Boost your learning
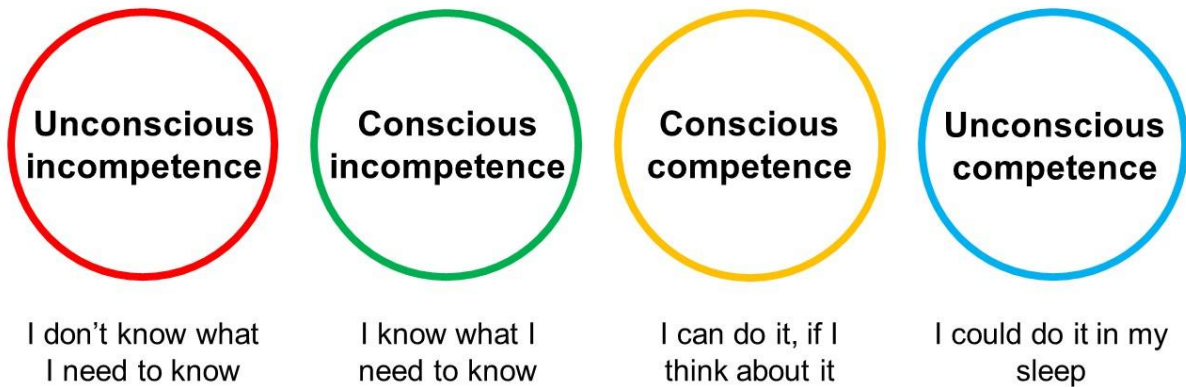
Learning and revising is incredibly challenging for many, but understanding the process will help. Here's how.

Learning journey

The next part has the long words "conscious" and "competence". Stay with it, and you'll soon see what I'm on about.

Learning Journey

Unconscious incompetence	Conscious incompetence	Conscious competence	Unconscious competence
I don't know what I need to know	I know what I need to know	I can do it, if I think about it	I could do it in my sleep

When learning, you follow a set journey through different levels of knowing.

Unconscious incompetence is where you don't know what you need to know. This stage often has you, unintentionally, making mistakes. To overcome this stage, you need help. Research online, a teacher, asking a friend, anything that will help you identify the skills and knowledge needed to learn something.

Example: You don't know that times tables exist.

Conscious incompetence is where you can identify the skills and knowledge needed, but you don't yet have the skills or knowledge. Often in this stage there is a lot of guilt or disheartenment felt because you've made mistakes and you now recognise them as mistakes. To overcome this stage, you simply need to practise. Repetition, teaching someone else, watching someone else do it, and more.

Example: You know that numbers can be multiplied, but you don't know how to do it.

Conscious competence is where you can demonstrate the skill or knowledge, but only if you are thinking about it. To continue past this stage, you need to keep practising and try to introduce practise into day to day life. This could be looking for

opportunities in the real world, bringing it into conversations, and continuing the activities used in conscious incompetence.

Example: You know your times tables, but you have to use your fingers to get it right.

Unconscious competence is where you know what you know and you don't need to think about doing it. You might not even know that you know it! Be careful in this stage as it often relies on muscle memory and when that muscle memory fails you in a stressful situation, you might not be able to perform at your best, ending up back at conscious incompetence.

Example: You can immediately answer times table questions, but potentially freeze when asked to explain why.

Learning cycle

The learning cycle demonstrates how we can approach learning or revising something.

Goal setting is really important to establish what you are working on, why you're working on it, and where you want to end up.

Planning allows you to work out how you re going to achieve your goal and what steps are needed to get where you want to be.
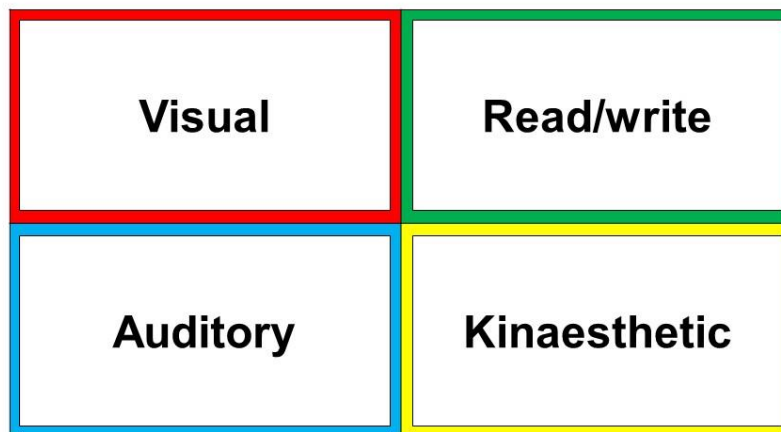
Learning is where you are going to develop the skills and knowledge needed.

Exploring is when you take that learning and apply it to real life situations.

Reflecting gives you the chance to review and adjust your goals ready to start the cycle again.

Learning strategies

Learning Strategies

Visual	Read/write
Auditory	Kinaesthetic

There are four main types of learning. Often you'll find several areas beneficial, but using an online quiz, you can determine which of each area is going to be most helpful for you as an individual.

Visual is all about colours and pictures. Learning strategies you may find helpful:

- Charts/graphs
- Posters
- Pictures/diagrams
- Videos

Read/write looks at learning through the use of words. Learning strategies you might find helpful:

- Reading books
- Writing notes
- Annotations
- Quizzes

Auditory involves listening to information. Learning strategies you may find helpful:

- Podcasts/audiobooks
- Lecturers
- Repetition
- Speaking

Kinaesthetic or physical learning involves moving your body. Learning strategies you may find helpful:

- Workshops
- Roleplay
- Modelling
- Trial and error

Now that you know all about the process of learning, why not get started on your next journey by creating your first goal. I like to use the SMART goal template as it helps ensure I'm successful.

SMART Goals

S Specific

M Measurable

A Actionable

R Realistic and relevant

T Time-bound

S – Specific – Identify what it will look like when you've achieved your goal.

M – Measurable – What scale will you use to determine you've met your goal.

A – Actionable – The plan you are going to follow to achieve your goal.

R – Realistic and relevant – Can you realistically action your plan and is it relevant to the specific goal.

T – Time-bound – When are you going to review your goal.

Example: I want to be able to be able to play my piano pieces confidently and pass my Grade 3 piano exam. I am going to practice 5 days per week and have 1 lesson per week. I've blocked my practice time and lessons into my diary and I've booked my piano exam for March 15th.

Specific – Confident piano playing.

Measurable – Passing an exam.

Actionable – I've made a plan to practice and learn.

Realistic/relevant – I've checked this will fit into my diary and it will work towards my goal.

Time-bound – I've given myself a review date.

Good luck with whatever learning journey you go on next!