

*Learning to Learn*  
*Making Learning Work*  
*for All Students*

**Garry Burnett**

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**CAMPAIGN  
FOR LEARNING**



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# *Teacher's Introduction*

For some reason unknown to me, I have great difficulty seeing 'Magic Eye' pictures. The first time I ever came across one, on a balmy evening in Mousehole, near St Ives, I remember spending a conspicuously embarrassing amount of time squinting and pulling faces at what looked to me to be a swirling porridge of patterns and colour, trying to conjure up the picture of leaping dolphins my son assured me was there all the time. "You aren't looking at it the right way. You need special vision," he reassured me. But I couldn't see anything at first except perhaps an Emperor's New Suit of Clothes, squinting and laughing back at me from the gift shop on the quayside. Once the picture finally shimmered into view though, it stayed for a long time. It was difficult to believe I couldn't see it in the first place, a beautiful collage of colour and light with three silver-blue dolphins dancing in a palpitating sea.

Ironically, this book is driven predominantly by a 'special' vision and is quite an eclectic mix of ideas and information drawn from all sorts of sometimes 'unlikely' sources. Malet Lambert School Language College has, as its mission statement, "We believe in 100% success for all", a statement of intent which was written to underpin a quite radical vision for raising standards in both the school and its wider community. The principle thrust of this vision has been to examine the nature and characteristics of effective learning in order that we might increase the motivation and efficacy of children in this process.



Some of the most inspirational areas of educational research in recent years have been in the development of strategies for improving thinking and learning and in the understanding of intelligence and cognitive neuroscience. Advances in cerebral imaging technology have allowed scientists to discover the biological processes that occur in the brain when human beings solve problems, act and think creatively, and make memories. It is now possible to understand more completely what kinds of conditions in the classroom are likely to produce successful learning, which preferred styles of learning children operate in and the

'brain-friendly' ways of accessing and developing different forms of intelligence as they manifest in the various talents youngsters display. The recently published National Curriculum 'Citizenship' orders (*Excellence in Schools*, DfES/QCA 1999) stress that children should "use their imaginations to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express and explain views that are not their own" (KS3: Developing skills of participation and responsible action). In other words, children should have the crucial interpersonal skill of empathy that features prominently in emotional intelligence.

Much of this vital information has been translated into the 'Learning to Learn' curriculum presented here. Through it, children will be taught motivational strategies such as making affirmations for success, risk-taking and comfort zones, anchoring positive states of mind using Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques, benchmarking successful people and emotional intelligence. They will explore the theories of Professor Howard Gardner on multiple intelligences and, using a specially written computer programme, learn about their own intelligence profile and preferred learning style based on visual, auditory and kinesthetic modes of representation. They will also learn about the most divinely complex organism in the universe, the human brain. All of these concepts and information will challenge children to think and then reflect metacognitively on the processes they themselves use when faced with new learning situations.

The most important aspect of 'Learning to Learn' is how well children understand the significance of *transferring* how and what they have learnt into different contexts. Knowing, for example, that you possess strong musical intelligence is of little consequence unless you know how to *utilise* that strength to learn effectively in other areas. Opportunities for transfer and generalisation are suggested in the lesson guidance for each chapter, as is the importance of the plenary in mediating this. The empowering of children with knowledge about this process and the theoretical foundation that underpins it can result in the creation of a dynamic dialogue about learning on a far more sophisticated level than might previously have been possible, as well as giving responsibility for the management of 'own learning' firmly back to the learner.

A model for planning lessons that works consistently with these theories is described later in this chapter through a template for an 'Effective Learning Structure'. This is just one model that follows a pattern for learning and review, which I feel is crucial to the assimilation and transfer of new knowledge and skills (an issue which, in itself, could be the subject of a fascinating book). I hope colleagues will experiment with its usage in subject areas as well in the planning of their own 'Learning to Learn' lessons.

In UK schools threshold assessment and performance management do make accountability for effective learning and pupil progress a crucial issue, and appropriate professional development for staff is an essential element of the course's successful delivery.

### *Learning to Learn, Citizenship and 'Inclusion'*

Much of the DfES/QCA guidance on inclusion points to the application of Learning to Learn concepts in order to achieve successful and well-differentiated

learning in classrooms. Examples cited in these orders include:

**B. Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs (P.18–21)**

- 3a Creating effective learning environments
- 3b Securing motivation and concentration *including* using teaching approaches appropriate to different learning styles and varying subject content and presentation so that it matches different learning needs
- 3c Providing equality of opportunity through teaching approaches
- 3d Setting targets for learning, including 'help pupils develop self-esteem and confidence in their ability to learn'.

(National Curriculum 'Citizenship' orders, *Excellence in Schools*, DfES/QCA 1999, 'Inclusion', Sections 3a–3d)

Colleagues who are interested in pursuing research into new developments in learning research might contact Bill Lucas or Toby Greany at the Campaign for Learning, or any of the twenty-four CFL schools nationally which are involved in piloting strategies aimed at validating accelerated learning approaches. Early results processed by MORI on 'Learning to Learn in Schools', the three-year pilot study, show high levels of motivation and improved attainment in schools where these approaches are used and, in qualitative terms, a huge strengthening of pupils' versatility as learners. I would recommend Bill Lucas's excellent book *Power Up Your Mind* to all educationalists as it represents for me the kind of rational and discerning insight I seek most in my own research.

I was most keen that this book should *not do* two things:

First, that it should not be a self-proclaimed quick-fix programme for all – a kind of 'E's to A's overnight' panacea, full of preposterous and exaggerated claims that ultimately serve merely to trivialise serious academic research.

Second, that it should not be followed blindly. I intend that it be written (and received) in the spirit of excited but cautious enquiry. I have developed this 'Learning to Learn' curriculum over many years with the help of feedback from many staff and pupils, most of which has been very kind and supportive, though I am certain that the many talented and creative teachers who customise, adapt and embellish these lessons will, quite appropriately, personalise them in order to address the needs of the pupils they teach. I am also aware that there are probably many other things I could have included that are perfectly relevant to this field of study and would yield an equally productive Learning to Learn experience. But this foundation course is a selection of ideas and materials that seem to me to make a coherent and interesting programme for colleagues to teach and for children to enjoy learning from. Being an English teacher I have inevitably chosen many examples and illustrations from narrative, poetry, language and literacy and I realise that for some people this might represent a limitation or even an irritation. But I do believe that the examples are good ones and that children will enjoy reading them and completing the activities in order to assimilate the concepts, skills and knowledge that they teach.

Immediate, positive, success-affirming prose feedback on all that the children write, say and do in these lessons is part of the magic required to inspire and transform self-esteem and aspirations. As children reach a developmental stage where image and personal identity seem to matter more to them than material

rewards, idiosyncratic praise for their achievements through feedback becomes even more crucial to their developing sense of self and in turn self-esteem. Advice for follow-up and feedback on the learning-styles questionnaire is also an important feature of the CD programme.

'Learning to Learn' is, I suppose, in essence exploring aspects of self-'hood' that in turn introduce new ways of looking at learning, new ways of responding and assimilating, new ways of accommodating and being flexible with information, new ways of perception and representation. And although this book does not pretend to offer any more than just ways to make a good start in this process, I hope that these are ways that, like those Magic Eye kaleidoscope collages, will only need to be glimpsed once before learning, achievement and aspiration are never quite the same again.

**Garry Burnett, Advanced Skills Teacher, Malet Lambert School, Hull**

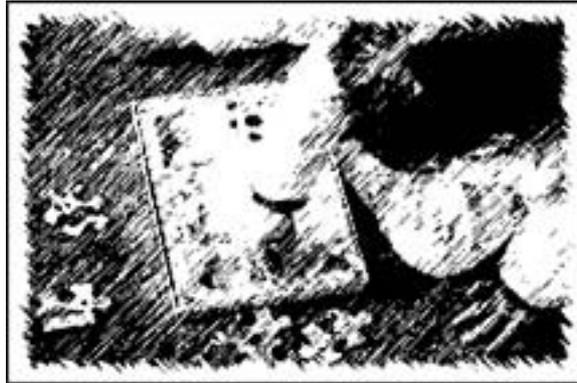
## ***Purpose of the Course: Objectives***

Pupils will:

1. develop a positive attitude to learning and be encouraged to believe that they can be successful;
2. develop high self-esteem and self-worth and learn how to relate this to target-setting and affirmations;
3. develop thinking skills and demonstrate how these can be transferred across the curriculum;
4. identify their own learning style and illustrate how new ideas can be explored to cater for this individual learning style;
5. gain knowledge of some of the latest research into the function of the brain in learning and how to work, where possible, with the brain's most natural style of learning;
6. understand the concept of 'multiple intelligences' and how to work with a multi-modal approach to learning new information and skills;
7. become more skilled and resourceful at learning independently in any situation;
8. learn effective ways to improve memory and recall;
9. learn strategies to make learning more effective;
10. learn strategies to make learning more fun.

# **Chapter One**

## ***It's All in the Mind***



### ***Learning to Learn: The Big Picture***

The purpose of this course is to help you gain learning super-fitness. We want to improve your ability to learn in any new situation and for you to feel confident and motivated to achieve this. The activities and materials included here are designed to make you think about the way you think and learn. As you look back on each of these lessons, try to see how you could use what you have learnt in other learning situations. This is called 'transfer' and your teacher will be seeking ways to help you understand the importance of this process.

During this course you will learn about:

- Motivation
- Thinking positively
- Breaking down barriers to achievement
- Thinking *you can*
- Comfort zones – how to expand your mind and your confidence
- Making affirmations for success
- Using music and movement to help anchor positive states of mind
- Benchmarking successful people
- Finding inspiration
- Tenacity – not giving up
- How to use your brain power to learn and remember more effectively
- How to build a healthier learning brain
- Improving strategies for memory
- Mindmapping
- Types of intelligence
- Understanding your own learning style

Have fun and enjoy 'Learning to Learn'.

## ***Kinds of Motivation: Intrinsic and Extrinsic***

Some things we have to do. Some things we are expected to do. Some things we are told to do. Being 'motivated' means *wanting* to do something. People are often more motivated when they receive some kind of reward. Sometimes, the reason people have for doing something is to achieve their own satisfaction or pleasure. Lots of people have hobbies and interests that they do with great dedication even though no one has asked or told them to.



Think of times when you have been rewarded in some way for what you have done. The reward could have been a certificate, a prize, a sweet or even money! It could have been your own pleasure or the receipt of praise from someone you respect. In other words, what do you get out of it? An important motivating state of mind is when you realise 'what's in it for you', what you will get out of it personally, or in terms of a material reward. *Motivation* might be categorised broadly in the following ways:

*Intrinsic* where the reason you have to do your best is inside, it is for you.

*Extrinsic* where the reason is 'material' or outside, it is for the prize or reward.

*Discuss* some of the following situations. What motivates you?

- Playing for a school team
- Doing your hobby (dancing, sport, drama, collecting etc.)
- Doing your homework
- Helping out in the home (doing dishes, tidying up, doing errands etc.)
- Watching your favourite programme on the television
- Beating your best score on your computer game
- Doing your paper round or a job to earn pocket money

Is the motivation in each of these cases intrinsic or extrinsic? Or possibly both? Make a list of different things you do in a typical week and decide whether they are extrinsically or intrinsically motivated.

| Task/activity | Extrinsic | Intrinsic |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|
|               |           |           |

*Chapter Eleven*  
*A Cage With Stout Bars?*



**The Red Cockatoo**  
Sent as a present from Annam  
A Red Cockatoo  
Coloured like the peach blossom  
Speaking with the speech of men  
And they did what they always do  
To the learned and the eloquent  
They took a cage with stout bars  
And they shut it up inside.

(Po Chu'I, 8th century, translated by Arthur Waley)

## ***Thinking About Learning***

### ***Kinds of Learning: 'KUS'***

- |                      |   |                      |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|
| <b>Knowledge</b>     | - | Memorising something |
| <b>Understanding</b> | - | Concepts             |
| <b>Skills</b>        | - | Doing something      |



In pairs, try to categorise the following learning experiences into one of the three kinds of learning in the table. For each learning experience, place a tick in the column that most applies to it – i.e. under the kind of learning that you would use to learn that particular experience.

For example, if you think that learning the number of days in a year is mostly a ‘memorising’ exercise, then place a tick in that column.

Discuss each learning experience with your partner first. Some might fit into more than one column!

What does this tell us about the kind of learning that takes place in the many different subjects we study at school?

*You should work in pairs and discuss your answers.*

| <b>LEARNING EXPERIENCE</b>                                       | <b>K</b> | <b>U</b> | <b>S</b> |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. The number of days in a year                                  |          |          |          |
| 2. How to make a spaghetti bolognese                             |          |          |          |
| 3. Why Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries                      |          |          |          |
| 4. The names of nine Roman Emperors                              |          |          |          |
| 5. The date of the first manned landing on the moon              |          |          |          |
| 6. How to play badminton correctly                               |          |          |          |
| 7. How to read a map   |          |          |          |
| 8. The causes of the First World War                             |          |          |          |
| 9. How to give an effective public speech                        |          |          |          |
| 10. Why the Catholics wanted to get rid of the Cathars in France |          |          |          |
| 11. The name of England's last ten prime ministers               |          |          |          |
| 12. Why <i>The Simpsons</i> is a popular TV programme            |          |          |          |
| 13. The names of the kings and queens of England                 |          |          |          |
| 14. How to play the piano  |          |          |          |
| 15. The history of Blues music in the USA                        |          |          |          |

## *Questions*

Now answer these questions in your exercise book:

1. How many of these experiences involved ticking more than one category?
2. What does this tell us about different types of learning?
3. Do you think there is a most 'important' kind of learning? If so, what is it? Why do you think so?
4. Which kind of learning would you say is the easiest for you?
5. Which kind of learning would you say is the most difficult for you?
6. Do you think different kinds of learning require different approaches and skills? What are they?

## 1. LINGUISTIC Intelligence

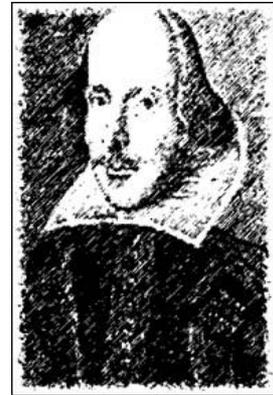
“Cursive writing does not mean what I think it means”  
(Bart Simpson)

This is the intelligence that is all about ‘language’. Lawyers, poets, novelists, scriptwriters, journalists, comedians and all those who use language in their occupation usually have strong linguistic intelligence. They are good at using language to entertain, describe, persuade and instruct. They might be skilled at word-games, drama, improvisational comedy, talking or storytelling. They might be interested in foreign languages and find language learning relatively easy. All sorts of wordplay will fascinate them, as well as jokes, jingles, rhymes and puns.

### Linguistic intelligence stars

(You might like to find out more about these people using the Internet.)

William Shakespeare, Dylan Thomas, Winston Churchill, J. K. Rowling, Richard Curtis, Ben Elton, Victoria Wood, Maureen Lipman, Maya Angelou



### Ten ways to use or develop your linguistic intelligence

1. Play or devise word-games, anagrams, crosswords, Scrabble etc.
2. Use a library/bookshop/second-hand shop. Read at least one book a week.
3. Use one new word every day (vocabulary building). Start with ‘ambivalent’.
4. Memorise a famous poem so that you could recite it aloud.
5. Listen to recordings of great readers performing ‘classics’ as a change from music.
6. Listen to good storytellers and try repeating their stories to your friends.
7. Get a thesaurus and use it regularly to improve your vocabulary.
8. Read a range of different writing (not just computer magazines or Harry Potter books, as good as they are!).
9. Keep a response journal and write your own reviews to films, books and CDs you have read, seen or listened to. Keep a diary for a month.
10. Try writing in the style of different writers, e.g. Dylan Thomas, Ernest Hemingway, Wendy Cope, Ted Hughes, Mark Twain, Harper Lee.

**“Garry Burnett’s inspirational book, *Learning to Learn*, shows how to embed a whole series of skills into the classroom that will last students a lifetime. He makes it simple – but the outcome of self-motivated, self-managed pupils is surely the purpose of true education. If you buy one book on professional development this year – make it this. It will make the difference in the difference you make.”**

Colin Rose, author of *Accelerated Learning* and *CHAMPS*

User-friendly, interactive, accessible and practical, *Learning to Learn* brings science and brain theory pioneered in the past few decades to the arena of teaching and learning. Garry Burnett leads us through a compelling process of finding the best learning strategies for each individual – a process that involves using the two sides of the brain and that draws on every aspect of the learning experience. Each unit has detailed teacher plans, providing a structured, effective learning cycle that will:

- utilise a range of learning styles with visual, auditory and kinesthetic inputs;
- exercise a variety of thinking skills;
- address the development of the Multiple Intelligences.

An exciting and enjoyable resource for teachers and parents, this book comes with a **free audio CD of stories**. Recommended to those eager to try out new ideas and wanting the best possible results, *Learning to Learn* will revolutionise your teaching approach, and aid in the development of confident and resourceful learners. **Suitable for ages 11–14/Key Stage 3.**

**“Garry is one of those committed and inspirational teachers who any parent would want to teach their child.”**

Bill Lucas, author of *Discover Your Hidden Talents*



Photo courtesy of *Hull Daily Mail*

**Garry Burnett** has spent over twenty years working in Yorkshire schools as head of English, LEA advisor and project leader for *Learning to Learn – Research and Development*. He is currently an Advanced Skills Teacher at Malet Lambert School, Hull. He is actively involved in the national *Campaign for Learning* and regularly leads training sessions at local, national and international level.



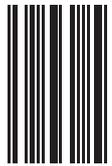
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