

Module 1 Learning Matters: Topic 1. Your Learning Mind-set

Video Transcript

Hi guys, Patrick Sherratt here. In this topic, I want to show you how to develop a learning mind-set. That's the thinking strategies that occur when you are trying to learn something new. Now whether you are learning something in class, or you are outside trying to learn a new activity, like skate boarding, the process of learning is still the same.

Let me show you what I mean.

Meet, Ben and John. Ben is relatively new to skating so he is not that good at it. It takes a while to learn new stuff because our brain has to wire in the understanding or the physical response. In fact, psychologists suggest that there are four stages to learning when we are trying to learn new stuff. The first level is called: Unconscious Incompetence. Incompetence means you are not good at it. Unconscious means you don't know you are not good at it because you have never done it before. So how are you going to know?

Now, whether it is learning to skate, or understanding a complex calculus equation, if we have never done it before we are usually quite happy to give it a go. We don't know any different.

As we practice we move into the next stage which is what psychologists call conscious incompetence. This basically means, conscious – you start to see yourself not good at it. This second stage is really a crucial stage to learn something new because as you see yourself not good at something, it's very easy to feel confused and frustrated. Yet, it is a natural part of the learning process – it takes a while for your brain to create the neural pathways for you to understand, or in the case of skating, physically do it.

What can easily happen is that as you see yourself not good at something, you start to tell yourself that you are not good at it. You say things like, 'I can't do it.' 'This is hard.' 'I can't work it out.' After a while it becomes a belief.

Now here is the key point: your ability to learn anything new whether its learning to skate or a new subject at school is determined at your belief level – not necessarily your potential level. If you see yourself not good at something and decide 'this is how I am', you stop yourself learning to get better.

Coming back to your four-stages of learning: if you manage to push through that difficult time seeing yourself not good at it, it is likely that you actually start to see yourself get better at it: Psychologists call this conscious competence.

Because of your determination, you persevere through the difficult stage and this enables your brain to wire in the understanding or physical ability. If you keep practicing, you will actually get really good at it. This final stage is called unconscious competence. Unconscious, because you don't have to consciously think about it. It's wired in. Now you are excellent at it!

So we **can** get excellent at anything we want to learn. The difficulty is we get stuck in the second stage of seeing ourselves not good at it. This is where a positive learning mind-set will help you. Knowing now that feeling confused or frustrated is a natural part of the learning process – you can start to acknowledge that as you see yourself

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not good at something you are trying to learn, it is ok to feel confused. It's ok to feel frustrated.

How you talk to yourself will determine how you get through that difficult stage. So a positive learning mind-set will help keep your self-talk positive. Instead of: 'I can't do this..' or 'I'm dumb at this' or 'This is really hard', you could say: "I can do it', I'm learning to get this', 'this is hard but 'I'll keep at it because....' And go on to give yourself a strong reason why you want to learn it.

A positive learning mind-set helps keep you motivated when the going gets tough through that difficult stage. One way to help get you through it is to give yourself a good reason, a purpose or a goal of why you want to learn this. For example, if you have learned to drive a car, you will know that as you were still not very good at it, you kept on practicing because you really wanted your independence – your freedom was a big motivator.

Likewise when you are learning to write better essays, or understand that mathematical reasoning – finding a strong purpose for why you want to learn this will help you persevere. If you really want it – go for it. Never give up!

Overview

There are four stages to learning something new.

We often get stuck in the second stage where we see ourselves not good at it.

A positive learning mind-set will help you push through that difficult stage.

A learning mind-set helps you acknowledge that it is ok to feel confused or frustrated.

A learning mind-set keeps your self-talk positive: Instead of 'I can't'. 'I'm learning to.'

A learning mind-set improves your motivation by encouraging goal-setting in every subject.