

How to Excel as a Student in Niger Delta University

By

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The desire of every student is to excel in his/her academics once admitted into the university. A few of the students manage to scale through, but a greater number graduate with average results. And of course, a good number still fail out! You may want to know why? The reason is simple: Students are not taught on how they can excel in their academics! Most of the lecturers only concentrate on the content of the discipline. For instance, a lecturer in Mathematics, Biology, Computer Science, Engineering, etc will only make efforts to cover the course outline without recourse to providing additional information on how students can comprehend and perform better in the subject matter, and graduate with flying colours.

Thus, unknown to most students, the ability to excel in their academics is actually within their reach, and require very simple efforts as they can do so on their own without necessarily waiting for the lecturer to teach or guide them. However, what you don't know they say, can defeat you.

This brief presentation therefore hopes to address this salient matter to assist students who are willing to perform better in their studies and find fulfillment. It is not a philosophy or theoretical diatribe, but proven tips that were gleaned from years of experience on how the average student can magically position him/ herself on the honours list on graduation. The issues discussed have assisted numerous students and others to perform excellently. They will therefore equally assist you. However, there is a condition attached to it if it must work for you. And here it is: According to Bernard Shaw, "If you teach a man anything, he will never learn. Learning according to him is an active process". We learn ONLY by doing. So, if you desire to master the principles you are studying in this paper, do something about them. Apply the principles at every opportunity. This is because if you don't, you will forget them quickly. It is a known fact that only knowledge that is utilized sticks to mind. There are seven tips that will be discussed in no particular order.

Seven Proven Secrets for Students who wish to Excel in Niger Delta University

1. **Set goal(s) for yourself:** Everybody knows that without the goal post(s), there can never be the game of football. So also is the game of life. The question to ask is: How many students set **goals** and make **plans** to work towards achieving those goals on admission into the university? It is habitually said that, "No body plans to fail, but in reality, many people actually fail to plan". This is often because people refuse to set realistic goals that will spur them to success. Goal here means objective, aim, end, ambition, target, purpose, aspiration, etc. By this definition, it is clear that what spurs the student to succeed is the goal(s) he/she sets on admission in to the university. Regrettably, a good percentage of students do not set any goal neither do they know how to set goals for themselves. Is there any wonder then why they perform so poorly? Goals as a matter of fact spur you to aspire higher; without which you just get along, and anything goes. Not having specific goals, and plans are therefore the primary reasons for students' poor performance in the university and in other areas of endeavour for that matter.

2. **Develop a reading time-table:** The story of creation as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis clearly indicated that God worked with a time-table. The work plan was contained in a seven-day time-table that saw the world beautifully created. The story revealed that even the all knowing, all sufficient, all powerful God had to design a time-table and work strictly by it to succeed. If this is the case, as we all know that it is true, then why shouldn't you do the same to succeed? However, the truth is that most students, even students in their final year do not have study time-tables. Is there any secret that will make a student to excel without the divine tool of a study time-table?

3. **Use your power of imagination/ visualization:** In the words of Albert Einstein, "Imagination is more important than knowledge: knowledge is limited but imagination encircles the world". And Napoleon Bonaparte said, "Imagination rules the world". It is a known fact that every person who accomplishes anything worthwhile in life begins with a big dream or a vision of what is possible for him/ her. They rise above their current surroundings, their existing limitations and challenges, and instead they imagine themselves sometime in the future living the kind of life they desire. This is because all things are possible through the power of belief, imagination and concentrated vision about your desires and expectations. Students who wish to excel need to envision and constantly imagine what they want to achieve and work assiduously towards it. For instance, imagine that you have the ability to be the top in your class and strive for it. Imagine that you are brilliant and confident and capable of achieving success and commit yourself to study. Also imagine that you can set and achieve any goal that you put your mind to and work towards it. The mere act of believing, imagining and working hard for what you desire will open more vistas of success for you; you become more brilliant, confident, assertive, and focused. Theron Dumont remarked that it is an established principle of psychology that the mental picture of the object or subject of a feeling, emotion or desire, when held before the mind tends to add force, power and vitality to the emotional state representing it, thereby making your desires manifest. In the words of Brian Tracy, visualization activates the Law of Correspondence, which says, "As within, so without". As you change your mental pictures on the inside, your world on the outside, like a mirror, will begin to change. Just as you become what you think about most of the time, you become what you visualize most of the time as well. You should therefore make use of your free gift of imagination and be able to visualize what you desire with feeling, emotion and passion. Interestingly, you don't need to buy these qualities or any of the other secrets being discussed in this paper.

4. **Think success:** Someone said that the greatest discovery in human history is the power of your mind to create almost everything you want. This is true because everything you see around you began with a thought (thinking) or an idea in the mind of a single person before it was translated into reality (telephone, aero plane, motor car, computer, clothes, buildings, the chair that you are sitting on now, etc). Your thoughts are therefore creative. In fact, thoughts are things! Your thoughts (thinking) form and shape your world and everything that happens to you. King Solomon said, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is (Prov. 23:7). Also, Apostle Paul admonished the people at Philippi (Phil 4:8) that they should fix their minds on whatsoever things that are pure, honourable, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy; and that if there be any virtue in them, they should think about such things. This suggests that what you think about most of the time, come to be. Job lamented that what he feared most has happened to him (Job 3:25). This happened through his continuous thinking about his fears. The question to ask is: As a student, what do you think about most of the time? Often time, students worry more than they focus their minds to creatively think and solve problems. Hear what Theron Dumont said, "...Man no longer sleeps in caves. The smoke no longer fills his home or finds its way out through the chinks in the walls or a hole in the roof. In traveling, he is no longer restricted to his feet or even to horses. For all this improvement, Man is indebted to Thought". In truth, for all the advancement in all human endeavours we give credit to the power of creative thinking, idea or

thought. The fact is that, you become what you think about most of the time. This is the great truth that underlies all religion, philosophy, psychology and success. The power of progressive thought is available to you, please use it positively and creatively to excel in all areas of your life.

5. **Practice:** Let me repeat what Bernard Shaw said here: “If you teach a man anything, he will never learn, learning is an active process”. It is a known fact that we learn by doing. So, if you desire to be at the top of your class, then you must practice continuously what you have been taught. This is because if you don’t, you will forget them quickly. It is another known fact that only knowledge that is utilized sticks to mind. As a student, how often, and how well do you practice? Ralph Waldo said, “Do the thing and you will have the power”. Similarly, we already know that it is only through practice that we perfect anything. So how often do you practice? Once? Twice?
6. **Be focused:** It is common truth that you can’t hit a target that you can’t see. In all areas of human endeavour, it is the people that are focused that are leading and succeeding. To be focused will require you to direct all your energy, your attention and concentration on what is important to you. Studies have shown that the best students academically are usually focused and never distracted by irrelevant pleasures and laziness. Another study revealed that the very act of focused attention will cause you to perform better in whatever area, both consciously and unconsciously. To be focused is therefore a necessary virtue for success.
7. **Feel the thrill of accomplishment:** Congratulation. As you have come to the seventh day or seventh tip, it is certain that you must excel. The principles discussed here are universal in nature, so they must work for you. So having come this far, you have already succeeded. What you must feel now is a sense of fulfillment, especially as you have designed a method of practicing each of the item discussed. Now you are advised to actually feel good, happy and excited. This is what is called, “nature’s wonder drug” and it works this way: Anytime you successfully finish an assignment of any type, your brain releases a small portion of hormone called ‘endorphins’. This gives you a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment; making you happy and at peace. Research reveals that this stimulates your creativity and improves your personality as well. And the more important the task that you complete, the greater the quantity of the endorphins that your brain will release, making you feel more excited and happy. This has another advantage, by activating your creative mind. Over time, this habit will make you to be more focused and work at ease to achieve excellent results. Learn therefore to celebrate your successes by just feeling good and happy.

Conclusion

The tips provided do not work only for students. They can be applied in all other areas of human endeavour. The result you will obtain is excellent performance. This is because the issues discussed as earlier stated are universal principles, which means the staff who wants to excel in his/ her career can also apply them; the businessman or woman; the restaurant operator; the teacher; the manager or even if you want to be wealthy. And by the way, who does not want to perform better to achieve better results? A final word from Goethe as I wrap up, “*Are you in earnest? Seek this very minute, whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Only engage and the mind grows heated. Begin and then the task will be completed.*”