

C1: CREATING AUTONOMOUS LEARNERS

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

Learning dispositions

The Three Rs

(Extract from Learning Dispositions and Personal Learning Planning)

Personal learning planning can be seen as an extension of self-assessment by students where students learn how to take greater responsibility for their learning in school and beyond.

Three Rs - resilience, reflection and resourcefulness - provide an overarching framework within which to build an approach to personal learning planning using the principles and practice of formative assessment as presented in the Highland model. They also serve to highlight the distinctive emotional, cognitive and behavioural factors likely to influence how teachers might foster independent learning as a way of helping children and young people to develop the capacities at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence.

In building resilience to setbacks in their learning, in reflecting on the nature of their successes and failures and in learning how to be resourceful in identifying different ways of dealing with difficulty, students can build a repertoire of ideas, tools and approaches, which will sustain effective learning over time. These three Rs - resilience, reflection and resourcefulness - offer an overarching framework within which the different emotional, cognitive and behavioural influences on autonomous learning can be explored.

Learning logs, diaries and journals can provide a structure in which individuals begin to see that successful learning is a realistic goal for everyone, no matter their ability. This can be complemented by activities designed to give students opportunities to develop the approaches and strategies they can use in learning how to think both as an integral part of specific learning contexts and as a function of learning how to learn.

By approaching personal learning planning in this way, students can build gradually and securely the resilience, reflection and resourcefulness that will help them to pursue their own learning priorities at a later stage when they are ready to identify them by themselves.

Building Resilience

Children and young people need to understand that learning is a personal journey under the control of the individual learner. Teachers have a critical role in stimulating and supporting it, but responsibility for the learning rests with the individual who should be actively engaged every step of the way.

Carol Dweck has explored how students' beliefs about themselves affect their disposition to learn. She has been instrumental in helping us to understand that successful learning depends at least as much on the effort we are able to put into a task as it does on the initial ability we bring to it. Her work on the implicit theories of intelligence or mindsets that influence how we respond to the difficulties encountered while learning have helped us to understand the factors that can either sustain or undermine our capacity to learn. If, through a fixed mindset, we believe that our intelligence is static, we will want to avoid difficulty because it exposes our limitations. On the other hand, if we believe that intelligence can grow through effort, we are more likely to welcome the challenge of learning something new. To enjoy this challenge, children and young people need to learn how to become resilient in dealing with the obstacles that invariably stand in their way and their teachers have an important role to play in helping them to achieve this.

Becoming Reflective

Students need to acquire a language for learning and for assessment to talk about what is to be learned and why, how it is being learned and how well. Teachers and students can then successfully share their understandings of what learning looks like and begin to talk about how both the formative and summative uses of assessment can be brought together in a coherent and constructive way to help them develop the skills of self-assessment in which personal learning planning should be grounded.

This shared language also provides a vocabulary for talking about the criteria and related standards to apply when judging the quality of activities undertaken and work done. In reflecting on their progress in completing a task, children and young people need to understand the criteria that should govern their judgements and the appropriate standards to apply.

Being Resourceful

Children and young people need support and guidance in building a repertoire of what they can think about and do to keep their learning on track as it develops. This repertoire grows with experience and provides a variety of strategies and tools to use to sustain their learning as it progresses. Teachers and others involved in the education of children and young people have a lot to offer in helping students build and use it effectively. In essence it consists of how creative and critical thinking is used to direct and evaluate learning.

Eric Young

For reflection and discussion

What is your experience of helping young people to be resilient, reflective and/or resourceful? What are the obstacles and how can they be overcome? What costs (in investing time, effort or support, etc) might be involved? What benefits might arise? Would the benefits outweigh the costs or vice versa? Share your thoughts with others in your group.

C1: CREATING AUTONOMOUS LEARNERS

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

Learning dispositions

Words of Praise

Every word or action from a teacher or parent to a child sends a message. Are they messages that say *You have permanent traits and I'm judging them?* Or are they messages that say *You're a developing person and I'm interested in your development?*

Praising children's intelligence or talent, tempting as it is, sends a fixed mindset message. It makes their confidence and motivation more fragile. Instead, try to foster a growth mindset by focusing on the processes they used - their strategies, efforts or choices.

(adapted from Mindset, p205)

The 99 words of praise below came from a school website (www.sd40.bc.ca/kelvin/compliments.htm). In the light of the extract above, mark each comment with an "I" if it praises intelligence or talent or with a "P" if it focuses on a process of some kind.

<input type="checkbox"/> Great!	<input type="checkbox"/> Phenomenal!	<input type="checkbox"/> Superb!
<input type="checkbox"/> Cool!	<input type="checkbox"/> Out Of Sight!	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent!
<input type="checkbox"/> Unbelievable Work!	<input type="checkbox"/> Two Thumbs Up!	<input type="checkbox"/> You've Got It!
<input type="checkbox"/> Way To Go!	<input type="checkbox"/> Terrific!	<input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding Performance!
<input type="checkbox"/> You've Outdone Yourself!	<input type="checkbox"/> Marvellous!	<input type="checkbox"/> Your Help Counts!
<input type="checkbox"/> Amazing Effort!	<input type="checkbox"/> Bravo!	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceptional!
<input type="checkbox"/> Breathhtaking!	<input type="checkbox"/> Wonderful!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're Special!
<input type="checkbox"/> Keep Up The Good Work!	<input type="checkbox"/> First Rate Work!	<input type="checkbox"/> Fantastic Work!
<input type="checkbox"/> You Should Be Proud!	<input type="checkbox"/> I Knew You Had It In You!	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good!
<input type="checkbox"/> Stupendous!	<input type="checkbox"/> Sensational!	<input type="checkbox"/> A+ Work!
<input type="checkbox"/> What An Imagination!	<input type="checkbox"/> Awesome!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're A Great Example!
<input type="checkbox"/> You Made It Happen!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're A Real Trooper!	<input type="checkbox"/> It Couldn't Be Better!
<input type="checkbox"/> Good For You!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're A Good Sport!	<input type="checkbox"/> You Made The Difference!
<input type="checkbox"/> Take A Bow!	<input type="checkbox"/> Super Job!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're Unique!
<input type="checkbox"/> It's Everything I Hoped For!	<input type="checkbox"/> How Thoughtful Of You!	<input type="checkbox"/> Nice Going!
<input type="checkbox"/> You're A Class Act!	<input type="checkbox"/> Well Done!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're Inspiring!
<input type="checkbox"/> How Artistic!	<input type="checkbox"/> You Go The Extra Mile!	<input type="checkbox"/> Hooray For You!
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Answer!	<input type="checkbox"/> You Deserve A Hug!	<input type="checkbox"/> High Five!
<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Special Work!	<input type="checkbox"/> Wow!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're Getting Better!
<input type="checkbox"/> You're Tops!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're Amazing!	<input type="checkbox"/> What A Great Idea!
<input type="checkbox"/> You Figured It Out!	<input type="checkbox"/> You've Got What It Takes!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're Neat!
<input type="checkbox"/> You're A Joy!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're A Shining Star!	<input type="checkbox"/> Spectacular Work!
<input type="checkbox"/> You're #1!	<input type="checkbox"/> You Tried Hard!	<input type="checkbox"/> The Time You Put In Shows!
<input type="checkbox"/> Remarkable!	<input type="checkbox"/> Far Out!	<input type="checkbox"/> How Extraordinary!
<input type="checkbox"/> You're A Winner!	<input type="checkbox"/> You Came Through!	<input type="checkbox"/> That's Incredible!
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Star Work!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're Super!	<input type="checkbox"/> You Can Do It!
<input type="checkbox"/> You're The Greatest!	<input type="checkbox"/> Sweet!	<input type="checkbox"/> Great Effort!
<input type="checkbox"/> How Original!	<input type="checkbox"/> What A Genius!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're A Natural!
<input type="checkbox"/> Very Brave!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're A Pleasure To Know!	<input type="checkbox"/> Way To Go!
<input type="checkbox"/> You're Sharp!	<input type="checkbox"/> Congratulations!	<input type="checkbox"/> I'm Proud Of You!
<input type="checkbox"/> Thank You For Caring!	<input type="checkbox"/> I'm Impressed!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're Very Talented!
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Discovery!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're A Champ!	<input type="checkbox"/> Right On!
<input type="checkbox"/> You're So Kind!	<input type="checkbox"/> Thanks For Helping!	<input type="checkbox"/> You're A-OK!
<input type="checkbox"/> Magnificent!	<input type="checkbox"/> You've Earned My Respect!	<input type="checkbox"/> You've Made Progress!
<input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding Effort!	<input type="checkbox"/> Neat Work!	<input type="checkbox"/> I Love It!