

Diana Laurillard and the Conversational Framework for Learning Design¹

How do people learn?

Concept level: learners have some concepts or knowledge or ideas which they reflect on and adapt. Through continual iterations of this process they gradually develop a concept, and join it up with other concepts.

Practice level: Learners have some practices or skills which they reflect on and adapt. Through continual iterations of this process, they gradually develop a skill, and then more complex skills.

Concept and Practice: The learner's concepts influence their practice and vice versa in another continuous cycle.

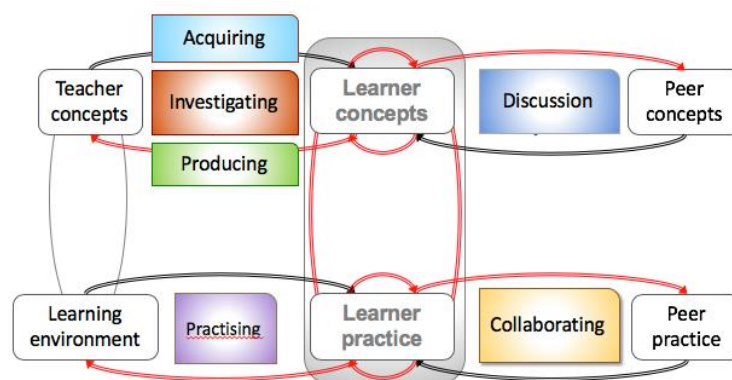
What is the Learning Process in Education?

In formal learning contexts in universities, colleges and schools, for example, there are learning environments and interaction or engagement with others – teachers and peers. Thus learning in education is, or should be:

“an iterative process, linking both knowledge and skills (theory and practice), and engaging the learner with teachers and their peers”²

Laurillard's Conversational Framework

The Conversational Framework is a practical framework, underpinned by theory and providing the basis for designing teaching and learning activities, especially as learning technologies are increasingly used in education. It represents the different roles of learners and teachers in the learning-teaching process and the different types of learning that result from their actions and interactions as described in the diagram³:



¹ Diana Laurillard (2000): *A conversational framework for individual learning applied to the 'learning organisation' and the 'learning society'*. Systems research and behavioral science, 16, pp.113-122 (1999).

² Diana Laurillard (2012): *Teaching as a design science: building pedagogical patterns for learning technology*. New York & London: Routledge. p.93.

³ Diana Laurillard (2020) presentation slides at NERUPI event:

<http://www.nerupi.co.uk/members/resources/online-pedagogy-equity-engagement-a-research-led-approach-diana-laurillard-2020>

Through the different types of learning – acquiring, investigating, collaborating and so on – learners engage with teachers and peers to enable the iterations in their internal learning cycle. The more different learning types are included in the design of activities, the more learning is enabled.

Learning through acquisition

Where the ‘teacher’ communicates concepts and ideas that change some of the learner’s concepts and then communicates more concepts that change it some more and so on.

EG: lectures and talks

Learning through Inquiry or Investigation

Where the learner explores or questions the teacher’s concepts and from what they find, they generate new ideas about what to explore next and so on.

EG: library or internet research

Learning through Practice

In a learning environment set up by the teacher, the learner is asked to achieve a goal (or test a concept through practice); the learner generates an action, receives feedback from the practice environment, responds with a revised action or concept and so on.

EG: experiments and testing

Learning through Discussion

Where the social construction of ideas helps learners to develop their concepts; the learner generates questions, they receive feedback from their peers and respond with answers to their questions and so on.

EG: Discussion groups

Learning through Collaboration

In a learning environment, learners are learning through practice and discussion, thus linking the two; the learner has feedback from both the practice environment and from discussion and negotiation with their peers.

EG: Group projects

Learning through Production

Where the learner reflects on and represents what they have learned to communicate it to the teacher; the learner connects concepts and practice to produce an essay, performance or presentation and show what they have learned; they receive feedback from the teacher to consolidate and enhance learning.

EG: Assignments