



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 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 yourself and the expectations you develop shape your thinking and actions.



A 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 that "something" better. If you can't do that "something", remind yourself you can't simply do it yet.

- *When do you give up?*

Perseverance is something we develop rather than a gift at birth. It is not always easy, but training your brain to take on regular challenges is an important key to building success.

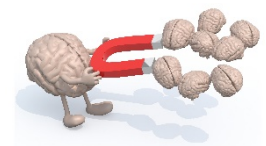
- *What do you feel?*

Don't ignore feelings; but equally, don't underestimate that they can play games in your mind and pull you away from effective study.

THE EFFECT OF GETTING STARTED

When facing the many 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. This might come as a challenge. But once you got started it is much easier to continue. Even tuning up and pushing to a higher level of quality won'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 will become 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 a 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.





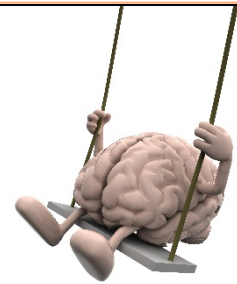
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THE INFLUENCE OF REPETITION

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

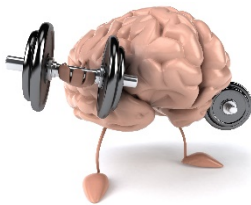
- Take control and develop a system that helps you identifying your strength and weakness. Many students use revision cards – remember the power of a two to three minute revision session a couple of times a day.



THE DISCIPLINE OF TRAINING

Your brain is not a muscle but works 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 getting into the flow of achievement. To development 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 your answers with the help of the mark scheme. Identify where you can improve. Revise and practice. And complete another exam paper. This smart revision cycle takes time but research shows it is the best exam preparation for most subjects.



THE ORIENTATION THROUGH CONNECTION

The complexity of your brain is your strength but also your weakness. This means that your brain is capable of making up ideas, stories or information itself. Associations might 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. 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. Then give your books or notes to someone else who can ask you questions about what you have studied.

