

1

Managing. Learning friendly cultures

A guided conversation for managers of Learning Power

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1

BLP
Building Learning Power

2

Line of argument across the slides

- Three types of classroom cultures. Where are we now?
- The four big shifts in classroom culture to build supple learning minds. What do classrooms look like now?
- Consider taking an Amble around the school to find out
- And decide what to do to support the results of your Amble; how you will support staff in the spirit of BLP
- So that ultimately we should see a move from the left (good teaching) to the right (Learning powered teaching) in terms of teachers' practice (see Poles apart)

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The threads that link these slides together:

- Classroom culture is of critical importance;
- Building better learners is unlikely to take root in highly teacher focused classroom cultures;
- Teachers need time and help to change the prevailing culture of their classroom;
- Creating learning focused classrooms is about moving teaching from good to outstanding.

Aim of the discussion: To consider/explore classroom culture as it is now, and how it needs to be to enable learning to flourish.

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

- The '3 panel' culture 1 tool, and assessed classroom culture against it;
- Undertaken a Learning Amble' around classrooms;
- Reflected on the Culture 2 Tool and evaluated the extent of the necessary changes;
- Considered how best to model leadership commitment to building better learners.

3

Classroom cultures

The diagram illustrates three distinct classroom cultures in a progression from left to right, connected by arrows. Each culture is represented in a box with a title and a list of characteristics.

- Passengers: Teacher Focused**
 - Teacher decides what and how of learning
 - Teacher does most of the questioning
 - Main focus is on pupil performance
 - Most of the learning relies on text books and or worksheets
 - Most tasks are undertaken individually
 - Teacher devises and undertakes assessments
 - Teacher takes a 'font of knowledge' role
 - Pupils believe responsibility for learning lies with the teacher.
 - Pupils get along by doing what is asked of them
- Crew: LearnER focused**
 - Actively engaged in a variety of learning tasks
 - Learners have some degree of choice in what to learn
 - Learner's questions drive their learning
 - Learners encouraged to organise enquiries
 - Learners involved in assessing their own learning
 - Learners monitor their own learning
 - Collaborative learning encourages dialogue
 - Learning tasks are differentiated and challenging
 - Main focus is on making meaning
 - Pupils engaged in making meaning
 - Supportive learning environment
- Pilot: LearnING focused**
 - Teacher takes the role of coach
 - Learning process given public focus
 - Learning process frequently reflected on
 - Lessons designed around content and process
 - Learning designed to promote progression in learning habits
 - Rich language of learning permeates the classroom
 - Learners conscious of using their learning behaviours
 - Learners self regulate their learning process
 - Focus is on becoming a better learner
 - Effective learning promoted through learner activity, collaboration, responsibility and meta learning

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The Key message(s) on this slide:

There are three distinct types of classroom culture – Teacher focused, Learner focused, and Learning focused.

Detail:

Here's the shift in more detail.

[Based on research by Chris Watkins of The London Institute]

Classrooms can broadly be categorised as predominantly one of 3 types.

The teacher focused classroom is highly unlikely to be learning friendly. It is designed for the efficient transmission of curriculum content. Learners' roles are predominantly passive, responsibility for learning resides with the teacher, dialogue is largely teacher generated.

The learner focused classroom is a step in the right direction. Learning is increasingly active; students are beginning to take more responsibility for their own learning; and students have more opportunities to talk and explore their ideas for themselves. Students are beginning to create their own understandings rather than memorizing teacher delivered information.

Our classroom cultures. Where are they now?

- Reflect on the culture of your classrooms
- Highlight all aspects of culture that are a regular feature in your classrooms
- Where is the in-school variation?
- What is this telling you?



4

The Key message(s) on this slide:

Take time to think 'where are we now?'

Detail:

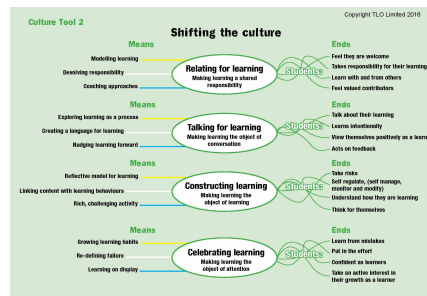
In the online culture module and during the training day, teachers are asked to consider their own classroom culture. Here we are asking leaders/managers to think more widely about classrooms in general.

- Which features are a regular feature in your classrooms?
- What is the extent of in-school variation?
- Which aspects appear where?
- Are there any links between classroom culture and examination performance?
- Are there any examples of existing good practice that could/should be shared?
- What is this analysis telling you about the scale of the changes ahead?

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Shifts towards learning friendly cultures.



5

The Key message(s) on this slide:

Creating a learning focused classroom culture is necessary to achieve desirable changes for students

Detail:

Talk through (at a deeper level) the Culture 2 tool. Look here at the outputs on the right hand side in some detail.

Which are critical?
Which may be puzzling?
Why are they there?
Are some more important than others?
What would you want to add?
Where would you put it?
Which are most in need of development?

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Keeping track on progress in classroom culture

- Try this Learning Amble tool to establish
 - Where classrooms are at now
 - Where they are in 6 months time
 - Changes that occurred in the first six months
- It could be undertaken by teachers themselves
- It could be undertaken in or between departments
- Use more sophisticated tools after a year (see Review unit in Stepping Stones Phase i)



6

The Key message(s) on this slide:

The slide introduces the Learning Amble (see the next slide) and explores how it might be used.

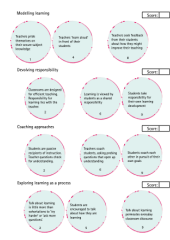
Detail:

Consider:

- who else, beyond this group, might profitably undertake the Amble;
- how you might capture and share their views;
- how you might use the Amble to monitor shifts in classroom culture over time.

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Learning Amble. Learning Friendly Culture.



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The Key message(s) on this slide:

The slide introduces the Learning Amble and stimulates a discussion around the outcomes.

Detail:

Download and print copies of the Amble (see Data Gathering Materials)

Undertake the Amble:

Depending on the size of the group, this may be split or a whole-group discussion.

For each of the 12 indicators, consider where your school is now. You do not need to match one of the example descriptors, as you might, for example, consider that you are "better than '2' but not yet '5'". If you finish the quiz before other groups, go back to those indicators and try to write your own descriptor. Discuss with others what you think and why etc etc.

Reflect on the outcomes:

- Do our classrooms support learners to take greater responsibility for themselves as learners?
- Do our classrooms support learners to understand and discuss the process of learning?

Record the outcomes of your Amble

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8

The Key message(s) on this slide:

Time to distil and capture key outcomes from the Amble and from your discussions around the Culture 2 Tool

Detail:

Download and print copies of the Culture Review Tool (Downloads section)

This is a key monitoring tool. It pulls together and records your discussions around Culture Tool 2 and the Amble.

To record the outcomes of the Review - Ask yourself:

What have we learned about classroom culture?

Where are our relative strengths and weaknesses?

Which aspects might be easy to shift?

Which might prove harder?

To consider a way forward - Ask yourself:

Who else might need to do the Amble and Review at this stage?

Supporting the outcomes of the Culture Amble.

- How could we model our commitment to...
- devolving responsibility for the leadership of learning to teachers and to teams?
- using the school's emerging language for learning?
- constructing lessons with learning in mind?
- organising displays to promote positive attitudes to learning?

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The Key message(s) on this slide:

The review is a waste of time if we do not act on it and walk the talk

Detail:

devolving responsibility for the leadership of learning to teachers and to teams – think about the levels of independence in your school. If teachers cannot function independently, nor will their students. How might you enable greater independence?

using the school's emerging language for learning? - think about the extent to which you talk 'learnish'. Do you use the language in assemblies and in meetings, and in conversation with students?

constructing lessons with learning in mind – think about staff/subject/phase meetings. Do they activate the types of learning behaviours you hope to see in classrooms? In terms of the first culture tool, to what extent are meetings 'teacher focused'?

Teaching: poles apart		
Subject content explained plus hints and tips for exams.		Learning capacities explained discussed and trained. Become a learning coach
Relating		
Busy activities. Learning content driven. Display best products. Spoon feeding. Heavy scaffolding.		Activities and environment arranged to surface and develop learning habits. Less scaffolding.
Constructing		
Mark regularly with supportive comments about subject.		Continual comment (talk and written) to nudge progression in learning power. Learning language developed.
Talking		
Secure in curriculum knowledge. Try not to show vulnerability.		Model being a learner too – trying things out, making mistakes, getting stuck.
Celebrating		
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10

The Key message(s) on this slide:

How teachers behave impacts on how students are as learners

Detail:

Another Poles apart diagram, this time looking at teaching behaviours. In the left hand column, competent teaching behaviours that focus on the efficient delivery of curriculum content, and in the right hand column the teaching behaviours of the teacher who is delivering curriculum content and, at the same time, building better learners.

Key Points

This slide suggests the change teachers need to make.

The left side depicts a perfectly good enough teacher but there is still a gap between how a good teacher works, where their emphasis lies, and the learning coach type teacher that developing learning power demands

Use this slide to orchestrate a discussion about the shift needed.

Note that the 4 dimensions are Relating, Constructing, Talking and Celebrating. These are the dimensions that are picked up in the Teachers' Palette and the culture diagram.