Learning By Faith
Hot Chocolate - March 15, 2006

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Learning by Faith

- “The spiritual understanding you and I have been blessed to receive, and which has been confirmed as true in our hearts, simply cannot be given to another person. The tuition of diligence and learning by faith must be paid to obtain and personally “own” such knowledge. Only in this way can what is known in the mind be transformed into what is felt in the heart. Only in this way can a person move beyond relying upon the spiritual knowledge and experience of others and claim those blessings for himself or herself. Only in this way can we be spiritually prepared for what is coming. We are to seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118).

- What is the difference between learning by faith, and learning by study?
“Consider how missionaries help investigators to learn by faith. Making and keeping spiritual commitments, such as studying and praying about the Book of Mormon, attending Church meetings, and keeping the commandments, require an investigator to exercise faith and to act. One of the fundamental roles of a missionary is to help an investigator make and honor commitments – to act and learn by faith. Teaching, exhorting, and explaining, as important as they are, can never convey to an investigator a witness of the truthfulness of the restored gospel. Only as an investigator’s faith initiates action and opens the pathway to the heart can the Holy Ghost deliver a confirming witness. Missionaries obviously must learn to teach by the power of the Spirit. Of equal importance, however, is the responsibility missionaries have to help investigators learn by faith.”

How do we help our students learn by faith?
“Learning by faith is the result of the Holy Ghost carrying the power of the word of God both unto and into the heart. Learning by faith cannot be transferred from an instructor to a student through a lecture, a demonstration, or an experiential exercise; rather, a student must exercise faith and act in order to obtain the knowledge for himself or herself.”

If we cannot transfer learning by faith to our students, what can we do to help them seek learning by faith.

Can learning by faith be achieved in class, or is it an out of class process?
How can we use technology to help students build faith? To help students learn by faith?

Does technology have any role in learning by faith?
Learning by Faith

Faith and action

- “True faith is focused in and on the Lord Jesus Christ and always leads to action.”
- How we use faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to learn by faith?
- What role does homework, reading, or other assignments have in the principle of action?
- Is requiring homework enough to encourage students to learn by faith?
- What needs to happen for learning by faith to occur?
“A testimony is found in the bearing of it.”

How does this quote relate to learning by faith?

Some ideas I have are having students teach each other, writing assignments, and most recently using a wiki.

“Discussing with others helps us remember what we have read. It also helps us to understand the subject matter more clearly. With determination and self-discipline, we can learn and progress every day by improving our reading habits.”

(Continuing to Learn, Lesson 33, The Latter-day Saint Woman, Part B, Personal and Family Development)
Learn by Faith

Action

Asking Questions

Joseph Smith

Consider the example of Joseph Smith as he learned by faith.

“The young boy Joseph Smith instinctively understood what it meant to seek learning by faith. One of the most well-known episodes in the life of Joseph Smith was his reading of verses about prayer and faith in the book of James in the New Testament (see James 1:5-6). This text inspired Joseph to retire to a grove of trees near his home to pray and to seek for spiritual knowledge. Please note the questions Joseph had formulated in his mind and felt in his heart – and which he took into the grove. He clearly had prepared himself to “ask in faith” (James 1:6) and to act.”
Asking Questions

- How does asking questions relate to learning by faith?
- What questions should we ask Heavenly Father?
- What questions should students ask instructors?
- How can we encourage students to ask questions?
- How do we handle a student who clearly has not attempted the homework, but is very vocal with questions in class?
- How would the Lord treat us if we come to him without putting in the needed work?
“Are you and I agents who act and seek learning by faith, or are we waiting to be taught and acted upon? Are the students we serve acting and seeking to learn by faith, or are they waiting to be taught and acted upon? Are you and I encouraging and helping those whom we serve to seek learning by faith? You and I and our students are to be anxiously engaged in asking, seeking, and knocking (see 3 Nephi 14:7).”

How can all of this apply to us as parents?

Should we treat our children the same way we treat our students?
One of the basic teachings of the Church is that the knowledge we gain in this life will be a blessing to us now and in life after death: “If a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130:19).