



LEARNING TO LEARN

Phase 1 & 2 Research Reports Summary Findings

A concise report based on the findings of Dr Jillian Rodd for the UK Campaign for Learning

This summary is based on the research findings of Dr Jillian Rodd, Research Leader for the Campaign for Learning's 2-year ***Learning to Learn in Schools*** project (September 2000 – July 2002).

The reports from Year 1 come from 25 UK schools at both primary and secondary level. In Year 2 the research took place in 16 schools, both primary and secondary.

The research had three main areas of interest:

- The emergence and preference of learning styles and multiple intelligences in children.
- The impact of studying Learning How to Learn for Year 7 pupils.
- Performance in specific curriculum subjects based on the effect of teaching metacognitive skills at Years 8 – 11.



YEAR 1

The key **messages** from the first year research indicated that pupil learning, motivation and standards improved when:

1. Teachers helped students prepare for effective learning by creating environments that promote physical, emotional and mental well-being and minimise barriers and factors that prohibit learning.
2. Teaching approaches are applied that recognise and respond to pupils' individual learning styles and intelligences. The impact is greatest on those with a preference for kinaesthetic (physical) input.
3. Teachers take time to help pupils understand themselves as learners, to help them acquire learning-conducive dispositions, and to teach them strategies that enhance learning effectiveness and performance.
4. Pupils are able to understand that learning takes place in and outside of the classroom, and parents and members of the wider school community understand about, and are included in, learning.

Teachers who were informed about and experienced in learning to learn approaches found extensive benefits in teacher effectiveness, professional development, motivation and confidence.

The **recommendations** of the Year 1 report were that:

- Teachers should be supported with curriculum time to help pupils take responsibility for their own learning by helping them understand the process of learning and themselves as learners.
- Teachers should be helped to utilise learning to learn techniques in terms of how they structure the learning environment, deliver information, facilitate learning opportunities and provide informative feedback.
- Parents should be offered opportunities to understand learning so that they can effectively support their children's learning.

YEAR 2

By the end of the project the findings were broken down into 5 key areas:

- the learner
- the learning process
- the learning environment
- the teacher
- the physical aspects of the learner (the body)



The Learner

- Students of all ages are more positive about learning and motivated to learn when they understand their preferred learning styles and intelligences.
- Kinaesthetic learners experience greater success where teachers teach according to pupils' preferred learning styles.
- Encouraging the development of pupils' learning dispositions, including the three **Rs** of resourcefulness, resilience and reflectiveness, enhances pupils' perceptions of themselves as learners and improves attainment levels.
- Pupils learn best when they enjoy themselves or are having fun, indicating that their emotional state is fundamental to learning.

The Learning Process

- Learning to Learn courses help primary and secondary students identify and apply a range of strategies that they think helps them learn at home and at school. The techniques considered most useful include Brain Gym, Mind Mapping, memory techniques, posters and diagrams, interactive whiteboards and working with peers.
- The vast majority of secondary school students think Learning to Learn courses are worthwhile, that what they learn helps them with schoolwork and that the courses should be part of the school timetable.
- Some secondary students transfer the Learning to Learn approaches to other parts of the curriculum.

The Learning Environment

- Attractive physical learning environments are associated with improved pupil attitudes, behaviour and performance.
- Posters, pictures and displays provide pupils with a structure through which to recognise, select and reinforce learning behaviours.
- Boys' learning in particular is enhanced by opportunities to use ICT.

The Teacher

- Student learning and behaviour is improved when teachers employ brain-friendly teaching strategies.
- Teachers' motivation and enjoyment is increased when they adopt Learning to Learn approaches.
- Pupils are happier and perform better where they have teachers who are flexible, open-minded, willing to experiment and embrace change.
- Learning to Learn motivates teachers to undertake and actively engage in a range of professional development activities.



The Body

- Pupils perform better if they have free access to drinking water.
- Exercise in the form of brain gym and sport has a positive effect on pupil enjoyment and motivation for learning.
- Engaging in specific de-stressing activities before written exams improves pupils' examination results.

Summary

A Learning to Learn strategy can seem difficult, but we believe that the slow introduction of these techniques into the classroom and the pupils' learning will have a positive effect on you, the teacher, and your pupils.

We believe that evolution not revolution is the way to achieve better results, better motivated students and more motivated teachers.

CHAMPS is an important step toward a Learning to Learn strategy in your school.

The full reports can be downloaded from the Campaign For Learning website at

www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk

They include detailed summaries of the thinking underlying the project, with case studies from the research schools and resources for teachers and schools wanting to develop their own Learning to Learn approach. The reports are published as:-

- ***Teaching pupils how to learn: research, practice and INSET resources*** (Bill Lucas, Toby Greany, Jill Rodd and Ray Wicks; Campaign for Learning/Network Educational Press; 2002) sets out the findings from the first year of the research and is aimed at a general teaching audience.
- ***Creating a Learning to Learn School*** (Toby Greany & Jill Rodd; Campaign for Learning/Network Educational Press; 2003) sets out the findings from the second year of the research and is aimed at heads, teachers and senior managers interested in developing better schools, classrooms and learners.

Both publications are available price £12.95 from: Southgate Publishers Ltd, The Square, Sandford, Crediton, Devon, EX17 4LW
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