

Learning how to learn

My action research project at UTS College
Laura Hanna



Why students struggle?

- Students get stuck and don't know what to do.
- Help with motivation, time management and study skills could have made a difference.

(Jason Lodge, UTS FFYE forum on learning)

My question

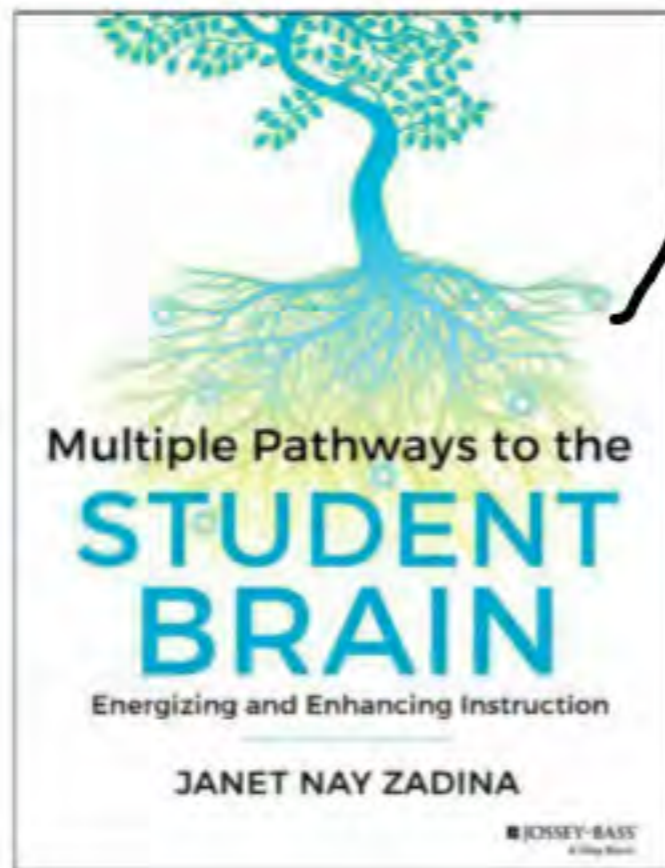
How can I support my students to develop effective learning skills and strategies?

- Did the accounting students develop their learning skills during semester 2, 2023?
- Do the accounting students feel more confident and engaged as a result of the specific focus on learning?

My plan

Embed learning skills weekly:

- Something to read at home
- Short activity in class
- Learning journal in class



- Goals and self-assessment
- What is learning? and note-taking
- Growth mindset
- Using visuals
- Speaking
- Writing
- Time management
- Is all stress bad?
- Attention and focus
- Motivation
- How does learning feel?



How do you define learning?

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How do you define learning?

What is learning?

There are three essential elements to learning:

1. Learning is a **process**, not a product. However, because this process takes place in the mind, we can only infer that it has occurred from students' products or performances.
2. Learning involves **change** in knowledge, beliefs, behaviours or attitudes. This change unfolds over time; it is not fleeting but rather has a **lasting** impact on how students think and act.
3. Learning is not something done to students, but rather something **students themselves do**. It is the direct result of how students interpret and respond to their experiences – conscious and unconscious, past and present.

Ambrose et al (2010)



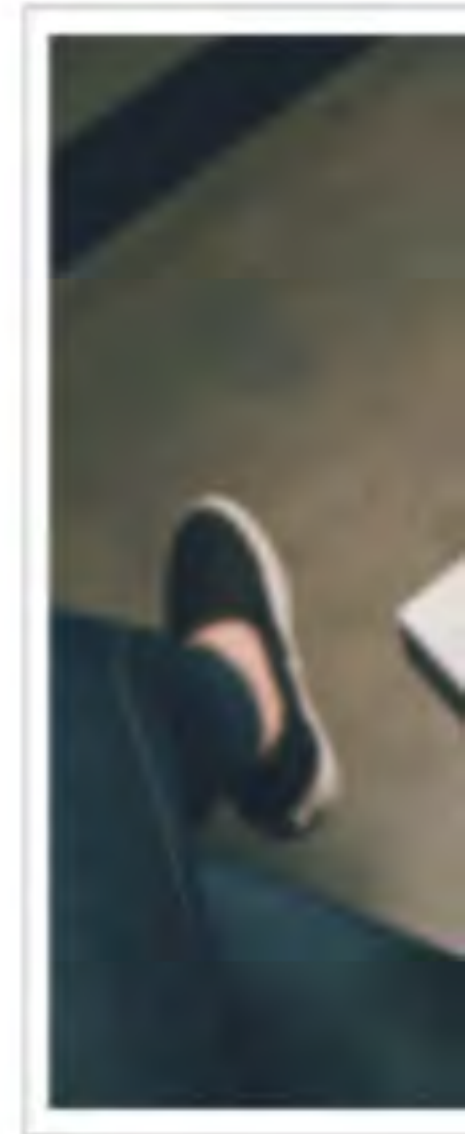
How learning works

Write it!

Write out important information to learn it. This requires the brain to gather and assemble the information and then organise it.

Learning tip: Write out the key concepts for each module.

Drawing or organising the information into visuals like mind maps, lists, or diagrams is also effective. Create study notes from the pre-tutorial materials and take notes during each tutorial.



Class activity: note-taking groups (Felton & Lambert, 2020).



Quiz

Time management

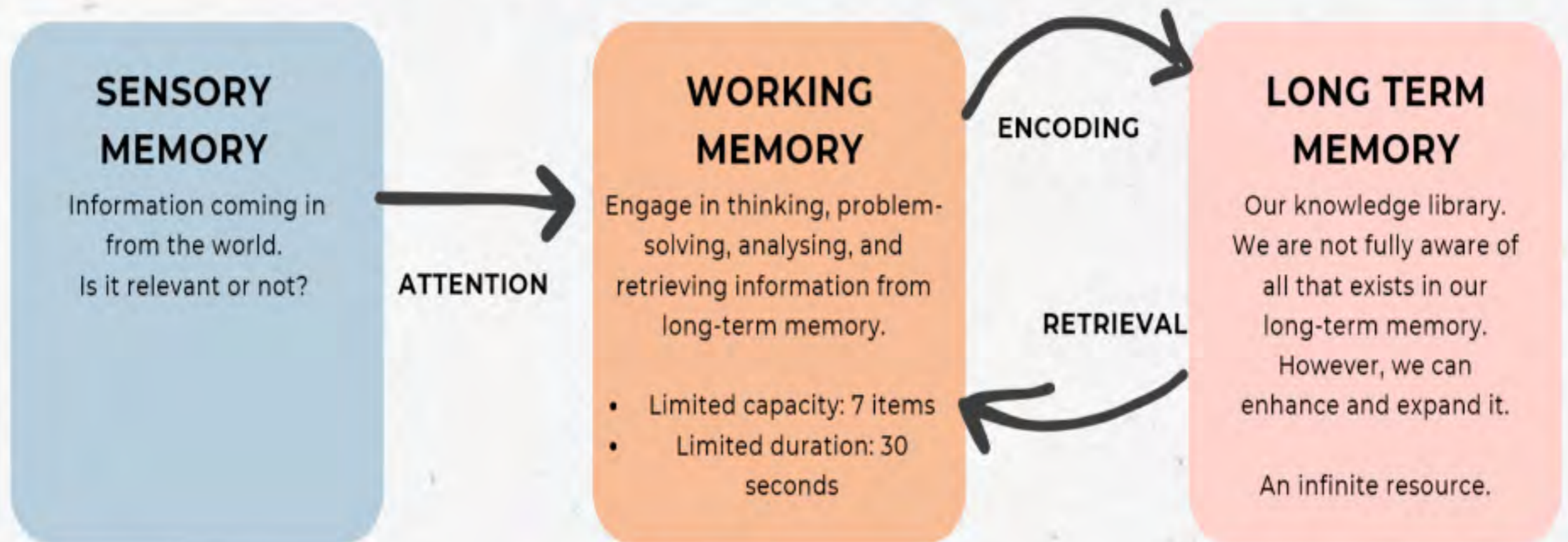


Which strategy is the best when preparing for an exam?

- Studying for eight hours the day before the exam.
- Studying for one hour each day, for eight days before the exam.
- Study all night before the exam.
- I am not sure.

MODEL OF MEMORY

LEARNING: MOVING KNOWLEDGE TO LONG-TERM MEMORY SO IT CAN BE CONSCIOUSLY RETRIEVED AS NEEDED



Penny Van Bergen & Alissa Beath

Quiz

Most effective study method



Which study method is the most effective?

- Researching online and finding YouTube videos to watch.
- Re-reading notes.
- Highlighting notes.**
- Testing yourself.

Quiz



Which statement about stress during learning is the most accurate?

- Low or moderate stress can be helpful.
- Any type of stress during learning decreases the ability to focus and learn.
- High levels of stress help students to learn more effectively.
- Feeling stressed during an exam helps you to perform better.



How learning works

Is all stress bad?

Learning at university is challenging and it can be stressful. Stress is a reaction in your body. It's your body taking care of you. Mild stress can be good for us. It can help us focus and pay attention to what is important. It can also give you motivation to get things done.

University is challenging! There is no reward for doing something easy.

For example, you don't feel satisfied doing a 10-piece puzzle compared to a 1000-piece one. The reward comes from doing something challenging. So, when things feel hard, don't give up.

What to do when you feel stressed:



My data- survey

- **91% developed more effective learning skills** which included things like:
 - Taking concise notes, formatting clearly. (17 comments)
 - Being disciplined, time management. (8 comments)
 - Collaboration and group work. (10 comments)
 - Doing practice, repetition and recall. (8 comments)
 - Understanding assignment briefs. (1 comment)
 - Critical thinking. (1 comment)
 - Goal setting. (1 comment)
- **89% felt more engaged and confident** due to the deliberate focus on learning.

Student comments

“Yes, I have improved because back in high school I did not maintain study notes. My study notes are very nicely structured now.”

“Study notes is important because it lets me put what I’ve learnt each week and write it down in my own words so I don’t forget and can look back at it if I do forget.”

“I have also found that throughout the modules, Laura included some study hacks that I have found to be extremely effective such as reading aloud, writing notes so that I am able to visualise the information, pretending I am teaching a class so that I can reword the explanation of challenging concepts so that I am also able to understand as well as the audience.”

My reflections

- More support for my students.
- More conversations about learning.
- Professionally invigorating.

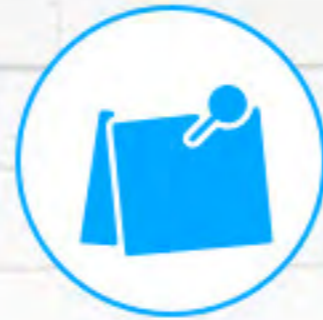
My next steps

- Learn more about learning.
- Learn more about action research.
- Action research group with my colleagues.

One essential learning skill or strategy?

In a subject you teach or you use in your own learning

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One essential learning skill or strategy?

Reference list

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Any questions or feedback?

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