

Building the habits of... Healthy Confident Individuals



Successful Futures: a new curriculum for Wales

The new curriculum is shaped by four statements of purpose that emphasise the importance of longer-term outcomes designed to equip young people to thrive in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world. One of these purposes states that young people should develop as **Healthy, Confident Individuals**, ready to learn throughout their lives, and the subject of this resource.

Healthy Confident Individuals:

- **have secure values** and are establishing their spiritual and ethical beliefs
- are building their mental and emotional well-being by developing **confidence, resilience and empathy**
- **apply knowledge** about the impact of diet and exercise on physical and mental health in their daily lives
- know **how to find the information** and support to keep safe and well
- take part in physical activity
- **take measured decisions** about lifestyle and **manage risk**
- have the **confidence** to participate in performance
- **form positive relationships** based upon trust and mutual respect
- **face and overcome challenge**
- have the skills and knowledge to manage everyday life as independently as they can
- **and are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.**

Uniting the models of Successful Futures and Building Learning Power. All powerful learners cultivate a set of key learning characteristics. Healthy, Confident Individuals would deploy a subset of these characteristics, the most important of which are highlighted below.



The BLP approach



There are two main parts to the approach:

- A a model of a learner and learning, in terms of a set of characteristics that work together to make a person a highly capable learner; we use 'learning power' to describe the effect. (Several of these characteristics appear in this resource.)
- B a view of the kind of pedagogy that will nurture and strengthen the learning characteristics in young people.

These are bound together by the fundamental idea that **'learning is learnable'**, and by explicit, detailed discussion of how learning works, supported by a rich repertoire of words and action.

Wider Strategic Skills

The Successful Futures' view of Healthy Confident Individuals covers a range of learning habits:

- **cognitive** habits which help learners handle information effectively
- **social** habits which help them work confidently with others
- **emotional** habits which help them manage the feelings of learning positively.

Building Learning Power adds a fourth aspect to this recipe for success: **Strategic**, or meta-cognitive, learning habits.

In the case of a Healthy Confident Individual, these strategic habits would include *Meta-learning* - where learners develop an informed view of themselves as a growing learner.

Learning behaviours to build Healthy Confident Individuals

The architecture of Classroom cultures

Relating – Shifting how you relate to your students; gradually sharing more of the responsibility for learning with them

- **Help students to lead their own learning**
 - » Don't tell students exactly what they have to do – allow them to make decisions for themselves; reduce the scaffolding of learning.
- **Working to deadlines**
 - » Use time constraints constructively to drive activities to efficient conclusions.
- **Build a community of learners**
 - » Build in opportunities for learners to construct understanding together, so that students develop the confidence to steer their own learning.

A shift in relationships



Talking – Shifting how you talk about learning; the sort of language content and style you use to enhance and explain learning

- **Time to think and talk about learning**
 - » Allow time for students to explore, discuss, and critique the learning process.
- **Review their learning process regularly**
 - » Build in moments for students to evaluate what they know, understand and can do, and where they need to go next **as learners**.
- **Make it safe to disagree**
 - » Help students to say why they disagree with you and others and why.

A shift in learning language



Constructing – Shifting how you construct learning activities; the tasks and classroom routines you use to build positive learning habits

- **Establish planning routines**
 - » Establish routines for dealing with a task, that provide reliable starting points for exploration or experimentation.
- **Strengthen perseverance**
 - » Provide tricky challenges; encourage individuals and teams to stick with challenges when immediate outcomes are not forthcoming.
- **Open-ended challenges**
 - » Encourage students to find out for themselves and explore possibilities as they embrace uncertainty.

A shift in how learning is constructed

Celebrating – Shifting what you celebrate about learning; what you prize, recognise, display; the outward signs of beliefs about learning

- **Effort is prized over attainment**
 - » Encourage students to see effort and struggle as essential aspects of learning, not as an indication of lack of 'ability'.
- **Public performances**
 - » Offer regular opportunities for students to present their work publicly and take pride in what they have achieved.

- **Recording key learning moments**
 - » Photographing (or videoing) and displaying students as they are learning, so that students are modelling learning for themselves for future reference.
- **Value other's contributions**
 - » Draw attention to the input made by students in framing ideas and suggesting directions.

A shift in what is celebrated and valued

Making the shift

The teacher's role becomes one of **surfacing learning**; to make learning public; to train some of the tricky bits; to talk about it; to recognise and celebrate it as it happens; to nudge it along, assisting students to grow their learning behaviours; and to design activity to stretch a wide range of learning habits. This uncovering of learning ensures students discover, use, understand and translate their learning behaviours into learning habits.

For many teachers this shift is likely to call for changes in practice. Take it steady! Think about what you might...

Stop

Trying to control everything

Start

Modelling your own learning

Start slowly

Reducing the scaffolding around learning

Experiment with

Enabling students to reflect on their growth as a learner

Healthy, Confident Individuals



Starters – to engage learners. For example:

Scrapheap Challenge

Collect a pile of unrelated objects, or ask students to bring in one object each and mix them in random groupings – e.g. a copper tube, piece of cloth, felt pen, blu-tack. Challenge students to make as many things as they can from the objects, using all of them but nothing else. Discuss examples of particularly imaginative/effective use of materials and whether these ideas can be used in another context.

Thinking routines – to embed learning behaviours. For example:

Connect-Extend-Challenge

Connect Extend Challenge is a routine for connecting new ideas to prior knowledge.

- **CONNECT:** How are the ideas and information presented CONNECTED to what you already knew?
- **EXTEND:** What new ideas did you get that EXTENDED or pushed your thinking in new directions?
- **CHALLENGE:** What is still CHALLENGING or confusing for you to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?

Activities – to stimulate use of the learning habits. For example:

Building on others' ideas

Prepare the way for students to build on the ideas of others when working in a group by making 'ABC' a routine that you use during whole-class teaching. Once a student has answered a question, ask another student to **Add** to it, to **Build** on it, to **Challenge** it, to **Defend** it, to **Elaborate** on it, or to **Find a Flaw** in it. As easy as ABC! This improves students' listening skills at the same time.

Activities – to stimulate use of the learning habits. For example:

Practise prioritisation

- » Regularly ask students to plan events or activities, e.g. as flow diagrams.
- » Model the habit of sequencing what has to be done, over a range of timescales.
- » Get students to plan action in response to a major emergency (preferably imagined!)

Teacher Talk – to nudge learning habits and open possibilities. For example:

- “How will you **judge the success** of what you have done?”
- “**What will it look like** when you have done it?”
- “Can you get things **in the right order**: what is urgent, what is important?”
- “Are you **on track** to meet this deadline?”
- “Can you **describe** how you learned that?”
- “**Where else could you use** this skill/idea/knowledge?”
- “Which learning behaviour would be the best one to help you with this?”
- “**Think back** to when you... How did you tackle it then?”
- “**Draft** your ideas in ways which will help you capture what you know

Using 'Could be' language rather than 'Is' language leaves open the possibility that things might not be cut-and-dried, that other avenues might need to be explored. This immediately invites students to be more thoughtful, critical, or imaginative about what they are studying.

How could you use more 'could be' language in your classroom?

Healthy, Confident Individuals are likely to:

Enjoy challenging activities

Keep going in the face of difficulty

Exhibit a principled, consistent approach to others

Be able to explain and defend their views, values and beliefs

Understand which learning strategies will work best for them

Have a strong justified belief in their personal effectiveness

Take time to think ahead and consider alternatives before taking action

Act with assurance, with confidence born of strategic thinking

Change their minds in light of new evidence

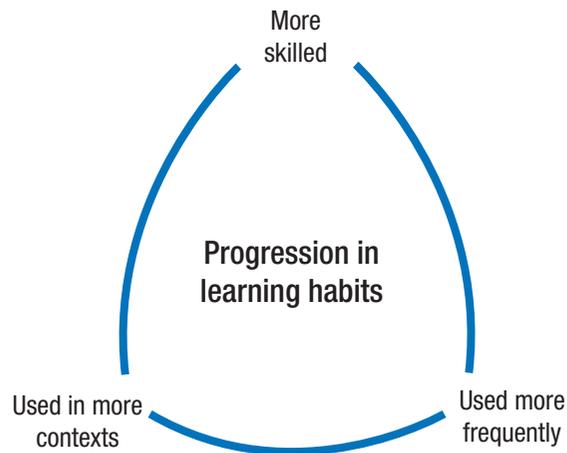
Learn with confident uncertainty

Growing learning behaviours

From behaviours to habits

If the big ambition of Successful Futures is to work, the learning qualities suggested have to become more than 'can-do' skills; they have to become habitual tendencies that students adopt in learning. The point is to grow and develop these behaviours to become dispositions or habits. Thus over time, students get better at persevering, questioning, reasoning, changing their ideas and so forth. They use these behaviours more frequently and in a wider range of contexts. They become powerful Healthy Confident Individuals not just in school but for a lifetime of learning and employment.

Three aspects of progress in building learning habits



I can't	Tell me	I'll try	I see why	I make sure	I am
Little sense of self as learner. Don't think about how they are learning.		Meta Learning			Understand how they learn and use this to develop how/what they achieve.
Rushes in without considering the consequences. Impulsive and unaware of the need to plan.		Planning			Considers a range of possibilities before committing to action. Plans with confident uncertainty.
Rigid and rule bound. Believes changing one's mind is a weakness.		Revising			Flexible and adapts readily to changing circumstances as new evidence unfolds.
Isolated and inward looking. See little point in consulting others.		Empathy			Responds to the feelings and ideas of others with understanding.
Uses knowledge and skills only in the context within which they were learned.		Making Links			Links diverse knowledge and skills to different contexts.
Likes to stick with familiar tools.		Capitalising			Draws on a wide range of resources and exploits every possible opportunity.
No coping strategies. Lacks self-belief. Daunted by difficulty.		Perseverance			Relishes challenge. Has a range of strategies to ensure success

This diagram outlines possible starts and ends of the growth of a Healthy Confident Individual. From the unskilled, untrained learner on the left to the learning-powered learner on the right lies a progression that can be mapped. The titles across the top identify the progressive phases of skill and attitude towards their learning which students need to be guided through.

Don't delay ... Find out more about *Building Learning Power* today and claim your 5 FREE student learning profiles.

The BLP Toolbox awaits you and your school's investment in the 'Successful Futures' of new generations in Wales. www.blp.how/success builds on the messages introduced by this card and takes you into the world within which teachers are preparing to deliver the new curriculum.



Building Learning Power

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The Learning Organisation