

I Learn Best When...

Curiosity



Critical Thinking

Wisdom



"There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning."

Jiddu Krishnamurti

Activity 1



Aim(s)

- To think about what learning is.
- To highlight that learning doesn't only happen in a teacher-led, classroom environment.



Resources

- *Learning is...* Worksheet.
- *Yes No Maybe* Cards. **OPTIONAL**
- Blu tack/sellotape. **OPTIONAL**
- *When am I learning?* Worksheet.



Delivery Guide

Part I



This is best completed as a whole group activity.

Give out the *Learning is...* Worksheets to each young person. Go through each statement and check for understanding. How many of these statements are true? You could also do this as a 'Yes No Maybe' game: you stick the Yes No Maybe signs on walls or tables around the room and read out a statement. The young people participating then have to place themselves near to the sign that best describes what they think. You can choose a couple of young people from each 'position' to tell you why they chose that answer.

- The ability to learn is possessed by humans, animals and some machines. **TRUE**
- Learning is the act of getting new (or changing existing) knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, or preferences. **TRUE**
- Only children learn - learning stops when we become an adult. **FALSE** *It could be helpful*

if the facilitator – or any other adult present – can talk about something they have learnt as an adult.

- **Learning is always led by a teacher.** **FALSE** *Learning can be self-directed, or led by a friend, a parent, a coach, a fellow student and many others. However, you could answer 'Maybe' to this as when learning is being led by someone, does that automatically make them a 'teacher,' even if not an official 'teacher in a classroom'?*
- **Learning always happens in a school or classroom.** **FALSE** *We learn all the time outside of a classroom: learning dance or football, for instance.*
- **'Peer learning', where students help each other to learn, can improve our learning.** **TRUE** *See this article: www.bbc.com/news/uk-30210514 (available 8/16).*
- **Learning starts at birth and continues throughout life – we can always learn new things.** **TRUE**
- **You can only learn in silence.** **FALSE** *Of course, this may be true for some people, but not everyone. People have different preferences about how they learn or the environment in which they learn. This links with the next two activities.*

Part II

Give out the *When Am I Learning?* Worksheet and talk through whether they think they would be learning in any of these situations. They could be learning in all of these situations, but they may draw distinctions between situations where they're learning a lot, and some where they're reconfirming their learning. Ask them to add at least two other situations where they are learning.

Points to highlight

- We are learning all the time – and everyone learns!
- There are lots of different ways to learn; it's not just about being in school or reading from a book.

Activity 2



Aim(s)

- To try out different learning environments and see or experience their effects.



Resources

- A small task to 'learn' (see delivery notes).
- This will vary, depending on what conditions you want to create.



Delivery Guide



If space and staff permit, this can be delivered as a carousel with the learning activities set up in various places and young people moving around to each one to experience the different learning conditions. Otherwise, it can be delivered with some young people taking part individually and others observing, or everyone in the group completing the activity at the same time.



Facilitators could take part in this and experience the activities themselves.

Find a small task that young people can use to simulate learning. Suggestions include:

- The 'memory pair' game, where a pack of 'Snap' cards is spread out in front of you, face down. You get to turn over 2 cards each turn, with the aim being that you need to match the pairs together. Your brain is learning where the different 'matches' are.
- The 'Wire Loop Game' (see www.instructables.com/id/Wire-Loop-Game/ - available 8/16):
- A game to think of a country or city beginning with every letter of the alphabet. They can research this on the internet or in an atlas while completing it!

Set up in a room and give each young person a chance to complete the activity (either one at a time, or all together) in different conditions. For instance: in silence or with blaring, loud music; in a room where it's really hot or where it's very cold; in a room with natural light or where it's very dim and hard to see; with people talking loudly and trying to distract them; or in a very crowded room with little space to work.

After completing this, ask them how the different conditions affected their learning / working. Did it make a difference? What environment helped them and what hindered them?

Points to highlight

- Environment can make a real difference to how well you can learn.

Activity 3



Aim(s)

- For the young people to explore their ideal learning conditions/environments.
- *'I am at my best as a learner when...'* Worksheet. **OPTIONAL**



Resources



Delivery Guide

Following on from the previous activity, ask the young people to think of the best learning environment for them. It may help to think of a time they've loved learning (including times explored earlier which are not necessarily classroom learning). If they can't think of one, or don't want to use that one, ask them to imagine an ideal place and time for them to learn.

Does anything feel good when they're learning? What would be the best way to learn?

- Who are they with?
- What is the activity?
- Who chooses what they learn?
- How do they feel?
- How much noise is there and what kind of noise?
- How long do they learn for?
- How difficult is it? Does the level of challenge remain constant?

There are several ways to deliver this:

Discussion

It can be done as a discussion, with young people coming up with possible answers to the questions and it being scribed onto flipchart paper or similar.

Worksheet

The worksheet can be filled in as individuals or in pairs.

Drawing/model making

The young people could draw and/or make a 3D model of their ideal learning environment if time allows; it can be a really powerful way to explore the conditions for learning.

If you're working in group, ask the students to work in pairs and share their stories. Ask them to identify any similarities between their stories and about the conditions where they learn best, then feedback to the whole class/group.

Points to highlight

- We all have different learning requirements and preferences.
- The environment and our motivation makes a difference to our learning.
- If we're interested – curious! – then learning may become easier.



Extension Activities

RSA Animate make great, short videos on a wide range of things which help people to learn about the big ideas of the day. These can be the RSA Animate videos: www.thersa.org/discover/videos/rsa-animate?id=51787 or the RSA Shorts: www.thersa.org/discover/videos/rsa-shorts?id=51789 (both available 8/16).

There is a great resource by Paul Blogush, a middle school teacher in the US, providing guidance on how to create a RSA Animate video with young people: blogush.edublogs.org/2012/12/26/how-to-make-rsa-animate-style-videos-with-your-class/ (available 8/16).

You could set the young people a challenge to create a RSA-like video to teach people something they know. It could be a concept in maths, a football move, how to do something on a video game or smart phone, or explaining something that's in the news. It must be clear, engaging for everyone to watch, and spark their curiosity so they will want to know more.



Links to Other Areas of the Curriculum

Design & Technology and Art & Design:

Links can be made with design subjects if the young people decide to make a 3D model of their ideal learning environment.

Various:

The extension activity can link with a number of different lessons, including History, PE and English.

Literacy:

Learning environments can link with PSHE and learning skills.

