

1

Chalkface.

The supple learning mind.

What is it?
What does it consist of?
How does it work.

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1



2

What you and your learners think about learning: exploring differences in beliefs.

Compare and contrast

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The threads that link these slides together:
Effective learners have a wide range of effective learning behaviours at their command
The Supple Learning Mind captures these high tariff behaviours and begins to provide a language for discussing and understanding the learning process.

Aim of the discussion: To consider/explore The Supple Learning Mind - the first key model in Building Better Learners. (The second is the Teachers' Palette - see Topic C)

- Objectives:** By the end of the discussion participants will have explored:
- How their view of effective learning may be at variance with what students believe about it;
 - The supple learning mind and its 17 high value learning behaviours, and reflected on students who exhibit, and do exhibit, these key learning behaviours;
 - How they learn when faced with a challenge;
 - Used a tool for observing learning behaviours and considered how they might use it in the classroom;
 - Reflected on how powerful learners are different;
 - Heard from some students about how they view learning.

3

What do good learners do?

Diamond 9






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The Key message(s):

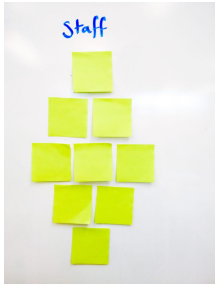
Give out sets of **different coloured** post-its
 Allow about 10 mins
 Visit each group and listen to their discussion

Take feedback about their ideas
 Pose questions about how the two diamonds differ
 Why do children have these ideas?
 Why are they different to yours
 Like it or not teachers are in the habit forming business
 What you do/say/recognise/praise etc will translate into children's' beliefs about learning

Background notes
 Encourage groups to photograph their diamonds
 Set a challenge.... To ask their children the same question (what do good learners do?) next week and again in 6 months time
 Hopefully their answers in 6 months will be closer to the professional ideas diamond!

What do good learners do?

Diamond 9




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4

The Key message(s):

Key points

Same exercise but now using professional judgement to consider the same issue

Give out sets of **different coloured** post-its

Allow about 10 mins

Visit each group and listen to their discussion

Take feedback about their ideas

Pose questions about how the two diamonds differ

Why do children have these ideas?

Why are they different to yours

Like it or not teachers are in the habit forming business

What you do/say/recognise/praise etc will translate into children's' beliefs about learning

Background notes

Encourage groups to photograph their diamonds

Set a challenge.... To ask their children the same question (what do good learners do?) next week and again in 6 months time

Moving students' views of learning

- What they tend to say now
 - listening at the top
 - sitting straight is key
 - working fast is best
 - being stuck is bad
 - mistakes make you look stupid
 - you can do it or you can't
 - working with others isn't really learning
- What we want them to say
 - learning is a struggle
 - struggling is good
 - good learners are curious
 - good learners keep at it
 - good learners are adventurous
 - good learners collaborate
 - learners understand themselves as learners

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The Key message(s) on this slide:

The less overlap on the two diamond 9's, the bigger the journey for learners

Detail:

On the left, behaviours/outlooks that we need to counteract, on the right those of effective learners.

What would you add to / subtract from these lists?

Reflect on how big the journey will be for learners as they lose some of their unhelpful outlooks and move closer to the teachers' diamond 9.

And sitting behind all of this is the somewhat awkward questions - how did students come to acquire their (mistaken) view of what good learners do? Are there hidden, or even unhidden, messages in our classrooms and in the way that teachers go about their business that leads to the misunderstanding?

BLP is about helping students to understand how they learn

Managing the process

Feelings about learning

Relating to others

Thinking in different ways

- Their feelings
- Their ways of thinking
- How they learn together
- How they manage the process

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The Key message(s) on this slide:

There are 4 domains of learning –

- the emotional domain, how we feel about learning;
- the cognitive domain, the ways in which we think;
- the social domain, how we relate to others, and
- the strategic domain, how we manage the process of learning.

Detail:

Learning is our brain at work. Making it work better at learning it's a good idea to understand a bit about how it works.

To understand that learning is most affected by how we feel, and how we feel controls how we attend.

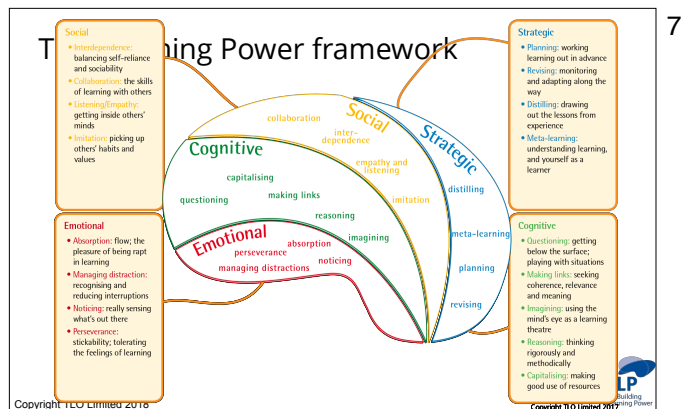
To learn well we need to think in different ways,

We need to relate to others with and from whom we can learn

We need to be able to manage the process of our learning.

It all goes on in our brain. The problem is we can't see the learning happening.

A student's **Performance** enables teachers/learners to see some of what may have happened in the learning process. Developing students learning power aims to make the process of learning more visible to the learner and teacher



7

The Key message(s) on this slide:

The 4 domains of learning are made up of 17 learning 'capacities'

Detail:

Key points

These slides build up the key capacities that make up each domain of learning

The names of the capacities form just the start/ beginnings of a language of learning

Each capacity develops or atrophies over time

Background notes

This is what it takes to be a good learner

International research suggests key capacities for better learning

BLP is about building these capacities into HABITS

These capacities give us a start on a language for learning

Resilience: attentional engagement — emotional aspect — feeling

Resourcefulness: range of tools and skills — cognitive aspect - thinking

8

Getting to know your students as learners

Think, puzzle, explore

- Think about the learning behaviours
- Puzzle over what it means to be without these learning behaviours
- Explore and record the names of students who appear to possess or are missing each behaviour.

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The Key message(s) on this slide:

Just a reminder of another visible thinking routine

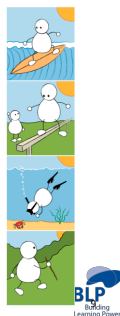
Detail:

Skip slide if teachers already familiar with it.

9

The BIG one: Emotional Engagement

- Become absorbed
 - Being rapt and attentive
- Overcome distraction
 - Creating your own best learning environment
- Notice attentively
 - Perceiving subtle nuances and patterns
- Persevere:
 - Keep going despite difficulty; tolerate feeling of learning



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The Key message(s) on this slide and the following 11 slides:

Each of the 4 domains of learning contains a range of key learning capacities. The language associated with these capacities will form the basis of the school's language for learning.

Use this slide to open discussion about how children are emotionally engaged in learning. There are four capacities that contribute to having a resilient disposition. The capacities are what lies within the secret garden of learning. Building Learning Power is about making these capacities transparent / public / overt to pupils. Giving them a language about learning, drawing attention to when they are using these capacities, designing activities to stretch and develop these capacities. Being ready and willing are the dispositional qualities i.e. there is a tendency to act in these ways. The 'able to' relates to the skill. Having the skill isn't enough: skills are not always used.

For more detail and some hints on how you might talk about / introduce these learning behaviours, download, read and digest 'Notes relating to slides 9, 12, 15, 18 (Supple Learning Mind, Learning Behaviours)'.

It is not a script, but outlines the key points that you might make about each behaviour.

When emotional engagement is missing

- Despair when an answer is not immediately clear
- Hatred of getting things wrong
- Want to do things quickly – to get rid of it
- Easily distracted
- Unaware of different strategies to try
- Expect learning to be easy
- Gravitate to non-challenging tasks



10

The Key message(s) on this slide:

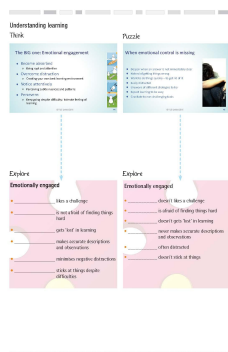
It is frequently easier to spot students with little or no emotional engagement than those with it.

Detail:

- These are the behaviours of non-resilient (not emotionally engaged) pupils
- Which of these behaviours do you recognise in your pupils?
- How might we as teachers combat such behaviours?

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BLP
Building
Learning Power



Can you think of a student for each descriptor?

Is it easier to think of names for the positive or the 'missing' descriptors?

11

Give time to participants to write in names of students they know who use or are failing to use these behaviours

Detail:

- This seemingly simple activity turns out to be quite taxing.
- It is virtually impossible to do for a class you do not know well, or a class that you see infrequently
- There are always a couple of students who stand out from the pack – on the one hand the accomplished learner(s) who appear to possess and use the positive learning behaviours on the left hand side of the page as and when necessary, and on the other hand those who have almost never exhibited any of them and reside firmly on the right hand side.
- But these are the exceptions. Most learners, the 'invisible majority', are harder to place.
- Force the issue if necessary – insist that they do not keep on using the same child.

Ask the questions –

- Can you name a student for each positive and each 'missing' behaviour?

And after a while . . .

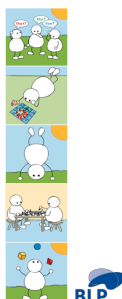
- Is it easier to place learners on the left hand side or on the right hand side?

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Building
Learning Power

The one we concentrate on: Cognitive Range

- Curious:
 - question, dig deep for answers
- Make links:
 - relationships between things
- Imagine:
 - look at things in different ways playing with ideas
- Reason:
 - construct logical arguments
- Capitalise:
 - on learning resources to help



12

The Key message(s) on this slide:

The second of the 4 domains of learning contains a range of key learning capacities. The language associated with these capacities will form the basis of the school's language for learning.

Detail:

Use this slide to unpack the disposition of being **cognitively** resourceful; of naturally using a wide range of cognitive approaches. There are five capacities which make up the cognitive range. These capacities need to be nurtured, stretched, grown, and made visible so that pupils use them consciously and can seek to improve them.

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BLP
Building
Learning Power

When cognitive range is missing

- Unaware of purpose of questions
- Afraid of asking questions
- Happy with first answer
- Perceive thinking as 'hard work' & pull back from it
- Doesn't look for or see patterns
- Keeps information in silos –
- Likes to keep rules; unadventurous, robotic
- Lacks spontaneity
- Bound by inhibitions
- Impulsive; jumps to conclusions

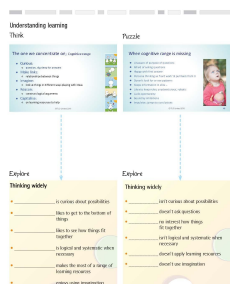


13

Detail:

- How learners behave when cognitive range is missing?
- Poor/simplistic questioning is an important feature of lack of cognitive range
- Lack of free thinking, adopting creative ideas is another feature of limited cognitive range

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Can you think of a student for each descriptor?

Do you keep thinking of the same names?

14

Ask the questions:

- Can you name a student for each positive and each 'missing' behaviour?

And after a while

- Do you find that you keep thinking of the same names?
- What about the 'invisible majority'?

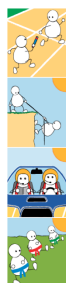
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14



The one we think just happens: Social Interaction

- Interdependent:
 - Balances learning alone and with others
- Collaborate:
 - Know how to learn with others
- Empathise and Listen:
 - Get inside others' minds
- Imitate:
 - Pick up others' thinking and ideas



15

The Key message(s) on this slide:

The third of the 4 domains of learning contains a range of key learning capacities. The language associated with these capacities will form the basis of the school's language for learning.

Use this slide to unpack the disposition of being socially interactive, or being interpersonally involved as a learner. There are four capacities that make up this socially based disposition.

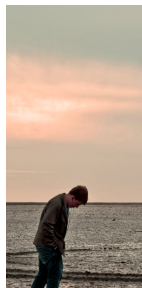
Again, the capacities, over time, should be introduced, made public, talked about, form the basis of learning activities, stretched, developed into habits.

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When the social dimension is missing

- Socially underdeveloped
- Unaware of others
- Social loafers or job hogs
- Inattentive to others
- Their way is the only way
- Feel isolated
- Feel unloved

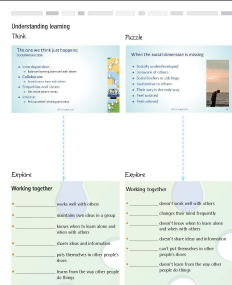


16

Detail:

- Evidence of a lack of social involvement
- Many children lack the basic social skills of working well with others
- The skills of collaboration reach beyond social conventions for teams to be successful
- Both job hogs and social loafers need to be combated

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Can you think of a student for each descriptor.

Can you use names that you have not used previously?

17

Detail:

Ask the questions –

- Can you name a student for each positive and each 'missing' behaviour?
- This time - Can you use names you have not previously used?

And after a while

There are some students who stand out as highly effective learners who appear regularly on the left hand side, and others who seem to exhibit many of the right hand side behaviours. But what of those students who fall into neither category? The 'average' learner? How well do you know them as 'learners'?

- Where are your higher attainers – LHS or RHS?

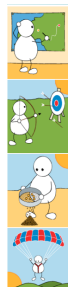
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17



The one we tend to forget about altogether: Strategic Responsibility

- Plan:
 - Work learning out in advance
- Revise:
 - Monitor and adapt along the way
- Distil:
 - Draw out the lessons from experience
- Learn about how they learn (Meta-learn):
 - Know themselves as a learner



18

The Key message(s) :

The fourth of the 4 domains of learning contains a range of key learning capacities. The language associated with these capacities will form the basis of the school's language for learning.

Use this slide to unpack the disposition of being reflective, or taking strategic responsibility for learning.

The capacities that make up a reflective learner are a willingness and ability to plan learning, revise plans, to monitor how things are going, to distil out what went well in learning for use in learning elsewhere, to understanding yourself as a learner – to become a meta-learner.

Stress that staff do not need to concern themselves, at this stage, with remembering all the capacities. The on-line course for year 1 deals with 3...perseverance, collaboration and questioning at a deep level.

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When strategic responsibility is missing

- Blurts out first things that come to mind
- Unaware of themselves as a learner
- Thinks learning just happens
- Rarely plans anything
- Doesn't think about how they have done something
- Little sense of 'doing their best'
- Rarely changes tack – sticks to familiar
- Makes nothing of feedback
- Lack of interest in improving

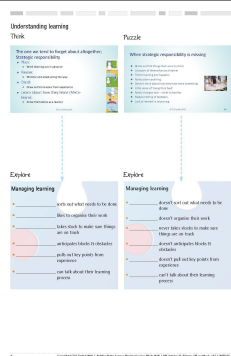


19

Detail:

- Lack of planning skills
- Not caring about end results
- Not looking for alternative ways of working
- Wanting to finish things quickly without care and attention, and with minimum effort
- What percentage of your pupils are like this?

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Can you think of a student for each descriptor?

Where are your high attainers tending to appear - left hand side or right hand side?

20

Detail:

Ask the questions –

- Can you name a student for each positive and each 'missing' behaviour?

And after a while

- Are your high attainers on the LHS simply because they are high attainers, or are they high attainers **because** they are on the LHS?
- What might this mean for raising attainment?

This is an important point:

High attainers tend to exhibit LHS behaviours, low attainers RHS behaviours. If we can eliminate RHS behaviours and replace them with LHS behaviours, will we also see attainment rise?

The evidence is yes, that effective learners are also effective attainers.

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Using your learning power

A making meaning activity

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The next 5 slides guide teachers through the Tin Tin Activity.

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Let's experiment... How do you learn?

- What's happening here?
- What learning skills are you using?



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The Key message(s) on this slide:

Introduces the Tin Tin activity

Detail:

Some participants will take part in the activity itself.
Others will observe the activity and feedback to participants afterwards.
It will take about 10 minutes

What do we do when we learn?

- Groups of 4 or 5,
- 3 people to tackle the challenge, others to observe
- Challenge – Can you sort the cartoon into a credible storyline?
- Observers – which learning skills are being used to solve the challenge?



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The Key message(s) :

This activity puts teachers in the unusual position of being learners. It helps them to reflect on the learning behaviours that they command, even if they are unaware of them.

Detail:

In advance –

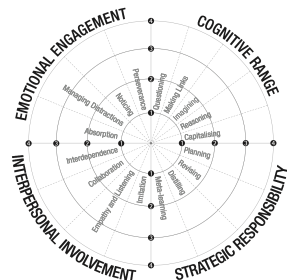
Download, print and cut up enough copies of the Tin Tin cartoon so that you have one pack for every 4/5 participants.
Download and print sufficient copies of the Rating Wheel for the observers.

Form groups of 4/5

Explain the task, which is two fold:

- 3 people undertake the challenge of sorting the cartoon into a credible storyline. Give no further advice or amplification. Most will interpret this as 'can you put all of the cards it in the right order' and ignore the much simpler task of creating a credible story line. It is a good lesson in answering the question that you have been asked, not the one that you think you have been asked!
- Others observe the activity and the learning behaviours that are employed. Observers should not participate in the activity or comment until the activity, which takes

Learning power rating wheel



- Observe and record the extent to which learning behaviours are being used.



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The Key message(s):

Here is way of capturing the range of learning behaviours that are being exercised

Detail:

Briefly talk observers through the process:

- Watch how participants tackle the task
- Whenever you spot a learning behaviour being used, put a tick on the outside edge of the Wheel
- Repeat throughout the activity
- At the end of the task, the number of ticks indicate how frequently each behaviour was used
- Colour in the 'spokes' of the wheel to illustrate the relative frequencies – if the behaviour was frequently exercised, colour in most of the spoke, rarely exercised colour in little.
- Feedback to participants when asked.

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The original order . .

11,6,8,22,3,21,23,17,
10,5,19,12,2,18,15,
14,13,9,16,1,7,20,4



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The Key message(s) on this slide:

This is 'the answer'. It is entirely unnecessary as the task was to create a credible storyline, and yet some participants will be desperate to check if they got it 'right'. Show it only if participants insist, and even then only briefly. Use it as an opportunity to take the mickey out of those groups who try to rearrange their answer so that it is 'right'.

Detail:

Before showing the slide, ask who wants to see the right answer. Ask who will be upset if you do not show it. Some will care not a jot, while others are already wondering if they can find the original on the internet if you do not know it or refuse to show it.

If you have time, explore these different approaches. Experience is that teachers of subjects with 'right answers' (like Maths and Science) are more prone to want to see the answer than those where a variety of interpretations are possible.

26

What are the design features?

- It appears to be about a cartoon, but what's really happening here?
- What are the task design features?
- Could you use this task design in your own curriculum?
- How might you do to adapt it to challenge the higher achievers?
- Which learning behaviours were you using...even unknowingly.
- How might you use the Rating Wheel?



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The Key message(s) on this slide:

This is a key slide. It debriefs the Tin Tin activity and the Rating Wheel activity.

The big messages are:

- Even on a relatively simple task, effective learners use a wide blend of learning behaviours, even if they are not aware of so doing.
- The task may not be what it at first appears and is applicable across the curriculum.
- Remove one or two key learning behaviours and the task becomes impossible.
- The Rating Wheel has many uses.

Detail:

It appears to be about a cartoon, but what's really happening here? –

The Tin Tin task is about reassembling information that has been broken up.

What are the task design features? –

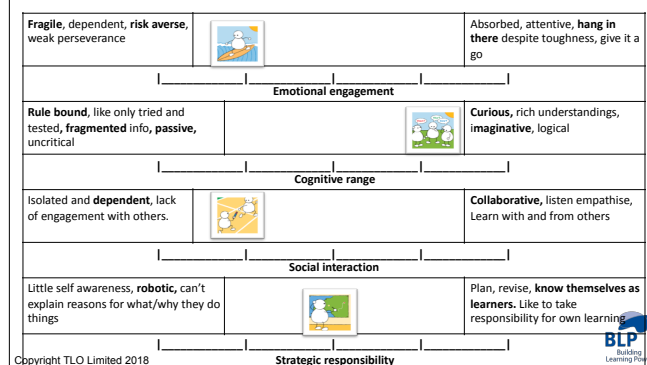
This is what we would call a manipulating task. All of the necessary information is given, the task is to manipulate/rearrange the given information.

Could you use this in your classroom –

Ask what they might break up in their classroom for their students to reassemble? (Think stanzas of a poem / any sequence of events or processes / timelines / a recipe etc)

27

Learning: poles apart



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The Key message(s) on this slide:

'Schooling' often leaves many students towards the left hand side. How can we help them move towards the right ?

Detail:

What might happen if pupils are not supported in their learning behaviours?

What might happen if we spoon-feed learners ?

Here are the alternatives - we want learners to be at or near the right hand side

- tough, alternative, curious, imaginative, rational, collaborative, empathetic, revisionist, and meta-cognitive
- Rather than fragile, risk averse, rule-bound, fragmented understanding, passive, dependent, robotic.

If we left learners to it they would probably be like the right hand side – they certainly appear to be before they go to school !

But schooling, too often works, against these natural, innate learning behaviours. It hot houses learners through, and in so doing moves them towards the left.

28

Why learning powered learners are different...

- because they begin to see how to take control of their learning behaviours..
 - have a learning language
 - they talk about how they do it, how it feels, learning together, getting better at it
 - develop self-awareness as a learner across each domain...thinking, feeling, managing, relating
 - can take control of their learning...if you let them
 - Consciously develop their learning behaviours...they become better learners



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The Key message(s) on this slide:

Learning Powered Learners are different

Detail:

Key points

What pupils need in order to become learning powered learners.

Here again the emphasis is on:

A language for learning

Being self aware of what they are doing as a learner

Taking control of their learning and consciously developing their capacities

The last of these means getting better at them (more skilled) and using these skills more often and across many contexts – at school, at home, in clubs, in different subjects; i.e. transferring the skills.

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Pupils talk about their learning power



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The Key message(s) on this slide:

Give learners a language of learning so that they can understand the concept of learning

Detail:

Listen to these young learners. Could your students speak with similar fluency about the learning process ?