**Learning How to Learn: 3 Strategies to Increase Your Learning Outcomes**

**by Doris Wesley**

*"Leveraged Learning is a tour de force of education - how it evolved, what it delivered and where it is going." — Dr. Srikumar Rao*

Learning how to learn is in high demand. No matter what you seek to learn, knowledge is often gotten through learning. According to Farnam Street, “more knowledge means better instincts; better insights into opportunities for you, and you will ultimately produce better work if you give yourself the space to learn.” Life is a series of lessons – we learn every day, and about almost everything. One reason, I am sure, you have embarked on this academic pursuit, is to learn. The importance of learning can therefore, not be over-emphasized, as it is the pathway to every acquisition we desire from life. Learning is a lifetime process!

So, if learning is necessary for our success and personal growth, why hasn’t much attention been paid to learning how to learn? We are often expected to pick up our intellectual baggage and hop into the learning bandwagon without proper guidance as to the “how’s” of learning. Times are changing, however, as we are confronted with the reality that learning how to learn is a vital aspect of learning we can aspire.

That is why in this article, we will explore three strategies that will enhance your learning. We will attempt to answer the questions of how we learn, how we adapt to various learning situations – pleasant and difficult, and how we can accelerate our learning process. The following tips are ones I have discovered through my experiences as a student of life’s lessons, and they all come from experts and scholars who are not just pro’s at educating aspiring learners, but also at teaching how to learn.

**Control Your Learning**

 The legendary quote: “know thyself” by Aristotle, expresses an importance to pay attention to the self. You must **understand yourself** enough to know what, where and how learning works best for you. No matter how confused you are about understanding some learning rudiments, overseeing what you learn, where you learn, why you choose to learn, who you learn from, what sets you in the learning mode – regardless of the quality of instruction, and how best you do learn, are some of the keys to active learning. These details set the mode for an enjoyable learning experience.

Another way to control your learning, is to maintain an insatiable mind. **Question everything**! I have always loved the expression “wide-eyed”. It connotes AWEDNESS. ATTENTIVENESS. AMAZEMENT. It is this wide-eyed state we must assume if we must be great and effective learners. A research conducted by Ryan and his fellow researchers shows that students avoid asking for help because they haven’t mastered the act of self-regulated learning. A constant hunger for knowledge must reside in our hearts and minds. Learning to learn involves an open and child-like heart and mind – inquisitive and probing. After all, all answers are only the results of questions asked.

**Enjoy Your Journey**

My mother often emphasizes on the journey to a destination as the most vital part of every travel experience. I find this true when it comes to life lessons as well. The journeys we take are as important, if not more important, than the destinations we arrive at. There is something about “destinations” that is limiting, but not a journey. With the vast opportunity to learn, and unlearn, we find out that in the end, the process of getting to that destination holds all the lessons we require. **Learning is not an event, but a journey**. It is not a one-and-done enterprise, but a way of life. Too many times, we treat learning as a seasonal occupation, as if learning should be done once and for all.

It doesn’t matter your individual destinations – perhaps to acquire a degree in Computer Science, in Political Science, or maybe even in Communications, like myself – recognizing that your lessons are in your every day, every event and with every person you meet while on the journey, is a great way to learning how to learn. Recognizing that though the destinations are great, the process to reach it, are often greater. As college students, we would often have to remind ourselves that precious things are often made precious through fiery fire, so we must not expect a smooth sail through this learning journey, or any learning journey for that matter. We must have to confront the notion that there is no such thing as failure or success. Instead, embrace every experiential form of learning that comes our way. That, is how we learn to learn!

**Embrace Your Mistakes**

This point has been briefly explained above, but for emphasis, I will expatiate on it here. Consider having to view issues differently, like seeing risk-taking as one side of a coin, and mistake-making as another. Both are not mutually exclusive. But we must question: is there anything such as making a mistake? How does one define a mistake? Let’s say you recognize a situation as a mistake, what effect does it have on you? – withering? Or flourishing?

Whichever way it goes, accepting that we must simply keep trying until we achieve our desired results, is an approach that converts our notion of blaming, to learning. It also forces us to define, measure, and act on what has been learned. This is the way we can make headway here in college, and beyond.

So, the next time you cross paths with “failures” or “mistakes,” don’t bury or deny it. Embrace and learn from them. In all, knowing, recognizing and applying these three strategies will lead you well on your way to a blissful and satisfying learning experience as college students.

About the Author

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