Title:

How to develop powerful learning including effective teacher appraisal and observation.

Introduction

One of the challenges we are looking to address at Nelson College for Girls over the next 5 years is how to find the most effective ways to ensure that the pedagogical practice of teachers enables the most effective learning for our students.

As a school we have been working towards developing our school as a Professional Learning Community. Two of our Strategic Goals relate directly to this:-

> *To foster a culture of personal excellence by:*
> > *1. Developing the skills and attributes of our students to equip them to participate in the outside world*
> > *2. Developing a culture of passion, inspiration and innovation in our staff*

In addition, at present, we are undergoing extensive professional development as a staff in making the pedagogical shift that has been brought about by BYOD (devices as a tool for learning). This has meant that it has become very necessary for our staff to examine their pedagogical practice and to be able to adjust it for differing circumstances. It has also begun to place a greater emphasis on meeting the individual needs of all students and in particular the needs of our priority learners (Maori, Pasifika, Migrant and Gifted and Talented).

All of the developments we are working on need to be consolidated into a cohesive plan to maximise teacher effectiveness so that learning outcomes for students are enhanced. It is therefore also important for us to find the best ways to measure this; and to increase our capacity to give meaningful feedback through lesson observations and appraisal. This must also be centred in a culture that puts the learning needs of the individual student at the heart of learning. Ensuring that we are utilising the most effective ways of engaging students and developing their learning and self-management skills is also very important.

My sabbatical time enabled me to research both the writings and the practical application of what others view to be effective ways to achieve this and to see how this might contribute to our current review of teaching and learning at Nelson College for Girls.

Underpinning research

As a school we began working on curriculum redesign in 2014 and were privileged to have Julia Atkin working alongside us as we struggled with how to undergo the change and shift we knew was needed. Julia has worked in schools for the past 20 years in both Australia and New Zealand and

beyond. Much of her work has focused around the two key questions that we are grappling with and which were the focus for my sabbatical research.

What is powerful learning? and What is powerful to learn?

These two questions are also reflected in the work of Professor Guy Claxton, whose writings also formed part of the basis of my sabbatical research. Both of these educators have been able to bridge the theory with the practical in terms of how their philosophies can be practically transformed into the classroom and school. In an article in 1996 titled *From Values and Beliefs about Learning to Principles and Practice*, Julia Atkin said:-

> Since the early eighties my work has focussed on helping school communities learn how to make schools better places for learning. These communities often have a vision of a preferred future but experience a tension between their vision and their current reality.

Our Curriculum journey began with establishing our Educative Purpose: our vision of our preferred future, and then collectively as a staff determining the Educative Values that should underpin this.

Julia Atkin's *Model for Curriculum Design* describes this well.
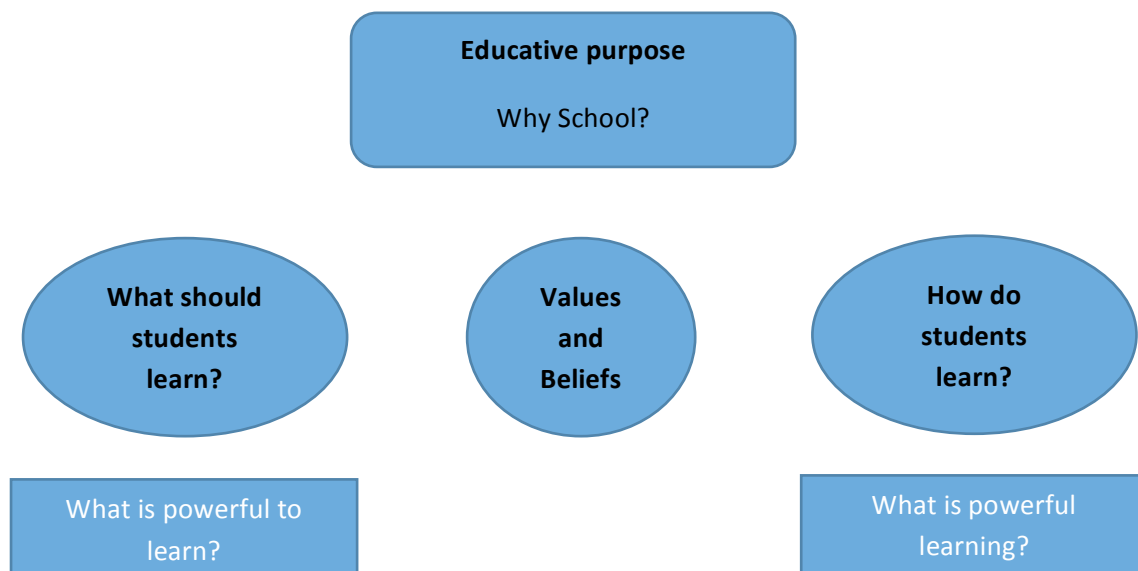
This model is now framing our continued journey towards finding the answers to the What and How of learning at our school and the underpinning pedagogical practices that are needed to enable this to be realised.

Educative Purpose and Values – Nelson College for Girls

Vision/Educative Purpose	*To educate and empower young women through revealing and nurturing individual talent, thus enabling them to participate confidently and to achieve their potential in a changing world.*
Our values	*Education / Knowledge; Creativity; Growth; Adaptability; Responsibility; Confidence; Community*

While we had a vision and a set of behavioural and social values prior to this work being done, this revision of our vision and values, with an emphasis on learning, has sharpened our understanding of our journey towards powerful learning. This is emphasised by Julia Atkin when she states:-

"Educational design is a complex process; its cornerstones for its integrity are its beliefs and values. The key to its coherence is ongoing review of the various processes."

Our review has led to us seeking to establish an emphasis on Learning to Learn, including Building Learning Power, and Growth Mindsets.

Establishing an underpinning philosophical basis

In March, prior to my sabbatical beginning, I attended a seminar in Christchurch, where the two main speakers were Guy Claxton and Carol Dweck. From this whole day seminar, emerged a strong conviction for me that establishing a clear underpinning philosophical basis to our curriculum work was essential. This conviction was further emphasised when I attended the ICOT Conference in Bilbao at the end of my sabbatical. Here there were a wealth of speakers such as Howard Gardiner, Art Costa, Edward de Bono and David Perkins amongst many others. Each had their own 'take' on what learning to learn might look like and how it might be achieved but the overarching message for me was the notion of an underpinning philosophy schoolwide that is the glue for everything that is done.

Guy Claxton was also an important presenter at the ICOT conference. Prior to my sabbatical in 2015, I was already familiar with the research of Guy Claxton and his fellow researchers. I had first heard Guy Claxton speak as a keynote speaker at the NASDAP conference in Christchurch in 2003. His work resonated with me then and I had continued to follow his research over the years. The dual presentation by Claxton and Dweck in Christchurch, combined later with that of Art Costa at ICOT, highlighted the synergies between their beliefs about learning and the similarities in approach that they have taken in classrooms. This practical element was very important for me in terms of being able to develop a philosophy that would be able to be understood and accepted by staff and students.

Increasingly I realised that the concept of Building Learning Power, successfully applied in a school, combined with developing a Growth Mindset approach for both staff and students could be a powerful underpinning philosophy and as a combination would assist us in answering the two questions *What is powerful to learn?* and *What is powerful learning*?

As part of my sabbatical I was also privileged to be able to visit 3 schools in southern England that were at varying stages of their journey to implement the concepts of Learning Power. I am very grateful to Guy Claxton and his colleague Graham Powell for making this possible for me. There is detail about what I observed during these visits later in this report.

What is Learning Power?

The 4 aspects of Learning Power identified by Guy Claxton are:-

Resilience; Resourcefulness; Reflectiveness; Reciprocity

Resilient – ready, willing and able to lock onto learning; Claxton describes this as being 'learning fit'. He speaks of the lack of effectiveness of 'spoonfeeding' and not developing 'chewing muscles'. He makes the link between his own work and that of Carol Dweck when he describes the lack of resiliency that can be shown by otherwise high achievers when encountering difficulty or the unexpected. Dweck describes the effects on high achieving students when some a page of difficult questions were stapled into a test paper. Not only were they not able to cope with these questions but their degree of being flummoxed affected their ability to complete other very manageable tasks.

Resourceful – ready, willing and able to learn in different ways: Piaget described this as 'knowing what to do when you don't know what to do'. Claxton emphasises that good learners like to wonder about things. Questions such as: How come? And What if? Are constantly in their minds. He refers also to a Danish proverb – 'He who is afraid of asking is afraid of learning' to reiterate this point. Another parallel aspect with Dweck's work that he draws is how important teachers' choice of language can be in making a great difference to students' creativity. 'This is how it happens' vs 'This is how it could happen.' Dweck's concept of Growth Mindset also emphasises the importance of language. How a teacher frames a message to a student will have either a very positive or very negative effect on that student's learning. Her example of using the words 'Not Yet' when speaking to a student who has not yet attained a particular level in a piece of work is a powerful illustration of this.

Reflective – ready, willing and able to become more strategic about learning. Guy Claxton describes good learners as people who "like taking responsibility for planning and organising their learning. They welcome opportunities to decide for themselves when, where, why and how they are going to learn a – and to get better at doing so." Inherent in students being able to be reflective learners is also an understanding of the process of learning.

Reciprocal – ready, willing and able to learn alone and with others. This is described as balancing self-reliance with sociability. "Students learn a great deal about all the four Rs, but especially reciprocity, in classrooms that are designed as 'communities of inquiry." Claxton

What is Growth Mindset?

Carol Dweck's concept of Fixed and Growth Mindsets stem from the premise that we always have a choice about how we react in a learning context. For someone with a fixed mindset, their belief is that they have fixed ability and that they cannot change this. They treat failure as a setback. Linked with this is a sometimes prevalent belief in my experience, that effort is in some way not needed. Learning success should come naturally and if it does not then it is because you do not have enough ability.

In contrast the concept of a Growth Mindset sees failure as an opportunity. There is a passion and enthusiasm for overcoming difficulties and for accepting challenge. This is articulated by Wendell Berry as: "The mind that is not baffled is not employed. The impeded stream is the one that sings". Edward de Bono uses a similar metaphor to describe the nature of challenge when he speaks of 'rock thinking' as being a focus on the barriers that are stopping us (fixed mindset). He prefers to focus on the water when he says: "Water thinking allows us to have the freedom to adjust our thinking to flow around the rocks, even if we cannot shift them." (growth mindset).

Underpinning philosophy combining these concepts

Both Claxton and Dweck emphasise that intelligence is not fixed. Dweck says: "Everyone can change and grow through application and experience." She believes that at the heart of a Growth Mindset is the "passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially) when it's not going well". Both speak of the need for us to be able to know what to do even when we don't know what to do. This links very well also to Art Costa's Habits of Mind, such as Persisting and Managing Impulsivity.

From these theories need to come some very practical ways in which we can work with students and teachers to ensure that we develop in our learners a growth mindset towards learning and that they are able to stretch their "learning muscles". In his book *Learning to Learn - the fourth generation,* Guy Claxton outlines 4 stages of the evolution of the learning to learn philosophy. These are summarised below as:

Generation	Characteristics
First generation	Raising attainment Outcome of schooling 'Good Teaching' was about content and acquisition Good teachers could put across information, develop literacy, numeracy
Second generation	Develop study skills Hints and tips on retaining and recalling for tests Practising techniques Good teaching as before, plus delivering these techniques
Third generation	Expanded to include emotional factors (eg self-esteem Characteristic ways of learning (multiple intelligences) 'Good teaching' included reducing stress levels and helping students raise their attainment levels Concerned with the 'how' of teaching
Fourth generation	Involvement of students in the processes Concerned with how students can be helped to help themselves (eg think creatively) Teachers themselves involved in becoming better learners Developmental and cumulative – encouraging the 'ready and willing' not just the 'able'.

Claxton also states that, in the earlier stages of this evolution, the term "learning" was often used to describe raising attainment – the outcome of schooling – rather than recognising that learning is a complicated process going on in children's heads. He emphasises the importance of truly personalising learning to provide an individually tailored mental 'exercise regime.'

> "The learning power coach has to watch and listen to her students and help
> them – when they are not able to do it for themselves – to select and construct
> challenges that will give them a satisfying kind of stretch." P11 4th Generation

Carol Dweck also describes the idea of stretching oneself in the learning process. She believes that those with a growth mindset thrive on stretching themselves. They want to be challenged and this in turn ensures heightened interest in the learning process.

Over a number of years, I have observed the lack of stretching that can occur in able students in particular. Often some of our brightest students are dependent on the teacher for knowing what to do next. They flourish in situations of certainty but become anxious and unable to proceed when faced with something that requires them to think more broadly about how to solve the problem or answer the questions. Some of these students have also found the transition to university, where greater independence is needed in their learning. They have struggled with having to be the processor themselves to make sense of what they are learning.

At the ICOT conference, Art Costa quoted Henry Ford's thoughts about thinking. "Thinking is the hardest work there is. That is why so few people engage in it." Costa also emphasised that the curriculum mind shift that we need is to shift students from not only knowing the 'right' answers to also being able to know how to behave when they do not know an answer. This is a major pedagogical shift for teachers that requires deep thought and professional development. Julia Atkin has said: "Our responsibility is to ensure learners gain what they are entitled to learn. HOW you engage the learners in the experience of learning – your pedagogy - is what will determine the quality and effectiveness of the learning experience." That journey is an interesting one for us to travel as it requires us to be truly reflective learners ourselves for us to be able to enable this transformation for our students. Many teachers worry that a less content driven approach will cause results to decline. Research by a number of educators, including John Hattie, indicate that this is not the case. Claxton stated in his workshop about Building Learning Power at ICOT that:

"More confident, independent, articulate, thoughtful learners

> Do better on the tests (Hattie)

> Do better in life (Moffitt, Tough)"

A further presenter at ICOT, Lane Clark, spoke about learning as a process that has stages, which students need to be able to navigate, to evaluate and to modify to make their own. Her work has synergy with Claxton's 4 generations. She emphasised that there are great differences between teaching learners how to learn (the process of learning; Claxton's 4th generation) and teaching them about learning (discrete teaching of thinking skills or study skills; Claxton's 2nd and 3rd generations). Clark emphasised that we must now teach about the process of learning. She said: "Learners should be provided with an explicit, visible process that mirrors the process of learning experienced in the 'real world' They should be enabled and empowered to independently navigate that process; eventually they should evaluate it and modify it and create their own." Clark also emphasised the importance of understanding how what has been learnt needs to be transferred from short term memory to long term memory. She quoted Kirscher et al (2006):

> *If nothing has changed in long-term memory, nothing has been learned. Any instructional recommendation that does not or cannot specify what has been changed in long-term memory, or that does not increase the efficiency with which relevant information is stored in or retrieved from long-term memory, is likely to be ineffective.*

Lane stated that it can take up to 2 -3 years for permanence in long term memory. This then requires for us to be conscious about how the brain works and how the transferral of information from short

term to long term memory occurs. Claxton too emphasises the importance of us understanding that the brain and the body are interconnected in the learning process not separated. He traced the history from classical times of how the belief was that there was a separation, with the mind being higher in the hierarchy. 20th century research began to look at the connection of the mind and body. More recently research has shown the importance of understanding the relationship between the mind and body. This research shows that we won't make a decision unless we take account of options, how we are feeling and depletion of our muscles. Claxton also stated that cognitive habits are mirrored in our muscular habits.

The synergy of the messages across many researchers and presenters was exciting. What became important in my thinking after this however was what does this look like in a school and a classroom?

Through discussion since my sabbatical, our Senior Leadership Team and our Heads of Learning Areas have agreed that we need an underpinning philosophy about learning that will enable us to move from our already established Educative Purpose (Vision) and Educative Values to ensuring that we focus on the next layer in this journey effectively – answering the questions posed by Julia Atkin of What is powerful learning? and What is powerful to learn? We have determined that the philosophy that we feel will suit our school the best is that of a combination of Building Learning Power and Growth Mindset. To help us on this journey 17 of our staff, including our Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Learning Areas attended a day with Guy Claxton in Nelson in March this year. Since then we have moved to set up a Professional Learning Group of interested staff to further understand these philosophies and to plan their implementation in our school.

What does powerful learning look like in a classroom from a teacher's perspective?

Across a number of writers, there is a strong emphasis that moving to a more student-centred learning approach is about a change of emphasis rather than a revolution. Guy Claxton emphasises that it is a long journey that "starts with small steps and is capable of fundamentally shifting the way teachers think, the way they teach and the way the whole life and ethos of the school." He describes four aspects that teachers do that are key components of building learning power in a classroom. These aspects are:-

- What they explicitly value and discuss with whole class
- How they talk to groups and individuals about their learning and achievement
- Activities that they select
- What they themselves model about learning.

Guy Claxton for example indicates that for teachers it is important to recognise that content and process are not opposed; "they are woven together like the warp and weft of cloth on the loom." In traditional classrooms, content has often dominated over process. The shift that has occurred in a more future focused approach is that the process of learning sits alongside the content and skills that must be mastered. Teachers need to be able to explicitly teach learning strategies; they need to become not only a teacher of a subject area in a secondary context but also a teacher of learning. This is also echoed in John Hattie's *Visible Learning* book. He also concluded that students learn most successfully when the processes and demands of learning are explicit. Different researchers have come up with ways of making explicit the learning process. Amongst these are Art Costa's Habits of

mind; Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and Guy Claxton's Building Learning Power. At the ICOT conference I had the privilege of hearing all 3 of these educators speaking and I was very struck by the synergies.

The language of learning that our teachers and students are going to focus on is that of Learning Power. Many teachers are used to focusing on two dimensions in planning their lessons – the subject matter (knowledge, curriculum) and the evaluation of what has been learnt (assessment). For a teacher who is focused on Building Learning Power there is a third dimension which is at its core – this is the learning habits and attitudes. Put in terms of Guy Claxton's *Learning to Learn: the Fourth Generation* a third generation teacher would ask "How can I help my students to learn better?" A 4th Generation teacher would ask the question: "How can I help my students become better learners?" Our challenge is to move our staff to be incorporating this thinking in their planning of learning.

To enable teachers to be able to have a framework to work within and to help make the process of learning explicit both Costa and Claxton have created vocabularies of learning. Costa has 16 Habits of Mind. Learning Power's vocabulary has 4 domains of learning and 17 learning capabilities. There are many synergies between both sets of vocabularies.

These are summarised as:-

Learning Power Dispositions			
Reflectiveness	Reciprocity	Resilience	Resourcefulness
Learning Power Capacities			
Planning	Interdependence	Absorption	Questioning
Revising	Collaboration	Managing distraction	Making links
Distilling	Listening/Empathy	Noticing	Imagining
Meta-learning	Imitation	Perseverance	Reasoning
			Making good use of resources

With this framework vocabulary a teacher can build ways in which to exercise the learning power muscles of their students. It gives a common working language to talk to students about their learning. Alongside this a teacher needs to have a second framework that Claxton describes as the "Teachers' Palette. This links back to the four aspects mentioned at the beginning of this section. They can be summarised as:-

- Explaining – telling students directly and explicitly about learning power and learning process
- Commentating – conveying messages about learning power through informal talk and formal and informal evaluation
- Orchestrating – selecting activities and arranging the environment
- Modelling – showing what it means to be an effective learner

The chart below summarises more particularly what this might look like in a classroom:-

The Teachers' Palette			
Explaining	**Commentating**	**Orchestrating**	**Modelling**
Making clear the overall purpose of the classroom	Drawing individual students' attention toward their own learning	Choosing activities that develop the learning habits	Responding to unforeseen events, questions etc in ways that model good learning.
Offering ongoing reminders and prompts about learning power	Responding to students'' comments and questions in ways that encourage learning-to-learn	Clarifying the learning intentions behind specific activities.	Externalising the thinking, feeling and decision making of a learner-in-action.
Inviting students' own ideas and opinions about learning.	Commenting on difficulties and achievements in learning-positive ways	Helping students set and monitor their own learning power targets.	Having learning projects that are visible in the classroom.
Giving direct information and practice in learning: tips and techniques.	Recording the development of students' learning power	Making use of displays and physical arrangements to encourage independence.	Talking about their own learning careers and histories.

Translating the vocabulary into action in the classroom has many aspects to it, which teachers can introduce in small ways initially. Some of our staff are beginning to work on what Guy Claxton described at his recent workshop as the basics of Learning Power. These include strategies such as:-

- Try 3 before me - brain-book-buddy-boss

- Using STUCK posters on their walls

- Using a Wonder Wall

- Using learning focused quotes

These teachers are excited by the difference they are noticing in the engagement of their students. In addition they are working to ensure that they are embracing the growth mindset approach of Carol Dweck. For many of them, their initial approach has been to embrace the use of the word "Yet" or "Not Yet" and an emphasis on praising struggle and use of strategies and choices, rather than praising intelligence. This is based on the assumption that that intelligence is able to be developed.

Visits to schools in New Zealand and England

As part of my sabbatical I was fortunate to be able to visit schools, first in New Zealand and then in Devon, England. My visits to schools in New Zealand were centred around effective organisational structures and appraisal systems, as well as looking at Innovative Learning Environments. I found these aspects very interesting but ultimately I focused on my investigation into what is powerful to learn and what is powerful learning and so did not fully explore these aspects during my sabbatical. Instead I focused more fully on my investigation into Building Learning Power and its effectiveness in developing student engagement and achievement. I was very grateful for the opportunity to visit Napier Girls', Hastings Girls', Rangi Ruru Girls' and Akaroa Area School and I thank the principals of these schools for this opportunity. In particular, we have been able to incorporate elements of what I saw into our ILE project this year.

My visits to schools in England were specifically to see Building Learning Power in operation. I was very fortunate to make contact with Guy Claxton at his seminar in Christchurch in term 1 2015. He gave me contact details for Graeme Powell in England and this resulted in my being able to visit 3 schools in Devon. These 3 schools were each at a different stage of their journey to adopt the philosophy of Building Learning Power and it was interesting to see how each had approached this. All 3 schools were using or had used Graeme Powell as a mentor and trainer.

South Dartmoor Community College

This was a co-educational school of about 1400 students, in the relatively small town of Ashburton, near Exeter. The school has embraced Guy Claxton's Building Learning Power fairly extensively over the last 5-6 years. It was more embedded here than in the other two schools.

South Dartmoor had a core philosophy of creating independent and inter-dependent learners. Their Vision Statement was:-

> "We believe in empowering students to take control of their own learning and their own lives so they know how to make good choice and also have the ability to thrive in a fast moving, ever changing world."

They saw their role as educators as:-

1. Developing students' capacity to learn both independently and in collaboration with others - they do this by building effective learning habits.
2. Ensuring that students contribute to the school's community as well as benefit from it – they do this by nurturing students' emotional intelligence.

In Building Learning Power, they had 6 key approaches that were the framework for everything that they did.

1. Learning Habits
2. Growth Mindset
3. Coaching
4. Planning for Progress
5. Student Voice
6. Behaviour for Learning

Learning Habits

They were explicit in their teaching of Learning Habits and information to students and the posters around the walls supported this. The delivery of knowing about Learning Habits took place in their citizenship classes.

There were 4 key components of this:-

Persevering – never giving up in the face of difficulties

Being Curious – asking questions and seeing the connections between things

Working well together - learning from others and helping others to learn

Reflecting on what they are doing – making flexible plans and keeping them under review

Growth Mindset

This was based on the work of Carol Dweck. They described two ways to view our minds:-

- as buckets, with limited capacity; once they are full, they are full.
- as balloons, that can continue to expand and grow.

They had developed a poster to support this idea that was in all classrooms. The text of the poster was:-

We are aiming for Creative, Curious, Courageous, Independent learners.

Are you a bucket or a balloon?

Their summary of the differences between learners with a Fixed Mindset and a Growth Mindset. This summary makes clear the strength in learning of a Growth Mindset.

Learners with a Fixed Mindset believe:-

- Their ability is fixed and immoveable
- That what they achieve is limited
- In playing safe
- Making mistakes is a sign of weakness
- It's easier to give in when the pressure is on
- It's other people's fault when things go wrong
- They're unworthy or not good enough
- That it's OK to be dishonest about their feelings

Learners with a Growth Mindset believe:-

- Their ability is expandable
- In exploring all possibilities
- That learning should be experimental and risky
- That learning from mistakes is vitally important
- That setbacks improve resilience and determination
- In taking responsibility for their thoughts and actions
- In learning from others
- They should accept their weaknesses and build on them

Coaching

They also had an emphasis on encouraging learning conversations with students – both teachers and parents as well as other students. This focused on encouraging students to focus on their learning goals and establishing first steps before rushing in to help them with things that were working through.

The key to this was in providing training for all involved in having those learning conversations.

Planning for Progress

They had based this concept on Piaget's definition of intelligence as "knowing what to do when you don't know what to do."

The review cycle was at the heart of this – Plan, Do and Review. In classrooms there was a stuck noticeboard which was used in different ways by different staff and departments but focused on this concept. Each department also had ways of assessing formative work with this in mind. In the Maths department for example, they used the codes of ?, T, ! , lightbulb for Distilling, double arrow for Rewind. I saw this in operation in a classroom and it worked effectively. The students I spoke to could all articulate what this system meant and how it helped their learning.

Student Voice

Students were given a strong voice about learning in the school. There were two main ways that this was accomplished:-

In classes:

- Developing real teams with roles for every student – this was based on co-operative learning group work ideas.
- Encouraging students to feedback to each other using supportive language – positive peer assessment.
- Asking students what they need to learn about a new module of work.
- Involving students in creating modules of work or in teaching lessons.

In the college:-

- Inviting students to join a Learning Council
- Involving them in reviewing departments
- Giving them a role in appointing new teachers
- Enabling them to help shape the curriculum and environment
- Asking them to take leading roles in organising and running college events.

The Learning Councils were involved in giving feedback to teachers about what worked for them in learning. They were also involved in pop-in visits to classes, with feedback given to teachers.

Behaviour for Learning

This was based on the need for students to show respect and take responsibility.

In class

Students were expected to:-

- Adopt learning habits that develop social skills such as listening to and understanding other people's views.
- Take personal responsibility for learning as an individual and in teams.
- Take personal responsibility for behaviour and attitude to learning.
- Help others in the classroom to shine and make progress.

In the college:-

- Use restorative approaches to help students understand emotions and improve social interactions
- Use restorative approaches to solve conflict situations through discussion
- Encourage a sense of belonging to our community

The Learning Habits

These were all based on the Building Learning Power Habits. As was mentioned earlier, Guy Claxton, in *The Learning Powered School* acknowledges that these habits bear a close similarity to Art Costa's Habits of Mind. Both were developed separately but both fulfil the need of making development of the capacity for all students to learn a proactive and conscious matter. The following diagram was being used at South Dartmoor to underpin overtly articulated learning habits.

Learning Habits				
Strategic	Planning	**Thinking**	Questioning	
	Monitoring		Making links/recognising relevance	
	Making revisions		Imagining/Hypothesising	
	Distilling		Rigorous/Methodic	
	Discussing learning		Capitalising	
Emotional	Managing distractions	**Social**	Collaboration	
	Time effective		Listening	
	Noticing details		Empathy	
	Overcoming frustration		Imitation	
	Taking considered risks		Independence	

Sitting alongside these Learning Habits were the Principles for Inspirational Learning – HOPE

High Expectations	Are standards for progress relevant and clear?
	Are routines for entry and exit supporting high expectations?
	Is goal setting owned by the students?
	Are students transferring learning gains?
	Are students showing pride in the presentation of their learning?
Opportunities for all	Are working relationships/learning conversations/grouping/No Hands Up strategies used to support progress?
	Is data used to support progress?
	Is feedback, AFL and hinge questioning improving progress?

	Are there opportunities to progress literacy/maths/Learning Habits and subject understanding?
	Are there opportunities to progress Social, Moral, Spiritual, Health, Cultural Learning?
	Are opportunities planned to emotionally engage students so that they enjoy learning?
Personal Responsibility	Are students role model learners who use Learning Habits to progress their own learning and lead and coach the learning of others?
	Are students provided purposeful opportunities to Plan, Do and Review?
	Is the ratio of student to teacher talk and doing 4:1?
	Are students role model learners whose excellent behaviour enables themselves and others to learn effectively as part of a community?
Endeavour	Are students using considered risks and strategies to Get Unstuck and never, never, never give up?
	Are Driving Questions engaging curiosity?
	Are students believing they can choose a Growth Mindset approach and never, never, never giving up?
	Are coaching questions improving progress?
	Are students being praised for high level of endeavour and progress?

St Peter's College Exeter

This school was a church funded school in Exeter. It had been through a difficult period with Ofsted deeming it as requiring Improvement. The school has a newly appointed Senior Leadership Team, some of whom have worked together before, particularly at South Dartmoor Community College. As a leadership team they have a clear vision for improvement in the school and this vision is based on Building Learning Power. It is summarised in their vision statement "Succeeding Beyond the Boundaries of Possibility". Head Teacher, Rachel Hutchinson describes 4 Core Principles for the school. These are:-

Creating Learning Habits

Opportunities for All

Responsibility for Progress

Excellence, Expectations, Endeavour, Enjoyment

As a school, they are working closely with Graham Powell, an associate of Guy Claxton and co-author of some of his books on Learning Power. I was very fortunate that on the afternoon I visited that Graham Powell was at this school. After an initial dialogue with the Leadership Team about their two year journey towards strengthening the pedagogical practice of their staff, I was then given a wonderful opportunity to spend time with Graham in classrooms as he assessed the ways in which

science teachers were making the most of learning opportunities. The Head of Science was also present in these lessons. Later that afternoon, I was also then fortunate to sit in on the debrief sessions about teaching and learning with the Head of Science. This session gave very specific feedback to the Head of Science about the strengths and areas to develop for each staff member visited.

The observation form that Graham uses is based on the Learning Habits under the 4 categories of Emotional, Cognitive, Social and Strategic. He is specifically monitoring the extent to which a teacher is being intentional about the learning and how aware they are about what is happening with regard to learning during the lesson. Graham also talked to me about noting the missed opportunities that occurred which could have made learning even more powerful.

The Learning Habits for the school were again based on the Building Learning Power ones but they had added some additional ones in to reflect the religious dimension of their school.

This was a really powerful experience. The lesson observations were intended to be very affirming of what teachers are doing but also to grow and develop them through identifying where they were being intentional and how they could have strengthened this even further.

The school was only on an early stage of this journey and there was still much more embedding of the Learning Habits and this method of observation to happen. The feedback however seemed to me to be focussed and very beneficial to improving the quality of the consciousness of what a teacher is doing to improve engagement and learning. The Head of Science indicated to me that he felt that, while the changes in pedagogical practice had moved fairly quickly, he nevertheless believed in what was happening and that it was making a difference to learning.

As with South Dartmoor Community College, this school is using the concepts of Building Learning Power to frame the pedagogical practice that it wishes to embed to ensure that students are engaged in learning.

Uffculme School

Uffculme School is a co-educational secondary school academy set in the small town of Uffculme in Devon. They were just beginning their journey towards focusing on learning about the process of learning. One of their senior leaders had also worked at South Dartmoor Community College previously and so had brought with him an understanding of Building Learning Power. Unlike the other two schools, Uffculme had decided not to follow a particular philosophy but rather to blend elements of several approaches together.

They were focusing in the junior school on establishing an understanding with their students on the learning process. This was taught in their citizenship classes and students whom I spoke to were able to articulate this understanding. It was having an effect on the pedagogical practice of some staff too but was not embedded in the school. An aspect that was working well was their establishing of a group of enthusiastic staff who were the supports for all other staff. They reported that they were increasingly having conversations with or being approached by staff who wanted to understand how they could maximise their use of the learning theories in their diverse curriculum areas.

Their motto – *From Outstanding to Exceptional* - was underpinning the work that they were doing.

Conclusion

My sabbatical experience gave me a wonderful opportunity to explore in a range of contexts the philosophies of a number of respected educators. As I have indicated earlier, it gave me a strong belief that the joint philosophies of Building Learning Power and Growth Mindset had a synergy for our curriculum journey in order for us to answer the two questions posed by Julia Atkin: *What is powerful to learn?* and *What is powerful learning*? To achieve the greatest gains from the answers to these questions, a shift in the pedagogical practice of our teachers is very important.

This is summarised by Julia Atkin in the following quote:-

> *When we have determined what we believe it is essential and desirable to learn, how do we ensure that it is learned powerfully?? How do we ensure that students gain their learning entitlement. A focus on pedagogy is the key.* Julia Atkin (Leadership for Learning, 2009)

We are now proactively moving towards the first stages of this journey. We know that it will be a long journey, with much reflection and varying of the pathway as we encounter challenges to be overcome. We need to create the conditions for teachers to understand how to make the creation of their classroom culture conscious rather than unconscious; to make the planning of learning intentional rather than serendipitous. This is summed by Guy Claxton when he says:-

> *Teachers do many things in order to create their own distinctive "classroom culture". Some conscious, some unconscious choices.*

We want our teachers too to understand the learning process so that their students can also know and understand this and therefore become able to cope when they face uncertainty in their learning. Guy Claxton summarises this by saying:-

> *The professionalism of the BLP teacher must allow them to show students what it is to be a confident, 'finder-outer' as well as a 'knower'.*

Julia Atkin has been a cornerstone of our journey to curriculum review. She has guided us in taking the time to better review our curriculum to ensure that it will lead to the best possible curriculum design for our students and staff.

Julia summarises this in this way:-

Beliefs and Values

Educational design is a complex process. The cornerstones for its integrity are our values and beliefs. The key to its coherence is ongoing review of the various processes.

These key processes include:-

- *Revisiting and clarifying our values and beliefs*
- *Stating our mission – our educative purpose*
- *Developing our understandings about how people learn*
- *Being responsive to the context in determining what students should learn in their school learning years.*

We have revisited our beliefs and values and confirmed our educative purpose. Through developing our understanding of the work of Claxton and Dweck, our challenge now is to turn the theory into practice through development of pedagogical practice an understanding of the learning process.

There will be challenges in this journey but if we can adopt Edward de Bono's "water thinking" which allows us to have the freedom to let our thinking flow around the rocks even if we cannot shift them, rather than focusing on "rock thinking" where the focus is on the barriers, then we will have an exciting journey ahead of us. Guy Claxton quotes Wendell Berry's summary of this:-

The mind that is not baffled is not employed. The impeded stream is the one that sings.

Cathy Ewing
Principal
Nelson College for Girls

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