

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Lesson 4: Effective Learning

**LO1 Understand how self-managed learning
can enhance lifelong development**

Introduction

- Students learn in many ways:
 - Seeing
 - Hearing
 - Experiencing things first hand.
- For most students, one of these methods stands out.

Effective Learning – Principles of Learning

- **Teaching does not automatically lead to learning**
 - Many students, even those who are scholastically gifted, understand less than we think they do. This has been proven by cognitive research.
- **Students' current ideas impact what they learn**
 - Regardless of how well teachers or books provide the information, students have to construct their own meaning.
 - It may be necessary for students to drastically reorganize their thinking.
- **Progression in Learning Is Usually From the Concrete to the Abstract**
 - It is easy for young students to learn about things that appeal to their senses —visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic.
 - As they mature, their ability to understand abstract concepts, manipulate symbols, reason logically, and generalize increases, albeit slowly.
 - Dependence on concrete examples of new ideas continues over the lifespan for most students.

Effective Learning – Principles of Learning

- **Students must practice in order to learn to do well**
 - For students to learn to think critically, be analytical, communicate effectively, argue logically, participate in teams, and acquire new skills, they must be encouraged and allowed to practice these things repeatedly.
- **Effective Learning by Students Requires Feedback**
 - The mere repetition of tasks by students—whether manual or intellectual—is unlikely to lead to improved skills or keener insights.
 - Learning often takes place best when students have opportunities to express ideas and get feedback from their peers.
 - For feedback to be most helpful to learners, it must consist of more than the provision of correct answers. Feedback ought to be analytical, to be suggestive, and to come at a time when students are interested in it.
 - There must be time for students to reflect on the feedback they receive, to make adjustments and to try again—a requirement that is neglected, it is worth noting, by most

Effective Learning – Principles of Learning

• Expectations Affect Performance

- Students respond to their own expectations of what they can and cannot learn.
 - If they believe they are able to learn something, whether solving equations or riding a bicycle, they usually make headway.
 - When they lack confidence, learning eludes them.
 - Students grow in self-confidence as they experience success in learning, just as they lose confidence in the face of repeated failure.
 - Teachers need to provide students with challenging but attainable learning tasks and help them succeed.
- Students are quick to pick up the expectations of success or failure that others have for them.
 - The positive and negative expectations shown by parents, counselors, principals, peers, and—more generally—by the news media affect students' expectations and hence their learning behavior.
 - When a teacher signals his or her lack of confidence in the ability of students to understand certain subjects, the students may lose confidence in their ability and may perform more poorly than they otherwise might. If this apparent failure reinforces the teacher's original judgment, a disheartening spiral of decreasing confidence and performance can result.

Effective Learning – Principles of Learning

- **Learning Is Not Necessarily an Outcome of Teaching**
 - Cognitive research is revealing that even with what is taken to be good instruction, many students, including academically talented ones, understand less than we think they do.
- **What Students Learn Is Influenced by Their Existing Ideas**
 - People have to construct their own meaning regardless of how clearly teachers or books tell them things.
 - But effective learning often requires more than just making multiple connections of new ideas to old ones; it sometimes requires that people restructure their thinking radically.
 - To incorporate some new idea, learners must change the connections among the things they already know, or even discard some long-held beliefs about the world.
- **Progression in Learning Is Usually From the Concrete to the Abstract**
 - Young people can learn most readily about things that are tangible and directly accessible to their senses—visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic.
 - With experience, they grow in their ability to understand abstract concepts, manipulate symbols, reason logically, and generalize.
 - Concrete experiences are most effective in learning when they occur in the context of some relevant conceptual structure.

Adapted from <http://www.project2061.org/publications/sfaa/online/Chap13.htm>

References

- Feldman, Robert S. *P.O.W.E.R. Learning*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000. Print.
- Project2061.org,. 'Chapter 13: Effective Learning And Teaching'. N.p., 2015. Web. 20 Jan. 2015.