



# Reflection on Your Own Learning

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EDUC 6116 Master's Foundations of Teaching and Learning

The 'vignette' I'm sharing unfolded over five months and, in many ways, is still ongoing. When I reflect on the beginnings of my journey into design for this assignment, I view it as a singular moment of self-actualization — one that felt deeply serendipitous. So let me share with you a vignette of a time I learned how to paint 'again'.

*As I pick up my canvas and brushes  
after years of chasing what I 'ought to'  
after years of making the 'right choices'  
after years of striving to meet expectations  
of a bright future and boundless potential  
I ask myself, "Am I giving up or starting over?"*

Growing up, being good at most academic subjects meant I was told I could do anything, be anything—an engineer, a doctor, a civil servant, even an astronaut if I wished. But one thing that never made it onto that list was becoming an artist. After all, being good at making art was never seen as something valuable, let alone a career to aspire to. Now, that child in me — always a favorite of her art teachers — is trying to reconcile with the adult in me, guiding me in reorienting and finding a new direction.

*From dawn till dark, seeking inspiration,  
I watch videos of others drawing and wander the city  
a snack bar in one hand, sketching on the go.  
Watercolors, paper, markers, pens, pencils, acrylics, or canvas—  
give me any tool, and I'll find a way  
to churn out sketches—colored or bare, paintings, comics, and poems,  
anything that offers a chance to express.*

As a child, I never approached drawing and painting as skills I needed to learn. They came more naturally to me than to others, and I mostly wanted to perform. The praise I received with each piece was both my reward and my motivation to keep going. Now, it's that same child in me who



is trying to learn for the first time—learning something I thought I already knew. It was the first time I was creating art with a goal in mind; it was no longer just a hobby.

*I am learning to pay attention to details,  
adding beauty to the most mundane things.  
Realizing some problems need more than logic,  
and how perfect color combinations create magic.  
Each line, each shadow adds its own character,  
connecting dots, telling stories through brush and paper.*

It felt like I was in a state of flow for those months—a kind of rhythm where one day merged into the next, and everything clicked into place. My days were filled with continuous practice and brainstorming, incorporating multiple mediums for creating art. I critiqued my own work but without judgment. After all, what mattered most was not the technical perfection or the mastery of form, but the expression itself. It was not about improving for the sake of getting better or chasing some arbitrary standard. Instead, I drew to refine my expression, to bring clarity and finesse to what I was trying to convey.

Gradually I realized that what I was learning—the tools, techniques, and methods—was not the end goal. These skills were just a means to communicating something deeper, something that words often failed to capture. It was about translating thoughts, emotions, and experiences onto paper, using art as a way to communicate in ways I could not otherwise. The tools themselves were part of a larger process, serving as stepping stones toward the ultimate outcome: the need to express. That was the true essence of my learnings and work.

*After a day of hard tussle and toil,  
I sit on the bridge, reflecting, introspecting.  
Where had this knowledge been all along?  
Why was it hidden from me, where did I go wrong?*

During those days, I often relaxed on a bridge near my house, sitting there at sunset, gazing out at the sea, lost in deep thought. It was a pivotal, transformative period in my life, where I had to let go of the visions of the ‘perfect’ life I once imagined and embrace a new destiny—one I was shaping on my own. Without a real-life role model to follow, I had to navigate uncharted waters alone. It was a time of immense personal growth and realizations.

### **So what does this experience tell me about learning?**

This experience has shown me that learning is often intertwined with unlearning, especially for adult learners. Sitting on that bridge, I wasn’t just discovering a new future; I was dismantling preconceived notions and societal expectations that no longer served me and aligned with who I was becoming. I was reorienting my perspective about success and what it truly means to ‘make it’ in the world and re-imagining the ‘perfect life.’

## How does learning occur?

I believe that learning unfolds in a non-linear fashion, contrary to conventional wisdom. It is not a step-by-step progression but rather a dynamic process that often requires pauses, revisits and revisions. From my own experience, I've come to realize that there is no more powerful tool for learning than hands-on engagement. When we begin to interpret the world around us by immersing ourselves in our chosen process, be it art, design or by any other means, we start to internalize the new knowledge and make it uniquely ours.

Self-expression plays a critical role in the learning journey. By translating our learnings, emotions and thoughts into tangible forms such as writing, drawing or other kinds of problem solving, we build a deeper understanding and uncover new insights into our perceptions of both ourselves and the world.

## What factors support or hinder learning?

The most significant factor that shapes, supports or hinders our identity and journey as a learner is the socio-economic and political environment we are born into. Our access to resources, support systems, opportunities, and even the kinds of dreams that we are encouraged to pursue are all heavily influenced by the socio-economic context that surrounds us. In settings where the broader understanding of why we are learning is missing, it is difficult to fully connect with the learning process.

On the other hand, these challenges can build resilience and resourcefulness — what we refer to as 'Jugaad' in India — innovative, make-shift problem-solving in the face of limited resources. Adopting the 'Jugaad' mindset of making the most of what's available often leads to innovation and growth, which is the ultimate goal of learning in the first place.

