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'Mind Your Brain' Workshop Help QA Students Understand Their Learning Styles

Brain-based learning strategy expert John Joseph worked with Qatar Academy students recently in a workshop aimed at improving their learning skills. Aptly called 'Mind Your Brain', the workshop provides an understanding of how the brain works and how students can use that knowledge to become 'superstar learners'.

The program covers a multitude of topics ranging from improving homework to brain care and various information processing models, all presented in simple frameworks filled with tips to engage students and help them identify their learning styles. For instance, Joseph shared a fairly simple rule for brain care: get enough sleep each night. He backed this up with an exercise on identifying at least ten common sleep thieves and how poor sleep can hurt student performance. He concluded the discussion by sharing easy to follow tips on how to get better sleep. His top ways on how to improve homework likewise included helpful ideas such as designing and keeping a homework diary, creating graphic organizers to make remembering and retrieving information easier and interesting strategies like playing computer games or visiting social networking sites first before doing homework.

According to Joseph it is imperative that students understand how their brain works and more significantly, how to utilize this understanding in acquiring knowledge and skills in school based on their own learning style. Equally important is learning how to de-stress and focus on enjoyment and satisfaction, exercising and taking breaks from study. Going beyond the academic setting, he also discussed motivation and confidence with a broader look at achieving success later in life.

In a related professional development session for teachers during the week and through the Parenting with the Brain in Mind workshop for parents, Joseph's message resonates with the whole QA community: "Everyone thinks. It is in our nature to do so. However, not everyone thinks well and that includes some of top grade-achieving students". Understanding how the brain works is important because "learning style, rather than intelligence, motivation or interest is often a major contributing reason for student performance".