Major Categories in the Taxonomy of Significant Learning

Foundational Knowledge
- Knowing refers to students’ ability to understand and remember specific information and ideas
- Students need to have some valid basic knowledge (science, history, literature, geography, other aspects of their world)
- Students need to understand major ideas or perspectives (evolution, capitalism, ethics)
Special Value: Foundational knowledge provides the basic understanding necessary for other kinds of learning

Application
- Students learn how to engage in some new kind of action (intellectual, physical, social)
- Students engage in various kinds of thinking (critical, creative, practical)
- Students gain skills in communication, playing a musical instrument, managing a complex project
Special Value: Application learning allows other kinds of learning to become useful

Integration
- Students are able to see and understand the connections between different things
- Connections can be between specific ideas, realms of ideas, between people, between different realms of life (between school and work, between school and leisure life)
Special Value: The act of making new connections gives students a new form of power, especially intellectual power

Human Dimension
- Students learn something important about themselves or about others helps them to function and interact more effectively
- Students discover personal and social implications of what they have learned
- What students learn or the way they learn sometimes gives students a new understanding of themselves (self-image) or a new vision of what they want to become (self-ideal)
- What students learn helps them acquire a better understanding of others – how and why others act, how the student can interact more effectively with others
Special Value: This kind of learning informs students about the human significance of what they are learning

Caring
- Learning experience changes the degree to which students care about something, reflected in the form of new feelings, interests, values
- Changes means students now care about something to a greater degree than they did before, or in a different way
Special Value: When students care about something, they then have the energy they need for learning more about it and making it a part of their lives. Without the energy for learning, nothing significant happens.

Learning How to Learn
- Students can learn something about the process of learning itself
- Students may learn to be a better student, engage in a particular kind of inquiry, how to become a self-directed learner
Special Value: This kind of learning enables students to continue learning in the future and to do so with greater effectiveness