

# What is Learning?

**Learning** can be defined as a relatively permanent change in behaviour or potential behaviour as a result of direct or indirect experience. Learning is thus a change in behaviour as a result of experience.

## Learning Definition

*Learning is any relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of experience.*

-Stephen P. Robbins

*Learning is the process of having one's behaviour modified, more or less permanently, by what he does and the consequences of his action, or by what he observes.*

-Munn N.L.

*Learning can be defined as relatively permanent change in behaviour potentially that results from reinforced practice or experience.*

-Steers and Porter

## Meaning of Learning

There are two primary elements in meaning of learning:

1. **Change must be relatively permanent:** This means that after “learning” our behavior must be different, either better or worse as compared to our behaviour prior to this learning experience.  
**For example**, you “learn” to drive a car or have learned how to use a computer.
2. This change **must occur due to some kind of experience or practice**. This learning is not caused by biological maturation.  
**For example**, a child does not learn to walk, it is a natural biological phenomenon. We do not learn to eat or drink.

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## Nature of Learning

Learning is a relatively permanent change in knowledge or behavior that results from practice or experience. There are several key points in this definition.

1. **With learning comes change**
2. **Change in knowledge or behavior has to be relatively permanent or long-lasting**
3. **Learning takes place as a result of practice or through experience**

## With learning comes change

When you learn a second language, your knowledge about how to communicate evolves, and your behavior changes when communicating with native speakers of the language.

Change in knowledge or behavior has to be relatively permanent or long-lasting

If you attempt to communicate with someone in another language by looking up words in a dictionary that you quickly forget once the interaction is complete, learning did not take place because there was no permanent change in your knowledge of the second language.

Learning takes place as a result of practice or through experience

Learning a second language requires much practice in pronunciation, word usage, and grammar.

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### Elements of Learning

Elements of learning are:

1. **Motivation**
  2. **Cues**
  3. **Response**
  4. **Reinforcement**
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### Types of Learners

There are following **types of learners**:

1. **Visual Learners**
2. **Auditory Learners**
3. **Kinesthetic Learners**

Types of Learners

#### Visual Learners

- Visual learners learn primarily through the written word.
- They tend to be readers who diligently take down every word.

#### Auditory Learners

- Auditory learners learn primarily through listening.
- They focus their ears and attention on your words, listening carefully to everything you say.
- They like to talk rather than write and relish the opportunity to discuss what they've heard.

#### Kinesthetic Learners

- Kinesthetic learners learn better by doing
- This group learns best when they can practice what they're learning
- They want to have their hands on the keyboard, the hammer, or the test tube because they think in terms of physical action.

## Characteristics of Learning

Characteristics of learning are:

1. **Learning is Purposeful**
2. **Learning is a Result of Experience**
3. **Learning is Multifaceted**
4. **Learning is an Active Process**

### Characteristics of Learning

#### Learning is Purposeful

Each learner sees a learning situation from a different viewpoint. Each learner is a unique individual whose past experiences affect readiness to learn and understanding of the requirements involved.

#### Learning is a Result of Experience

Since learning is an individual process, the instructor cannot do it for the student. The learner can learn only from personal experiences; therefore, learning and knowledge cannot exist apart from a person.

#### Learning is Multifaceted

Learning is multifaceted in still another way. While learning the subject at hand, a learner may be learning other things as well. They may be developing attitudes about aviation-good or bad-depending on what they experience.

#### Learning is an Active Process

Learners do not soak up knowledge like a sponge absorbs water. The instructor cannot assume that students remember something just because they were in the classroom, shop, or airplane when the instructor presented the material.

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## Learning Process

The **learning process** has the following steps:

1. **Stimuli**
2. **Attention**
3. **Recognition**
4. **Translation**
5. **Reinforcement**
6. **Behavior**
7. **Reward**
8. **Habits**
9. **Motives**
10. **Efforts**

## Learning Process

### Stimuli

Stimuli are any objects and language which draw the attention of people. These are external and internal.

### Attention

The degree of attention depends upon the nature of stimuli. All stimuli are not paid attention to. Technical and interesting stimuli are highly attended.

### Recognition

Attention-paid stimuli are recognized as acceptable factors of improvement and new life styles. The levels of recognition depend upon the levels of values, preferences, needs and desires of the learners

### Translation

The translation and evaluation process is a crucial point for implementing the stimuli in behaviour through reinforcement.

### Reinforcement

Reinforced perception is learning. The perception process includes stimuli, attention, recognition, translation and behaviour. Perception leads to learning, but perception itself is not learning unless it is reinforced.

Repeated action is reinforcement. Reinforcement may be positive, negative, punishment and extinction. Learners learn as per their perception levels. Generally positive reinforcement is more effective for making permanent changes in behaviour.

### Behavior

Learning changes behaviour through reinforcement of perceived knowledge. It makes permanent changes in behaviour. A temporary change in behaviour is not learning. Positive behaviour gives rewards to learners.

### Reward

Humans as learners expect rewards for learning. As ideal, adult learners, this rewards should be internal more than external.

### Habits

A permanent change in behaviour becomes a habit which helps continuous improvement in behaviour and performance.

### Motives

Motives depend on the level of satisfaction. Learners getting more satisfaction through learning develop high motives. Less satisfied learners have low motives. Learning is complete only when motives are fully realized and translated into efforts.

## Efforts

Habits help achieve good efforts and performance. This is a continuous process. Efforts are the automatic outcome of good habits which are acquired through the learning process. Self-development is possible through self-effort. Learners willing to develop themselves are self-motivated and effort-oriented.

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## Principles for Learning

Over the years, educational psychologists have identified several principles which seem generally applicable to the learning process. They provide additional insight into what makes people learn most effectively.

6 Most important **principles for learning** are:

1. Readiness
2. Exercise
3. Effect
4. Primacy
5. Intensity
6. Recency

### Principles for Learning

#### Readiness

Readiness implies a degree of single-mindedness and eagerness. When students are ready to learn, they meet the instructor at least halfway, and this simplifies the instructor's job.

#### Exercise

The principle of exercise states that those things most often repeated are best remembered. It is the basis of drill and practice. The human memory is fallible. The mind can rarely retain, evaluate, and apply new concepts or practices after a single exposure.

#### Effect

The principle of effect is based on the emotional reaction of the student. It states that learning is strengthened when accompanied by a pleasant or satisfying feeling, and that learning is weakened when associated with an unpleasant feeling.

#### Primacy

Primacy, the state of being first, often creates a strong, almost unshakable, impression. For the instructor, this means that what is taught must be right the first time.

### Intensity

Intensity: A vivid, dramatic, or exciting learning experience teaches more than a routine or boring experience. A student is likely to gain greater understanding of slow flight and stalls by performing them rather than merely reading about them.

### Recency

The principle of recency states that things most recently learned are best remembered. Conversely, the further a student is removed time-wise from a new fact or understanding, the more difficult it is to remember.

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### Theories of Learning

**Theories of learning** have been developed as models of learning which explain the learning process by which employees acquire a pattern of behavior. There are **four theories of learning** discussed below.

1. **Classical conditioning theory**
2. **Operant conditioning theory**
3. **Cognitive learning theory**
4. **Social learning theory**

### Reference

1. Robbins, Stephen P. 2010. *Organizational Behaviour*. New Delhi: Prentice-Hall.
2. Caldwell, D.F., and C.A. O' Reilly III, "Measuring Person-Job Fit with a profile-comparison Process," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, December 1990, pp.648-57.

Source:

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