

Unit Three:

Acquiring Knowledge

YGPS (Your Global Positioning System), Workshop Series 2010

Unit 3: Acquiring knowledge

# 1. Introduction

Read the following three quotations:

Knowledge is power.

*- Francis Bacon*

Man is not weak - knowledge is more than equivalent to force.
The master of mechanics laughs at strength.

*- Samuel Johnson*

They know enough who know how to learn.

*- Henry Adams*

Do you agree with these statements?

Acquiring knowledge is what education is all about since it empowers you as an individual to reach your dreams. For a good post-secondary student it is just as important **to know how to learn** as it is to acquire new knowledge since you will continue to learn the rest of your life.

Acquiring knowledge is not just about getting good marks it is about absorbing and engaging with new ideas and facts of all types and in all situations. A good learner is also able to validate information and to connect related information and ideas and keeping a balance between the big picture and the details. To help you develop an active and open mind this unit makes use of seven short videos (32 minutes in total) developed by McMaster University in Canada to help you meet the learning outcomes of the module.

## Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

* Describe what brain based learning is
* Explain how the memory process works
* Identify your learning style
* Enhance your study skills by:
	+ Describing your specific study methods
	+ Choosing an effective note taking technique
	+ Practicing the question method
* Know how to prepare for exams

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| YGPS_resource icon.jpg | Start up activity 3.1: How the brain learns |

Watch the video on ***Brain based learning*** [05:44 min] on your resource file . Use the left side of this table to make notes during the video. Then answer the questions in the right hand column.

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| Notes  | Questions |
|  | Why do students get confused? |
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|  | What should you feed your brain? |
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|  | How can you adapt the triangle technique to your study environment? |
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# 2. How do I remember?

One of the problems that many students face in post-secondary learning is that they struggle with the volume of work. There are many reasons why learners struggle with this problem, but the main reason is that they do not understand the mental actions that are needed for effective learning.

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpgYGPS_resource icon.jpg | Assessment Activity 3.2 Full frontal learning |

Watch the video on ***Full frontal learning*** [04:16 min] on your resource file . After you have watched the video complete the empty spaces in the pictures below.



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# 3. What is my learning style?

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpg | Learning Activity 3.3: Identifying your learning style |

A learning style is your preferred way of getting information into your brain and retrieving it later on. A learning style preference forms from past experiences, past choices, past learning, and past subject interests as well as other things such as previous skills. A learning style develops because of a self-reinforcing pattern. The more you use a style the more comfortable you become with it, and the easier it is for you to implement it. Therefore when a new learning situation occurs, you are more likely to employ the study method that is drawn from that preferred learning style, sometimes to the exclusion of other styles BUT remember learning style is not learning ability

It is not your IQ or aptitude for a subject. There is no barrier for you using or learning another style; just that by habit, you don't use it. Not all learning styles are equally effective in all disciplines. This is not a surprise, how you study for English is different than how you study for calculus. However, the most successful students are those who are flexible, they asses their course, they assess their material, and what they are learning, and change their learning style as appropriate. This means sometimes going against your learning preferences, and developing skills in different learning style techniques .

**To identify your learning style you are going to enter cyberspace....**

1. Open your web browser (Internet Explorer, etc.) and type in the following address: <http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire>
2. Complete the questionnaire and click OK
3. Click on the help sheets to help you understand your learning style
4. For more information you can click on help sheets in the left hand menu to get suggestions for study strategies that link best to your learning style; or you can type in the following web address:

<http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=helpsheets>

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| YGPS_assessment icon.jpg | Assessment Activity 3.4 |

## Reflecting on your learning

Read through the sections you have completed thus far and answer the following questions:

1. Describe brain based learning?

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1. How does one move information from the short term memory to the long term memory?

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1. What is your learning style?

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1. What study strategies do you need to use?

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# 4. Enhancing your study skills

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpgYGPS_resource icon.jpg | Assessment Activity 3.5 The good, the bad and the useless |

Watch the video on **The good, the bad and the useless** [04:27 min] on your resource file and answer the question below:

Which study strategy do you find most effective when learning?

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 (Walsh, 2004b)

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpgYGPS_resource icon.jpg | Assessment Activity 3.6 Note taking |

Watch the video on **Notes and more notes** [04:09 min] on your resource file and answer the question below:

Which note taking strategy would be the most effective for you to use?

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpgYGPS_resource icon.jpg | Assessment Activity 3.7 Note taking: CK maps |

Watch the video on **Concept Knowledge Maps** [03:34 min] on your resource file and answer the question below:

Would you use concept knowledge maps? Why?

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| YGPS_activity icon.jpgYGPS_resource icon.jpg | Assessment Activity 3.8 Question Method |

Watch the video on **Question method of studying** [05:09 min] on your resource file and answer the question below:

What do you think about the question method of studying?

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## 4.1 Sharing on your learning

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| YGPS_group activity icon.jpg | Group Activity 3.9 |

1. **Reflect critically**

Turn back to the start-up activity 3.1. Read through the notes you made during the video. Now, read through your answers in learning activities 3.5 to 3.8. Use the space below to indicate how you would improve on the notes you took in activity 3.1.

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1. **Share you learning**

Form pairs and tell each other what you have learnt in this section. You might like to make additional notes below during your discussion.

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# 5. Getting ready for exams

Tests and exams often make students anxious or scared. Although the anxiety and even fear is understandable it is also possible to do something about these emotions.

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| YGPS_group activity icon.jpg | Group Activity 3.10: Getting ready for exams |

Watch the video on **Getting ready for exams** [05:06min] in your resource file . In groups of 4 discuss what you have learnt and how you would improve your own exam skills.

Use the space below to make notes of your discussion. One member of the group will briefly report back to the class.

# 6. Tracking my progress

You have reached the end of this section. Check whether you have achieved the learning outcomes for this section.

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| **Learning outcomes** | **✓ I feel confident** | **✓ I still need practice** |
| I am able to describe brain based learning |  |  |
| I can explain how the memory works |  |  |
| I have identified my learning style |  |  |
| I recognise how I can improve my study skills |  |  |
| I understand how to prepare for exams |  |  |

What did you like best about this section?

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What did you find most difficult in this section?

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What do you need to improve on? How will you do this?

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