

POWERING UP CHILDREN

**The Learning Power Approach
to Primary Teaching**

Guy Claxton and Becky Carlzon

Foreword by Ron Berger



Crown House Publishing Limited
www.crownhouse.co.uk

First published by

Crown House Publishing

Crown Buildings, Bancyfelin, Carmarthen, Wales, SA33 5ND, UK

www.crownhouse.co.uk

and

Crown House Publishing Company LLC

PO Box 2223, Williston, VT 05495, USA

www.crownhousepublishing.com

© Guy Claxton and Becky Carlzon, 2019

The rights of Guy Claxton and Becky Carlzon to be identified as the authors of this work have been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Cover image © Brian Jackson – fotolia.com.

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under current legislation no part of this work may be photocopied, stored in a retrieval system, published, performed in public, adapted, broadcast, transmitted, recorded or reproduced in any form or by any means, without the prior permission of the copyright owners. Enquiries should be addressed to Crown House Publishing Limited.

Pages 104–105, Figure 4.1 © Prospect Primary School. Used with kind permission. Page 135, Figure 5.1 © Gemma Goldenberg, Sandringham School. Used with kind permission. Page 159, extract © Curtis, Matt (2017). Transforming fixed mindsets towards maths, *Talking Maths* [blog] (6 January). Available at: <https://talkingmathsblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/06/transforming-fixed-mindsets-towards-maths>. Used with kind permission. Pages 175–176, Figure 6.1 © Peter Hyman, executive head teacher, School 21. Used with kind permission. Page 177, Figure 6.2 © Voice 21 and the University of Cambridge. Used with kind permission. Pages 182–183, Figure 6.3 © Becky Carlzon, Nicola Suddaby and Andy Moor, building on Maryl Chambers. Used with kind permission. Pages 267–268, Figure 9.1 © St Bernard's RC Primary School. Used with kind permission.

Quotes from Ofsted and Department for Education documents used in this publication have been approved under an Open Government Licence. Please see: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>.

Crown House Publishing has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

First published 2019.

All trademarks depicted within this book, including trademarks appearing as part of a screenshot, figure, or other image, are included solely for the purpose of illustration and are the property of their respective holders. The use of the trademarks in no way indicates any relationship with, or endorsement by, the holders of said trademarks.

Note from the publisher: The authors have provided video and web content throughout the book that is available to you through QR (quick response) codes. To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue entry for this book is available from the British Library.

Print ISBN: 978-178583337-3

Mobi ISBN: 978-178583381-6

ePub ISBN: 978-178583382-3

ePDF ISBN: 978-178583383-0

LCCN 2018961111

Printed and bound in the UK by

TJ International, Padstow, Cornwall

For Dr Teo, who gave Becky her life back.

Foreword by Ron Berger

All educators and families agree on this, and research consistently affirms it: the character of children has a profound effect on their academic and life success. Students who are respectful, responsible, courageous, and compassionate do better in school and life. Students who show determination and resilience in their learning, who have high standards for craftsmanship in what they do, are better equipped for everything that comes their way.

Remarkably, many schools feel that they cannot focus on these skills and habits during the school day because there is just not enough time. They see time in school as a trade-off: we can focus on academic learning to prepare for exams – the measure of our accountability – or we can focus on cultivating student character. Given limited time, character must be put aside. The irony is that these things are not separate. Focusing on character at the same time as academics builds students who are stronger at both. They work together: the dispositions that make students good and effective human beings also make them successful learners. We don't need to choose.

In *Powering Up Children: The Learning Power Approach to Primary Teaching*, Guy Claxton and Becky Carlzon bring together a vision, models, and resources to help primary teachers build classrooms where “learning dispositions” are explicitly cultivated in concert with academic skills and content. This book provides a framework for a “learning-powered classroom” and fleshes out that framework with concrete strategies and models that primary teachers can put to use right away. In every chapter I found myself nodding in affirmation: this is how a classroom should be.

All teachers understand that the biggest determinant to student success lives in each student themselves: how committed and determined they are to succeed; how much confidence and clarity they have in order to improve; what strategies they have in order to move forward. We often mistakenly attribute a student's strengths in this realm to innate qualities or family background – a student is either motivated or not – it is an individual issue. In truth, we adjust to the cultures we enter. If a school or classroom community expects more of students, challenges them and supports them

more deeply, believes in their capacity and refuses to let them drift, students behave entirely differently. They step up. We can create classroom cultures, school cultures, of high standards and success for all students.

Powering Up Children describes what a classroom culture of high standards for academics and learning dispositions can look like, and uses models and stories to make that clear. It provides instructional strategies and templates that teachers can use, and, just as importantly, coaches teachers to move beyond a teacher-centric classroom to one in which students take significant responsibility for their own learning. It supports teachers to gradually release responsibility to students to set goals, critique their own and each other's work, and to reflect on their challenges and growth.

Students are capable of much greater things than we imagine. *Powering Up Children* is an excellent guide to building schools and classrooms that empower teachers to challenge and support children more deeply, to believe in them more authentically, and to bring out their best as scholars, citizens, and human beings.

Ron Berger, Chief Academic Officer, EL Education

Acknowledgements

We would like to say thank you to the many people from whom we have learned so much, and who have generously given their time, their experience, and their materials. Without them this book would be much slimmer and poorer. Our intellectual friends and mentors include: Ron Berger, Margaret Carr, Art Costa, Angela Duckworth, Carol Dweck, Michael Fullan, Bena Kallick, James Mannion, Kath Murdoch, Dame Alison Peacock, David Perkins, Ron Ritchhart, Sir Ken Robinson, Chris Watkins, and David Yeager. Previous collaborators we are indebted to include: Maryl Chambers, Leanne Day, Jenny Elmer, Janet Hanson, Bill Lucas, Ellen Spencer, and Steve Watson.

The primary teachers and head teachers who have showed us the way include: Julie Barlow, Birgitta Car, Andrea Curtis, Reagan Delaney, Robyn Fergusson, Amrita Hassan, Rakhsana Hussain, Peter Hyman, David Kehler, Karen McClintock, Kellie Morgan, Bojana Obradovic, Lorraine Sands, Nicole Stynes, Adam Swain, Luke Swain, Julian Swindale, Emma O'Regan, Katriona Rae, Judith Reid, Sarah Saddington, Victoria Scale-Constantinou, Mariyam Seedat, Rebecca Senior, Heath Venus, Anna Weinert, and Michelle Worthington. We would like to acknowledge the help we have received from teachers at the following schools: Bangkok Patana International School, Bangkok; Blaise Primary School, Bristol; Bushfield Primary School, Wolverton; Carlogie Primary School, Angus; Christian College Geelong, Geelong; Corngreaves Academy, Cradley Heath; Flinders Christian College, Victoria; Melbourne Girls' Grammar, Melbourne; Nayland Primary School, Suffolk; Prospect Primary School, Adelaide; The Regent's International School, Bangkok; Sefton Park School, Bristol; and St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Liverpool. Special thanks go to: Andy Moor, Nicola Suddaby, and colleagues at St Bernard's RC Primary School; Robert Cleary, Gemma Goldenberg, and their colleagues at Sandringham Primary School; Diane Pumphrey, Katrina Williamson, and the teachers at West Thornton Academy; Bryan Harrison and colleagues at Miriam Lord; Lisa Cook and the team at Challenging Learning; Tom Wallace and the team at Balance; and Hannah Coles, Alice Stott, and the team at Voice 21, as well as Nicky Clements, Michelle Forrest, Michelle Green, James Mannion, and Anton de Vries.

Finally we would like to thank the good folk at Crown House, especially David Bowman, Tom Fitton, Tabitha Palmer, Louise Penny, Beverley Randell, Bethan Rees, and Rosalie Williams. Louise's sharp eyes, in particular, have helped our book to be much clearer in both structure and language. You couldn't wish for a better bunch.

Contents

Foreword	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1. An Overview of the Learning Power Approach	9
What Is the LPA?	9
How Does the LPA Work?	12
The Strands of the LPA	13
The LPA Psychology of Learning	14
What Does the LPA Ask of Teachers?	16
Where Does the LPA Come From?	18
What Does LPA Offer?	21
Why Does the LPA Matter?	26
Chapter 2. The Learning Power Approach in Action	29
What Does the LPA Actually Look Like?	29
Summary	45
Chapter 3. Setting the Scene: Making Your Classroom a Safe and Interesting Place to Be a Learner	47
Prerequisites for a Learning-Powered Classroom	56
Dipping Your Toes In	57
Model respect, understanding, and kindness	57
Create a calm, orderly, and accessible classroom	61
Have clear expectations, focusing behaviour around learning	62
Make it socially safe to be a learner	63
Build trust	65
Digging Deeper	67

Make learning intriguing, engaging, and purposeful	67
Distinguish between learning mode and performance mode	74
Summary	78
Chapter 4. Designing the Environment	79
Designing the Environment with Learning Power in Mind	81
Dipping Your Toes In	82
Think about the layout and use of the furniture	82
Assess the provision of resources	86
Source inspirational quotes that reflect positive learning habits	88
Make anchor charts	90
Create a wonder wall	93
Create a personal best wall	94
Show works in progress	95
Diving Deeper	97
Build interactive displays that strengthen learning muscles	97
Bumps Along the Way	108
Summary	110
Chapter 5. The Languages of Learning	113
The Languages of Learning	116
Dipping Your Toes In	116
Refer to “learning” rather than “work”	118
Capitalise on the power of “yet”	119
Invite the children to use their imaginations with “Let’s say ..”	120
Use “could be” language	121
Make use of “wonder”	123
Rethink your language around “ability”	124
Talk about the innards of learning	127
Open up a dialogue about making mistakes	132
Informally notice the effective use of learning muscles	132
Model fallibility	133

Contents

Model metacognition	134
Diving Deeper	136
Examine the underlying values	136
Get everyone speaking learnish	137
Learn by example	137
Bumps Along the Way	143
Summary	146
Chapter 6. Collaboration and Conversation	147
What's So Great About Collaborative Learning?	148
Collaboration and Conversation	154
Dipping Your Toes In	154
Build awareness and understanding of collaboration as a learning muscle	156
Create a display around collaboration	157
Plan for collaboration	158
Value and praise effective collaboration	160
Ask the children to choose their own learning partners	160
Create scaffolds and frames for talk	161
Diving Deeper	164
Make the shift from teacher to learning coach	165
Plan roles within a group	166
Open up discussions around group sizes	173
Purposefully and cumulatively develop oracy skills	175
Use collaboration for peer feedback and reflection	180
Extend, deepen, and assess collaboration	181
Bumps Along the Way	183
Summary	186
Chapter 7. Making Learning Challenging and Adjustable	189
Make Learning Challenging and Adjustable	192
Dipping Your Toes In	193

Use language and praise related to challenge	193
Use more open-ended questions	195
Use visual strategies to support risk-taking	199
Offer different degrees of difficulty	200
Get the children to design their own challenges	204
Start lessons with a grapple problem	205
Diving Deeper	209
Design split-screen lessons	209
Bumps Along the Way	215
Summary	217
Chapter 8. Independence and Responsibility	219
Developing Independence and Responsibility	223
Dipping Your Toes In	223
Offer simple choices about how to present learning	224
Open up discussion and choices around noise levels	226
Create opportunities for the children to plan and organise their learning	227
Open up discussion about what the children think they need to learn next	229
Involve the children in taking ownership of their classroom	231
Ask the children to determine their own success criteria	232
Ask for feedback on how to improve lessons	233
Diving Deeper	234
Involve the children in planning their own projects	236
Create opportunities for the children to teach one another	239
Enable the children to judge when they need support from a teacher ...	242
Timetable planning time or tinkering studios	243
Bumps Along the Way	245
Summary	248

Chapter 9. Reflection, Improvement, and Craftsmanship	251
The Benefits of Focusing on Improvement and Reflection	256
Reflection, Improvement and Craftsmanship	258
Dipping Your Toes In	258
Develop a language for reflection	260
Find time to focus specifically on reflection habits	261
Thread in reflective thinking routines	262
Design rubrics to structure feedback	263
Explicitly teach self- and peer-evaluation	263
Continually give and develop verbal feedback	266
Reflect on how to make written feedback useful and meaningful	268
Add an LPA boost to Two Stars and a Wish	269
Diving Deeper	271
Use protocols that develop reflection	271
Build a diary room	272
Track learning stories	273
Adjust assessments to focus on improvement	274
Plot and feed back about the growth of learning muscles	274
Use reflection breaks	275
Bumps Along the Way	276
Summary	279
Chapter 10. Beyond the Single Lesson	281
Embedding the LPA More Deeply	281
Engaging Colleagues	284
Dipping Your Toes In	284
Use window displays, doors, and notice boards	285
Adapt your learning environment	285
Reward the children for developing as learners	286
Link with like-minded colleagues	286
Mention your interest in the LPA to your year group team	287

Run an introductory workshop on the LPA	287
Digging Deeper	287
Talk openly to leaders about the impact you are seeing	288
Use the student council	289
Prepare an assembly to develop learning powers	289
Engaging Parents and Carers	291
Dipping Your Toes In	291
Write letters home about learning powers	292
Use window space and notice boards to bring the LPA to life	292
Use learnish in parents' meetings, letters home, and reports	293
Digging Deeper	296
Make links with home	296
Run a workshop for parents and carers about the LPA	298
Bumps Along the Way	299
Summary	301
Conclusion	303
Further Reading	305
Resources	309
About the Authors	311

Introduction

This book on the Learning Power Approach (LPA) is for primary, or elementary, school teachers.¹ But it is not for all of them. It is only for those who are really serious about teaching in a way that builds character alongside delivering the traditional curriculum. It is for teachers who are hungry for ideas and information about how to do that, and ready to change their way of being in the classroom to achieve that end. Let us explain.

School is about more than examination results. Everyone knows that. Everyone agrees. No school proudly claims on its website, “Send your children to us and we will squeeze the best grades we can out of them, by hook or by crook. And that is all we care about.” If pressed, every school protests that “we are not just an exam factory, you know”. There is always some acknowledgement that forming powerful habits of mind in children matters too: that we all want them to grow in confidence, kindness, resilience, or “mental agility”. “Fulfilling their potential” doesn’t just mean “getting top marks”. We want good results, but we want *results plus*: grades *plus* a character that is ready for the challenges and opportunities of the mid to late 21st century, as best we can predict what those will be. We can’t imagine a school that wants *results minus*: children with good grades but who are timid, dependent, unimaginative, and unadventurous.

We want good results, but we want *results plus*: grades *plus* a character that is ready for the challenges and opportunities of the mid to late 21st century.

¹ Throughout the book, we will tend to use our native UK terminology of primary schooling, years, and key stages – except when referring to case studies from other educational systems. The UK system runs from “Reception” (which children enter at age 4, roughly) through Years 1 (5–6-year-olds), 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 (10–11-year-olds). Often these are divided into two “Key Stages”: Key Stage 1 comprises Years 1 and 2; Key Stage 2 comprises Years 3 to 6. In the USA school years are called “grades”, and they tend to be one year “behind” the English years, so fifth grade corresponds roughly to Year 6.

The key question is: what does that *plus* amount to? What exactly do we want our kids to be *like* when they leave our class, or move up to their high school? And how exactly is our school – and especially our teaching – going to look different if we take this plus as seriously as we could? How are we going to teach maths differently if we want our children to be growing an adventurous and creative spirit at the same time? How are our displays of children’s work going to look different if we want them to develop a sense of craftsmanship – a genuine pride in having produced the best work of which they are capable? We all want our children to become more resilient – to be inclined and equipped to grapple intelligently with things they find hard. So how are our forms of assessment going to tell us whether we are succeeding: whether our Year 4s are indeed more resilient than they were in Year 3?

Lots of teachers and school leaders espouse these values. Some of them have thought through – in detail – exactly what it will take, and set in motion – with the requisite degree of precision – the necessary changes. But many are still hesitant, awaiting clearer guidance and support from departments of education or academic “thought leaders”. Or they have got a firm hold on part of the challenge, but not yet figured out the whole if it. They work on resilience, but not imagination; on collaboration, but not concentration; on self-esteem, but not critical thinking; or, conversely, on higher order thinking skills, but not empathy.

The LPA shows in systematic detail how to go beyond the soundbites and the posters to create classrooms that really do grow robust, inquisitive, imaginative, and collaborative learners – lesson by lesson, week by week, year on year.

It is this detailed and comprehensive help that the LPA provides. It is for teachers and schools that really want to take the plus seriously, and have begun to realise the implications of doing so. They know that “team games” are not enough to grow collaboration; that becoming a good collaborator is as much to do with the way in which we teach English as it is to do with sports day. They know that a few fine words on the home page of the school website, or in a policy document on teaching and learning, are not enough. They have quickly realised that some glossy posters downloaded from Pinterest about growth mindset and the power of *yet* are not enough. You have to “live it, not laminate it”, as the Twittersphere pithily puts it!

For example, Sam Sherratt, who teaches the Primary Years Program of the International Baccalaureate (IB) in Ho Chi Minh City, wrote in his blog back in 2013, “All too often, in IB schools, the Learner Profile [a list of desirable attributes] exists in the form of displays and catchphrases, but doesn’t exist as a way of life, as a code of conduct or as an expectation for all stakeholders. We are not going to let that happen at ISHCMC [his school]!”² The LPA shows in systematic detail how to go beyond the soundbites and the posters to create classrooms that really do grow robust, inquisitive, imaginative, and collaborative learners – lesson by lesson, week by week, year on year.

So this book is crammed full of practical illustrations, advice, and hints and tips. It is designed for busy primary teachers who want to get started on the LPA journey, and for others who have already made good progress but may feel a bit stuck for fresh ideas or are wondering about the next step to take. And there is always a next step. As our understanding of the LPA has deepened, the horizon of possibility keeps receding in front of us. The further you go in training children to take control of their own learning, the deeper the possibilities that are opened up.

Depending on where you are on your journey, some of our suggestions will be very familiar to you, and some might seem rather pie in the sky. The spot we try to hit, as much as possible, is the area in between

The further you go in training children to take control of their own learning, the deeper the possibilities that are opened up.

“I do it already. Tell me something new”, and “in your dreams, mate”: the spot where you sense a new possibility for tweaking your existing style and it feels plausible and doable with the real live children you teach. That’s what we want you to be on the lookout for. So if something seems familiar, we invite you

to think about how you could stretch what you already do just a little more. And if a suggestion seems far-fetched it may nevertheless spark a train of thought that leads to a more fruitful idea.

2 Sam Sherratt, “Parent Workshops: The IB Learner Profile”, *Making PYP Happen Here* [blog] (7 October 2013). Available at: <https://makingpyphappenhere.wordpress.com/2013/10/07/36/>.

In a talk he gave a while ago that Guy attended, David Perkins suggested that each of us is either more of a “do-think-do” person – someone who likes to dive in, give things a go, then reflect and try again – or a “think-do-think” person – someone who prefers to gather all the information, then gives things a go and thinks again.³ Whichever you think you might be, we hope that you can use the ideas outlined in this book as a guide to improving your LPA practice. Feel free to dive into whichever chapter is most appealing to you, although we do suggest reading the whole book from cover to cover at some point!

The LPA is not a set of rigid “recipes for success”; it is a set of tools, ideas, and examples that we hope you will critique and customise to suit your own situation. All we ask is that you hold fast to the spirit and the values while you are developing your own version. Sometimes we have seen people introduce – without meaning to – the “lethal mutation” that kills the spirit. For example, if you slip into seeing the LPA mainly as a way to rack up those conventional test scores, you have missed something really essential. Rather, we develop habits of mind like resilience and resourcefulness mainly *because* they are valuable outcomes of education in their own right – and then we keep an eye on making sure that the results go up too.

We are aiming to develop strong mental habits in our children that will stand them in good stead for a lifetime, and that takes time and consistency.

The LPA is very far from being a quick fix or the latest fad. It is actually quite demanding because it requires us to re-examine our natural style of teaching, and to make small but real experiments with our own habits in the classroom. As Sir Ken Robinson has said, “If you want to shift culture, it’s two things: its habits and its habitats – the habits of mind, and the physical environment in which people operate.”⁴ The LPA requires some honest self-awareness and reflection, and that can be quite effortful and sometimes even uncomfortable. We told you the LPA wasn’t for everyone!

3 Guy has asked David if he has a published reference for this idea, but he can’t find it!

4 Cited in Ron Ritchhart, *Creating Cultures of Thinking: The 8 Forces We Must Master to Truly Transform Our Schools* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2015), pp. 230–231.

But our experience tells us that nothing less will do. Just adding some shiny new techniques on top of business as usual – what we call the “tinsel approach” – does not work in the long term because the same underlying messages of the medium persist. We are aiming to develop strong mental habits in our children that will stand them in good stead for a lifetime, and that takes time and consistency. Habits take months, even years, to develop and change. Children’s development depends on the day-to-day cultures we create for them to inhabit, not on something special we remember to pay attention to every so often. And to create those cultures, we teachers have to be conscious, resilient, and imaginative learners too.

The beauty of the LPA, though, is that it relies on a series of adjustments that are worked into your natural style one by one, gradually and cumulatively. You are not being asked to transform yourself from a leopard into a tiger overnight. It is evolution, not revolution. The LPA is a direction of travel, supported by signposts and resources to guide you along the way, and everyone can go at their own pace. The good news is that, on the journey, teaching the LPA way becomes highly satisfying and rewarding. A roomful of enthusiastic, resourceful learners, who are keen to sort things out for themselves, is a sight to behold – and a joy to teach. Instead of doing a lot of informing, explaining, and interrogating, your role develops a subtler side to it in which you spend more time nudging and challenging the children to “go deeper”.

The LPA is a direction of travel, supported by signposts and resources to guide you along the way, and everyone can go at their own pace.

In every context in which Becky has taught, this is exactly what she has found – small tweaks to her practice have often made the biggest difference. For example, just by positively and consistently weaving in the language of the LPA, as we will show in Chapter 5, children have quickly locked on to “what learning is about” and realised how they can explore and express their own learning. An illustration of this occurred when a new child started in Becky’s class in the middle of the academic year. By the end of his first day he was talking about how he was going to challenge himself, who he had been collaborating effectively with, and what he had learned from his mistakes that day. Children are usually very quick to pick up cues from adults and their peers.

Children can also surprise us. For example, when reflecting on their learning process, the 5- and 6-year-olds in Becky's class have been known to make comments such as:

"I'd prefer to collaborate today because I need to share ideas with a friend."

"I noticed everyone was really absorbed in their learning today because the classroom was so quiet."

Because this book is designed to be really practical, there isn't much in the way of background or rationale about the LPA in it. We only say a little about where the approach comes from, what the scientific underpinnings are, and what the evidence for its effectiveness is. You will find all of that, if you are not familiar with it already, in the first book in this series, *The Learning Power Approach: Teaching Learners to Teach Themselves* (published by Crown House in the UK and Corwin in the US). The only thing worth noting here is that the LPA is not another "brand" competing for your attention in the crowded education marketplace. It is our attempt to discern the general principles behind a number of initiatives that have been developing, often independently of one another, over the last twenty years or so. It is a new school of thought about the kind of teaching that effectively stimulates the growth of agile, tenacious, and inventive minds – as well as getting the grades. You will find examples and ideas from a wide range of sources, and from different countries, as well as from our own research and practice.

The book you are reading now is actually the second in a series of four books, of which *The Learning Power Approach* is the first, providing the background to the approach. This volume will be followed by two other, equally practical, books: one for high school teachers, and another for school leaders. But we wanted to focus the first of these books on younger children because those vital qualities of mind – the general-purpose "learning muscles", as we call them – are being shaped most powerfully, for good or ill, in the early years. Set children on the right trajectory in their primary school and they will have a precious asset for life – even if, as sometimes happens, they go on to find themselves in a high school that is not yet as ready to welcome their independence and maturity as it could be.

Will the LPA work in your school? We are sure it will. We have seen it work well in early years settings in disadvantaged areas of New Zealand; in remote rural primary schools in the forests of Poland; in international schools in Bangkok and Buenos Aires; and in big urban primary schools across the UK, as well as in private preparatory

schools in the Home Counties and in special schools in London and Birmingham. The examples, tools, and techniques with which this book is crammed have been tried and tested in a wide range of settings.

But you will probably still have to experiment with them in the specific conditions of your classroom and often make adjustments to get them to work. Every school and every class is different; there's no getting around that. One size rarely fits all. The key is to be ready to adapt the ideas to each context and to be open to problem-solving and to sharing your LPA journey with your learners. For example, when Becky moved from teaching in a Reception class in Bristol, England, to teaching business English in Argentina, it took a few months before she could really make headway with developing her students as learners as well as fluent English speakers. But by patient trial and error she found methods that worked to get them to take more responsibility for their learning.

... those vital qualities of mind – the general-purpose “learning muscles”, as we call them – are being shaped most powerfully, for good or ill, in the early years.

She invented marking schemes which built curiosity around mistake-making and also developed a willingness to be more playful with the English language. She found ways to tap into her students' imaginations and make her lessons more attractive to them. One of her business classes invented new smoothies and sent videos of their creations to the renowned smoothie brand Innocent in the UK to see what they thought. To their delight, Innocent replied with their own video! In the process, Becky's students learned about phrasal verbs, improved their pronunciation, and developed their instruction writing – as well as building accuracy with language, reflection skills, and the ability to collaborate with colleagues. While learning how to teach in this new context, Becky was constantly asking herself questions like:

“How can I build my students as strong, collaborative, and reflective learners?”

“Is there a different way I could approach this to build persistence and learning from mistakes?”

“How can I make learning English more meaningful to my students?”

“How can I hand more responsibility over to my students?”

“How can I encourage my students to push and challenge themselves and not take the easy option?”

By experimenting with different possible answers to these questions, Becky was able to apply and develop the LPA in a new and unfamiliar context.

A learning-power classroom has many varied sides to it. Teachers lay the furniture out in a different way. They choose different things to display on the walls. They involve the children more than usual in designing their own learning. They use a specific vocabulary when they are talking to the children, and encourage specific kinds of talk between the children. They create particular kinds of activities and challenges. They comment on children’s work and write reports differently. Over time, we have distilled a clear set of design principles that teachers can follow if they want to make their classroom a highly effectively incubator of powerful learning.

The central chapters in this book are structured around thematic clusters of these design principles, and generally follow a common format:

1. First we explain why the design principles we are focusing on are important; including what’s in it for you – the teacher – and what’s in it for the children.
2. Next, we offer a menu of practical low-risk tweaks to classroom practice that enable you to engage with the design principles and experience some quick wins.
3. Then we give you some ideas about how to embed the principles more deeply in the ongoing life of your classroom, including some rich lesson examples from across the primary age range, and from different school subjects.
4. Finally, we address some of the common bumps and issues that may crop up along the way, and offer some advice on how to creatively adapt and modify the LPA until it begins to bear fruit.

And with that, let’s now dive into Chapter 1 and see what the LPA is all about.

Chapter 1

An Overview of the Learning Power Approach

This chapter provides a brief sketch of the LPA: what it is, where it comes from, why it matters, how it differs from other approaches, and what it asks of teachers. These questions are dealt with in more detail in the first book in the series, *The Learning Power Approach*, which we hope you will refer back to as your appreciation of the LPA grows and deepens.

What Is the LPA?

In essence, the LPA is a newly emerging school of thought about teaching and learning. It is about how to teach in a particular way if you value certain outcomes for the children in your classes. If you want your children to be quiet and well-behaved, to remember what you have told them, and to get good marks – if those are the behaviours and attitudes that matter to you most – then there is a kind of teaching that will steer children in that direction (although, kids being kids, not all of them will comply!). But that is not the LPA. The LPA is a way of teaching for teachers who value politeness and success, but who value other outcomes even more. They want to see children do as well as they can on the tests, to learn to read and write and do their maths, but – more than that – they also want them to grow in their independence, resourcefulness, creativity, curiosity, and capacity for thinking about and exploring important matters deeply – for themselves.

Traditional teaching doesn't reliably produce this second set of outcomes. On the contrary, some children learn how to get good marks in a way that makes them more, not less, reliant on the teacher. They can become more interested in getting right answers than in really thinking and wondering about the things they are exploring.

They grow more conservative and cautious in their approach to learning, rather than more adventurous and resilient.

So whether you like the LPA or not will depend on your values. If you don't think independence, resilience, and curiosity are important characteristics for the next generation, then you can stick to more conventional teaching methods. Nobody can force you to change your style. But if you think, as we do, that such dispositions are vital if our children are to flourish in a turbulent and fast-changing world, then the LPA will be more likely to appeal.

The LPA is a way of teaching for teachers who ... want to see children do as well as they can on the tests, to learn to read and write and do their maths, but – more than that – they also want them to grow in their independence, resourcefulness, creativity, curiosity, and capacity for thinking about and exploring important matters deeply – for themselves.

Put more formally, the goal of the LPA is this:

To develop all students as confident and capable learners – ready, willing, and able to choose, design, research, pursue, troubleshoot, and evaluate learning for themselves, alone and with others, in school and out, for grades and for life.

All of the words in this statement matter.

Develop reminds us that cultivating these character traits takes time. We can't just throw children in at the deep end and expect them to be powerful learners straight away. We have to constantly provide them with manageable opportunities to stretch and strengthen their confidence and ability to work things out for themselves.

All says that this is vital for every student, regardless of their background or their "academic ability". High achievers need it if they are going to cope with the demands of their academic/vocational pursuits beyond school. And low achievers need it even more, because without these dispositions, they are condemned to stay in the slow lane of learning.

We need to help children become *ready* and *willing* to learn on their own, and not just *able* to. We want them to be keen to learn, as well as capable of learning. It is not enough to train children in learning or thinking "skills", because a skill is just

All teachers, as well as school leaders and educational innovators, will find enormous value in this book. Its provocations will spark new ideas, challenge some existing thinking, and provide clarity about new ways forward.

Martin Westwell, Chief Executive, South Australian Certificate of Education Board, Australia

A must-read for anyone with the true calling of a teacher and a curious mind.

Ana María Fernández, educator and creator of the VESS Educational Model, USA

Powering Up Children should transform the thinking of all primary school teachers and policy makers, both in my native Japan and indeed across the whole world.

Asato Yoshinaga, Associate Professor, Kokugakuin University, Japan

A must for all primary school educators.

Kellie Morgan, Director of Early Learning and Junior Years, Melbourne Girls Grammar, Australia

Any teacher reading this book will feel inspired and empowered to get going with the Learning Power Approach straight away, because it all seems so doable.

Shirley Clarke, formative assessment expert, UK

Full of practical examples and ideas to help teachers and children delve deeper into what Guy Claxton and Becky Carlzon call “results plus”.

Tom Wallace, Specialist Leader of Education in Formative Assessment, Ignite TSA, and co-founder of Balance Assessment, UK

I am excited by the prospect of sharing *Powering Up Children* with teachers around the world – it is just the guidebook to accompany any teacher as they venture out on a journey of change.

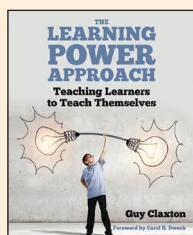
Kath Murdoch, education consultant, Australia

Full of exciting possibilities for those teachers and leaders looking to move beyond the recent focus on passing statutory tests and towards a way of teaching that gives children so much more.

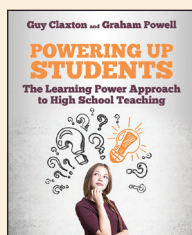
Aidan Severs, Deputy Head Teacher, Dixons Allerton Academy Primary, UK

A unique collaboration between Professor Guy Claxton and expert classroom practitioner Becky Carlzon that puts learning power theory into practice – and the result is a triumph!

Rae Snape, Head Teacher, The Spinney Primary School,
National Leader of Education, The Kite Teaching School Alliance, UK



The Learning Power Approach
Teaching Learners to Teach Themselves
ISBN: 978-178583245-1



Powering Up Students
The Learning Power Approach to High School Teaching
ISBN: 978-178583338-0

