

Strengthening the habit

Student self-review

In order to strengthen learning habits, it is important for students and their teachers to reflect on the specific attributes that contribute to a well-formed habit.

Ipsative and formative approaches to reviewing learning habits place students at the centre of the process of developing their learning habits and strengthening their learning character.

Here is one way of keeping the revising habit alive and growing.

Learning conversations

The key to developing learning habits is to give students the time and support they need to reflect on themselves as learners and to plan how they might improve. For some teachers, initiating and sustaining a learning conversation with a student (and their parents) comes easily, but for many it is useful to have a set of coaching notes to help to focus the conversation. When those coaching notes are differentiated according to how frequently the student perceives they use the learning skill, the learning conversations become much more robust and can lead to targets and strategies for development.

Coaching notes generated from student's answer

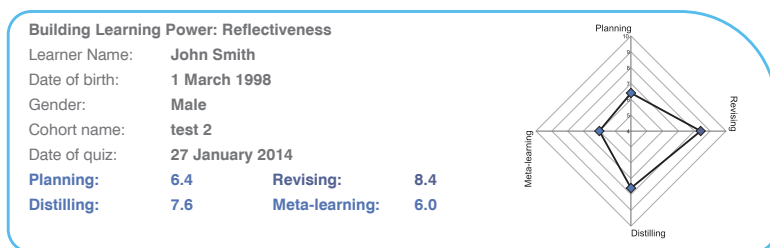


Online questionnaire for students. (Blaze)

Revising

These At-A-Glance cards are based on the practical framework of learning capacities and habits known as Building Learning Power. The framework provides a clear picture of what it takes to be a good learner. The purpose of the approach is to grow students' Learning Character and Habits. In so doing Building Learning Power develops the appetite and ability to learn in different ways, and shifts the responsibility for learning to learn from teacher to student.

Find out more: www.buildinglearningpower.com



TEACHER COACHING: Using the feedback profiles

The quiz feedback offers a solid base from which to develop learning power conversations with learners.

Here we offer some suggestions and hope that you will use these as a trigger for your own ideas.

John is using his REVISING learning muscle often.

Tell me about something you have changed or improved recently.

- What do you think it means to be a flexible learner?
- What makes you stop every now and then and think about how your learning is going?
- What questions do you ask yourself?
- Do you ever scrap what you are doing and start again?
- What does this make you feel like?
- Why do you think revising, like this, is important?
- How could you help someone who doesn't like revising what they do or how they do it?

Learner Feedback: You are a confident, flexible learner: you watch to see how your learning is going and you change your plans if you have a better idea. You like things to be as good as you can make them so you take time to check things over and improve them if necessary.

Why do you think revising like this is important?

- Revising slow you down, and does that matter?
- How could you help someone else to be more confident about revising?

John is using his PLANNING learning muscle some of the time.

What shall we try to achieve by having this conversation? Let's make a plan!

- What sort of things should we think about before we start? E.g. goals, time, obstacles etc.
- Let's see if our plan works.
- Why might it be important to think about these things before starting something?
- When do you do this sort of thing when you're learning?
- I've noticed that you...
- What would help you to think more about things before you start?

Learner Feedback: You sometimes think about how you're going to go about something before you start, but you don't do this automatically yet. You sometimes need to be reminded to organise your learning a bit more, or think about what you're trying to achieve before you start.

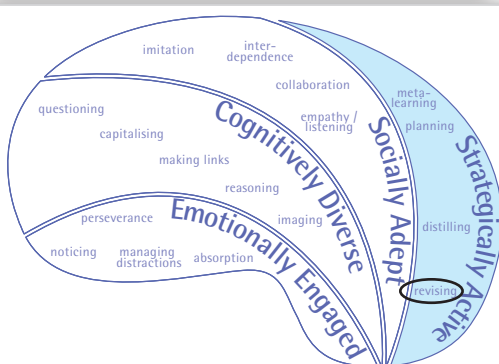
What sort of things do you think about before you start on something?

- How has this 'thinking before doing' been helpful recently?
- Why do you think planning something might be important?

Using the feedback

Some schools are:

- experimenting with using student mentors to lead these learning conversations
- including the feedback as part of the process of reporting to parents
- using the feedback to agree learning targets with students and parents at the annual target setting day
- using BLAZE BLP to help parents to understand Building Learning Power



Building the habit of...

Revising



The New Challenge

Ofsted now recognises the need for schools to:

- provide their own compelling data of a trajectory of improvement
- successfully promote and support children's 'self confidence, self awareness and understanding how to be a successful learner'.

This together with the current interest in character led education all point to the opportunity for schools to cultivate the habits and attitudes that underpin success and thereby build students' learning characters.

About Learning Habits and Character

Learning habits are the routine ways in which we think and act when faced with life's experiences and challenges. They are second nature to us. Some habits make us very productive and effective; others cause us to learn in constrained and limited ways. Habits are indeed part of our character.

We acquire habits through use: ways of behaving become habituated. If we have a well formed **Revising** habit, we will have a tendency to use it in all learning experiences. The more we experience the value of a particular habit, the more we will tend to use it throughout our lives.

Like it or not, teachers do help to form a learning character. The ways in which young people perform and behave are influenced by the way teachers orchestrate and guide learning. Deliberately fostering an effective learning character in students is a renewed common purpose for education, shared between students and teachers, parents and society more generally.

A well formed Revising habit involves being ready, willing, and able to:

Self-monitor how things are going, keeping an eye on the goal, making sure things are on track and making improvements along the way.

Expect the unexpected, having a readiness to re-shape, re-order, re-form plans to take account of new circumstances.

Remain alive to new, unforeseen opportunities and ideas, seizing these in order to move in different directions (and so remain creative).

Look at what they are doing with a critical eye, seeking and welcoming constructive criticism from others to improve and correct their work, seeing themselves as a growing learner.

Strive to be the best they can be; attain their own high standards and those required by others.

“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most adaptable to change.” - Unknown, but often attributed, incorrectly, to Charles Darwin

Young people with the habit are likely to:

Invite and act on constructive criticism

Be flexible

View change as an opportunity

Think on their feet

Keep an eye on how things are going

Ditch ideas that are not working

Be open to feedback

Want to be the best they can be

Keep an open mind

Expect the unexpected

Emotionally Engaged • Cognitively Diverse • Socially Adept • Strategically Active

Forming the habit

activities to develop... Revising

Quick Wins

Editor's Desk

- » Create an area of the classroom which is dedicated to and celebrates the skills of reviewing and improving. Set aside a table in the classroom, and equip it as if it were an office – writing equipment, computer, office chair etc. This is called the 'Editor's Desk', which is set aside for a student to use when they are in editing, drafting, redrafting, correcting or improving mode.

Display redrafting

- » Collect and display work at different stages of development. Use arrows and notes to highlight the changes and their impact.
- » Renew and refer to these frequently to encourage students to review and amend their work.
- » Show that you do not expect perfection at the first attempt!

Think, Pair, Share

- » Offer students a problem or question which is more substantial than simple recall.
- » Allow individual think time to engage with the question.
- » Students turn to their 'Learning Partner' and share ideas, discuss, clarify, challenge etc.
- » The pair share with another pair, and subsequently with the whole class to arrive at a range of possible answers.
- » At each point students are exposed to the views of others which encourages them to revise and refine their initial thinking.

Visible thinking routine...

I used to think, Now I think

This routine helps students to reflect on how and why their thinking/understanding is changing:

- Remind students of the topic you have been working on.
- Ask them to respond to each of the sentence stems: I used to think..., Now, I think...

Alternatively ask students to write down their views at the beginning of a topic. Invite them to revisit & update their answer during and at the end in light of what has been learned.

Or, at the beginning of a lesson ask students to write down what they understand by a particular term that will be explored in the coming lesson (e.g. Phrase (English); Proof (Maths); Power (Science) etc). At the end of the lesson ask them to write down what they now understand by the term.

Students as coaches

- » Use the familiar 'Skill: Will' matrix to help students develop ways of reflecting on their own performance. Using the matrix (see below) students judge their levels of accomplishment and motivation in any area of the curriculum or indeed life beyond school.

High Skill		High Will
Low Will	High Will	
Inspire: Things I'm good at but not really interested in.	Delegate: Things I'm skilled in and motivated to do more.	Low Skill
Direct: Things that really challenge me and I don't enjoy.	Guide: Things I'm keen on but need to improve my skills.	
Low Skill		High Will
High Skill		

Students can support or coach each other to complete the grid for themselves small steps to create the desired movement.

Each of the quadrants requires a different coaching approach.

- » Direct - set short-term goals, structure learning tasks closely.
- » Inspire - re-kindle interest, set short term actions and
- » Guide - envision the future when skill levels are raised learning opportunities and provide reflective f
- » Delegate - encourage experimentation and further challenge interest.

- » Students can support or coach each other to complete the grid objectively and then identify for themselves small steps to create the desired movement.
- » Each of the quadrants requires a different coaching approach.
 - » Direct - set short-term goals, structure learning tasks and monitor progress closely.
 - » Inspire - re-kindle interest, set short term actions and accentuate positives.
 - » Guide - envision the future when skill levels are raised, secure appropriate learning opportunities and provide reflective feedback.
 - » Delegate - encourage experimentation and further challenges to maintain interest.

Teachers as character builders

Learning habits form part of our character and develop through use and practice (deliberate or otherwise!). But desirable habits will survive and flourish better if students are aware of them, realise their value, and strive to improve them.

Cultivating habits involves:

- Providing rich and varied **occasions** for **exercising** learning habits
- **Infusing** learning habits into lessons to enhance content understanding
- Recognising and **celebrating** the use and **growth** of learning habits
- **Enabling** students to identify how and when to use learning habits
- Expecting students to take ownership of and **responsibility** for their learning habits
- **Exploring** the development of learning habits with students.

Teachers are influential character builders and need to be mindful of how they help students form, replace, re-form and strengthen their learning habits.

Are your teaching habits helping students' learning habits? Are you building learning characters who will succeed in life?

Take it steady! Think about how and when you might:

Stop/avoid:

- Sticking rigidly to lesson plans
- Only putting review points at the end of lessons
- Expecting everything to be 'right first time'.

Experiment with:

- Lifting the level of challenge so that students get stuck more frequently. Encourage them to revise their line of approach
- Encouraging students to coach each other
- Planning review times within a lesson to enable students to stop, take stock, and monitor progress to date

Start/do more of:

Providing more opportunities for students to draft and re-draft their work

- Increasing verbal and written constructive feedback
- Making 'corrections' fun, and purposeful
- Praising adaptable, flexible behaviours that lead to significant re-thinks and improved outcomes.

Start slowly:

- Talking about how initial plans / ideas almost always need refining
- Showing your own first draft of something, and the finished product
- Organising displays that show students' work in progress

Challenge robotic thinking

- » Students are encouraged to view things from other standpoints
- » Different and alternative ways of doing things are explored

Plan and review

- » There are established routines for planning and revising which are used when students are problem solving.

Talk to nudge Revising

Teacher talk - as a learning coach

(To ensure students do the thinking for themselves.)

Good learners are flexible – they watch how they are doing and change things as they go

Are there other ways you might do it?

What can you learn from this mistake ?

Is that the most efficient way of doing it?

Ask yourself: Am I happy with what I have achieved?

Think about your success criteria as you go along. Check that you are still on track to meet them

Ask yourself from time to time: Is this going ok ?

Learning does not always go to plan. It's OK to amend your plan and approach it differently.

Student self-talk

(As the skill becomes a habit, and as the habit shapes part of the learning character, look out for students who say (or think) the following)

Is this the best it can be? Could I do it differently?

Is this going ok?

How else . . .

How could I improve this?

Am I satisfied with this?

Ok – that failed. What could I do instead?

I think I've done enough tinkering with this now.

I've had a better idea so I'll start again

This is an interesting turn of events

Emotional Climate to build an adaptable learning character

Display learning in progress

- » Classroom displays show a good balance of completed work and annotated 'work in progress'

Coaching feedback

- » Is honest and constructive
- » Focuses on what is needed to improve
- » Supports students to coach themselves

Flexibility is prized

- » Changing tack in the light of personal reflection and incoming feedback is part of the learning culture.
- » Adaptability is seen as a strategy for achieving excellence.