



BETTER LEARNING: A FRAMEWORK

LEARNING PROVIDES US WITH OUR GREATEST HOPE.

It is the perennial key to humanity's salvation. And yet, we do not prioritize our learning experiences throughout our lives, nor do we understand what creates great learning experiences.

SO, WHAT IS YOUR BEST MEMORY OF GOOD LEARNING?

What has been your most exciting moment of "deep" learning? It was probably challenging and dynamic, and it probably didn't happen at school or university.

THAT IS A SHAME.

In schools and other learning organizations, we need better "learning stories"—better stories to help us meet the ongoing challenges that learning presents throughout our lives.

HOWEVER, AT THE SAME TIME, WE ALL SEEK MORE EASE.

We want software to be more intuitive. We all seek to find the quick way to do things.

We are increasingly indifferent to a world that offers so much wonder, provokes our imaginations, and offers us the "desirable difficulties" of learning.

How can we bring back learning to be a fundamental, wonderful, and essential lifelong process rather than a means to an end?

WE THINK THAT TELLING A BETTER "STORY OF LEARNING" IS PART OF THE ANSWER.

OVER THE LAST YEARS, WE HAVE EXPERIMENTED WITH VARIOUS APPROACHES TO LEARNING.

In our work with the **CHARACTER LAB** (characterlab.org), we have found that character strengths linked to the development of the mind, will, and heart—such as grit, curiosity and optimism—strongly affect the learning experience.

We have worked with IDEO to bring design thinking into schools, and we have figured out that "designing learning experiences" that engage the user in dynamic and innovative ways improves the quality of learning.

We know that learning is a process that is at once challenging, rewarding, dynamic, malleable, and constructive, as we have seen through the research of scientists such as **CAROLDWECK** (profiles.stanford.edu/caroldweck), **ROBERT BJÖRK** (bjorklab.psych.ucla.edu/research), and **DAN WILLINGHAM**.

Good entrepreneurs such as **STEVE JOBS**, **TIM ZAGAT** '57 (zagat.com), **RATAN TATA** '55 (wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratan_Tata), or **DAN FRIEDMAN** '09 (linkedin.com/in/danfriedman2) have a certain mindset that allows them to imagine a great idea and then collaborate with others to make it a reality. We feel that is instructive to the learning process.



THINK

Questioning, Researching,
Examining



SHARE

Storytelling, Exhibiting,
Refining



BUILD

Planning, Prototyping,
Experimenting



REFLECT

Reviewing, Observing,
Giving Feedback

The Learning Experience is a next-generation library on the Lower School campus that supports creative thinking, building, and sharing in order to strengthen children's minds, characters, and sense of community.

THINK



A Think space is where students can question, research, examine, and investigate their own ideas or explore new ones.

BUILD



A Build space is where students can plan, prototype, and experiment. This space gives them the freedom to move forward with their ideas and make something.

SHARE



A Share space is where students can discuss ideas, exhibit their work, and, most importantly, share with other students their progress, findings, and goals.

REFLECT



After each stage of the Learning Experience, students will give feedback and reflect on their projects. From there they can make new decisions as a result of this reflection.

We also have understood from cognitive science that knowledge has to be put into action with effective, ongoing feedback from an expert teacher in order to avoid remaining or becoming “inert,”—in order for true understanding to occur.

We now see that research on cognitive science, non-cognitive capacities, design thinking, the entrepreneurial mindset, and experiential and project-based learning all have striking similarities in regard to the processes that they describe. They require thought, action, collaboration, feedback, reflection, and renewed action as a result of that feedback and reflection.

In order to help make the connections between these various perspectives on learning, **WE HAVE DEVELOPED A COMMON FRAMEWORK IN ORDER TO HELP PEOPLE** communicate more effectively about their learning processes and experiences:

THE THINK-BUILD-SHARE-REFLECT MODEL.

We believe that by describing the learning experience in a simple model we will help everyone understand the essential act of learning more precisely and help support a more comprehensive view of great learning experiences—experiences that are currently unavailable to most students due to the mechanistic way we typically view learning and the systemic ways we control it in schools and universities. We do not currently frame learning as an organic and “peripatetic” process as Aristotle did, walking around his colonnaded Lyceum or in the agora of Athens. We have come to view learning as a means to a credentialed end rather than the lifelong awe-inspiring, dynamic process we embraced when we were very young and natural learners.

LEARNING HAS BEEN DIMINISHED, MADE DULL AND IS SEEN AS A NECESSARY EVIL

that one has to endure in order to live a real life after university.

WE NEED TO CHANGE THIS.

WHY MUST WE COMMIT TO IMPROVING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR OURSELVES & OTHERS?

LEARNING IS AN ESSENTIAL HUMAN ACT.

In a universe guided by scientific laws that care not at all for human progress or development, in a universe driven by the ever inexorable forces of entropy, the human capacity for purpose and personal narrative is the way that we thrive and find meaning in our lives. Learning allows us to grow, to find purpose and create meaning, and that is at the core of what it means to be human. It allows us to make a difference in our lives, in the lives of our families, and in the spirit of our countries and our world; it is both a personal and collective imperative. Great learning experiences throughout our lives allow us to create our own stories of growth, purpose, and meaning, making the space for us and others to thrive.

LET US CREATE EXCITING NEW LEARNING STORIES FOR EVERYONE.

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