

Distance Learning and the Family

Glenn H. Dakin

Planning a practical learning process is essential for successful distance learning. Online learners may be motivated by convenience to participate. Reading, writing, listening, and time management are learning skills. Guiding a distance learner to implement a learning family plan promotes awareness of learning skills, brain-based learning, boundaries, stress reduction, and effective time management.

LOCUS OF CONTROL AND LEARNING

Understanding how loci of control influence distance learning is important. According to Kutanİs et al. (2011), "Internal or external locus of control plays an important role for students to sustain the efficacy and usefulness

of learning performance" (p. 114). External and internal locus of control are two opposing principles for how individuals react to life events (Strauser et al., 2002). Reactions to family, work, and social involvement can impact learning processes. Self-direction of the learning process is essential for distance learning. Driscoll (2005) clarifies, "Learning is a persistent change in performance or performance potential that results from experience and interaction with the world" (p. 1). Individuals relating circumstances to justify outcomes reflect external locus of control (Kutanİs et al., 2011). Conversely, self-regulated learners do not allow circumstances to interrupt the learning process, demonstrating an internal locus of control. They practice continuous improvement in strengthening learning skills (Kutanİs et al., 2011).

Employee benefits and federal aid encourage individuals to participate in online distance learning. Online learning provides convenience contrasted with physical classroom requirements. Individuals can engage wherever and whenever possible. They may derive beliefs that one online course strategy will be successful in all online courses. Learning to learn is a



Glenn H. Dakin,
EdD,
5 Lirio Place, Los Lunas, NM 87031.
Email: Gdakın@aiuniv.edu
onegod@rmsbc.com

lifelong continuous improvement process of revision through objective perceptions of experiences. Dewey (1994) posits that learning from experience is an action that affects future experiences.

THE SELF-FULLING PROPHECY AND LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Field (1989) speculated, “self-altering prophecies are expectations by a source person that when communicated lead to behaviors of a target person that would not have occurred had the prophecy not been made” (p. 151). The theory attempts to explain how prior learning experiences influence efficacy, self-confidence, and motivation. The self-defeating prophecy causes suppression, while the self-fulfilling prophecy from the pessimistic approach reflects confirmed failure belief (Field, 1989, p. 152). Friedrich et al. (2014) posit, “Pygmalion effects have high scientific and practical relevance due to their potential positive or negative effects on important student outcomes” (p. 1). Individuals always rise to the level of their beliefs. Dependence on grades is an extrinsic reward. Schaps and Lewis (n.d.) stated, “Extrinsic rewards are not needed to stimulate student engagement and perseverance. Rather, we find that extrinsic rewards may indeed undermine intrinsic motivation” (p. 81).

PASSIVE LEARNING VERSUS ACTIVE LEARNING

Passive learning is typical of the traditional presentation of knowledge. The cognitive load theory supports working memory, processing minimal amounts of knowledge. Chunking is organizing knowledge in small amounts progressively discovered to then encode and retain in long-term memory. Scaffolding new to prior knowledge guides the learner to progress from simple to complex while creating brain dendrites and synapses increasing associa-

tions. Scheduling daily time per course helps the learner to shift focus towards the learning process versus result orientation.

Distance learners practicing self-regulation may revise their processes, strengthening learning habits. According to Driscoll (2005), “Objectivism is the view that knowledge of the world comes about through an individual’s experience of it” (p. 387). The learner’s objective understanding of their auditory, visual, or kinesthetic actions empowers them to engage with positive change. Driscoll (2005) posits, “Knowledge is constructed by learners as they attempt to make sense of their experiences” (p. 387). How the learner diligently plans and engages with learning reduces anxiety.

IS IT TRAINING OR IS IT LEARNING?

Learning to learn involves training the mind. Engaging with self-direction is responsible learning. Strengthening skills may lead to positive learning experiences. Dewey (1994) stated, “This condition is satisfied only as the educator views teaching and learning as a continuous process of reconstruction of experience” (p. 87). Learners that follow a learning schedule can engage with rehearsal, improving upon their prior experiences. Training a mind that is conditioned with external motivation can be challenging. Dewey (as cited in Archambault, 1974) posits, “it’s not the doing that matters, it’s the thinking about doing” (p. 321). Multitasking may have a negative influence on distance learning. According to Crews and Russ (2012), “The existing research reveals that multitasking has an impact on productivity, frequency of error, critical thinking skills, and the ability to concentrate” (p. 58). Unfortunate disruptions that stem from reactivity can significantly destabilize learning. Gonzales and Mark (2004) posited workers might require up to 25 minutes or more to resume brain produc-

tivity before interruption. Planning for distance learning is essential.

LEARNING FAMILY STRUCTURE PROCESS

Setting up a learning family process is not complicated. Too often, distance learners may compete with family needs, work, or other social demands for learning time. These concepts are essential to the implementation of a successful learning family structure:

1. Schedule a daily specific learning time for each subject.
2. Create a secluded learning area without interruption.
3. Do not include TV, cell phones, or radios.
4. If musically inclined, use an iPod with ear phones.
5. On the first day, review assignment details and clarify understanding.
6. Reach out to faculty for understanding assignment details.

LEARNING FAMILY PROCESS STEPS

1. Create a daily schedule with 90 to 120 minutes per course.
2. Make a copy for each family member.
3. Schedule a discussion at the kitchen table.
4. Explain that you are engaged with the online educational goal to improve family quality.
5. If you find individuals not onboard, then state you are borrowing 30 to 40 thousand dollars to do this now.
6. The discussion must reach a point where everyone agrees.
7. At this time, state, "Please, I need your help."
8. Distribute the schedule and ask for feedback.
9. When consensus is reached, thank them for their time.

10. Make no demands to conform to the plan; instead, ask for support.
11. If you are a parent, create a reward system for tracking activity.
12. Hang a 3 x 5 grease board listing all family names.
13. After each week, mark the person with stars and reward them.

LEARNING FAMILY PLAN BENEFITS

Benefits of a family plan include that children will imitate the process. What a wonderful gift to give a child. Another benefit is anxiety that stems from demands can be reduced by diligently following the plan. In addition, the practice may also help individuals to establish personal boundaries. Families that follow a structured learning plan may improve their family communication through active listening.

REFERENCES

- Archambault, R. D. (Ed.). (1974). *John Dewey on education: Selected writings*. Chicago University Press.
- Crews, D., & Russ, M. (2012). The impact of multi-tasking on human and organizational efficiency. *Leadership & Organizational Management Journal*, 3, 58.
- Dewey, J. (1997). *Experience and education*. Touchstone Books.
- Driscoll, M. P. (2005). *Psychology of learning for instruction* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Field, R. H. G. (1989, March). The self-fulfilling prophecy leader: Achieving the metharme effect. *Journal of Management Studies*, 26(2), 151.
- Friedrich, A., Flunger, B., Nagengast, B., Jonkmann, K., & Trautwein, U. (2014). Pygmalion effects in the classroom: Teacher expectancy effects on students' math achievement. *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 41(1), 1.
- Gonzales, V., & Mark, G. (2004). Constant, constant, multi-tasking craziness: Managing multiple work spheres. *Proceedings of CHI*, (pp. 113-120). AOM.
- Kutanıs, R., Mesci, M., & Övdür, Z. (2011). The effects of locus of control on learning performance: A case of an academic organization.

- Journal of Economic & Social Studies*, 1(2), 113–136.
- Schaps, E., & Lewis, C. (n.d). Extrinsic rewards are education's past, not its future. *Educational Leadership*, 48(7), 81.
- Strauser, D. R., Ketz, K., & Keim, J. (2002). The relationship between self-efficacy, locus of control and work personality. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 68, 20–26.

Your distance education materials in print,
online and mobile formats.

Delivered.



Strengthen your organization's reputation with professional-quality, branded materials.

Equip instructors with the educational materials that allow them to focus on the learning experience.

Offer students choice by creating materials that are optimized for multiple educational formats.

omnipress

www.omnipress.com