



PRESS RELEASE

“IF MY STUDY SUMMARIES LOOK APPEALING, I ENJOY PICKING THEM UP.”

An interview with learning expert Nicola Berger on the Instagram trend #studygram:

Ms. Berger, we are pleased to be able to talk to you about the subject of "learning". Not everyone is immediately enthusiastic when it comes to learning. Where does your passion for learning techniques come from?

Things never just fell into my lap, neither at school nor later in the course of my studies. I always had to organize myself well and study a lot. But I quickly realized that this could also be fun. At university, I studied this area and discovered many new strategies and tips that help make learning easier.

Not everyone learns the same way. How does one know which learning technique suits one best?

There are many ways to prepare learning content. Everyone should test different sensory channels and learning styles for themselves and it would be best to absorb knowledge via several channels.

Can you give some examples?

Written summaries, visualisations such as mind maps, listening to texts, saying aloud and repeating learning material, learning in groups or haptic learning.

That's a wide variety. But how do I know what suits me best?

You should observe yourself to determine which methods are suitable. Questions such as these can help: Can I work well with mind maps and diagrams? Do I absorb knowledge well in lectures when I listen, or do I have to take notes? Can I work well in groups? Is presenting learning content to others or myself helpful for me?

If I know how I can learn best, which tools should I definitely buy in order to learn successfully?

First of all, it is important that you obtain the literature you need for learning in advance. Furthermore, you need paper, pads, post-its, pens in different colours and widths, markers, a sharpener that works well, a ruler and a decent eraser.

Where is the best place to learn?

Whether you learn better at home at your desk, in the library, or in a café depends on the person you are. Many people can better recall learning content when they change workspaces, as the material is linked to the place where it was learned.



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What is the best way to design my workspace?

You should feel comfortable at your workspace. It should be designed in such a way that you enjoy being there. I am a fan of the mise-en-place method. The term actually comes from the gastronomic field. It means that everything you need in order to learn is within reach.

For some time there has been the hashtag #studygram on Instagram. Learners worldwide post their creatively designed study material. Why is this so successful?

The hashtag #studygram is based on trends of recent years, for example hand lettering and bullet journaling. The community shows appealing workspaces one looks forward to. Preparing study material becomes a hobby. In this way, the motivation of learners automatically increases.

For whom is this method particularly suitable?

Many of the charts and learning diagrams that can be seen at #studygram look really artistic. You certainly need to have some talent for this. Nevertheless, the simple structuring and visual processing with different pens, fonts and colours are already ideal for learners who can absorb well visually and haptically.

Can certain colours or shapes help you remember things better?

The small, typical symbols we often see in #studygram posts definitely help to structure and visualize learning material. If my study summaries look appealing, I enjoy picking them up. I automatically link the symbols with the learning material.

And which colours should I use?

It is best to choose colours that appeal to you and contrast well. It can make sense to assign colours to specific topics. We associate colours with certain things. There are different opinions about the effect of colours. Red, for example, is supposed to have a stimulating effect. But if you associate red with a teacher's red pencil, the learning success can also be inhibited. The best thing for everyone is to decide for themselves which colours motivate and appeal to them.

That all sounds very positive but is there also a catch with #studygram?

Yes, a small one: Preparing study charts the way we see them at #studygram takes time. A good and not too tight schedule, which you should keep to, if possible, is helpful. In addition, you should think carefully about what content you want to prepare in this way. Topics in which visualization plays a major role, such as the components of the heart for a biology test, are particularly suitable.

One also often sees lists and plans.

They also particularly encourage you to keep at it. Preparing a nice study plan that you need throughout the whole learning process can be motivating.

That's often easier said than done. Many people are putting off tasks for days. Are you also someone who occasionally procrastinates? Or what do you struggle with when learning?

My biggest obstacle when learning has always been the blockade that occurs when there is a pile of work ahead of me that is too big. At first glance, it often seems invincible. That's what I call the "small-mouse-in-front-of-big-mountain syndrome." Three strategies can help here. For me, the easiest and most important method: Just get started! Then I like to apply the so-called salami tactics. You divide big tasks into many small feasible slices, just like with a salami.

And the third strategy?



Always start with a learning task that you enjoy. It is helpful to first of all create a plan with a pretty design. One can, for example, post it with the hashtag #studygram and motivate one another. Once you're in the flow, the tasks you're not looking forward to later become easier.

To conclude, a question about motivation: Your homepage says that you drink 3 cups of coffee per text page. Which motivation tips would you give pupils and students in learning phases? Should they also drink a lot of coffee?

(laughs) Of course, this was meant to be more of a joke. For example, good time management is important. This includes not being too ambitious - better go with smaller portions. In between you should take regular breaks - best offline to allow the brain to process what it has learned - and you should sleep enough. Furthermore, you should reward yourself for the work you have done: for example with a cup of coffee *(laughs)* or a tea, a bath or a walk.

Thank you very much for this insightful interview, Ms. Berger.

For further information on #studygram go to: <https://www.staedtler.com/intl/en/discover/starting-a-studygram/>

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