

Tony Hollins is the director of the Education First Learning Centre in East Gosford on the NSW Central Coast. He has a masters degree in education and has been an educator since 1982 at all levels from pre-school to university.

# Students take control with the learning boost formula







**D**o you think it is possible to boost the quantity and quality of learning that students can achieve in a learning session? In my experience as an educator I have helped thousands of students of all ages and abilities to maximise their learning performance.

The key to my success as a teacher and their success as students is an understanding of the power of the four factors that determine the result they get from a learning experience, whether it is at school, at home or at tutoring.

I have combined these factors in a revolutionary way in “The Education First Learning Boost Formula”:

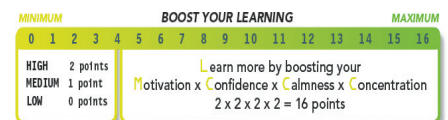
**L = MC3 Learning Boost =**  
**Motivation** x **Confidence** x **Calmness** x **Concentration**

## So why are these four factors so important?

	<b>Motivation:</b> A student who does not want to learn will learn very little. Motivated students can see some benefit to themselves of learning, even if that benefit is in the future. Motivated students set goals and develop strategies to hit their targets. They link what they are learning now with prior learning. They can see the “big picture” of their life as a student.
	<b>Confidence:</b> A lack of self-belief causes students to expect that they will not learn. This is usually caused by the disappointment of previous learning experiences, and almost guarantees they will not learn much this time either. Confident students believe they will learn, but understand that learning is not always easy. They know that learning involves the chance of making mistakes, and can cope with disappointing results. They believe they will reach the stars, eventually. They give themselves a “pep talk” before, during and after a learning session.
	<b>Calmness:</b> Negative emotions such as those generated by stress, fear, anger, boredom or despair prevent the entry of new concepts into the long-term memory of the subconscious mind. This is often described as “in one ear and out the other.” Calmness and alertness cause electrical activity in the brain that opens the filter to the subconscious. Concepts are then learned and recalled more easily.
	<b>Concentration:</b> Limited attention to the task at hand minimises the amount of learning that can occur in a given time. Students who study in front of a television or chat with their classmates are trying to make their study time more enjoyable. They are just prolonging the session and reducing its effectiveness. By concentrating, focussing attention on the object of study, students can learn more in less time.

To emphasise the control students have over their own learning, at Education First we use the idea of a computer game controller. Students can then give themselves a boost by imagining pressing the buttons!

Teachers remind students of the formula at the start of a learning session, and during the session if necessary. At the end of the session, students score zero, one or two points for each of the factors, and then multiply the numbers to find their Learning Boost Score for that session. Students are consciously controlling their own learning using the power of positive self-talk.



A score of zero for any of the factors will give an overall score of zero. This means there was no “boost” to learning, and the session was as effective as a “normal” session.

Try using the Learning Boost Formula next time you are in a learning situation. See if you can score a maximum boost of 16 points! Students at Education First are encouraged to use the formula at school and at home, and report excellent results.