

Learning in a Passionate Way

Teachers and My dear students:

As a teacher, I always come across students who have better learning results than their classmates in some subjects and they are more likely to have prolonged interests towards their studies, even though there is no differences in their IQ or level of diligence.

There are so many examples where some students can learn better than the others and they have the capacity to learn independently the subject that interests them. They are eager to spend more time on that particular subject in a self-motivated way and are able to discover new knowledge all by themselves. A case in point for this is the playing of computer games or learning of sport games.

Researches on how human beings learn and how the human brain works give us the explanation. We know that educational excellence begins with **engagement or involvement and learners' passion for what they learn**. In other words, learners' attitude towards learning is one of the key factors that control the learning outcome. A student who learns in a passionate way will attain better learning effectiveness.

Passion is generally defined as "A powerful emotion, such as love, joy, hatred, or anger". It is important to identify being PASSIONATE from being OBSESSIVE. Obsession is defined as "A compulsive, often unreasonable idea or emotion." It is a matter of societal approval that made these two attributes differ from each other, just as it is for the difference between a hard worker and a workaholic. It is therefore important to find out the key components of passionate learning.

A survey in the United States found something interesting about passionate learning.

Twenty five students, ages 10 to 17, from seven schools were divided into six groups to develop a visual representation of what they know as the key elements for passionate learning and the following aspects were found:

- 1. Challenge:** Learning must challenge the person to go beyond what they currently know, and to take risk in the process. It is important to find something that is challenging to you, so don't look for easy subjects.
- 2. Helping Relationships:** Helping relationships, which possess the critical element of caring, is essential to learning. Helping relationships include both being helped and helping others. My dear students, do find "a teacher --- in Chinese 師傅, a learning buddy or other "superheroes" who you admire and believe that they will help you a lot in your learning.

3. Enjoyment: Learning must include some element of enjoyment. This does not mean that hard work is not involved. In fact, students cited some of their most enjoyable learning moments were the times when they worked the hardest. The most important thing is to discover or to build up your interests in the subject, then you'll find enjoyment.

4. known Beginnings...Unknown Endings: Often learning is like getting on a track where you see the start but cannot see the destination. What is important is **getting in** the race. Make yourself ready to try new things and get start.

5. Action: Learning is most enjoyable when it includes some action or "doing" piece. Taking simple notes is better than just listen to somebody's talk. Action and practice are basic to learning.

6. Creative: Learning involves acquiring knowledge, but knowledge without creativity is colourless and bland, like the unpainted portion of the world. Learning that comes with creativity is colourful and full of life. Try to look at a subject from different perspectives, thinking and doing something new will help you build up interest.

These fundamental components are not unfamiliar to teachers. Teachers are always trying to prepare lessons to include one or more of the above six elements: challenge, creativity, action, uncertain destination, helping relationships and enjoyment. Do you still remember the Learning Day last Friday and the coming Language Art Performance Assembly? These activities are all aiming at providing you with challenge and interests. As a learner, you should prepare yourself for learning in a more effective way and hopefully you will one day become a passionate learner.

As teachers, we all expect to develop the capability of our students and help them to become active participants of our society. It is always a teacher's dream to see students learn in a passionate way and to extend their learning from classrooms or within schools to become an independent life-long learner.

Interesting websites:

1. <http://ct-net.net/>
2. <http://www.nekas.net/index.php>