

# Putting Perseverance into Learning



## Learning Diary

To accompany the online unit: Putting Perseverance into Learning

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# 1 Perseverance - a well formed habit

“Attention can be broken when learning gets blocked, but good learners have learnt the knack of maintaining or quickly re-establishing their concentration when they get stuck or frustrated. The quality of stickability or perseverance is essential if you are going to get to the bottom of something that doesn’t turn out as quickly or easily as you had thought, or hoped.

If you get upset and start to think there is something wrong with you as soon as you get stuck, you are not going to be able to maintain engagement.

Instead, all your energy will go into trying to avoid the uncomfortable feeling, and this may mean drifting off into a daydream, creating a distraction, or blaming somebody else. A great deal of classroom misbehaviour starts this way. If students were better equipped to cope emotionally with the inevitable difficulty of learning, they would mess about less. There is a range of things that teachers can do to strengthen students’ stickability.

Perseverance is often undermined by two common and erroneous beliefs. The first is that learning ought to be easy. If learners think that they will either understand something straight away, or not at all, then there is simply no point in persisting and struggling. The second is that bright people pick things up easily, so if you have to try it means you’re not very bright. Clearly the idea that effort must be symptomatic of a lack of ability makes persevering an unpleasant experience. Good learners develop perseverance when their parents and teachers avoid conveying these messages, even unwittingly.”

Extract from Building Learning Power, by Guy Claxton

## 2 Five big culture shifts

Five big culture shifts to get you started. Ask yourself – how might you:

- |   | In place                 | Going to try             |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Support and encourage pupils to step into risky, challenging areas of learning; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Offer students the skills and motivation to create and achieve their own goals; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Help students to overcome and control the negative emotions of learning;        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Build reflection in and on learning a regular feature of classroom activity;    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Nourish, guide and support students to become confident independent learners.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

# 3 The six principles that lie behind teaching for Learning Power

## 1: Visible learning... Surfacing learning

You make it clear to pupils which learning habits and processes they are using. You try to make every aspect of the learning process as visible as possible through the language you use and through the words and images you display on the walls.

### Develop 'stuck prompts' together

- Work with students to find useful questions to ask themselves and helpful strategies for them to use when they are stuck.
- Ensure that there are plenty of options that come higher on the list than "Ask the teacher".
- Create stuck prompts as reminders around the classroom.
- These are, in effect, low-risk, low-investment levers for creating a shift in students' sense of what is valued, what is normal, and what is the point of their learning — and thus in the quality of their engagement.

☐ In place

☐ Going to try

## 2: Dual focus teaching...blending content and process

You design activities that combine the dual objectives of 'what' will be learned and 'how' it will be learned. You make sure students know that the content they are learning is a way of giving their minds a useful workout. (The content is the vehicle for learning)

### Set goals with learning in mind – shift the way you plan.

All your lessons have always had two purposes:

- to have learners acquire some knowledge, skills or understanding;
- to use some learning behaviours to access the knowledge/ understanding or to practise the skills..
- ...although you may not have been fully aware of the learning behaviours that are being invoked.

As you become more deeply aware of learning behaviours you will think through lesson planning a bit differently:

- the learning behaviours that could be useful for getting to grips with the content;
- how the design of activities /tasks will best stimulate these behaviours;
- how learners could be made more aware of these behaviours;
- how learners could be enabled to reflect on and evaluate their use of these behaviours.

In other words, the goal of the lesson would then have overt content and learning dimensions.

In planning terms, you have made a shift from thinking;

- From 'what do I have to teach and how am I going to teach it?'
- To 'what do students need to learn, how will they best learn it, and how am I going to orchestrate that learning?'

☐ In place

☐ Going to try

### 3: Emotional engagement...Capturing attention

Your lessons are designed to intrigue your pupils. Pupils don't put in the effort unless their energy and attention are captured by what they are doing. You capture your pupils' emotional engagement by giving them more of a stake in the process of learning.

#### Start lessons with a grapple task

A good grapple problem is challenging. It's something that the students might have an idea about but might entail something they haven't come across or done before. A good grapple task centres on learning that is just beyond the students' reach/experience. They give students a chance to wrestle with the problem before they have been taught methods for tackling it. They are allowed to solve it in any way they want and in doing so they are discovering their own approaches and exposing their own tricky bits.

Blend grapple tasks with Think Pair Share...giving time to think by themselves, share ideas with a partner before discussing it more widely. By using grapple tasks you are getting the students:

- to build resilience;
- to develop problem solving skills;
- enhance collaboration and listening;
- cultivate 'having a go';
- lessen fear of mistakes.

Don't forget to discuss which strategies were used, which were successful/effective and why

☐ In place  
☐ Going to try

### 4: Handling uncertainty...Challenge

You have realised from your own life that what is engaging tends to be what is challenging. Since you see education as a preparation for a learning life, you help pupils to learn how to handle increasing degrees of complexity and uncertainty.

#### Use a range of ways to support challenge

- Make positive connections between making mistakes and challenge
- Model how to think about and work through challenges
- Create a challenge wall; put up questions, extension tasks, riddles, problems. A go-to place for another challenges when other learning is finished
- Display work that shows students have improved mistakes etc.
- Stimulate different ways of thinking by using what are known as 'Stingray' questions...What if...(something they thought they knew is looked at from a different angle – What if the Moon's gravitational pull disappeared? What if Germany had won the First World War? How would the country look if everyone went Vegan?)
- Use the Nando's Peri-ometer as a visual aid to support the ranking of tasks by level of challenge, and allow students to select the level of challenge that they wish to undertake.

☐ In place  
☐ Going to try

## 5: Relationships...Working together

Learning is both a sociable and a solitary activity, and you offer your pupils opportunities to experience both. You develop interdependent learners who know how to handle themselves in collaborative groups and able to move around in the social space of learning to best effect.

### Help students to learn how to share their ideas with others.

Many students find it hard to share their ideas with others – in group situations, they seem to get swamped by the louder, by the more assertive, by the quicker thinkers. So they stop trying and become reliant on the ideas of others.

To develop students' inclination to share their ideas, nudge them with:

- What do you think?
- Tell your friend what you are thinking?
- What do you know about this?
- Tell us about . . .
- Who would like to tell us . . . .
- What does xxx think
- Say what you think
- Who haven't we heard from yet?

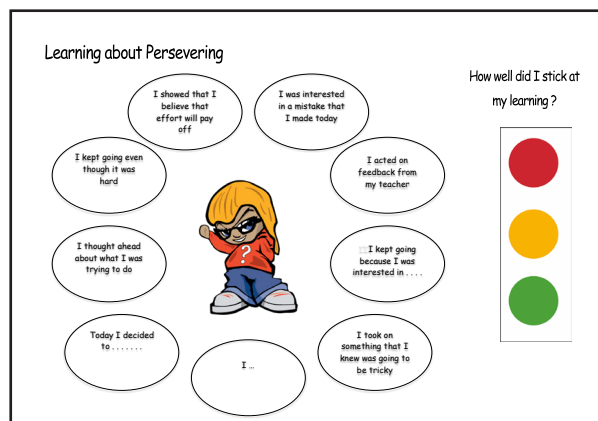


☐ In place  
☐ Going to try





## 6: Reflection and responsibility...Taking charge

You understand that pupils have to learn how to manage and organise their own learning and that the way to do this is by giving them increasingly demanding opportunities to do so. You orchestrate pupils taking charge of their learning by expecting them to plan what they do, distil meaning from it, and revise it accordingly.

For example: Use learning mats at the start of this process to prompt the use of and reflection on Persevering .



☐ In place  
☐ Going to try

Persevering	1) Dealing with 'stuckness'	2) Managing environment	3) Self talk	4) Dealing with challenge	5) Orientation to goals
<b>Embodies; "I can't not."</b>	Unphased by being stuck, knowing they have the strategies to overcome it.	Manages own learning environment independently with a positive learning-value system.	"I look out for new strategies to help me learn/understand."	Seeks out and relishes challenging activities knowing they have the skills and emotions to make them successful.	Sets and amends long term life goals.
<b>Organises; "I make sure."</b>	Takes risks underpinned by relevant strategies. Analyses failures and mistakes positively to better understand.	Overcomes and manages any external discouragement, negativity, peer pressure.	"I get organised to ensure everything gets done."	Systematically plans longer term/substantial projects.	Sees current goals in a wider/long term context. Willing to change immediate goals in the face of setback.
					
<b>Values; "I see why."</b>	Is curious about mistakes. Uses written and verbal feedback effectively.	Has worked out ways to help them through the hard slog of practice.	"I keep going because I'm interested in this goal. I know I can overcome this."	Uses relevant strategies to clarify task purposes and outcomes. Uses planning tools to avoid obstacles.	Makes given goals their own. Creates clear achievable end goals. Thinks of challenges as their goals.
					
<b>Responds; "I'll try."</b>	Initiates own prompts to get unstuck. Maintains positive emotions. Knows why they are stuck.	Uses distractions positively. Knows what to avoid.	"I stay positive even when it's hard."	Anticipates the risks of more challenging activities.	Accepts external sources of goals (from teachers/parents) Tries with doable goals.
					
<b>Receives; "Show me. Tell me."</b>	Uses suggested prompts and resources to get unstuck.	Aware of what distracts them and tries to control it.	"Learning can be a struggle. It's okay to find things hard. I have the put effort in."	Resists the inclination to stick with easy, can-do activities.	Has a sense of what they want something to look like. Visualises end results.
					
<b>Lacks; "I can't. I won't."</b>	No coping strategies.	Prone to be distracted. Put off by lack of resources. Sensitive to negativity.	"I don't like being wrong. What's the point of effort? I think learning is easy."	Gives up easily. Craves constant support. Put off by having 'too much to do'.	Little sense of ends or goals or working towards something purposefully.

## Capture your learning enquiry as a question

### Before filling in the enquiry question, think again about

- What you want pupils to get better at. This could be with regard to any of the four areas of culture.
- What you want to do vis introducing aspects of the learning culture that you consider will have an impact on pupils.

### Over a 4 week period will

(What I'm going to do)

### improve/develop/enhance

(Pupil behaviours/achievement etc.)

### in my identified group of pupils?

## Put a little enquiry plan together

1. Aspects of Learning culture I'll work on	Relating	Talking	Constructing	Celebrating
2. Particular issues I want to focus on				
3. How I intend to spread/organise the changes I want to make over the next four weeks				
<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Tackle Time line</p> </div>				
4. The whole-school culture issues I have agreed to experiment with.				
Monitoring, I'll watch out for:				
Changes in my practice		Changes in pupil behaviour		
•		•		
•		•		
•		•		
Name		Class Date		



# 6 Team Reflection and Planning

## Personal Action Reporting

Evidence from my Persevering experiments that I will report to the team at the next meeting

improvements in students' behaviour

increased focus

more enjoyment in learning

more/renewed interest in the subject

greater harmony in the classroom

more willingness to try, and try different ways

more positive about themselves as learners

Avoidance of.....

Improvements in.....

Increases in.....

Little of no changes in...

## Approved courses from TLO

TLO offers a range of courses, on-line learning, conferences and resources to stimulate and extend schools'

practice in Building Learning Power.

- *Enhance understanding and skills*
- *Ensure BLP principles are interpreted for full effect*
- *Encourage staff to explore and experiment*

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TLO Limited have worked closely with Professor Guy Claxton since 2001. Together we have sought to create a dynamic programme for translating and extending his ideas into effective practice, in ways that can benefit every classroom and every young person. Schools, teachers and children have participated in every stage of this exciting journey of development. Our growing range of publications, face to face and on-line training and other on-line materials and training is the fruit of this endeavour.