

Deep vs. Shallow Approaches to Learning – How Students Respond

Skills and Abilities	Students who Employ a <i>Deep Approach to Learning</i>	Students who Employ a <i>Shallow Approach to Learning</i>
Planning + Organization	Plans and organizes their learning in a deliberate manner. Ensures there is enough time to appropriately learn through good time management.	Not well organized and doesn't always plan learning effectively. Often rushed, without enough time to complete tasks. Possibly has a high workload because of inefficiencies.
Self-Monitoring + Reflection	Self-monitors: Changes strategies when not working, aware of what helps them learn. Reflects and self-assesses methods and strategies. Goal-oriented.	Doesn't self-monitor: Uses same strategies even if not providing best results. Not a reflective or self-assessing student. Possibly lacks goals for own learning.
Awareness of thinking and learning	Aware of how they are thinking and learning. Seek meaning in learning. Aware of differences between argument and evidence, principles and examples etc.	Lack of awareness of how they are thinking and learning. Not always seeking meaning or understanding. Fails to distinguish principles from examples.
Depth of Processing	Focused on learning the content in a deep manner, through critically examining facts and ideas and stores them in existing structures/relationships and makes many new links and ideas to prior knowledge and new knowledge. Links content to real life and finds ways to connect that learning in meaningful ways.	Focused on learning the content in a shallow and quick manner. Learning is seen as discrete bits of information stored in isolated and unconnected ways. Not able to recognize new learning as being built upon existing knowledge. Lacks background knowledge necessary to understand new material. Sees course content as knowledge to be learned for an exam or test and to repeat what they've learned.
Self-Regulation	Takes control over their own learning. Able to self-regulate all aspects of body and mind (physical, affective and cognitive) with respect to learning according to situation.	Assume learning is outside of personal control. Often anxious. Doesn't have strong abilities to manage self and regulate when learning isn't happening. Motivated by fear of failure.
Grades	Actively seeks to understand the material/the subject.	Focused on 'passing grades' not necessarily best grades.
Risk Taker + Curiosity	Risk taker. Willing to try learning. Has a high degree of intrinsic curiosity in the subject matter. Studies to learn something new. Has confidence to try new learning.	Not a risk taker – sticks with known methods. Doesn't exhibit a level of curiosity with learning. Studies for a qualification or a mark – not always interested in the subject matter.
Note-Taking + Study Habits	Takes meaningful class notes focusing on core concepts. Has plan for studying, uses variety of methods, studies well in advance and seeks to have learning be deeply engrained in brain. Reads and studies beyond course requirements.	Has poor note-taking skills. Engages in memorization, last minute cramming, re-reading notes, passive study habits that don't get good results – forgets most learning after exam/test is over. Sticks close to the course requirements.