
Attitudes and Skills in Learning

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Hard work in learning will not produce fast progress. Instead, use of skills in learning will be effective in getting results. Positive attitude helps in learning process. Learning occupies a very important place in our life. The 21st century learning skills are often called the 4 C's: critical thinking, creative thinking, communicating, and collaborating. These skills help students learn, and so they are vital to success in school and beyond.

Keywords: Communicating, Collaborating, Attitude and Creative Thinking.

Introduction

Hard work in learning will not produce fast progress. Instead, use of skills in learning will be effective in getting results. Attitudes are evaluations people make about objects, ideas, events, or other people. Attitudes can be positive or negative. Explicit attitudes are conscious beliefs that can guide decisions and behavior. Implicit attitudes are unconscious beliefs that can still influence decisions and behavior. Positive attitude helps in learning process.

Learning occupies a very important place in our life. Most of what we do or not do is influenced by what we learn and how we learn it. Learning therefore provides a key to the structure of our personality and behavior. The 21st century learning skills are often called the 4 C's: critical thinking, creative thinking, communicating, and collaborating. These skills help students learn, and so they are vital to success in school and beyond.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the process we use to reflect on and assess and judge the assumption underlying our own and others' ideas and efforts. It is focused, careful analysis of something to better understand it. It helps a person in stepping aside from his own personal beliefs, prejudices, and opinions to sort out the facts and discover the truth, even at the expense of his basic belief system. When people speak of "left brain" activity, they are usually referring to critical thinking. Here are some of the main critical-thinking abilities:

- Analyzing is breaking something down into its parts, examining each part, and noting how the parts fit together.

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- Arguing is using a series of statements connected logically together, backed by evidence, to reach a conclusion.
 - Classifying is identifying the types or groups of something, showing how each category is distinct from the others.
 - Comparing and contrasting is pointing out the similarities and differences between two or more subjects.
 - Defining is explaining the meaning of a term using denotation, connotation, example, etymology, synonyms, and antonyms.
 - Describing is explaining the traits of something, such as size, shape, weight, color, use, origin, value, condition, location, and so on.
 - Evaluating is deciding on the worth of something by comparing it against an accepted standard of value.
 - Explaining is telling what something is or how it works so that others can understand it.
 - Problem solving is analyzing the causes and effects of a problem and finding a way to stop the causes or the effects.
 - Tracking cause and effect is determining why something is happening and what results from it.

Creative Thinking

Creative thinking is the process we use to develop ideas that are unique, useful and worthy of further elaboration. It is expansive, open-ended invention and discovery of possibilities. When people speak of “right brain” activity, they most often mean creative thinking. Here are some of the more common creative thinking abilities:

- Brainstorming ideas involves asking a question and rapidly listing all answers, even those that are far-fetched, impractical, or impossible.
- Creating something requires forming it by combining materials, perhaps according to a plan or perhaps based on the impulse of the moment.
- Designing something means finding the conjunction between form and function and shaping materials for a specific purpose.
- Entertaining others involves telling stories, making jokes, singing songs, playing games, acting out parts, and making conversation.
- Imagining ideas involves reaching into the unknown and impossible, perhaps idly or with great focus, as Einstein did with his thought experiments.
- Improvising a solution involves using something in a novel way to solve a problem.
- Innovating is creating something that hasn’t existed before, whether an object, a procedure, or an idea.
- Overturning something means flipping it to get a new perspective, perhaps by redefining given, reversing cause and effect, or looking at something in a brand-new way.
- Problem solving requires using many of the creative abilities listed here to figure out possible solutions and putting one or more of them into action.
- Questioning actively reaches into what is unknown to make it known, seeking information or a new way to do something.

Communicating

Communication (from Latin communicate, meaning "to share") is the purposeful activity of information exchange between two or more participants in order to convey or receive the intended meanings through a shared system of signs and semiotic rules. The basic steps of communication are the forming of communicative intent, message composition, message encoding, transmission of signal, reception of signal, message decoding and finally interpretation of the message by the recipient.

- Analyzing the situation means thinking about the subject, purpose, sender, receiver, medium, and context of a message.
- Choosing a medium involves deciding the most appropriate way to deliver a message, ranging from a face-to-face chat to a 400-page report.
- Evaluating messages means deciding whether they are correct, complete, reliable, authoritative, and up-to-date.
- Following conventions means communicating using the expected norms for the medium chosen.
- Listening actively requires carefully paying attention, taking notes, asking questions, and otherwise engaging in the ideas being communicated.
- Reading is decoding written words and images in order to understand what their originator is trying to communicate.
- Speaking involves using spoken words, tone of voice, body language, gestures, facial expressions, and visual aids in order to convey ideas.
- Turn taking means effectively switching from receiving ideas to providing ideas, back and forth between those in the communication situation.
- Using technology requires understanding the abilities and limitations of any technological communication, from phone calls to e-mails to instant messages.
- Writing involves encoding messages into words, sentences, and paragraphs for the purpose of communicating to a person who is removed by distance, time, or both.

Collaborating

Collaborative learning is a method of teaching and learning in which student's team together to explore a significant question or create a meaningful project. A group of students discussing a lecture or students from different schools working together over the Internet on a shared assignment are both examples of collaborative learning.

- Allocating resources and responsibilities ensures that all members of a team can work optimally.
- Brainstorming ideas in a group involves rapidly suggesting and writing down ideas without pausing to critique them.
- Decision-making requires sorting through the many options provided to the group and arriving at a single option to move forward.
- Delegating means assigning duties to members of the group and expecting them to fulfil their parts of the task.
- Evaluating the products, processes, and members of the group provides a clear sense of what is working well and what improvements could be made.

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- Goal setting requires the group to analyse the situation, decide what outcome is desired, and clearly state an achievable objective.
 - Leading a group means creating an environment in which all members can contribute according to their abilities.
 - Managing time involves matching up a list of tasks to a schedule and tracking the progress toward goals.
 - Resolving conflicts occurs from using one of the following strategies: asserting, cooperating, compromising, competing, or deferring.
 - Team building means cooperatively working overtime to achieve a common goal.

Conclusion

Positive attitude and skills in learning bring good results among learners. Critical thinking, creative thinking, communicating, and collaborating are important skills in learning.

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