

CHARACTERISTICS OF PLAY

ACTIVELY
ENGAGING

MEANINGFUL

SOCIALLY
INTERACTIVE

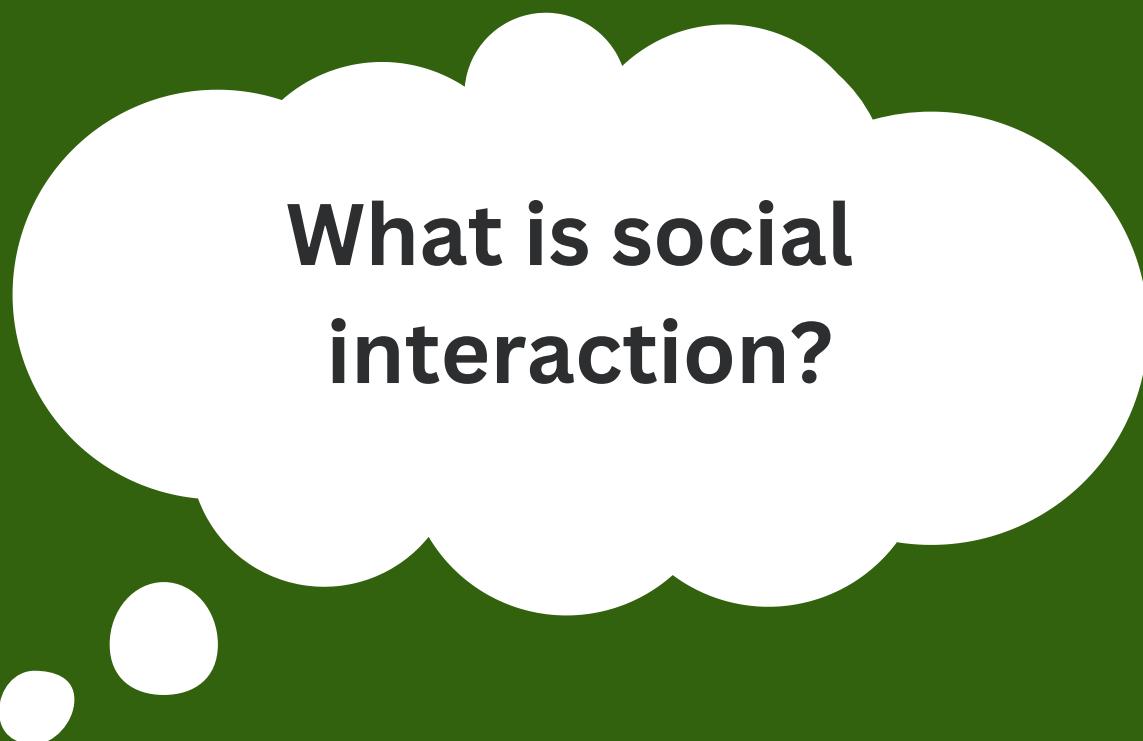
JOYFUL

ITERATIVE



What is actively engaging?

Becoming so involved and so engaged in what you are doing, that learning happens naturally.



What is social interaction?

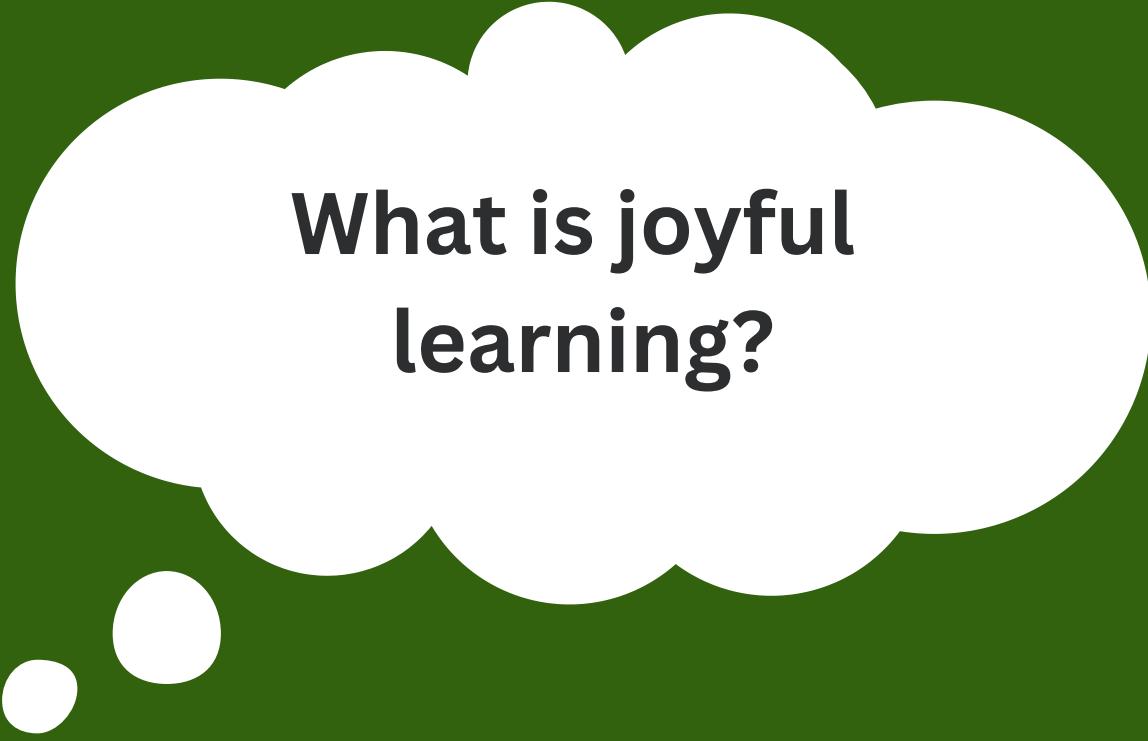


Learning to communicate and engage with others.

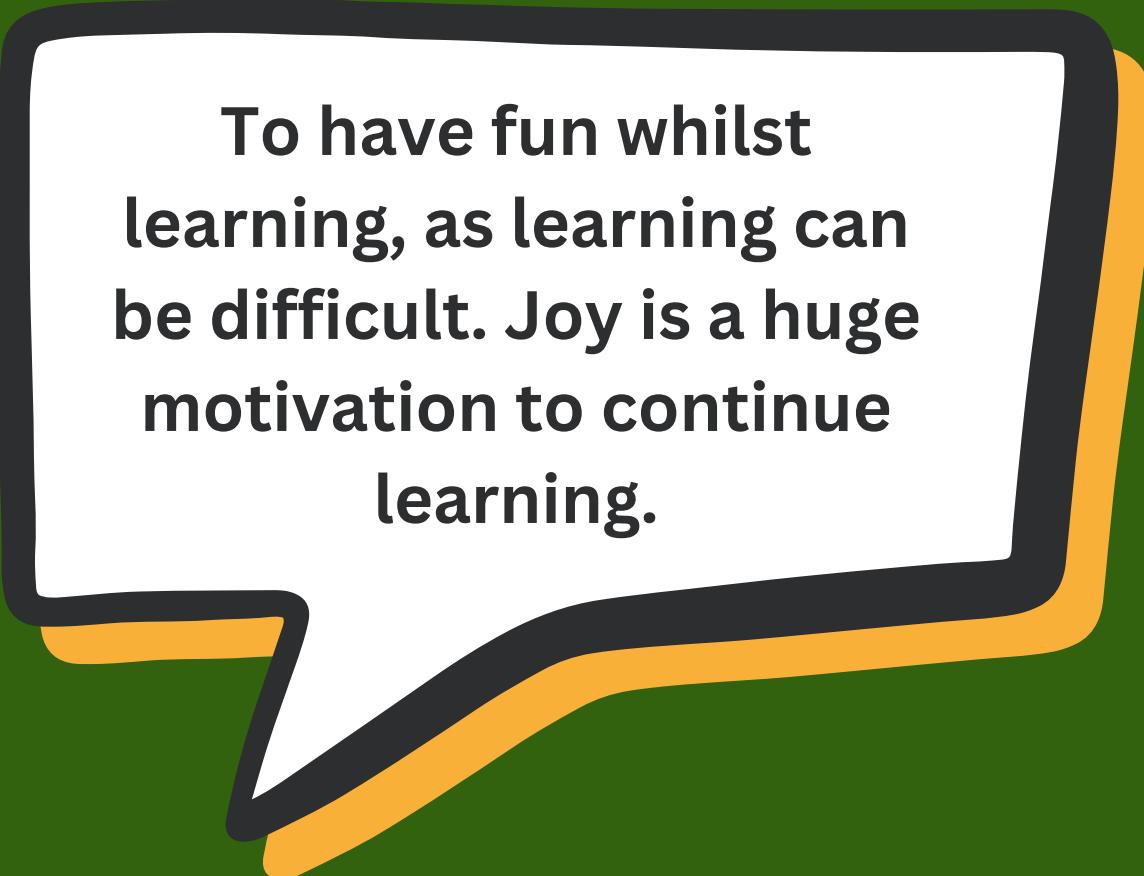
Sharing ideas gives us the opportunity to see things from another perspective.

What is Iterative learning?

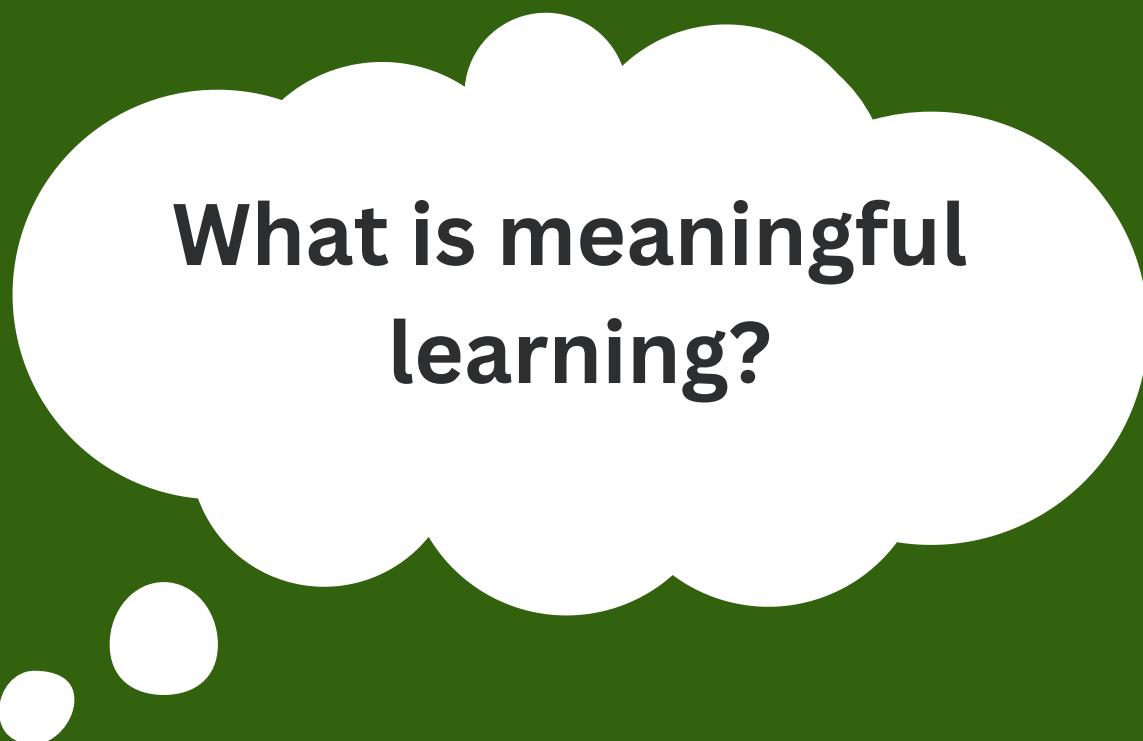
Learning through mistakes and practice. Keep trying and you'll get there in the end. This strengthens critical thinking and reasoning.



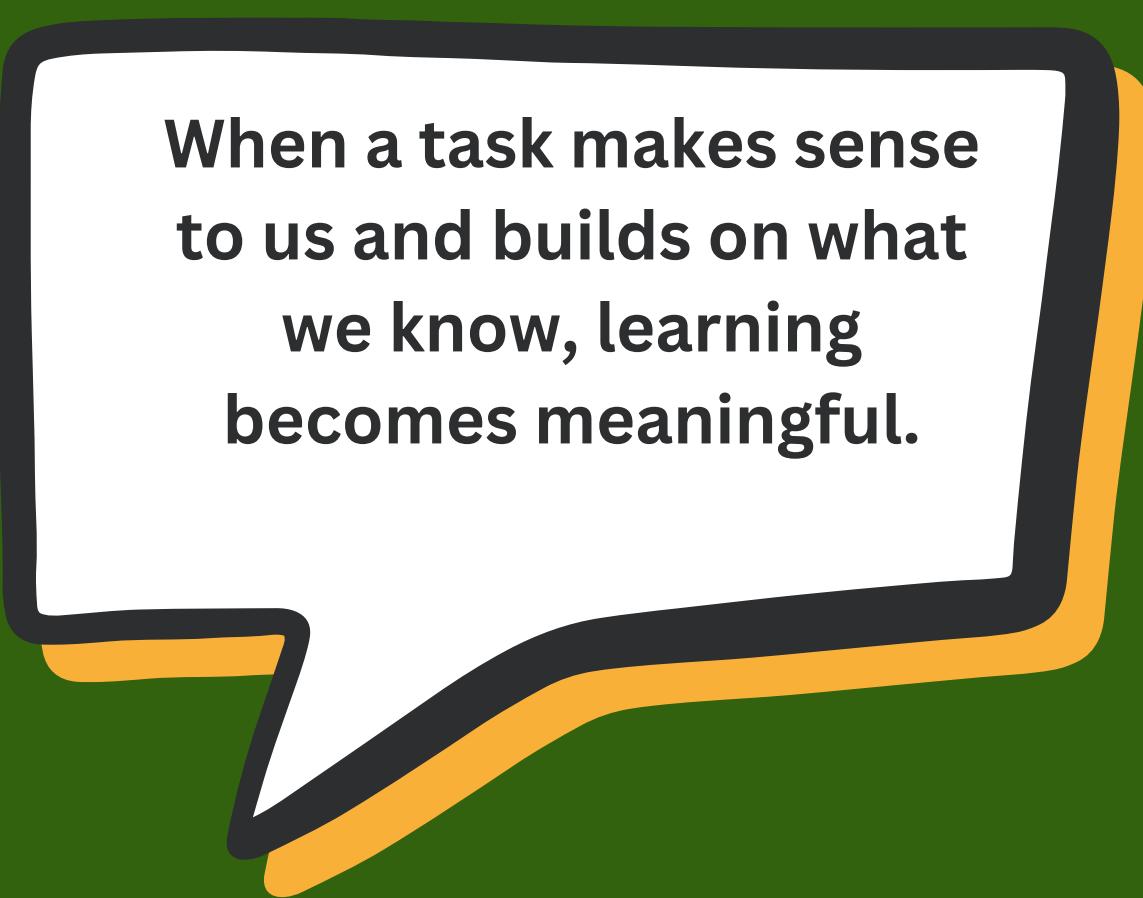
What is joyful learning?



To have fun whilst learning, as learning can be difficult. Joy is a huge motivation to continue learning.



What is meaningful learning?



When a task makes sense to us and builds on what we know, learning becomes meaningful.

What is play?

Play is a fundamental necessity and a shared experience that everyone recognises and understands. It arises from a natural impulse, an innate ability and motivation that every child has, and that adults can rediscover if they believe they have lost their playful spirit.

Embracing playfulness is an essential process that empowers us to explore our own ideas, interests, choices, and curiosities.



A playful environment fosters creative expression and self-exploration, both of which are crucial for everyone's health and well-being. Play is not only enjoyable and brings joy to our lives, but it also acts as a catalyst for addressing challenging situations or issues they may be facing when they act it out in play .

In the context of forest school, play contributes to children's development. Why is that?

In a forest school environment, children and learners are provided with a natural and safe space to grow and develop from various perspectives.

By engaging in physical activities and exploration, children enhance their motor skills, including climbing, jumping, and balancing. They build strength, discover functional movement patterns, and refine their fine motor abilities. Consequently, the forest serves as a hub for physiological learning and promotes health and well-being.



From an emotional and psychological standpoint, the forest school concept allows children to delve into their identities through play. It offers a setting where learners can navigate their inner emotional landscapes, observe their peers doing the same, and cultivate a sense of self through a long-term experiential journey.

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Through the playful framework of forest school, children enhance their cognitive skills while being encouraged to direct their own thinking, problem-solving, and theoretical processes. For instance, constructing a shelter provides an excellent opportunity for learners to think independently and gain knowledge through hands-on experiences. Embracing failures and mistakes is essential, as they foster cognitive development in children.



Additionally, rooted in the community principle of forest school, children who engage in play strengthen their socio-cultural skills and naturally build interpersonal and cultural connections through daily interactions. For example, a child from a specific religious background may share songs, prayers, or traditional dishes, allowing others to incorporate these elements into their own lives.

Forest School Leaders as Playworkers

A Forest School Leader serves not only as a Play Leader but also as a supporter, facilitator, and encourager of each participant's play process.

These leaders are continually engaged in personal development while championing the importance of play. They understand that play is essential for children's health and well-being.

Forest School Leaders collaborate with participants to co-create play spaces, maintaining a constant inter-relational exchange among everyone involved.

They skillfully balance risks with developmental benefits.

In this environment, Forest School Leaders and participants engage in a playful dance, which can be initiated or led by either adults or children.

Worked on in conjunction with

Anna Brixner and Bee