

This article appeared as a supplement to the JuniorTukkie magazine (November 2017) edition

Learning is Life

By Anthea Pretorius

Learning is a natural and a lifelong process that should excite you and gladden your heart, because learning helps us to understand our world and how we can make it better.

Our brains are a muscle that need to be flexed. Brain fitness increases wellbeing and prevents atrophy. Learning should make you feel wonderfully alive and engaged in topics that intrigue and fascinate you. At a university you can explore any topic that excites you intellectually. You have access to knowledgeable academics across nine faculties in 1 800 academic programmes. You have access to fantastic libraries (see article on pages 23-24); to community engagement experiences; to thousands of online journals; to apps and to discussion groups and talks presented on our various campuses.

Human beings learn best when they are alert and relaxed

We learn when our minds are focused on an immediate experience both in lectures and laboratories, where practical implementation of theory takes place.

Human beings learn by making connections

These connections are on a mental level where prior learning, concepts, associations, comparisons and memorisation takes place.

Connections also take place on a social level at university, because you will be exposed to an intellectually rich and diversified environment. Every conversation is an opportunity to share ideas, to formulate questions, to search for solutions, to discuss alternatives and different perspectives; to discover, invent, to weigh options, to envision and to suppose.

'Your active choice to participate, to question, to ponder, to challenge, to differ – is the mind-set of a difference maker, a creative innovator and a winner.'

The more you learn, the hungrier you will find you become to obtain more knowledge. This is because learning is like an excursion into a mysterious world; a trip into a place where the unexpected, the surprising, the shocking, the scary, the wonderful, the unexplained, the frightening, the imaginative all take place. It is a world of endless possibility. It is the world of intelligence and imagination and

creativity and innovation. It is the world of entrepreneurship.

Time is what we want most, but what we use worst. (William Penn, 1692)

What limits learning?

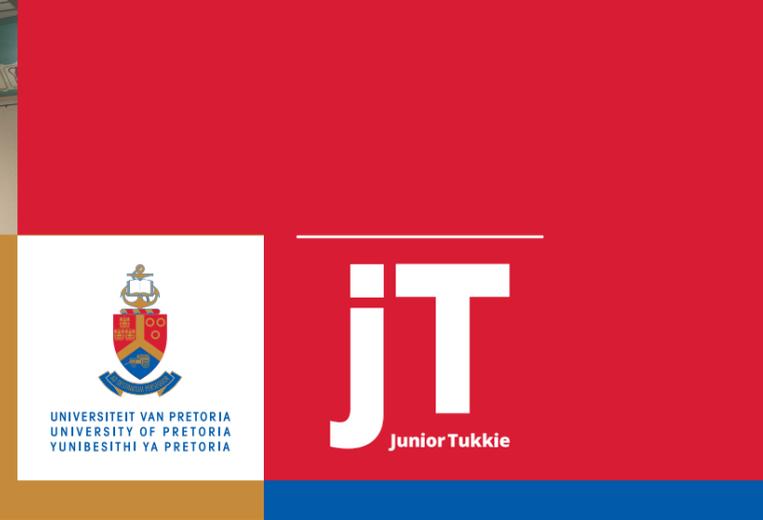
- A lack of discipline/commitment
- A lack of interest/engagement
- A lack of focus
- A lack of physical and mental preparation
- A lack of consistent effort
- A lack of drive and tenacity
- A lack in acquiring sound learning habits
- A lack of planning and achievable scheduling
- A lack of time management
- Distractions (like social media)
- Clutter in your learning environment
- Disorganisation
- Disinterest
- Laziness
- Procrastination
- Poor lifestyle choices (eg nutrition, rest, lack of exercise)

Tips, techniques and tactics

The University of Pretoria offers a range of supportive services that enable you to not only succeed academically, but to excel.

Every student is encouraged to:

- Fearless question
- Test ideas
- Be curious
- Read literature on the topics that interest you
- Listen attentively
- Think critically
- Share your opinions boldly
- Discuss theories
- Take notes
- Reflect on what you learn
- Generate new ideas/to be innovative
- Collaborate, interact and learn from others
- Support and encourage your peers in their learning journeys
- Build a network on a personal and professional level
- Share what you have learned by explaining the material to other students
- Develop the ability to verbalise what you learn and to write about it in a manner that is concise and summarises the three most salient points under headings
- Think about where knowledge can be applied
- Organise your learning into logical and coherent groupings so that you can also make comparisons.



Join the UP conversations in your modules, in your programme, in your Faculty, on websites, online forum and other platforms. Participate in MOOCs. Find your tribe!

Learning is life.

Learning is progress.

Learning is worthwhile and it is fun.

Learning is a wonderful opportunity.

Learning is a state of mind.

Learning is a personal commitment.

Learning produces knowledge.

Knowledge produces confidence.

Confidence forms your character.

Character results in you becoming an intelligent contributor.

Learning should be stimulating and pleasant. Don't be scared to have fun!

