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Managing. Learning Power what and why.

A guided conversation
for managers
of Learning
Power

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Line of argument through the slides

- Our aim for young people. An overview of intent
- A key 'must do' to make it work
- Necessary changes will be extensive across school
- What do we need to do early on?
- Manage a dialogue about learning across school
- Organise and manage a culture of enquiry
- Keep track of development of enquiries

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The threads that link these slides together:

- There are changes ahead for students, teachers, leaders and whole-school systems/structures
- Such change will take time and energy
- There may be resistance along the way

Aim of the discussion: To consider/explore the scope of the proposed changes and how they might be introduced.

Objectives: By the end of the discussion participants will have explored:

- The scope of the necessary changes
- How leaders might stimulate interest in and commitment to the changes
- How leaders might create a culture of experimentation
- How leaders might keep a close eye on how the changes are taking root.

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Our aim for young people

- To purposefully grow our students' learning behaviours ... perseverance, self-control, attentiveness, openness to experience, empathy, tolerance of diverse opinions, creativity, critical curiosity etc. A wealth of high value learning habits.
- By developing learning friendly cultures that:
 - use a learning language
 - give students greater responsibility for learning
 - offer classroom activities that stretch learning behaviours
 - celebrate the use and growth of learning behaviours

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The Key message(s) on this slide:

Two big ideas: Firstly the aim of *purposefully* growing learning behaviours; Secondly that it will be achieved through a *shift* in classroom culture.

Detail:

Purposefully growing learning behaviours: John Hattie's research tells us that many teachers believe that if teaching is good, then there will be a 'ripple effect' into learning behaviours. Furthermore, he tells us that there is absolutely **no** evidence that this is the case. Growing learning behaviours, he states, **requires planned interventions**.

Developing learning friendly cultures: these 4 aspects foreshadow section 3 on the necessary shifts in classroom culture. It flags up the need for the school developing its own language for learning, a shift of responsibility for learning towards the learner, a change to the activities undertaken in classrooms, and a shift in the things that are valued and celebrated.

Key point:

Most teachers are very happy to support the suggestion that their students need to be more perseverant, exercise greater self control, display attentiveness, to learn from experience and feedback etc etc.

Research suggests there's a key difference in schools that make BLP work

- Stop it fizzling out by understanding BLP as:
 - whole-school culture change, not an initiative
 - something that will take several years to implement/sustain
 - not a quick fix to raise results
 - a struggle for some teachers

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The Key message(s) on this slide:

It will take time

Detail:

Either commit to Building Better Learners, wholeheartedly and with sustained focus, for the next 2 or 3 years, or walk away now. Playing with it for a while, only to have it overtaken by 'the next good idea' is a waste of your time and energy.

It is not a *quick* fix to raise results, but all the evidence is that 'students with more elaborated conceptions of learning perform better in public examinations at age 16.' (Watkins, Learning, Performance and Improvement). That better learners do better in examinations should not come as a surprise to us, but *it will take time* before the 'elaborated conceptions of learning' are translated into results.

A struggle for some teachers:

Habit change is never easy, and the more ingrained the habit, the harder the change may be.

A headteacher warned us recently never to underestimate how long it takes some good teachers to make the necessary adjustments. It is not because they are being difficult, nor are they necessarily resistant to change. Rather they are reflective practitioners who are evaluating the ideas and considering what this means for their own classroom practice. They are, rightly, sceptical of quick fixes and snake oil !

Building Powerful Learners

Breadth of change

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The Key message(s) on this slide:

The changes will impact on all areas of school life

Detail:

The three areas:

- 1 Building students supplement learning minds (the learning behaviours we are seeking to develop)
- 2 the classroom cultures and teaching practices that will enable these behaviours to grow
- 3 the aspects of a learning school necessary to support the other 2 aspects.

See notes for this slide in **Downloads - Notes** to help understanding of slide 5 (Breadth of change)

Create a dialogue re a vision for learning. HOW?

- Share Learning Power books with staff?
- Make parts of this resource available to staff?
- Ensure no mixed messages
- Use Learning walks looking for learning NOT teaching?
- Faculty/year audit of routinely used learning behaviours. Share and discuss results?
- Introductory training day for all staff? (using material in this resource pack)

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The Key message(s) on this slide:

There are many change levers that need to be activated. What sort of strategies could we use to begin the school's journey to a learning culture and by engaging staff in the exploration.

Detail:

Creating a dialogue about learning: It is a simple fact that teachers tend to pay attention to the same things to which leaders pay attention. If leaders focus on uniform, teachers conclude that uniform is important and focus likewise. If leaders focus on attainment, standards and examination results, so will teachers. It follows that if we, as leaders, want to shift the focus towards student learning, we will need to pay it lots of attention.

How might we create a dialogue about learning in the school? When/where could this dialogue take place? How will we demonstrate their **sustained** commitment to this dialogue?

Sharing Learning Power books with staff: Sharing Learning Power books may be a start, but only that. Some teachers will read the materials carefully, some will take a more cursory view, some will adopt the 'it's another initiative' attitude, some will find the potential changes threatening and react adversely, some will say 'yes' and think 'no'. Be prepared for this., and consider how you will engage/persuade the doubters.

Ensuring no mixed messages: Walk the talk ! The new, emerging vision for learning may command widespread support, but it needs to be more than a revamped vision

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Creating a culture of enquiry. HOW?

- Encourage staff to actively experiment in their classrooms
- Set up Professional Learning Teams
- Support the freedom to take risks and learn from mistakes
- Emphasise the school is learning its way forward
- Promote the idea of teachers being leaders of their own learning



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The Key message(s) on this slide:

The best way to enable staff to change is to create a culture of enquiry across the school. We ask that students 'fail in safety'. The same should be extended to teachers.

Detail:

Experimentation is key. Trying things out, finding what works with your students, small scale action research projects supported by colleagues who are undertaking similar enquiries lie at the heart of changing teaching habits.

How will you, as leaders, ensure that teachers are supported in experimenting, making mistakes and learning from them, taking control of their own growth as reflective practitioner?

Will you have to make any alterations to existing practices/structures (like, for example, Performance Management) to ensure that teachers feel empowered to 'fail in safety'?

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Keep track of developments. HOW?

- Regular classroom reviews in a spirit of learning support NOT judgement or appraisal
- Not 'checking up' but reflective process across the school
- Possible changes to watch out for in students:
 - changes in learning behaviours,
 - increased motivation
 - greater interest in learning
 - taking more responsibility for learning
 - becoming less dependent
 - showing more confidence in tackling difficulty



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The Key message(s) on this slide:

Leaders need to keep track of developments in the most sensitive, supportive way possible

Detail:

Consider how you might monitor:

- changes in students' learning behaviours,
- increased motivation
- greater interest in learning
- taking more responsibility for learning
- becoming less dependent
- showing more confidence in tackling difficulty

Ask yourselves:

- How would it change your usual lesson observation proformas if you set out to capture this type of evidence?
- How might you engage teachers in contributing to the gathering of this information?