

# The Complete Learner's Toolkit

Metacognition and mindset – equipping the modern learner with the thinking, social and self-regulation skills to succeed at school and in life

Mistakes help me learn

I never stop trying ...

When it's challenging, my brain is growing

Change is always possible

Learning is the key

Asking questions helps me learn

I use learning strategies that work

Helping others helps me ...

I believe I can ...

I learned how to learn

I love to learn

I see struggle as growth

Jackie Beere

# Praise for *The Complete Learner's Toolkit*

Jackie Beere's books are always worth reading. She has an eye for what works in classrooms and provides practical examples for busy teachers tackling tricky interdisciplinary issues outside their subject expertise. *The Complete Learner's Toolkit* is a veritable cornucopia of ideas for lessons – and any school wanting to enrich their PSHE offer or tutorial programme will want at least one copy in their staff library.

Sir Tim Brighouse, former London Schools Commissioner and  
Chief Education Officer for Birmingham and Oxfordshire

This welcome book is another sign of the rapidly changing view as to the nature of learning and the focus on the skills and strategies needed by learners. Jackie Beere has produced a detailed, exhaustive and authoritative guide that combines a clear overview of the topic alongside supportive activities and case studies. Most importantly, the resources in this text provide a bridge between principle and practice.

*The Complete Learner's Toolkit* is to be welcomed because it goes into the detail that is so often missing, and it will give teachers and learners the confidence to apply the ideas and develop alternative ways of thinking and working.

John West-Burnham, Honorary Professor, University of Worcester

*The Complete Learner's Toolkit* is a vital resource for effectively equipping the modern learner with the 21st century skills required to succeed and thrive in our fast-changing world. This insightful toolkit is essential for school leaders, teachers and parents to help them provide children and young people with the very best possible education and start in life.

Justin Blake, UK Country Lead, HundrED, and education consultant

*The Complete Learner's Toolkit* outlines lessons to develop the language of, and strategies for, learning, and focuses on the most important aspect of learning: teaching students to become their own teachers. Surely, if lifelong learning is to be realised, being able to teach oneself is essential. This entails knowing when and where to get help from an expert, how to evaluate the myriad of information now available, knowing how to prioritise, and using evaluative thinking in order to determine where to go next in the learning journey.

John Hattie, Laureate Professor, Melbourne Graduate School of Education,  
University of Melbourne

In recent decades we have learned an awful lot about how learning happens through a focus on ideas such as mindset, memory and metacognition. Generally, these ideas are talked about – and fiercely debated over – among adults. In *The Complete*

*Learner's Toolkit*, Jackie Beere has created a treasure trove of activities that bring these ideas to life in a way that children can get to grips with – all rooted in an expansive vision of education that stretches beyond employability skills and into the realms of self-regulated learning and self-actualisation.

As we edge inevitably into an age characterised by algorithms, AI and autonomous vehicles, I am sure *The Complete Learner's Toolkit* will be of great use to teachers, parents and young people themselves for many years to come.

Dr James Mannion, Bespoke Programmes Leader, UCL Institute of Education, and co-author of *Fear is the Mind Killer: Why Learning to Learn Deserves Lesson Time – and How to Make It Work for Your Pupils*

*The Complete Learner's Toolkit* is an essential book for every school because it provides lessons for children that will help them be more resilient, become more motivated learners, and improve their skills in readiness for working life.

As a school governor with decades of experience in business, I welcome this exciting package of ideas that will help the next generation thrive in an even more demanding work environment. For school leaders and teachers, Jackie Beere's book provides a crucial addition to the curriculum offer so that they can support and develop the essential skills for wellbeing, collaboration and rising to the challenges of 21st century life.

Gill Watton, Vice Chair of School Governors, the Elmwood and Penrose Federation

In *The Complete Learner's Toolkit* Jackie writes and shares from first-hand experience of what really matters and what should be at the heart of all outstanding classrooms. Addressing the needs of teachers and students alike, it will equip everyone who reads it with the intrinsic tools to make lifelong learning a success.

In addition, the book is a valuable CPD guide to help teachers of all levels of experience model positive attitudes and behaviours so that their students can excel and emerge from school with a skill set that will set them up for lifelong success. Jackie offers a multitude of practical advice and easy-to-follow lessons, all crafted to sit alongside the skills identified by the World Economic Forum. Emotional intelligence (EQ), growth mindset and metacognitive strategies are the irrefutable pillars of the book's content, all made so easy for practitioners to access through these well-designed resources.

Overall, *The Complete Learner's Toolkit* is a great addition to any teaching and learning library, and a resource that will surely stand the test of time.

Helen Boyle, Advanced Skills Teacher, Teacher of Religious Studies/Humanities, St Christopher's School, Bahrain

The world is changing and, if we're to solve the problems facing our planet, schools must change too. *The Complete Learner's Toolkit* is the essential companion for teachers and school leaders who are ambitious about a better future for humanity.

Getting good grades is no longer enough; metacognition, mindset and character are essential in developing a purposeful disposition to the world. The ideas set out in this book are infused with the shrewd wisdom born out of Jackie Beere's extensive school experience. Not only do the book's activities help teachers to foster essential and in-demand workplace skills in children, they also make them more confident, empathetic and creative citizens. Being creative means breaking the rules – and finding solutions to complex problems, such as catastrophic global climate change, pandemic control and extreme poverty and violence, requires expert problem solvers.

*The Complete Learner's Toolkit* gives children the confidence to lead, the adaptability to learn and the values and generosity of spirit to make good choices and sensible decisions in life. This book is about no less than human flourishing and encourages every teacher and school leader to harness the enormous power of the next generation on a now-fragile planet and in an increasingly unequal world.

Ian Loynd, Head Teacher, St Teilo's Church in Wales High School

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# Foreword

Like all head teachers, I am always searching for resources that will equip our teachers to deliver the best possible learning experiences to our students. *The Complete Learner's Toolkit* does exactly that, while delivering so much more.

I have had the pleasure of working with Jackie Beere, as we are both Associates of Independent Thinking. I have always admired her philosophy in relation to teaching and learning over the years – that is, putting the students at the heart of teachers' planning, thus responding to their emotional and social needs, which also has a positive impact on their academic achievements.

Jackie is an educator who passionately believes in students developing a growth mindset and a self-belief in themselves as learners. In this book she draws upon the current research available around growth mindset, resilience and communication – and, in a rapidly changing world, these are essential for students to have in order to develop their workplace skills.

As a school that puts values-based education at the heart of its work, the outcomes we desire for our students are centred around the values of respect, responsibility and resilience. Using *The Complete Learner's Toolkit* will enable our teachers to fully explore with students what resilience is and how to develop it as they grow. Each of the lessons builds these skills and enables students to develop a deeper understanding of self and of how to apply their new learning – helping them to thrive and not just survive.

Respect from others emerges once students understand how to respect themselves. The activities in this book are planned to enable students to understand themselves and their relationships with their peers, and to explore the most effective ways in which to learn. Ultimately, we are all responsible for the decisions we make and we want our students to choose what they know is right for them in the different contexts they find themselves. *The Complete Learner's Toolkit* makes students consider ways in which they can build the courage to take necessary risks and be responsible for those choices.

Schools that explicitly teach students to develop a growth mindset reap the rewards when students are faced with challenging situations academically and are able to demonstrate that they can persevere. It also raises achievement in the classroom as students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills improve. *The Complete Learner's Toolkit* takes this understanding even deeper when it teaches students about their

## The Complete Learner's Toolkit

amazing brain. To have some basic understanding of the neuroscience that underpins how we work as humans is powerful for students – and to be able to 'identify parts of the brain', talk about 'neural pathways' with their peers and discuss the work of Piaget, Pavlov and Dweck empowers students to deepen their understanding using accessible language.

Students are naturally curious. By asking the kinds of enquiry questions that feature throughout *The Complete Learner's Toolkit*, it reinforces the idea that asking questions is a strength – and we, as teachers, should be encouraging our students to remain curious about the world they are growing up in. It also empowers pupils to ask such questions when they may feel pressurised by their peers: 'What are we doing?' 'What impact are we having on our community?' 'How will this make us better people?'

If there was one thing I would give as a gift to all students, it would be confidence. So many students are influenced by external pressures, especially through social media. *The Complete Learner's Toolkit* focuses on students gaining an understanding of their emotional intelligence – which, in turn, encompasses self-awareness and self-management skills and, in doing so, builds tolerance and confidence. These are fundamental attributes that can empower students to become the leaders of the future. Everyone is a leader in their own right, and to own confidence in self while understanding and trusting others forms the basis of excellent relationships.

Ultimately, *The Complete Learner's Toolkit* will help shape students' attitudes towards themselves and provide them with a better understanding of how they learn. If the tools and lessons contained within this book are shared effectively and with compassion, then the students of today will be well equipped to make the world of tomorrow a better place to be.

Julie Rees, Head Teacher of Ledbury Primary School

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## Introduction:

# Why this book is essential for our children

We know that schools have a much more important job to do than simply prepare children for exams. This book adds personal development to your curriculum in a powerful and exciting way. It contains 36 lessons which have been devised around the World Economic Forum's projections of essential and in-demand workplace skills for the 2020s.<sup>1</sup> Teaching these skills is necessary if our children are to grow up with the resilience, confidence and communication skills that will help them to thrive in an ever-changing world and workplace. Research shows us that socio-emotional skills have declined in the last 30 years, especially for boys.<sup>2</sup> Further research shows us that children who are taught these skills as part of the curriculum or as discrete courses show improved behaviour and attainment:

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*Treated children become less impulsive, less disruptive, and display less opposition to teachers and parents. In class, treated children become less likely to disturb lessons and more likely to focus on the teaching content.*<sup>3</sup>

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Each lesson in this book can be used as a stand-alone or incorporated into a topic or subject context. The lessons encourage the habits of reflection and metacognition that give children the power to manage their thinking. They also include many practical strategies that will help them maximise their learning potential and improve self-regulation.

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- 1 A. Gray, The 10 Skills You Need to Thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, *World Economic Forum* (19 January 2016). Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-10-skills-you-need-to-thrive-in-the-fourth-industrial-revolution/>.
  - 2 O. Attanasio, R. Blundell, G. Conti and G. Mason, *Inequality in Socioemotional Skills: A Cross-Cohort Comparison*. IFS Working Paper W18/22 (London: Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2018), p. 1. Available at: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/wps/WP201822.pdf>.
  - 3 G. Sorrenti, U. Zöllitz, D. Ribeaud and M. Eisner, *The Causal Impact of Socio-Emotional Skills Training on Educational Success*. IZA Discussion Paper No. 13087 (March 2020), p. 47. Available at: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3562877](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3562877).

# The context for teaching these skills

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**New tasks at work are driving a demand for essential skills that are not always a focus in the curriculum.**

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The world is changing. The skills required to perform most jobs are constantly evolving, as reflected in the World Economic Forum's ever-shifting projections of necessary workplace skills. They have gone through several updates, even as I have been working on this book. I remain confident, however, that the skills targeted in these lessons will be of use to children throughout their lives – in the classroom and beyond it in the world of work and in their daily lives. In three decades of teaching students and teachers, I've seen how the skills identified here have had the most powerful impact on developing outstanding learners. I have witnessed this in students, teachers, myself and my own children. These lessons aim to develop the social skills essential for students to work together in groups and allow them to tap into the synergy found in collaborative learning.

Rapid technological advancement certainly has an influence, but proficiency in new technologies is only one part of the future skills equation. 'Human' skills such as creativity, originality, initiative, critical thinking, persuasion and negotiation are expected to increase in value, as is attention to detail, resilience, flexibility and complex problem solving. Emotional intelligence, leadership and social influence are also set to see a marked increase in importance.<sup>4</sup> Developing these skills will require learners to have confidence, high levels of self-awareness and a mindset that relishes challenge. These skills are most powerful when taught in the context of the knowledge domain so that they are transferred effectively in practical applications every day.

A lot of these lessons focus on how learners think about learning, and about themselves, informed by Carol Dweck's extensive research on growth mindset. She concludes that those who believe that they can grow their intelligence through struggle and effort make more progress.<sup>5</sup> However, the strategies around growth mindset don't provide a single 'magic bullet'. We are all a mixture of growth and fixed mindset, so it is vital to help our students know when to use growth mindset thinking to avoid giving up when facing a learning challenge.

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4 V. S. Ratcheva and T. Leopold, 5 Things to Know About the Future of Jobs, *World Economic Forum* (17 September 2019). Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/09/future-of-jobs-2018-things-to-know/>.  
5 C. Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006).

Jim Collins highlights the importance of having the ‘right people’ on the bus in a business context to make your enterprise a success.<sup>6</sup> He emphasises that being the right person has more to do with character traits than with knowledge or skills. With a growth mindset, we understand that such character traits are not set in stone but can be nurtured and developed.

Children (and adults) with a growth mindset believe that their basic qualities can be developed through dedication and hard work. They believe that struggle equals growth and that effort is the path to mastery. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that I have seen is essential for lifelong success.

The activities in this book will help children become aware of how their thinking influences their mindset, so that change and growth in their emotional intelligence becomes possible. A growth mindset also affords us a level of emotional literacy that enables us to develop useful learning habits such as resilience and self-management. As children develop an acceptance of failure as an essential part of learning, they become the fearless learners they need to be in times of uncertainty.

Teaching about growth mindset – how and, particularly, *when* to use it – creates motivation and raises achievement in the classroom and the staffroom. It turns mistakes into learning experiences and it also enhances wellbeing and relationships. A growth mindset approach is fundamental to developing the skills which the World Economic Forum identifies as essential and on which this book focuses. These are:

- Active learning and learning strategies.
- Complex problem solving.
- Critical thinking.
- Creativity.
- Leadership and social influence.
- Emotional intelligence.
- Judgement and decision making.
- Service orientation.
- Negotiation.
- Cognitive flexibility.<sup>7</sup>

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6 J. Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don't* (London: Random House Business Books, 2001), p. 64.

7 This list is an amalgam of what I see as the most important skills from the World Economic Forum's most recent lists. See Gray, *The 10 Skills You Need to Thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution*; and Ratcheva and Leopold, *5 Things to Know About the Future of Jobs*.

The lessons in this book are for teachers to use with students aged 7–16 (Key Stages 2–4 in England) to help them become aware of their own strengths and personal challenges and give them an insight into how to develop these lifelong learning skills for themselves. This book can be used as a course for the whole class or dipped into when needed with groups or individuals. The bonus is that this resource will not only develop great thinking habits in the young people but also in ourselves. In teaching these lessons, we can learn so much!

## Developing and embedding a learning culture

There is a continuing debate about whether we should teach the skills of how we learn in addition to the content of the curriculum. However, there is no such dispute about the importance of the quality of teaching, and teachers' mindsets, to school improvement. By using this book as an integral toolkit for developing outstanding learning, you can improve learning *and* teaching.

Including lessons on learning skills in the curriculum can help teachers to understand the barriers to learning that some children face. It helps children to develop more strategies for learning in every subject, and supports more independent learning in every lesson. As James Mannion and Kate McAllister discover in their book *Fear is the Mind Killer*, this is especially true for disadvantaged children:

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*there is an abundance of compelling research evidence to suggest that teaching pupils in ways that engage and develop metacognitive and self-regulatory processing leads to demonstrable, statistically significant gains across a range of pupil outcomes.*<sup>8</sup>

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In Sea View, one secondary school cited in the book, learning skills lessons were introduced as a complex intervention across the curriculum. Leaders prioritised a learning skills culture and teachers developed their own crucial skills of self-regulation, metacognition and oracy as part of the whole-school continuing professional

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<sup>8</sup> J. Mannion and K. McAllister, *Fear is the Mind Killer: Why Learning to Learn Deserves Lesson Time – and How to Make It Work for Your Pupils* (Woodbridge: John Catt Educational, 2020), p. 45.

development (CPD), which also helped them to model a learning mindset in their own classrooms.

If you are to deliver a bespoke learning skills curriculum that suits the context of your school, the leadership must back it. In my experience, as a head teacher leading a school which implemented this course, it must be a school-wide priority for the skills to penetrate every aspect of teaching and learning. All staff need to be trained in the skills and their purpose, but there must also be dedicated teachers to deliver discrete lessons in the skills. The teachers who deliver these lessons must not be conscripts but evangelists who have a passion for developing independent learners. This was also the conclusion in the Sea View experience:

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*if you really want your students to become effective, self-regulated learners, you need to provide them with dedicated lessons in which this work can take place.<sup>9</sup>*

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The exciting result of the Sea View project was to transform a school in special measures into one that closed the gap for pupil premium students more effectively than any other school in the region. There were also real gains in GCSE outcomes for all students who experienced learning skills lessons in Key Stage 3:

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*the results followed a very similar pattern to the interim results at the end of Year 9, with statistically significant gains in subject learning among the Learning Skills cohort as a whole, and among students from disadvantaged backgrounds (i.e., those eligible for the PP).<sup>10</sup>*

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To make the most of the material in this book and create the best outcomes for students, teachers should also treat these lessons as personal CPD. Doing so can help them to embed the skills and mindsets which this book promotes in their teaching, and so model them for their students. Teachers can also consider how best to adapt the lessons in this book and how to incorporate the World Economic Forum essential skills within their subject specialisms. In my own experience, teaching these skills to 11- to 14-year-olds made me a much more flexible and successful teacher, achieving outstanding examination results in my subject, and enabling me to become an advanced skills teacher (AST) and eventually a teacher trainer.

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<sup>9</sup> Mannion and McAllister, *Fear is the Mind Killer*, p. 112.

<sup>10</sup> Mannion and McAllister, *Fear is the Mind Killer*, p. 254.

No doubt the debate around skills and knowledge will continue. However, I hope that this book will provide a useful resource that will help students – and teachers – to achieve their true potential.

## A teachers' guide to understanding the skills developed in this book

### Active learning and learning strategies



**Aim:** To help students understand more about how their brains work so that they become more effective learners.

We know that learning changes brains. Learning grows new neural pathways, enabling us to develop new skills and solve problems. If we want our learners to retain new knowledge long term, they need to embed these neural pathways by applying the knowledge in novel situations, using it to problem-solve while enjoying the process. The terminal examinations that currently dominate many curricula require confident mastery and retention of the knowledge, not merely rote learning which is shallow and short term. It is essential that we teach our students how to review their learning, maximise their memory and grow their neural pathways so that they can perform in these examinations and – beyond them – be prepared and able to tackle new challenges.

One of the most important research discoveries about knowledge and memory, according to Peter Brown et al. in *Make It Stick*, is that active retrieval is the most powerful way to strengthen learning.<sup>11</sup> Making a determined effort to recall your knowledge and test yourself on it works. And the more challenging the test, the more beneficial the impact, so struggling to remember and working very hard at it really does grow your brainpower. By finding out more about how their brains work in these lessons, students will understand how important it is to persist in finding strategies that will increase their ability and potential.

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<sup>11</sup> P. Brown, H. Roediger and M. McDaniel, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 59.



When learning is harder, it's stronger and lasts longer.

Peter Brown et al.<sup>12</sup>

Discovering how their brains work will encourage our students to see that they need to use it or lose it! Research by Stanislas Dehaene, professor of experimental cognitive psychology at the Collège de France, suggests that a baby's brain is far from a blank slate: it is, in fact, a sophisticated structure with its own innate language of thought.<sup>13</sup> Education hones our abilities, and improvements in learning rely on attention, active engagement, error, feedback and sleep, among other things. These lessons encourage active learning and raise awareness of strategies that will help motivate students and stimulate brainpower. Dehaene suggests that 'no dyslexia or dyscalculia is so strong as to be beyond the reach of rehabilitation', because of the amazing power of brain plasticity.<sup>14</sup> This means we should never underestimate children's ability to learn. The most important message for our students is that we all have truly amazing brains – and that learning fuels our brainpower – so the harder we work, the smarter we become.



Metacognition – the ability to know oneself, to self-evaluate, to mentally simulate what would happen if we acted this way or that way – plays a fundamental role in human learning. The opinions we form of ourselves help us progress or, in some cases, lock us into a vicious circle of failure.

Stanislas Dehaene<sup>15</sup>

In addition, Part 1 will help you to help develop students' personal wellbeing by getting them to understand why they become emotional, frustrated, angry or excited. These lessons help students to develop metacognition as a habit that will create natural resilience. As John Hattie stresses, 'Resilience is the ability to react to adversity, challenge, tension, or failure in an adaptive and productive manner.'<sup>16</sup> It is an essential quality for learning and for life.

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12 Brown, Roediger and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, p. 9.

13 S. Dehaene, *How We Learn: The New Science of Education and the Brain* (London: Allen Lane, 2020), p. 82.

14 Dehaene, *How We Learn*, p. 82.

15 Dehaene, *How We Learn*, p. 22.

16 J. Hattie, *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 59.

## Complex problem solving



**Aim:** To remind students that they are natural problem solvers and that there are many ways to tackle any problems they face in their learning.

According to Mike Berners-Lee, we have created an ever more complicated and complex world, demanding a challenging mix of interdependency and technical mastery.<sup>17</sup> However, we are born problem solvers. Children are experts at solving problems. As infants, they solved the problem of how to get fed, talk, walk and adapt to life. They did it through playing, watching, listening, copying, practising and learning how to learn, showing that we – as a species – are natural problem solvers who can follow our instincts to work out what to do next.

What gets in the way of this innate ability later in life is getting stuck in our own thinking. We begin to feel uncomfortable when we start to compare our performance with that of others – and judge ourselves against them – instead of staying in the moment. Frustration, confusion and mistakes are an important part of problem solving but they will stop us making progress if we see encountering them as evidence of our limitations or weaknesses, rather than as a source of information that will help us make progress. These lessons remind us that solving complex problems is an adventure that involves improvisation, experimentation, repetition, feedback and, again, that to struggle is to grow.

In the foreseeable future, humanity's challenges will include complex problems such as global warming, ocean acidification, mass migration, water shortages, nuclear proliferation, political instability, pandemic control, internet insecurity and an aging population (to name only a few!) – all of which will need to be tackled using a wealth of problem-solving skills.

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<sup>17</sup> M. Berners-Lee, *There Is No Planet B: A Handbook for the Make or Break Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 189.

## Critical thinking



**Aim:** To help students realise and practise how to think and reflect objectively so that they can make good judgements.

Critical thinking is a crucial skill for achieving success at school and at work in later life. It involves observing, analysing, assessing and evaluating evidence in an objective, open-minded manner. It also asks that we cultivate a sense of curiosity that is always willing to ask questions. This skill will be developed in all the lessons in this book, but these particular lessons and activities in Part 3 will focus on sharpening children's abilities in this area, so that they can recognise and use this powerful tool for learning.

Socratic questioning is at the heart of critical thinking. Using open questions in the classroom and for homework helps deepen students' understanding and helps embed knowledge. In addition, developing the habit of critical thinking will help your students grow up to be open-minded and willing to listen to both sides of an argument before making up their minds. This could be a recipe for a less divided society!

In *There Is No Planet B*, Mike Berners-Lee concludes that we need to develop new thinking to ensure our survival on planet Earth. This includes global empathy, which means becoming more aware of our wider impact on others as our 'daily lives affect those on the other side of the world'.<sup>18</sup> Developing a critical thinking perspective will help our future citizens to stand back from their personal needs and consider the wider implications of their lifestyles.

It is crucially important for our students to be able to discern who and what to trust in our current world of fake news and self-curated imagery. Critical thinking will give them the ability to discern fact from fiction in an 'increasingly complex media and political sea of claim and counterclaim'.<sup>19</sup> If we can develop this skill in the next generation in schools, democracy stands more chance of being protected from corruption.

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<sup>18</sup> Berners-Lee, *There Is No Planet B*, p. 186.

<sup>19</sup> Berners-Lee, *There Is No Planet B*, p. 189.

## Creativity



**Aim:** To make students consider ways in which they can have the courage to take necessary risks to find new ways of thinking.

Creativity develops new thinking, leading to different approaches and novel ways of doing things, solving problems and finding new answers. It takes courage to be creative because as we grow older, we get used to doing things in ways that make us feel comfortable. We become creatures of habit, with the tendency to sit in the same places, read the same newspapers, listen to the same style of music and have similar friends with similar hobbies.

To step out of this comfort zone and become more creative involves taking a risk. Being creative means breaking the rules – innovating, finding new solutions and pushing back the boundaries. This takes courage and confidence as it could go wrong. These lessons encourage children to be brave and to create new experiences and new thinking – habitually.



If you don't embrace the fact that you think about the world in different ways, you severely limit your chances of finding the person that you were meant to be.

Ken Robinson<sup>20</sup>

Creativity can be a risky business: that's why it's linked to resilience. We all have our comfort zones, and they mould our behaviours until they become habits. Students also like to stay in their comfort zones, but we can help them get comfortable with pushing the boundaries. They need to work with a variety of different people, enjoy the challenges and opportunities presented by new experiences and new thinking. To do this, we may have to accept that we, as teachers, must be the creative role models, as Andrew Morrish suggests:

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<sup>20</sup> K. Robinson with L. Aronica, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 49.

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training in the latest strategies for learning, developing  
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