!

*The brain is the control centre of the whole body. It steers your organs, is responsible for your feelings and makes all your activities possible. Although there are certain things you can't control (like the reflex of your eyes), other things **you** can influence and often control. Here are some points to be aware of when you are learning.*

THE POWER OF RESPONSIBILITY

You are teacher NO 1! It is your brain and you have a massive influence on how you make it work for you. In fact, you will probably influence your brain more than anyone else you'll meet on this planet. What you say to yourselves and the expectations you develop shape your thinking and actions.

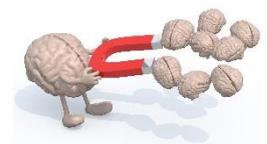


Couple of questions you can ask yourself:

- How do you think? When you set goals you do this within a framework. Aim to think as a growth thinker. Seek to identify the opportunities where you can do 'something' better. If you can't do something remind yourself you can't do it yet.
- When do you give up? Perseverance is something we develop rather than a gift at birth. Not always easy but train your brain to take on regular challenges. This might involve some 'pain' at times but is in essence an important key to building success.
- What do you feel? Don't ignore feelings but equally don't underestimate that they can play games in your brain and pull you away from effective study.

THE EFFECT OF GETTING STARTED

Facing the many things to be done and challenges that come with it your will power is only of limited use. Try to develop routines that get you into the flow of work. Remember that when you set up a new routine it takes time to establish itself. Which might come and challenge you it seems that your will power is not strong enough to get it done. But once you got started it is much easier to continue. Even tuning up and pushing to a higher level of quality doesn't become so difficult any more.



- ➔ Take control, take a pen and just get something done on your piece of paper. After taking the first step the second becomes much easier. Set yourself a deadline or use a To-do-list. This could help you in the first step.

THE ABILITY TO TAKE PICTURES

The brain takes pictures all the time. Research shows that very large part of all the information your brain has to process goes through your eyes (for sighted people).



- ➔ Take control of the pictures you catch and let them take part in your learning. Make use of Post-it notes and illustrate your revision notes.



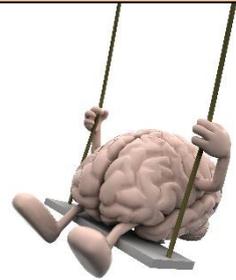
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THE INFLUENCE OF REPETITION

Studies show that if you do something for more than 10 000 hours you become an expert. Seeing, saying or doing the same thing over and over again makes it very familiar and your brain is far more likely to create an effective recall system.

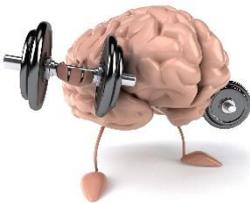
- Take control and develop a system that helps you identify your strengths and weaknesses. Give extra time to your weaknesses to turn them into strength so that you end up with double strength. Many students use revision cards – remember the power of a two to three minute revision session a couple of times a day.



THE DISCIPLINE OF TRAINING

Your brain is not a muscle but works a bit like it. The more you use it the better it will work for you. This, like sport people will tell you, is not always a pleasant feeling. In fact, it can hurt and often you need to push through a pain barrier to become your best. Discover the secret of doing a little often.

- Try to establish routines that help you get into the flow of achievement. Development of such routines takes time for the brain to 'appreciate'. However, with perseverance you will see that performance increases. Success of training is therefore not so much about what you feel but your ability not to give up!



THE ART OF GETTING YOUR TIMING RIGHT

Doing the right thing, at the right time, and in the right manner drives us to success. Our brains are amazing and many techniques help us to capitalize on its power but all this takes time. Starting early is not a luxury but a necessity to optimize our learning. Part of the reason for this is the 'space' you give to the brain to make mistakes and correct them. Getting things wrong is often the start of a learning curve.

- Preparing for an exam? Regularly complete a past exam paper. Mark and analyse the strength of your answers with the help of the mark scheme. Identify where you can improve – revise and practice – complete another exam paper. This smart revision cycle takes time but research shows it is the best exam preparation for most subjects.



THE ORIENTATION FROM CONNECTION

The complexity of your brain is your strength but also your weakness. The latter in the sense that your brain is quite capable of making up ideas, stories or information itself. It does this by making associations which can seem very likely but just aren't true. In other words, we could think that we know or remember something but in reality we don't. This is one of the main difficulties for students preparing for exams. Research shows that the best way to check whether you really know something is to give yourself the opportunity to teach or discuss the information you have learnt.

- Take the time revising for your exams on your own but also allow some time when you give your books or notes to someone else who can ask you questions about what you have studied.

