

A PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH TO LEARNING FOR LONG TERM RETENTION [Using OSCAR as the Framework]

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It is the thesis of the author that an effective problem solving procedure can and should be utilized on a regular basis to address **ALL** learning situations the user faces. Such situations will occur/ are occurring in organized courses in school or college. They will also, of course, occur after “formal” education is completed – in the lifelong learning so important to success in our personal lives and careers. The purpose of this very short note is to provide some guidance as to how a problem solving approach might be utilized effectively for these three types of situations.

To do so of course, a problem solving procedure must be selected for use in this discussion. The author’s personal problem solving procedure, with the acronym OSCAR, is used for this purpose. *Having written that*, it can and must be said that most problem solving procedures have many common features – regardless of what the feature or step is titled. Therefore in considering the TABLE found on the next page, the reader is encouraged to view the material within the table within the context of applicability to her/his own personal procedure, as should be very possible. If indeed the features of OSCAR [such as its “embracing of ambiguity” and its “emphasizing of regular self-assessment”] are not currently emphasized in the reader’s personal procedure, the reader might wish to investigate other material on problem solving [and OSCAR] developed by the author.

An effective problem solving procedure is one that routinely provides useful outcomes for a variety of situations faced such that the user is motivated to indeed utilize it on a regular basis. The author would never suggest that OSCAR or any other procedure is automatically the best one for use by anyone; it is believed that such a choice must be a personal one that works for the individual user. Whether the reader has such a problem solving procedure, or if indeed OSCAR is found to be a procedure the reader wishes to adapt for her/his personal use, in either case, the author would be most pleased to work with the reader in any refinement that will increase the effectiveness of the procedure.

<p style="text-align: center;">PROBLEM SOLVING STEP</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LEARNING FOR LONG-TERM RETENTION</p>
<p>1. The <u>Objective</u></p>	<p>What is/are the learning objective[s] – the goals <u>YOU</u> have for this learning activity? These should include the identification of a set of personal interest topics that you believe can be better addressed through this effort.</p>
<p>2. The <u>Speed Bumps</u></p>	<p>What is it <i>at this time</i> that prevents me/us from immediately meeting the learning objective[s]? This identification might be best addressed through review of course or assigned application materials.</p>
<p>3. The <u>Considerations</u></p>	<p>Through personal reflection and discussions with any other people who might be involved, what is already known information? What is <u>your visualization</u> as to what the learning activity really involves? List various options that could be considered that will address the learning objective[s].</p>
<p>4. The <u>Answers</u></p>	<p>Review the options that have been identified in this case. Based upon input from experts [e.g. faculty and/or consultants], develop a plan that provides the details of the approach selected to address the learning objective[s], including the development of a timeline. Carry out your plan, with careful periodic attention to assessment of how the plan is working – and what if anything might be needed to improve the plan.</p>
<p>5. The <u>Reflections</u></p>	<p>Review one final time the outcomes of your learning effort to insure, as best you can, that indeed you have satisfied the learning objective[s]. After the “external” assessment [e.g. any exams and/or reviews of oral or written reports], what is this additional feedback on meeting the objective[s]? From a review of all assessment, what might be done differently – now or in the future? Document for future reference. If appropriate, communicate these thoughts to others as well.</p>