

Learning learning

Rajeev Sukumaran, Senior Project Consultant
Teaching Learning Center, IITM

All reflective teachers would be pondering on the same question in their minds

I am teaching – are they learning?

It is this curiosity that helps us look at the *content* and *context* of *learning* from different perspectives. One such curiosity; *what do people have in mind about learning?* We all know that learning is the life and heart of education. Education does not absolutely require grades, teachers, classes, curriculum, degrees or even institutions. But it does require learning!

Few definitions that enhances our view on learning...

Learning is acquiring new, or modifying and reinforcing, existing knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, or preferences and may involve synthesizing different types of information – Wikipedia

The alteration of behavior as a result of individual experience. When an organism can perceive and change its behavior, it is said to learn – Ian

An observable and measurable change in behavior that is the result of an experience – Mike Wills

Learning can be defined as the acceptance of everything and applying it into our daily life - unknown

Learning is the total sum of Input + Experience, EQUALS, Thought process + Output - Vicki Fowles

Learning is process through which the learner is encouraged to ask questions on various aspects of life - Rajendra Karnik

Learning is a process of Mental, Physical and Spiritual development. Development is advancing and growth. Development is proof that learning has taken place - Kerrisha Gayle

Learning is "detection and correction of error" where an error means "any mismatch between our intentions and what actually happens" - Chris Argyris

It is observed that there are atleast three components to the definition of Learning:

"Learning is a process, not a product."

Grades and marks are measures of learning, but they are not the process of learning itself.

"Learning is a change in knowledge, beliefs, behaviors or attitudes."

Any change requires time, that too with changes to core beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes.

"Learning is not something done to students, but something that students themselves do."

If we have planned a lesson, and only to finally find that our students just didn't "get it," we should consider that our lessons be designed not to just impart knowledge but also to lead students through the process of their own learning.

What do our students have in mind about 'learning'?