

Learning Path

An interim report

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The development of a learning path grew out of the belief that learning is a process, that the steps that learners take can be identified and charted, and that a clear understanding of the learning process and path is important for teachers and parents alike

The process started when Education 20/20 invited a panel of young people to identify the kinds of support they found most helpful when learning. Not surprising, a long list of ideas emerged with the following being chief among them: gather information, analyze experiences, obtain feedback, take instruction, evaluate selves, coach others, practice, observe others, attend lectures, seek counselling and observe demonstrations. When asked about the order in which help was needed, not surprisingly, students followed quite different paths. As an example, one student said his first step would be to Google the topic; another said if it involved a new skill, he would probably attempt it first, while others liked the traditional lecture as a place to start. Since panel members were in school or recent graduates, much of the discussion revolved around gaining new knowledge rather than skills or attitudes. Different purposes for learning did not substantially change the range of help needed, although it may change the order and the amount of time on the path. Since then, the Learning Path has been the subject of a number of both formal and informal consultations. The latest version can be found on the reverse side of this paper. It should be noted that learning is used in the broadest sense and is not just schooling.

The path has five identifiable components:

1. A point of entry.
2. Exploration, during which the student gathers information, observes others, undertakes assessment, seeks counselling and may even attempt the task.
3. Engagement in the teaching learning process which may involve receiving instruction, periods of self study, practice, assessment and feedback
4. Documentation of the process or what has been learned may be important to a learner; if so, student may seek a credential or qualification.
5. An exit point signifying the end of a particular learning experience or set of experiences.

Based on the graph, learners cycle and recycle through the learning process in their own style and pace; it allows us to visualize and accommodate a “spiral” or learner centered curriculum. But the graph is far from complete; it is not a finished product, perhaps it never will be. Its value is in the discussion that it generates. What happens next will depend on our readers.

Our thanks to students for launching us on this path, facilitators who kept the discussion on track, and the many interested parents and educators who contributed to its evolution.

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