

# THE LEARNING PROCESS

## How to get the Ball Rolling and get Down to the Business of YOUR Learning!

### **SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:**

The learning process is not necessarily difficult in itself, it depends what you are trying to learn and the level of importance you have placed your level of desired outcome. If your learning is a life or death situation, then it would be VERY stressful! However, there is no learning in school which is rested upon a life or death situation, so take a deep breath and let out all of your stress you may have been bottling up inside you : )

Of course, if this is a course that you will need to eventually write a Diploma Exam for in order to receive final credit, and then use the final mark to get into university or college, then you might still feel some stress. It is important to do the best you can, but still, this isn't a life or death situation; it just matters a bit more in the bigger picture of your life, so you want to try to do it right the first time.

I believe that the learning process is a deeply personal one. From the day we were all born, we have been learning. We are all unique and have different needs to learn the deepest and most effectively. Some of us find learning quite easy and some find it more difficult. I would like to challenge your perceptions about your learning. If you find it easy, have you really been challenging yourself? Do you choose to take the easy way out and/or never really face head on what actually challenges you? If you find learning difficult, maybe you need to give yourself a bit of a break and allow yourself to slow down your learning process, maybe find different ways of learning. It is REALLY important that you understand that very little of our learning comes from books. Most of our learning, our deepest learning, comes from repeated experiences. We need to LIVE our LEARNING! We need to SHARE our learning and our learning process with others so that we can experience our learning in a different way.

We know we have learned something deeply when we no longer have to consciously think about doing it in order to do it...do you think about how to walk or how to feed yourself? The same principles of learning how to walk, run, speak, and ride a bike apply to learning new concepts in school. Cool! In many ways, you are already an expert in learning, you just might not have known that you are!

So, now it is time to get focused on your learning process for this course. How do you do that? Hopefully, I have put together a handout that will help guide you. I also suggest you type in the key search phrase "What is the learning process" or "the learning process" into a search engine. Check out the results you get. Research the learning process!

## HERE ARE MY TIPS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED IN YOUR LEARNING PROCESS:

In a nutshell...we learn by:

- Doing something (**Concrete Experimentation**)
- Thinking about it (**Reflection**)
- Doing some research
- Talking with others and applying what we already know to the situation (**Abstract Conceptualization**)
- Doing something new or doing the same thing in a more sophisticated way based on our learning (**Active Experimentation**)

This information was taken from the following webpage: [The Learning Process](http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/get-started/the-learning-process/) (http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/get-started/the-learning-process/)

## So, how do you get started with your learning?

### STEP ONE: Identify what needs to be learned

- Identify what you need to specifically learn...open the Specific Learning Outcomes (SLO) Chart above.
- Review the Specific Learning Outcomes Chart for this Related Issue/Unit. What are your initial observations about what you need to learn about?
- In the SLO chart for this Related Issue/Unit, identify the KEY TERMS/VOCABULARY (hint...get the words from the SLO chart first, and THEN get words from the textbook chapters and module(s)).

### STEP TWO: Take an inventory of your current understanding and skills

- Start taking an inventory of what you think you already understand. Ask yourself questions about the SLOs. Start writing down any questions you have about the SLOs. Focus your questions on the WHAT, WHY and HOW...the WHO and WHEN are more secondary questions. (It is all of these questions that begin to customize YOUR learning).
- Reflect on the words being used in the SLO chart. Do you know what they mean? Begin to record all of the words you do not have a working knowledge of, and remember that you need to understand these words within the context of the subject you are learning.
- Take a shot at ASSESSMENT ONE (you get 3 attempts, so why not see where your level of understanding and is at the beginning of your learning...this also helps you to identify specific areas you need to focus on in YOUR learning. BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND : )
- OPEN, SAVE, and REVIEW the instructions for both ASSESSMENT TWO and THREE for the unit. What do you think about the SLOs as you review them? What do you think about what will be required of you in the ASSESSMENT PIECES?

### **STEP THREE: Begin to formulate your questions of inquiry**

This is a key step to jumping off into YOUR learning. This approach is about you beginning to build YOUR frame of reference for learning.

- As you review WHAT you are supposed to learn about, start becoming conscious of the questions you are probably already formulating in your mind. The most IMPORTANT QUESTIONS are the WHAT, WHY and HOW questions. The secondary questions to ask are the WHO and WHERE questions.
- Start to record/write down ALL of the questions you have about what you are supposed to be learning about. You do this by going through EACH Specific Learning Outcome in the Related Issue SLO Chart. Do you know and understand what the outcomes are about? If not, you have questions...so start recording them!
- Organize your questions for EACH SLO. These questions will be the guide to your learning process. Your goal is now to start ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS. When you venture out to seek answers to your questions, you are engaging in the learning and research process : )

### **STEP FOUR: Identify, gather and access your resources**

- Identify your resources. Start with the easy ones: the LEARNING MODULES(S), most likely from Learn Everywhere, your course TEXTBOOK. Both of these should have been provided by the school. If you are missing either of these resources, you need to contact the school library and your course teacher.
- If you are using this guide for your Social Studies course with Andrea Belke, you also have an AWESOME website to access! Go to Andrea's homepage: [Andrea Belke @ ArgyllHigh School Teacher - Home](http://andreabelkeatargyll.weebly.com/) (http://andreabelkeatargyll.weebly.com/) You can then access the specific course websites from Andrea's homepage.
- Identify other resources, like books (both non-fiction and fiction), films (both fictional and documentaries), articles in magazines and newspapers and professional journals, TV shows, plays, open lectures, etc. ANYTHING to ENRICH your learning experience(s).
- Identify and talk to people you know about what you are venturing out to learn. Ask for their insights and to share their experiences.
- Plan HOW you will record your learning process. Will you work primarily in the digital world on your computer using different software and programs to save and work with your research findings? Will you record all of your research and information in a notebook?

### **STEP FIVE: Organize your information and work with it**

- Learning is an ACTIVE AND DYNAMIC PROCESS! The more you work with the information and concepts you are trying to learn, the deeper your learning will be.
- Take notes, organize your notes, colour code your notes...THEN reorganize them differently and re-write them over and over again until you no longer have to refer back to the original notes...revise your notes along the way, add your new understandings and take out what you know is no longer of importance.

- Communicate what you are learning to others, when we speak our thoughts and ideas aloud to others, we can gain greater insight and 'hear ourselves learn'.
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- Try to use all of your senses when you are engaging in the learning process. Use your eyes, ears, hands, sense of smell and taste if possible. Speak your learning out loud
- Begin to identify and/or figure out how you will COMMUNICATE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED TO OTHERS. This is building the evidence of your learning.

## **STEP SIX: Demonstrate what you have learned to others (and yourself)**

- In school, the end goal is to demonstrate what you have learned and how well you have learned it on ASSESSMENT PIECES. These most commonly take the form of tests (exams) and minor and major assignments.
- If you are taking a Diploma course, you will have to write a Diploma Exam at the 30 level, either a 30-1 Diploma Exam or a 30-2 Diploma Exam. In English and Social Studies, there are TWO PARTS to the Diploma Exams: A written part and a Multiple Choice part. Each part is written on a separate pre-determined day. You should check out the Government of Alberta's Education website: [Alberta Education - Preparing for Diploma Exams](http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/exams.aspx) (<http://www.education.alberta.ca/students/exams.aspx>)
- You need to pay close attention to what the course designated ASSESSMENT PIECES are that you will need to complete. The marks you achieve on these specific pieces will be calculated together to determine your COURSE MARK.
- In Andrea's Social Studies courses, there are TWELVE ASSESSMENT PIECES in total for EACH COURSE. This means there are THREE ASSESSMENTS FOR EACH RELATED ISSUE UNIT. All of the assessment pieces, with the exception of the project choice in ASSESSMENT THREEs, are designed and modeled after the Diploma Exam expectations and formats. I do this purposely to help students learn to demonstrate their learning in the format that will count the most at the end. I do not see this as teaching to a test, I see this as helping to prepare for a type of assessment that is imminent and that is important for students to master as best they can.
- I have incorporated a PROJECT BASED LEARNING APPROACH for any students who find this form of learning more meaningful. In EACH RELATED ISSUE UNIT ASSESSMENT THREE, you will be able to choose to either write a research position based paper/essay OR to complete a project. At the 10 Level, students are not forced to write position based papers/essays. At the 20 Level, students are encouraged to choose the position based paper/essay at least once in the course. At the 30 level, students need to write AT LEAST TWO POSITION BASED PAPERS/ESSAYS to make sure that they have this skill mastered as best they can in final preparation for the Diploma Exam: Part A Written.
- THE SCHOOL ALSO REQUIRES THAT YOU COMPLETE A COURSE FINAL EXAM, these exams will also mirror the format you will eventually encounter on the final 30 level Diploma exam. Remember, if this is a Diploma Exam course, the Diploma Exam is worth 50% of your ENTIRE COURSE FINAL MARK. Your course assessments done in school will account for the other 50% of your final course mark.

**STEP SEVEN: If you are not happy with the end results, go back through the process and fix what you deem necessary : )**

### **SOME WORDS OF WISDOM:**

- The process of learning follows the law of physics: FOR EVERY ACTION THERE IS AN EQUAL AND OPPOSITE REACTION. In short, you get out of it based upon what you put into it; if you put little to no effort into your learning and learning process, you should expect to get very little in return (in terms of marks for your course assessments)
- You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives. ~Clay P. Bedford
- Give me a fruitful error any time, full of seeds, bursting with its own corrections. You can keep your sterile truth for yourself. ~Vilfredo Pareto
- It is important that students bring a certain ragamuffin, barefoot irreverence to their studies; they are not here to worship what is known, but to question it. ~Jacob Bronowski
- You learn something every day if you pay attention. ~Ray LeBlond

**At heart, I am a social constructivist learner. If you do not know what that is...go check it out : ) What kind of learner are you?**