

How Might we Monitor the Development of Learning Dispositions?

Using reliable external research to create indicators and tools to show growth

by Peter Burrows, EdPartnerships International, 2015

Research Source: Professor Guy Claxton, Bristol University

These descriptions of the powerful learner can be used to underwrite a variety of tools and prompts: a self-report questionnaire; an observation schedule for use by teachers, students and researchers; a basis for identifying linguistic prompts and nudges that can be used by teachers and coaches to develop each disposition. *(EXAMPLES FOLLOW)*

The 16 characteristics below are based on both research in the learning sciences, and teachers' judgements about the 'habits of mind'. Taken together, they seem to describe the mindset of a 'powerful learner' in a way that many teachers find both plausible and fruitful.

RESILIENCE – emotional strength

1. **Inquisitive:** has a questioning and positive attitude to learning.
2. **Persistent:** stays determined, positive and patient in the face of difficulty or mistakes.
3. **Adventurous:** willing to risk and 'have a go'; up for a new challenge.
4. **Focused:** observant, concentrates well, ignores distractions, becomes engrossed.

RESOURCEFULNESS – cognitive capability

5. **Imaginative:** comes up with creative ideas and possibilities; visualises.
6. **Connecting:** looks for links and relationships; likes to 'hook things up'; uses metaphor.
7. **Crafting:** keen to work on improving products; practising and developing skills.
8. **Capitalising:** makes good use of resources, tools and materials.

REFLECTION – strategic awareness

9. **Methodical:** well-organised; thinks things through carefully.
10. **Self-evaluative:** makes honest and accurate judgements about 'how it's going'.
11. **Self-aware:** knows their own strengths, styles and interests as a learner.
12. **Transferring:** looks for other applications and lessons for the future.

RELATING – social sophistication

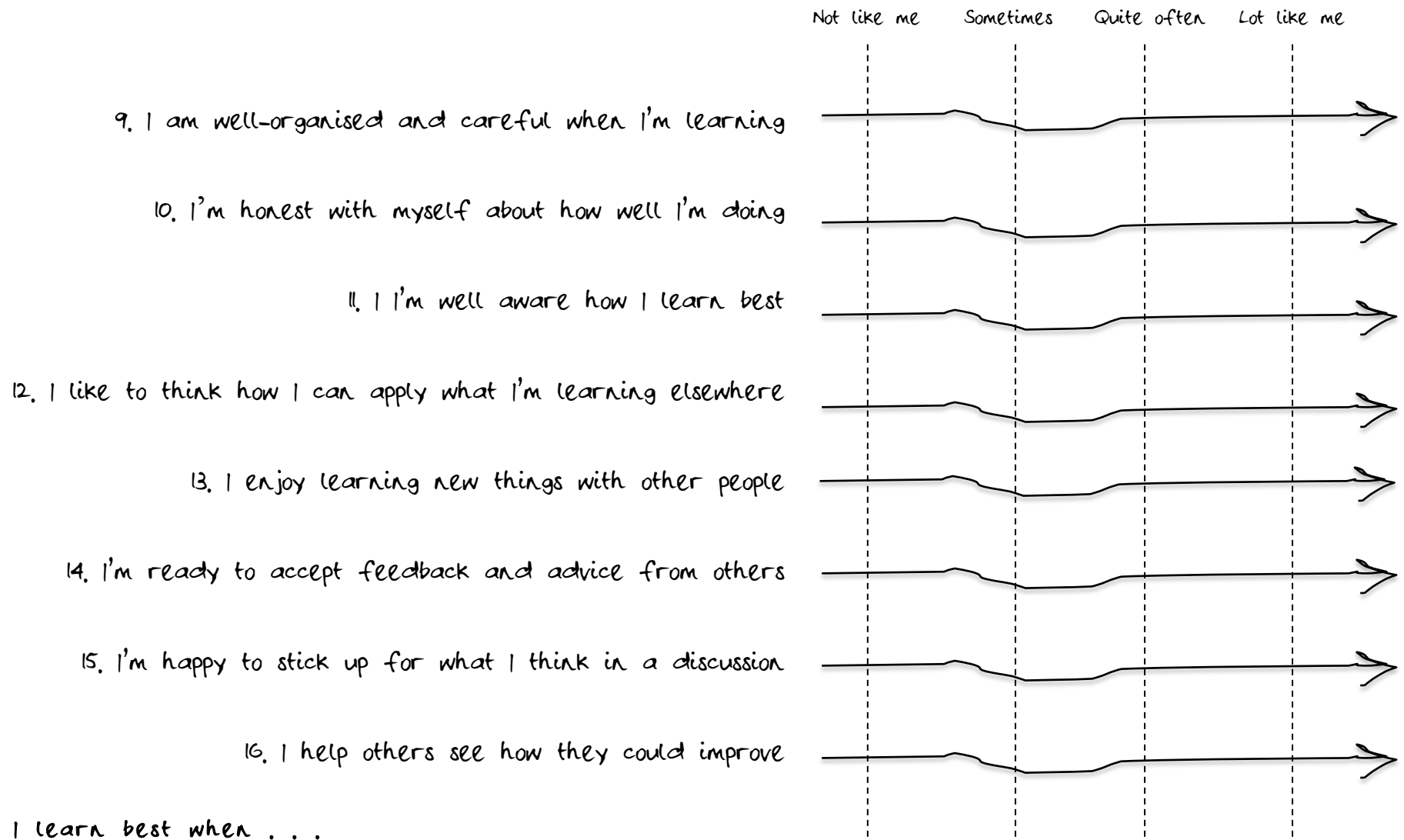
13. **Collaborative:** a good team-player; helps groups to work well together.
14. **Open-minded:** asks for, listens to and makes good use of information, feedback and advice.
15. **Independent:** able to 'stand their ground'; shows initiative.
16. **Empathic:** understands others; offers helpful feedback and suggestions; receptive and imitative.

LEARNING POWER QUESTIONS

Name: _____

These questions will help me to find out how you see yourself when you are trying to do things that are new or difficult. There are 16 statements. Look at each one and think how true this is of you when you are learning new things. This includes things you are learning for your own interest out of school, as well as in lessons. Of course we all vary, but try to choose the answer that is closest to you in general. **(Put a \times on each arrow line that is most like you.)**

	Not like me	Sometimes	Quite often	Lot like me
1. I think I can learn most things if I try	----- ----- ----- ----->			
2. I'll stick at something difficult till I've got it	----- ----- ----- ----->			
3. I'm willing to have a go at something new	----- ----- ----- ----->			
4. I get completely absorbed when I'm trying to master new things	----- ----- ----- ----->			
5. My brain comes up with lots of creative ideas	----- ----- ----- ----->			
6. I like making links between things in my head	----- ----- ----- ----->			
7. I enjoy working on improving what I've done	----- ----- ----- ----->			
8. I make good use of things around me to help me learn	----- ----- ----- ----->			



LEARNING POWER OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

Student Name:

Record the extent to which this student displays this learning disposition, based on your observations. **DOT AND DATE** your record.

L E A R N I N G D I S P O S I T I O N

Rarely Occasionally Quite often Frequently

1. **Inquisitive:** generally shows a questioning and positive attitude to learning.



2. **Persistent:** stays determined and positive in the face of difficulty or mistakes.



3. **Adventurous:** is willing to risk and 'have a go' when facing a new challenge.



4. **Focused:** concentrates, ignores distractions, and quickly becomes engrossed.



5. **Imaginative:** easily comes up with creative ideas and possibilities.



6. **Connecting:** looks for links and relationships, likes to 'hook things up'.



7. **Crafting:** is keen to work hard on improving products and developing skills.

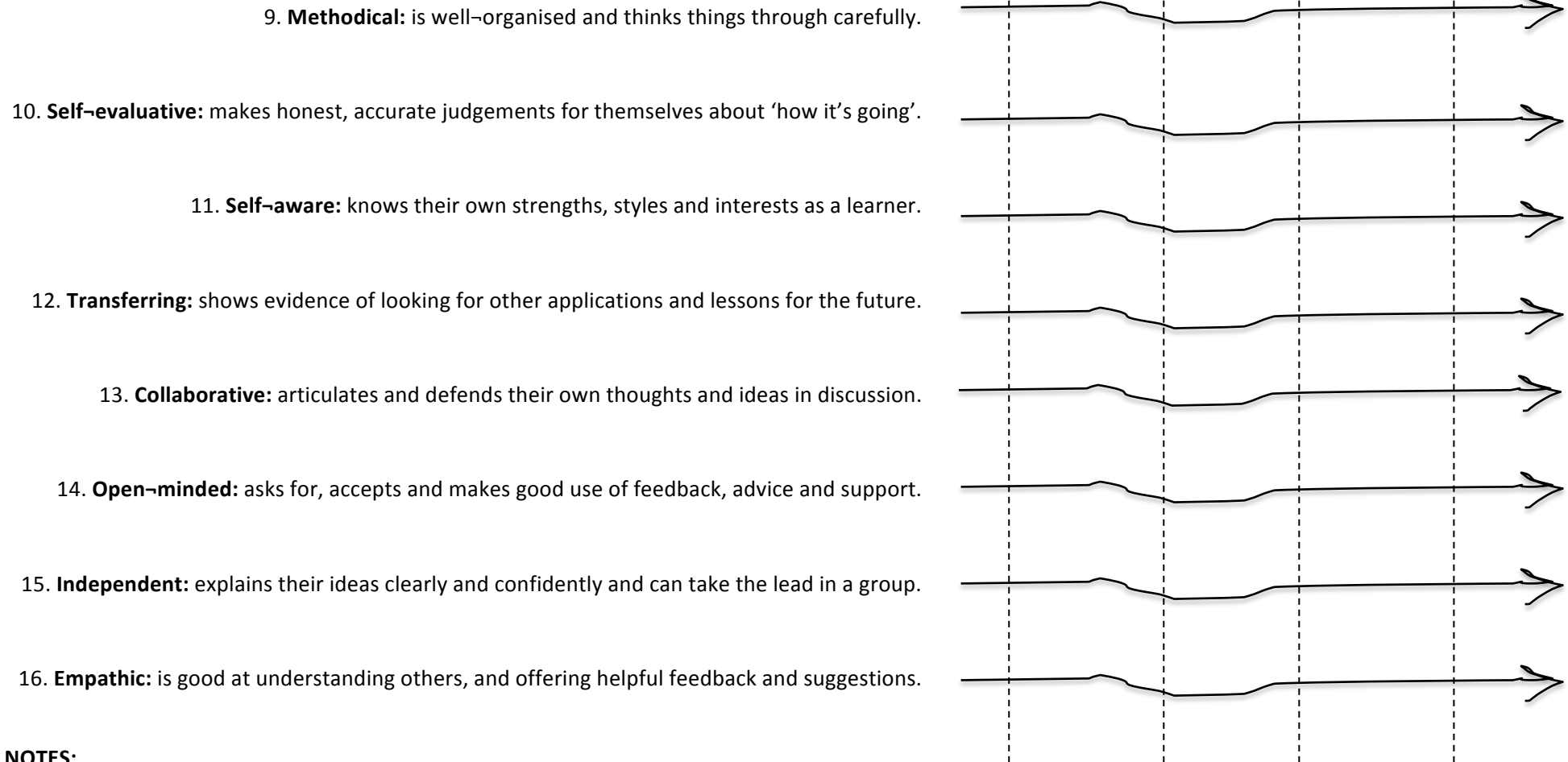


8. **Capitalising:** makes good use of resources, tools and materials to support their learning.



LEARNING DISPOSITION

Rarely Occasionally Quite often Frequently



Additional sources of information and inspiration

Additional sources of information and inspiration for what Guy Claxton calls 'expansive education' can be found in **at least** the following publications:

Claxton G. 2014 'School as an Epistemic Apprenticeship: The Case of Building Learning Power' 32nd Vernon Wall Lecture to the Education Section of British Psychological Society
<http://tinyurl.com/qggvydq>

Claxton G. 2002 'Building Learning Power: Helping Young People Become Better Learners, TLO Ltd, London.

Claxton G. and **Lucas B.** 2015 'Educating Ruby: What Our Children Really Need to Learn', Crown House Publishing, London.

See also: <http://www.educatingruby.org>

Resources from the Learning Power website: <http://www.buildinglearningpower.co.uk>

Ritchhart R. and **Perkins D.** 2008 'Making Thinking Visible', Educational Leadership, Volume 65 | Number 5, pp 57-61 http://www.ronritchhart.com/Papers_files/MTV_ritchhart_perkins.pdf

Resources from the Visible Thinking website: <http://tinyurl.com/plqkp39>

Costa A. and **Kallick B.** 2009 'Habits of Mind Across the Curriculum: Practical and Creative Strategies for Teachers', Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, Alexandria

Dweck, C. 2012 'Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential', Ballantine Books, New York

Hart S. 2005 'Learning Without Limits', Open University Press, New York

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