Transversal competences and school involvement: Learning to Learn Research in Schools in the UK

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Overview

Research project
European context
Impact
  Learners
  Teachers
  Schools and the wider community
Research project aims

• how *Learning to Learn* approaches support the development of confident and capable lifelong learners
• how different *Learning to Learn* approaches improve learning
• how *Learning to Learn* supports teacher’s motivation and ability to cope with and manage change
Research themes

• how to assess *Learning to Learn*
• how to link *Learning to Learn* in school with family and community learning
• how to get transfer of *Learning to Learn* skills across the curriculum; and
• how Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) can support *Learning to Learn* in schools.
What is ‘learning to learn’?

Broad idea
Includes skills, knowledge, attitudes and dispositions
Emphasis on longer term goals of education
Lifelong learning
Campaign for Learning’s definition of Learning to Learn

“a process of discovery about learning. It involves a set of principles and skills which, if understood and used, help learners learn more effectively and so become learners for life. At its heart is the belief that learning is learnable.”

http://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/
‘Learning to learn’ is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organize one’s own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one’s learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skill as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual’s competence.

(Education Council, 2006, para. 5, annex)
Transversal competences

• Many of these competences are **transferable** or **transversal** competences;
• independent of subjects and based on **cross-curricular objectives**.
• They usually relate to;
  – better management of one’s own learning,
  – social and interpersonal relations and
  – communication
• Reflect a general shift of emphasis from teaching to learning.
Key and transversal competences

1. Communication in the mother tongue
2. Communication in a foreign language
3. Mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology
4. Digital competence
5. Learning-to-learn
6. Interpersonal and civic competences
7. Entrepreneurship
8. Cultural expression
Do you know how YOU learn best?

1. Be Ready
   Know why you want to learn something and believe you can do it.

2. Be Resourceful
   Find out how you learn best. Keep trying out new approaches to learning.

3. Be Resilient
   Keep going and try different approaches when you're stuck.

4. Learn to Remember
   Try to apply what you learn, for example by teaching it to someone else. Use different approaches to make the most of your memory.

5. Always Reflect
   Think back after you have learned something and consider how you could do better next time.

To find out more, visit www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk
The development of *Learning to Learn*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First stage</td>
<td>Improving teaching&lt;br&gt;Effective delivery of content knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second stage</td>
<td>Developing study skills&lt;br&gt;Hints, tips and techniques</td>
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<td>Third stage</td>
<td>Emotional and social aspects&lt;br&gt;Characteristic ways of learning (‘styles’) &lt;br&gt;Concerned with the ‘how’ of teaching</td>
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<td>Fourth stage</td>
<td>Involvement of students in the process&lt;br&gt;Concerned with how students can be helped to help themselves &lt;br&gt;Teachers themselves involved in becoming better learners&lt;br&gt;Developmental and cumulative</td>
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from Claxton, 2004
Learning to Learn in Schools: Project Overview

4 year project (2003-2007) 
(Phases 1&2 - 2000-2003; Phase 4 - 2007-2011)

**Schools**: clusters of about 12 schools in Cheshire LEA, Enfield EAZ and Cornwall EAZ/LEA (34 total)

**Local Project Co-ordinators**

**University research support**

**Advisory Board**

**Campaign for Learning**: co-ordination, policy, promotion

**Funding**: DfES, Innovation Unit, Technology Group, LSC, NCSL, Accelerated Learning Systems, NferNelson,
Professional enquiry

- Teachers work together
- Try out *Learning to Learn* approaches and techniques
- Evaluate the impact on learners
- Communicate their findings to other teachers

Image of Wilbury Primary School, Enfield (2004 report)
Project outcomes

85 case studies by teachers
33 in 2004
21 in 2005
31 in 2006


Academic articles

Professional publications

Oakthorpe Primary School, Enfield (2004 report)
Developing a language for learning

Explicit talk about how learning takes place in classrooms
A clear progression in the way learners think about their learning
A shared language for learning in schools

‘Pepi the Clown’ a puppet to from Hazelbury Infants, Enfield (2006 report)
Confidence and attitudes

Clear evidence of improved confidence as learners

e.g. “When I was asked to improve my work at the start of the year I thought it was because it wasn’t very good. But now I know that we are asked to do it because it will help us get a better level or grade. So I don’t feel that my work is not good, but I know we are doing it to get a higher level.”

(Fallibroome High School, Cheshire)

Image of role play and drama from Kehelland Village School, Cornwall
Impact on attainment

All of the schools identified benefits for pupils’ learning and achievement. The majority of schools (65%) specified benefits for pupils’ attainment as measured by teacher assessments and national tests on groups and/or classes. At school level improvement was only identifiable in some project schools through national performance data.
Impact on teachers and teaching

*Learning to Learn* supported teachers’ professional development. It promoted autonomy and changes in professional practice through the systematic exploration of new approaches in the classroom. Had a clear and positive impact on teachers’ motivation and their capacity to manage change.
“Participating in this research project has emphasised the value of creating professional learning programmes, tightly focused on classroom practice, with sustained opportunities for dialogue and reflection. Furthermore, we believe that the lead learner model has contributed to building capacity within the school to take on new initiatives, particularly those concerned with teaching and learning.”

Fallibroome High School
Learning about Learning to Learn

It is **not** a simple set of activities or techniques. A range of approaches can support more effective learning *habits* and *dispositions*. Collaborative professional enquiry by teachers using practical classroom strategies helps such development.

Developing ‘readiness’ for learning Alverton Primary School, Cornwall (2006 report)
Learning to Learn involves:

1. More effective feedback between teacher(s) and learner(s), with learners working together and developing their own awareness of their learning
2. Needs a range of teaching and learning techniques and approaches
3. The *process* of learning made more explicit
4. A common language for learning resulting in better communication about learning
5. Supportive and challenging change
Transversal competences

• Change in emphasis
  – From knowledge… to skills and attitudes
  – From curriculum input… to output for learners
  – Requires a pedagogy to support this
  – With supportive assessment of key features
Transversal competences and learning

Equipping the next generation with skills and attitudes they need to learn, work and take part in society in the future

Teaching essential skills through the competences

Balancing short term and long term aims in education
Well I started off objecting to this, however now I have tried it I feel more confident in myself to contribute. I feel the single gender group is able to have a laugh, but can get on with the work as well.
(The Roseland School, Cornwall)

I don’t worry as much now – I know my answer will be okay, I used to panic before and then worry but I think, hey, I can do this now.
(Kehelland Village School, Cornwall)

It helped me by allowing me to try different ways of learning and to find out what I am best at.
(Henbury High School, Cheshire)

It helps me to learn a lot when I learn something once and I teach someone it again. My brain records it more.
(Hazelbury Junior School, Enfield)