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How Students Learn Best

When researching the topic on how students learn the best, I’ve come to the conclusion that there is no definitive answer to this question. There is no “secret code to crack,” Simply stating, every single student learns at various rates, consumes different amounts of information, and varying components of the material after each lesson. This is the beauty and challenge of being an educator in today’s society. There is high variance in the cognitive abilities of students, along with the techniques in which they learn best. Because of this fact, presenting subjects in different ways, whether it’s verbally, visually, or by using tangible materials will accommodate to the majority of students needs.

From my experience, students must have their basic needs met, before they are able to obtain and preserve new information. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, a model for the motivation of humans, states that above all, basic needs must be met. Students must feel emotionally and physically safe when being welcomed into the school and classroom setting. Their breakfast must provide nutritional value and they need to have consistent and effective instruction, each and every day. Sleep is also equally as crucial for students, as it is the process in which information moves from temporary storage to permanent memory. The next level of the hierarchy is psychological needs which includes forming relationships that support belonging and friendship. It also includes building self- esteem and self- achievement. When growing up, students need support from their family, friends, educators and mentors.

I believe that educators should embrace a “growth mindset” which reinforces that each and every student can expand their knowledge and should view their failures as challenges. As a teacher, helping students to understand that they will get smarter by first, understanding their end goal, next, realizing that investing more time and practice will make them smarter, and lastly executing this on a day in day out basis. This becomes a positive feedback loop within the students life as they begin to gain confidence and recognition.

Another important part of teaching is not only teaching students the material, but also teaching students how to learn. A person will have to learn new things throughout their entire life so equipping someone with the tools to learn is arguably even more important than the material they are currently learning. This is why it is important to allow students to struggle to some degree so the begin to develop internal strategies for tackling complex problems.

In conclusion, school culture must encourage a positive environment, lessons must reflect real life, and educators must provide active engagement for students in the world around them.