

Learning How to Learn

David R. Kassoy

Meanwhile during the discussion at the BFA meeting on Thursday it was not clear to me that we have an outcome or outcomes in mind for students pursuing a higher education. There is significant controversy about the student outcomes on the national level. Some would like a form of vocational training with the objective of providing employable skills. Others would like a lot of on-line delivery to make the educational experience less costly without being able to articulate the consequences. Yet others would prefer a traditional education combining breadth and depth. I've proposed to President Benson that the primary purpose of a higher education is to **learn how to learn**. Effective learning skills provide the ability to cope with the various contingencies of Life, from first job, to marriage, parenting, investing in one's future, caring for elderly parents, contributing to one's society, coping with graceful aging, life-long learning and so forth. I believe that what one learns is important in the context of **how one learns it**. I'd propose that the essential outcome of a higher education should be acquisition of effective learning skills. As a scientist and engineer, I suppose we'd need to quantify and assess the learning skills. At the very least the campus should have a discussion of preferred outcomes!! It will facilitate our Futures planning.