

A Research Paper On Approaches To Learning January 2017

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NOTE FROM SILVER OAKS

In the realms of education that we dwell in, all our efforts are to raise a class of young people who will create a better world. Integrity and honesty are the aspirations we have for them.

As a School we are striving to share our experiences with all those involved in educating people for a better world.

Our objective is to share and add to the knowledge pool.

We would be delighted to hear from those who appreciate our work and would like to use some of our design models in their realms of education.

Nothing can be more satisfying than the feeling that our experiences have come of use to someone somewhere.

Design Model for Approaches to Learning

With the research question “Can teachers use approaches to learning” in our mind we set course on a 15-month investigation project.

The research cycle chosen for this work is “The Action Research Cycle”

Identify problem → Propose solution → Try out solution → Gather data → Analyze data → Report

Identify problem:

Students do not realize that they have attained a certain skill, and so when asked what they have learnt in class, they use general words and phrases and give vague replies. It is puzzling that despite them being engaged in student centric approaches, they do not spell out the actual learning that has happened in them. They do not seem to use an acquired skill or learning in other places and other situations. Overall, we did not find students being responsible for their own learning.

This research was necessary to address the identified needs of:

- Giving students ownership of their learning
- Knowing and improving their present skills
- Setting targets for new skills
- Making learning in students more self-directed, independent and self-regulated

Propose solution:

Approaches to learning provide a solid foundation for learning independently and with others. It develops skills that help them “learn how to learn.” Approaches to learning skills can be learned and taught, improved with practice and developed incrementally. These describe what you do when you are learning and why you should do it.

Learning is a self-directed process and knowledge is constructed rather than received, hence this idea of “[Goal Charter](#)” becomes more relevant in a student-centered classroom. It is an effort to improve students’ ability to learn independently. The observation would be to see students developing and demonstrating approaches to learning, gradually.

Try Out Solution:

We began to design [Approaches To Learning cards](#). Throughout the inquiry process, students use their social skills as they accept responsibility for their share of work. They listen to others with intent and respect their viewpoints. They voice their opinions without hurting others. Students utilize their communication skills when they view visuals and multimedia presentations and express their ideas clearly. Using artistic expression, they convey their message effectively using an appropriate medium.

After multiple brain-storming sessions, the action plan was set. The target groups for this learning were grade 6 students. This learning style was implemented successfully with active participation of the team members.

[Handouts](#) were given to students to tune them into the ATL process. [Literary text](#) on six body systems were given to students where they gained knowledge, developed conceptual connection, discussed and debated about their understanding, communicated their knowledge and solved problems on their own.

While implementing we observed that they followed certain codes of behavior, were organized in their learning, they could read, comprehend, think and write on their own. Students started to take baby steps to know and improve their skills; be responsible for their learning and set new targets. They developed understanding and made sense of what they are learning. With the successful expected outcome of the experiment on Approaches To Learning, we felt the need to implement the same across grades 4, 5 and 6. Hence the idea of [goal charter](#) came into existence.

Students were made to take the experiences provided by us in authentic and complex learning environments. By engaging in thinking and cognitive activities and constructing knowledge as they immerse themselves in inquiry based learning experiences. They, independently and with others developed self-knowledge and skills. Through this goal charter learners started developing the trans disciplinary skills which leads them to be lifelong learners.

Students were made to progress in the order mentioned below:

1. Beginner [Observation] –Introduced to these skills and observe while others perform it.
2. Learner [Emulation] –Start copying others who use these skills and use the skill with guidance.
3. Practitioner [demonstration] –Demonstrate the skill confidently and effectively.

[Photo Gallery](#)

Gathering and Analyzing data:

A variety of data collection methods were adopted:

Data Collection	Method
Observations	Observing students' performance in their learning experiences
Anecdotes	Recording what and how students show their independence
Students journals	Value added time written by students in their journals
Teacher and student interviews	Interviewing students and teachers about how self-regulated and independent are they in their learning

Opportunities to discuss our findings within the group gave us the scope to analyze the gathered data. Periodical interactions and sharing of observations with each other gave us food for thought and presenting before a team of like-minded members and taking suggestions and corrections and acting upon those audited the study.

Students conversations amongst themselves, with teachers, demonstration and exhibition of independent learning in front of an audience, parents feedback gave us the indication that we were coming to the right conclusion.

Ethical considerations were safeguarded by maintaining integrity in the execution of research study; confidentiality of data regarding students' data was protected and students' self-esteem was highly regarded.

We tried our best to not be carried away with underlying assumptions and biases. Our high aspirations did not stop us from having high expectations and no compromise was made in accumulating enough evidence in support of the research study.

[Videos](#)

References:

1. Approaches to Learning: Literature review by Na Li

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