

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Everyone would tend to agree with the statement that learning leads to development and everyone also agree that learning is a life long process. Development is also a life long process which takes the individual through a journey of higher stages. A production engineer wants to become a production manager, a lawyer wants to become a judge, the judge wants to become a chief justice. Learning and development are inexorably intertwined.

Learning is the process of understanding which leads to modification in attitude and behaviour through additions and modifications to skills, values and knowledge. Attitude is the mental disposition of an individual at a particular point of time towards a particular aspect of life. Behaviour usually is predominately an outcome of values and attitudes. So in this context, it becomes essential to understand how students learn to become managers, how managers learn to become leaders.

Learning happens in multiple ways. Some individuals are very comfortable in listening to someone and understanding while others may be inclined to understand only when they experience or they go through a concrete experience or they go through a concrete experience. Though learning is highly individualized, we can see some general patterns of learning and unlearning.

- Through concrete experience
- Through abstract thinking and conceptualization
- Through observation and reflection
- Through experimentation

These are the broad patterns by which learning occurs in an individual and it is the responsibility of each individual to understand his own style of learning.

The way in which one individual learns and the profession in which the individuals is more likely to shine have a close correlation.

Learning also happens in different stages – assimilation of knowledge through factual information is the first stage. Understanding and internalizing the factual information is the second stage. Ability to apply this knowledge and understanding to solve day-to-day problems in personal and professional life is the third stage. Analysis is the next stage where inferences are drawn about underlying causes or causative phenomena. The last stage is the process of integrating multiple inferences drawn from multiple experiences into a coherent synthesis of all underlying phenomena.

Development invariably takes place only when learning process leads to a substantial change in the attitude and behaviour of an individual. Hence, an individual should be on a continuous search for new learning, new analysis, new ways of looking at things. Learning also implies unlearning – the process of leaving behind some core ideas to which the individual was clinging on to. In the whole development process, unlearning is the most difficult stage because learning and identity are closely linked. An individual's identity arises from multiple relationships. What gives identity to an individual can be one or many of the above-mentioned factors. Learning and consequent development

undeniably leads to either dropping of some values, some beliefs or behaviors and in this process the identity also goes through a metamorphosis. Losing identity and gaining a new identity can be roughly equated to being born again.

Development is inevitable and so learning is!