

What Makes Good Learning?

DIRECTIONS: Rank the main character in each of the following stories according to the quality of learning each one experienced. Give a 1 to the character you think had the highest quality learning experience, all the way through to a 4 for the character you think had the lowest quality experience. Then, write a paragraph explaining your rankings. Justify your choice for the #1 learning experience and explain why each of the others was not as high in quality.

_____ Tommy has had the same baseball coach, Coach Davis, throughout his last 3 years of high school. Coach Davis has worked closely with him to improve his swing. All of the players know that Coach Davis's approach to batting is based on his four key principles. Tommy, like most of the players, knows the four principles so well he can recite them without even thinking about it. However, Tommy isn't always great at putting the principles into practice. Although his batting average has gone up, he's still only hitting at around .250, which isn't much of an improvement from his freshman year when he was hitting around .230.

_____ Melinda has just accepted her first job at a prestigious software design firm. During her job interview, her new boss asked her why she wanted to be a software designer. At first, Melinda wasn't sure how to answer the question—she'd set herself onto the path several years ago and hadn't really thought much about it since. But then she started to think back to her tenth-grade geometry class. To be honest, she couldn't remember much about the class itself. Software design doesn't involve very much geometry. She just remembered how inspiring her teacher was, and how it was the first time in her life she felt passionate about math. For Melinda, that geometry class was the experience that set her on the path to where she is today.

_____ When Frankie first started working at his brother Bill's auto shop, he knew nothing about cars. Bill wasn't much for explaining things, but he would let Frankie watch what he was doing, and he would always give Frankie a chance to try things for himself. Frankie quickly learned how to do a lot of the day-to-day things around the shop on his own. He could change oil and brake fluid, rotate tires, and replace headlights and windshield wipers. One day, the shop was really busy, and Bill asked Frankie to install new brakes on a car that had just come in. Although Frankie had watched Bill install brakes before, he'd never tried it himself, and he was a little unsure of how to get started. Frankie pulled the car onto the lift and started to raise it up when he felt a sudden thump against the side of his head. He turned to find Bill sneering angrily at him. In a few stern words, Bill explained to Frankie that he hadn't set the car fully into place before he started raising the lift. Suffice to say, Frankie never made that mistake again.

_____ Shantelle has a piano competition coming up soon. Her teacher has gone through the piece she will be performing with her several times, note by note, explaining every detail. Her teacher has also recorded the piece the way it should be played. Shantelle listens to it all the time; she even falls asleep with her headphones on and the song playing on repeat. Shantelle practices hours every day—so many hours that her friends and family begin to worry about her, and everything else in her life has become second to piano practice. Eventually, she is able to play the piece just as perfectly as her teacher. When the day of the competition finally arrives, Shantelle performs the piece just as well as she'd hoped. In fact, she was surprised at how easily it just came to her. She won first place at the competition, and her dream of becoming a professional piano player seemed a little bit more within her reach.