Push's Quick Guide to…

Unchaining your Brain

Why learn (not study)?

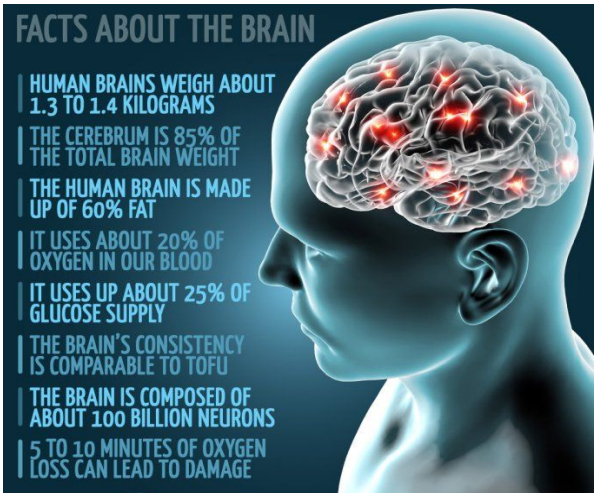
Learning is different to studying. Studying is usually done by repetition of hearing, seeing then repeating this process, in an often unemotional way. Learning is a way of achieving the rewards you want in life.

Learning can be fun (really)!

When you're happy, you feel more empowered and enabled to make decisions about your life. Every career path will require you to continue learning new things, so if you love what you're doing… studying won't feel like studying… in fact, you'll relish the new things you have to learn.

How does the brain learn?

The brain primarily learns through memory. Ever wonder why certain childhood memories stick in your head? What's your earliest memory and why? Do sounds, smells, and tastes come flooding back into your head? If so, then you have subconsciously formed a strong connection to the storage part of your brain, and a strong connection means you can access it in milliseconds. Our senses inform a lot of our knowledge about the world. Evolution has taught us to see patterns in sensory information… and to recall similar patterns. In other words: **our senses make us remember things**.



2 types of memory:

You have **short-term** and **long-term** memory.

Your brain stores things firstly as a short-term memory (30secs-1min), but if not repeated or recalled, it will fizzle away very quickly as the brain deems it not important if you haven't revisited the thought.

According to Learning Solutions Magazine '*within one hour, people will have forgotten an average of 50% of the information you presented. Within 24 hours, they will have forgotten an average of 70% of new information, and within a week, they forget an average of 90% of it*.'

3 steps to becoming an effective learner:

Everyone learns differently; trial and error works well to find out how best you learn, but these 3 steps will certainly help you become a great learner.

1. **Prepare the brain**: make sure you understand the bigger picture as to why it would be useful to store this new information in your brain. Ask yourself "*why?*" and "*how does this fact fit into a larger topic?*" This is called **metacognition** – a learner who knows that they're learning and what they're learning will learn more (and learn better).
2. **Feed the brain**: the brain learns best through doing and teaching. So after initially reading, understanding, and re-reading out loud a few times, get doing. Explore different techniques and see what you find most enjoyable and effective. Use your senses (see, hear, touch, taste, smell). The more you can feed your senses into what you need to learn, the more emotional you make it. The more emotional it is (fun, exciting, challenging), the more the brain creates links to it for future recall.
3. **Fix it in the brain**: this moves information from your short-term memory to your long-term memory. A good approach is what is sometimes called **The McKinsey Model = *Hear, See, Do, Teach***.
    - If you see something you're 4x more likely to remember it
    - If you hear + see something + do it you're 8x more likely to remember it
    - If you hear + see + do it + teach it to someone else you're 16x more likely to remember it

The 2 types of testing:

1. **Summative**: these test what you know up to a certain point (exams and assessments).
2. **Formative**: these assess your progress. What you can remember/do and what you can't yet remember/do. Formative testing is very powerful; a crucial part of learning is testing yourself.

The importance of testing (& failure):

Testing is a crucial part of learning. It allows you to work out what's gone in and what's not (formative), and shows you how effectively you've learned something and what kind of memory techniques work best

for you before the exam itself (summative testing). Failure is a crucial element of self-development; your brain learns through doing and re-doing.

Test yourself at least 3 times:
1: With your **notes to hand**.
2: **Without your notes** (writing down what bits you can't remember)
3: Without notes, **timed, under exam conditions**.

"Memory is the residue of thought"
Daniel T. Willingham, Psychologist

Remember: create connections in your brain that allow you to bring information to your mind quickly, instinctively and passively. It is always better to get up and do: to immerse yourself in thought and imagery about what you are trying to learn. The more we get up and do, the more we harness the ways our ancestors learned, before digital media and the written word (which has only existed for about 5,500 years, with origins from the Sumer area of the Persian Gulf).

Watch Johnny's introduction to the Unchain your Brain webinar session

Watch Johnny's quick Study Skills guide to inspire your learning

Watch Johnny's quick Revision Techniques top tips