Building Learning Power

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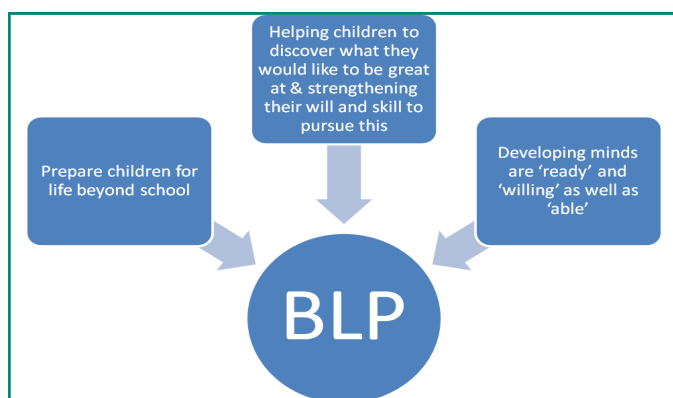
What is building learning power?

> "Building learning power is about helping young people to become better learners, both in school and out"
>
> Guy Claxton

Building learning power (BLP) is based on three core beliefs and is nurtured by three root systems. This 'spotlight' provides an introduction to Claxton's work and the key principles on which it is based. BLP is about how we can create a culture, through attitudes and habits, in the classroom and the school more widely in which learners (that's all of us!) can face challenge and uncertainty calmly, confidently and creatively.
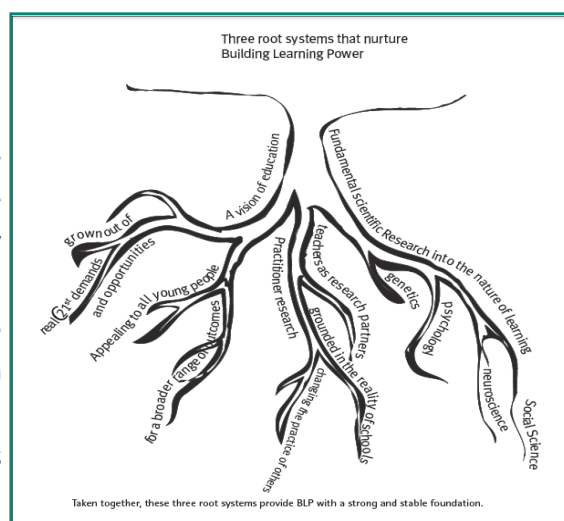
Teacher's role:

- Cultivating dispositions that are likely to create learners who are active throughout their lives.

- Helping learners develop states of mind that support learning.

- Encouraging learners to understand which tools help in certain situations and how to use them.

- Teaching learners how to be more strategic about their learning and how to transfer their learning from one area to another.

Three Core Beliefs

- Prepare children for life beyond school
- Helping children to discover what they would like to be great at & strengthening their will and skill to pursue this
- Developing minds are 'ready' and 'willing' as well as 'able'
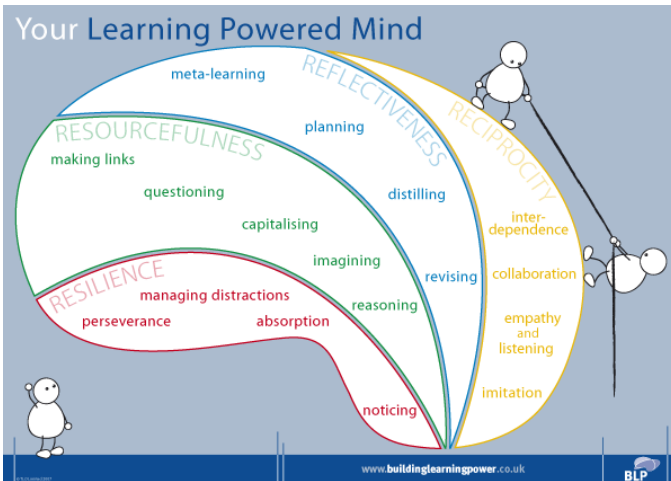
BLP

Three Roots

Research into the nature of learning and neuroscience confirms that the brain is malleable and BLP makes use of the research and knowledge in this area. The busy reality of the school and classroom is the context in which teachers work and teachers are encouraged to become research partners. Carrying out small action research projects is a great way to embed change. The vision for what we can achieve includes and goes beyond the measures of attainment.

Three root systems that nurture Building Learning Power

Taken together, these three root systems provide BLP with a strong and stable foundation.

How do we do it?

Learning Powered Mind

The learning powered mind is designed to be a tool to help us understand some of the skills that effective and efficient learners use. The model should be used by schools to support their creativity in designing learning experiences that over time build the confidence and capacity in children and young people to approach a range of new and challenging situations.

Together the learning powered mind and teacher's palette provide the 'big picture' of learning. It allows us to focus on particular areas of learning while knowing how this connects with others skills and attitudes.

Teacher's Palette

Guy Claxton has worked with teachers over many years and has found that these four key behaviours can make a big difference to the learning of those we work with. They will help to keep pupils positive and motivated to try.

Explaining

Talk about learning to learn. Give pupils the vocabulary they need to talk about learning. Teach them the skills they need to be good learners.

e.g. tell pupils that being a good learner is something that will always help them

e.g. you might focus on a particular skill during an activity or for a week to show them how important and useful it is

e.g. talk about what you are learning yourself and what you need to do to develop the skills you need

Orchestrating

Learning experiences and activities need to focus on developing the skills we need for learning. Pupils need the opportunity to practice these skills.

e.g. link learning objectives to a learning skill

e.g. combine a learning objective with a learning skill objective

e.g. keep a learning log with pupils – what skills have we learned/ practised today?

Commenting

Comment on and 'notice' pupils' learning power. This can be done formally and informally.

e.g. focus comments on effort and encouragement

e.g. develop your own vocabulary for talking about learning

e.g. ask questions that help pupils to focus on their learning skills

e.g. make time/ encourage pupils to ask questions

Modelling

Model being a learner. Get stuck in, try things out, make mistakes etc.

e.g. get alongside pupils

e.g. talk through the process of doing something together

e.g. make an effort to use the language of 'it could be' or 'it might be'

e.g. acknowledge mistakes and show that it can be fun to learn from them