



Lifelong Learning

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A warm blustery Austin day, I enjoy a Brazilian lunch with two individuals practiced in the art of thinking. Rodney reflects on how differently he thinks now that he is a weekly blogger. Megan, the savvy observer who has mastered the subtle art of suggestion, asks me if I blog.

I had not and am grateful to Rodney and Megan for helping me to explore this avenue of communication. I am an Austin physician (radiologist), educator, mother, and aromatherapist. I am passionate about purposeful living. If you catch me doing otherwise, please stop and remind me. My husband teaches high school science. My son is a boy scout.

Today, focus on lifelong learning since many characteristics of lifelong learners are the same as those of self-motivated individuals who use all parts of their non-corporeal being and really live on purpose. Most balanced individuals I observe understand the ways the mind works and the spirit moves the body into shapes, contours and actions that either serve as a life-preserver or drag us under the chilly waves in the flow of life.

An article entitled "Education Techniques for Lifelong Learning" by Dr. Jannette Collins, a radiologist in Wisconsin appears in the medical journal, *Radiographics* this month. Dr. Collins describes lifelong learning as "one of the most important competencies that people must possess". Her article is a call to action for educators of all age students to change the way they teach. She encourages teaching methods that foster the traits, skills and learning activities necessary for lifelong learning.

What underlying traits typify those who become master learners? Dr. Collins lists 15 in her article. For this article, I select five. See which of the traits you breathe and become more aware of opportunities to improve the others:

Confident in the ability to learn from others, share what they know and accept feedback

Willingness to make and learn from mistakes

Persistent

Flexible in thinking

Independent and self-sufficient while at the same time being interdependent and interpersonally competent

Talent and gifts are terms we employ when individuals are unconsciously competent about how their abilities affect their performance. All of these traits can be learned if there is enough desire and persistence.

Dr. Collins lists eight skills and seven learning activities that foster lifelong learning. Consider four skills she identifies:

Well-developed communication skills

Self-directed learning skills

Higher-order thinking skills

Metacognitive skills ("thinking about thinking")

How does one develop such skills? Practice activities that build the skill frequently enough to create a habit in the mind. In other words, practice enough that the activity is performed without a second thought. That takes a good bit of practice. Want to guess how much? 10 times? 100 times? Usually over 1200 repetitions are necessary.

Lifelong learning means to master the art of thinking. Remember Rodney and Megan? They are not so old pros. If you are interested in additional information about lifelong learning, check out the companion blog to this piece at <http://www.mindtamers.com/news.php>

Additional Resources:

Collins, J, *Education Techniques for Lifelong Learning, Lifelong Learning in the 21st Century and Beyond*, Radiographics, 2009; 29(2): 613-622

Bolhuis, S, *Toward Process-oriented Teaching for Self-directed Lifelong Learning: a Multidimensional perspective*. Learn Instruct 2003; 13(3): 327-347

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ARC is continually in need of new test questions to update its test pool. Questions should reflect current aromatherapy practice and be based on research validated knowledge and skills. ARC is particularly seeking high quality test questions in the **Basic Concepts** and **Professional Issues** sections of the content outline:

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