

Becoming a Better Learner

What Does it Mean to Learn

Learning means the process of acquiring new, or modifying existing knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, or preferences. It is a means of honing our skills, enriching our minds, and changing the way we see things in the world.

Learning is a fundamental tool humans use to grow and better themselves. It has been statistically proven that better learners become better leaders.

Life-long learning means taking time to explore the things that interest you and those around you, allowing you to become an active participant in conversations at work, and in social settings.

Mind and Body Working Together

Your mind and body are not separate entities, they work together. What is good for one is good for the other.

Learning can help your body, because you can discover better tips on having a more restful sleep, or how to properly exercise or perform a certain exercise without injury.

And it is the same in reverse as well, exercising is great for your mind as well as your body. Studies have shown that those who exercise are able to focus or concentrate more on their task at hand.

Adopting the Right Mindset

Adopting the right mindset for learning can take time because we have to train our brains and focus on having a **growth mindset**. This means controlling the ability to learn, which can be honed and developed through hard work and effort. Here are a few examples of things we can do daily to help us improve and become better learners.

- **Journaling:** Not only is journaling good for you to keep track of things you have learned throughout the day, but it is also a way for you to better remember those things.
- **Reflection:** Being able to go back and objectively think about conversations that have taken place or challenges that were previously solved can help you to re-wire your brain and start seeing things you have not before.
- **Reactions:** Learning from people's reactions and opinions can be a huge help in learning.
- **Challenges:** Stepping back and looking at challenges differently can help you change how your mind works.
- **Taking notes:** Taking notes can be a great way to remember things - you have that information to go back on later and expand upon, research, and learn.



How do Goals Play into Learning

Goals are our ambitions, our aims, and our desires. We all have them, that is not unique, but how we view or even address our goals says a lot about us. One way of looking at goals is to take the **SMART** approach, where each letter stands for a different method of achieving your goal.

1. **Specific:** Make a plan and be specific. Have I laid out a detailed plan of how I am going to approach this? Am I already making efforts toward this?
2. **Measurable:** It is important to set parameters so that you can tell if you are working toward your goal or getting off track.
3. **Attainable:** It is very important to make sure that your goals are actually attainable, otherwise you are setting yourself up for failure.
4. **Relevant:** You need to be clear about your goals. Keep your learning relevant to your goal.
5. **Time-bound:** Make sure that when you set a learning goal that you include a time frame so that you keep yourself accountable, while also making your goal specific.

Five Methods of Note Taking

When it comes to actively taking notes, there are a number of ways that we can do this. Oxford Learning details five methods of note-taking that will help you stay on track:

- The Cornell Method
- The Mapping Method
- The Outlining Method
- The Charting Method
- The Sentence Method

Learning About Your Network

A personal network is a group or set of people who are known to you, with whom you interact on a regular basis. It is a group of caring, dedicated people committed to maintaining a relationship to support a given set of activities, such as your employment, for example.

Networking is incredibly important now, more than ever, because these people are links to, not only information, but related jobs within your field or areas of expertise. In fact, studies have shown that up to 80 per cent of jobs are not even advertised, which means it is all about who you know. Networking can help you:

- Grow your knowledge base
- Do better in your current job
- Advance in your career or obtain a new position



Becoming Accountable

You need to continuously hold yourself accountable when it comes to striving to become a life-long learner. How do you do this?

- Write it down
- Reward yourself for your accomplishments
- Create goals within goals: mini-goals
- Check in with yourself
- Tell someone about your goals