

STEP 1.2

TRANSCRIPT

Everyone who teaches wants their students to have a good experience of learning, because that's what will drive their future learning. In this video, we look at what it takes to learn in the context of formal education, and then we can think about how to make that happen.

The conversational framework is intended to help teachers think about teaching and learning from the student's point of view. Basically, it's a distillation of the main educational literature on the key findings and principles about learning. This is the full framework. It's complex, but it has to be. The process of teaching and learning is a highly complex activity. And this diagram is about as simple as it could possibly be.

It starts with the learner at the centre. Learning is an activity that develops both concepts and practises. It's what we all do throughout life. We develop a concept, which generates an action, and the feedback on that action then modifies the concept to generate a better action that then gets better feedback. So concept and practise each assist the other to develop over time.

But that fundamental process of developing and integrating concepts and practises is what we try to use for learning in formal education. So here the learner can get help from the teacher on the one hand and from other learners on the other hand. At the upper level of the framework, teacher and learner communicate about concepts. And the learners do the same with each other. And every interaction is an opportunity for concepts to develop.

At the lower level, the teachers and students model and share their practise through actions and feedback in a special learning environment. And again, all those interactions are an opportunity for practises to develop. If the learning environment is quite challenging, then to get the best feedback, the learner has to integrate concepts and practises. And that's when the learning process really begins to benefit the learner for the long term.

Now, with that framework in mind, we can identify some recognisable learning activities, which together cover all of it. If the learner is listening to the teacher, or watching a video, or demo, or reading a book or website, that's learning through acquisition. It's very common in education. It creates the opportunity for the learner to develop concepts, but it doesn't require them to do anything. All the other types of learning activity do.

If the learner is going to the teacher, or the library, or the internet to find out something, that's learning through inquiry. It's a different way of reading a book, more under the control of the learner. And they have to come up with the question, evaluate what comes back, search again. It's a more active learning process, enabling that conceptual process to keep developing.

If the learner is asking questions of other learners or answering their questions, exchanging ideas, challenging each other's arguments, that's learning through discussion. Listening, and responding, articulating, and arguing, they're all opportunities for the concept to develop.

And if the teacher sets up a learning environment with a task goal, the learner then has to generate an action, interpret the feedback, and maybe think about a relevant concept and try again to get nearer the goal. This is learning through practise.

And suppose you get the students working together on a project where they have to produce a shared output, maybe a diagram, or a definition, or a design, or a report, this is learning through collaboration. It's different from discussion. Having to produce a shared output means they have to negotiate their ideas in practise until they agree. So in the process they're challenging each other and

providing peer feedback to develop the best output they can, even more opportunities for integrating and developing concepts in practise.

And finally, when students are producing something for the teacher to evaluate, that's learning through production. Again, it may be a plan, a website, a performance, a theory, an analysis. But having to produce a public presentation of what they've learned is as important as getting feedback from the teacher, many opportunities for integrating and developing concepts in practise.

Together all six types of learning activity cover most of what you're ever likely to ask of students, and together they cover the whole conversational framework. So to summarise, the best possible learning experience comes from using all those types of interaction. A rich mix of learning activities is likely to be the most effective.