***Learners NOT Students!***

All of us are learners. Think about it. We were born curious and open to learning or we wouldn't walk or talk. It's just how each of us were made. Learning is part of us. We were not born students-- we were born learners. Our first experiences of learning were through play and discovery.

The term "student" was first defined in the middle ages.

*1350-1400 - Middle English, alteration (influenced by Latin studre, to study) of studient, studiant, from Old French estudiant, one who studies, from present participle of estudier, to study, from Medieval Latin studire, from Latin studium, study.]*

This is the 21st century not the Middle Ages. Learning is happening anytime, anywhere by anyone. Consider now that we are able to learn in different ways through different mediums with the expanded use of mobile devices.

Rethink what the term "student" implies.

All the references to student that we could find represent someone who studies or is being taught as part of an institution.

*A student is someone who is learning when they attend an educational institution. In some nations, the English term is reserved for those who attend university, while a school child under the age of eighteen is called a pupil in English (or an equivalent in other languages), although in the United States a person enrolled in grades K-12 is often called a student. Wikipedia's Definition*

 **In the Free Online Dictionary, student means:**

*1. One who is enrolled or attends classes at a school, college, or university.*

*a. One who studies something: a student of contemporary dance.*

*b. An attentive observer: a student of world affairs.*

**How about calling students, "learners?"**

We would like to shake things up. If you consider anyone who is learning at any age and anywhere a "learner," then you give the responsibility for the learning to the learner. Since the institution or anyone who is teaching students are accountable for the learning -- not the learners. That means the teachers are responsible for what the "students" learn. Doesn't this seem backwards?

Where is the incentive and motivation to learn if all the responsibility is on the teacher? Students don't own what they are supposed to learn. If you change the thinking behind the terms, then using the term "learners" makes more sense.

Think about yourself as a learner in and outside of school. Are you a student or a learner? If you interact with people, go outside, open a book, you might be learning something new. You are learning. You are self-directing that learning. You are a learner not a student. Let's compare the terms:

**A student...**

learns in a classroom.

is assigned a task to do.

follows required objectives.

does the assignment designed by the teacher or curriculum.

seeks information for the assignment.

works individually or in a group depending on assignment.

earns a grade to reflect that they met the objectives and standards.

**A learner...**

develops their own learning goals.

monitors their progress in meeting their goals.

has a purpose or interest to learn something.

asks questions.

seeks information.

finds ways to collaborate with others.

wants to know something because they want to know it -- not for a grade.

is curious about life and never stops learning.