

UNDERSTANDING LEARNING

Professor John West Burnham's model describes the characteristics of the different modes of learning. It is not meant to be hierarchical or to reflect academic values. As he himself says, in some contexts shallow learning is entirely appropriate: 'my knowledge of how my car's engine works is shallow; but I hope that the mechanic's is deep if not profound.'

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SHALLOW LEARNING (... WHAT?)

is focused on the memorisation and replication of information and is the basis of teaching and assessment in many education systems.

DEEP LEARNING (... HOW?)

is concerned with the creation of knowledge, which the learner is able to relate to their own experience and use to understand new experiences and contexts. The deep learner is thus able to integrate theory and practice.

PROFOUND LEARNING (... WHY?)

is the way in which we develop personal wisdom and meaning, which allows us to be creative, to make moral judgements, to be an authentic human being who is able to accept responsibility for our own destinies.