Are You Working Towards Good Learning?

The way you approach your study affects your learning outcomes. The following checklist helps you see whether you are working towards high-level learning outcomes.

1.   ***Choose the most appropriate response to each item.***
   5: always or almost always true of me
   4: frequently true of me
   3: true of me about half the time
   2: sometimes true of me
   1: never or only rarely true of me

1.	I find that at times studying gives me a feeling of deep personal satisfaction.	5 4 3 2 1
2.	I find that I have to do enough work on a topic so that I can form my own conclusions before I am satisfied.	5 4 3 2 1
3.	My aim is to pass the course while doing as little work as possible.	5 4 3 2 1
4.	I only study seriously what's given out in class or in the course outlines.	5 4 3 2 1
5.	I feel that virtually any topic can be highly interesting once I get into it.	5 4 3 2 1
6.	I find most new topics interesting and often spend extra time trying to obtain more information about them.	5 4 3 2 1
7.	I do not find my course very interesting so I keep my work to the minimum.	5 4 3 2 1
8.	I learn some things by rote, going over and over them until I know them by heart even if I do not understand them.	5 4 3 2 1
9.	I find that studying academic topics can at times be as exciting as a good novel or movie.	5 4 3 2 1
10.	I test myself on important topics until I understand them completely.	5 4 3 2 1
11.	I find I can get by in most assessments by memorising key sections rather than trying to understand them.	5 4 3 2 1
12.	I generally restrict my study to what is specifically set as I think it is unnecessary to do anything extra.	5 4 3 2 1
13.	I work hard at my studies because I find the material interesting.	5 4 3 2 1
14.	I spend a lot of my free time finding out more about interesting topics which have been discussed in different classes.	5 4 3 2 1
15.	I find it is not helpful to study topics in depth. It confuses and wastes time, when all you need is a passing acquaintance with topics.	5 4 3 2 1
16.	I believe that lecturer shouldn't expect students to spend significant amounts of time studying material everyone knows won't be examined.	5 4 3 2 1
17.	I come to most classes with questions in mind that I want answering.	5 4 3 2 1
18.	I make a point of looking at most of the suggested readings that go with the lectures.	5 4 3 2 1
19.	I see no point in learning material which is not likely to be in the examination.	5 4 3 2 1
20.	I find the best way to pass examinations is to try to remember answers to likely questions.	5 4 3 2 1

2.   ***Now add up two scores:***
   Score A = sum of scores for items 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18 =
   Score B = sum of scores for items 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20 =

3.   ***Find out what the scores mean on the next page!***

What do the scores mean?

The scores tell you how you typically approach your study:
- Score A indicates your tendency towards a 'Deep Approach' to learning
- Score B indicates your tendency towards a 'Surface Approach' to learning

Here are a few typical items which show the characteristics of the two approaches.

Deep Approach to Learning	Surface Approach to Learning
I find that I have to do enough work on a topic so that I can form my own conclusions before I am satisfied.	My aim is to pass the course while doing as little work as possible.
I test myself on important topics until I understand them completely.	I learn something by rote ('死記'), going over and over it until I know it by heart even if I do not understand it.
I find most new topics interesting and often spend extra time trying to obtain more information about them.	I see no point in learning material which is not likely to be asked in the examination.

If you have scored high (>35) on **Deep Approach**, this indicates that you have an intrinsic interest in learning and thorough understanding is an important learning goal for you; you don't mind spending to study a topic in depth and you use various strategies for test your understanding.

If you have scored high (>25) on **Surface Approach**, this indicates that your motivation towards learning is mainly extrinsic and passing the course is your main concern; you believe in 'minimum effort for maximum results' and you largely rely on memorisation as your learning strategy.

How does it relate to your learning outcomes?

Deep approach to learning often results in **deep understanding** of the topics. To have a deep understanding means that you can see the connections among things and you can create something new based on your understanding. At this level of understanding, you will be able to apply your knowledge effectively in real-life situations. This is generally the level of understanding you should aim at in your university study.

Surface approach to learning, on the other hand, often results in **surface understanding** of the topics. Most of what you have committed to memory by rote will be lost after a while. At this level of understanding, all you can do is to recall some factual information about certain topics, but you probably cannot apply your knowledge very effectively to explain and analyse things, to identify and solve problems, and many other things that you would encounter in real-life and workplace situations.

Your approach to learning is a choice/habit that you can change. In fact, your approach to learning may vary from subject to subject. If you just look at how you learn something you like very much, you might find that you are already a deep learner in some occasions.