Rhizomatic Learning Explained

STORYZEN

I feel overwhelmed... A plethora of terms have been used to describe a holistic, systemic apprehension of learning: communities of practice, learning organizations, rhizomatic learning, connected learning, learning networks, ecologies of learning

I think a common dominator in all these terms, is a conceptualization of learning as an emergent phenomenon, as the *side effect* of the active participation and engagement in a complex system of meaningful synergies.

This is a perspective that locates learning not in the head of an individual being, but in the web of relationships between that person and the world.

Peter Senge also theorized the concept of the learning organization, a coherent whole able to demonstrate emergent behavior. In a learning organization, there is a form of learning that takes place and can be realized only in the group-as-a-whole level: what the whole organization is able to achieve that cannot be reduced to any linear sum of its members' potentials

$$\underline{1 + 1 > 2}$$

That echoes to me the words of *Deleuze and Guattari*. A rhizome "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo . Proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing"

"the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight"

It seems to me that this is all about a networked conception of learning. I could imagine a complex learning rhizome is a performative confluence of human and non-human actors that engages people, resources, processes, and contextual parameters.

In such view, Rhizomatic Learning can be defined as the process of extending, nurturing, cultivating, and catalyzing the development of a living network, consisting of knowledgeable agents, both human and artificial, and material objects/resources.

Learning as
developing a
network of
resources

expand

Learning can be realized as the creative capacity of such rhizomes to build upon existing resources and create new connections, acquire new nodes, and expand even further in different directions.

creativity

Fritjof Capra points out that **the network pattern** is the fundamental pattern of life. But the network as a dynamic process not as a static structure.

That's why the rhizome (both the botanical original and the philosophical one) is a wonderful metaphor for learning, because it is always in the becoming, always developing toward every possible direction in a nomadic way.

Therefore, learners can be understood as **nomads** traversing their personal learning networks in their own ways in the context of a community of co-learners, and, by doing so, they co-create wonderful and unique learning rhizomes.

The role of the educator in such rhizomatic ecology is to empower participants to create alternative connections, new networks of thinking, and new patterns of relating with each other, and with other available human nodes or non-human learning resources.

But it is not the educator that actually educates the students. The rhizome as a whole becomes the teaching apparatus, a multiplier of perspectives, and an amplifier of synergies.

In such epistemology of learning, the primary role of the educator is not to teach in a straightforward manner, but rather to catalyze and facilitate the development of the rhizome that will indirectly drive learning toward the desired direction.

the rhizome creates the background, the contextual validity, and the situated meaning for individual actions. By developing learning rhizomes, self-organizing confluences of human and non-human in the becoming, we participate in anotropic performative dances which help us unfold our full living potential.

This *storytelling artifact* summarizes the key points of the following article:

Brailas, A. (2020). Rhizomatic Learning in Action: A Virtual Exposition for Demonstrating Learning Rhizomes. *Eighth International Conference on Technological Ecosystems for Enhancing Multiculturality*, 309-314. Salamanca Spain: ACM. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3434780.3436565>

Comic characters created with Comicgen library (<https://gramener.com/comicgen>).

Dee, Priya, Dey, and Ringo
by Ramya Mylavarapu,
ramya.mylavarapu@gramener.com,
under CC0 license

Ethan by Devarani B,
devarani.b@gramener.com,
under CC0 license

Ricky By Suchismita
Naik under CC0 license

Brailas, A. (2021). Rhizomatic Learning Explained.
<https://doi.org/10.35542/osf.io/n4xhs>