
The John Henry Newman guide to what it takes to be a Learning Hero



No matter what age you are, learning can be fun and rewarding. It can also be hard work and test your patience! One thing is for sure, however – effective learning is no accident! Our attitude and approach affect the extent of our learning and so we have tried to sum up the important factors that influence it.

We have broken learning down into four areas:

Home Learning

Enquiry

Reflection

Organisation



And we have created prompts to help pupils and students assess their current approach and consider how they might improve it.

In our view an approach to learning can be measured using a four point scale. Learning behaviour can be:

DYNAMIC

which will lead to above expected progress over time

POSITIVE

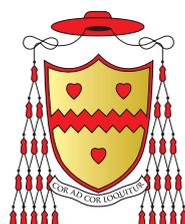
which will lead to expected progress over time

PASSIVE

which will lead to underachievement over time

DISENGAGED

which will lead to significant underachievement over time



So what are the questions that need to be asked to establish how helpful and supportive an approach to learning actually is?

We would suggest the following and will be using them at school to talk to pupils and students about their learning and evaluate its success. You may wish to do the same at home...

Home Learning

Does he/she complete homework that supports and builds on the learning done in class to the best of his/her ability?

Does he/she always show a willingness to give 'things a go' even when he/she finds some of the learning is difficult or requires special effort?

Is he/she happy to explore new ideas with enthusiasm?

Does he/she show that he/she understands an important part of learning is making mistakes and learning from them?

Is he/she willing to ask and answer questions to increase his/her understanding?

Does he/she look at things from more than one angle, use his/her imagination and look to make links?

Does he/she read and respond to teachers' feedback thoughtfully – using it to improve the way he/she thinks and works?

Is he/she organised in planning, meeting deadlines, recording the tasks set and using a wide variety of appropriate resources?

Does he/she present work with care?



For work done in school...

Enquiry

Does he/she always show a willingness to give 'things a go' even when he/she finds some of the learning is difficult or requires special effort?

Is he/she happy to explore new ideas with enthusiasm? Does he/she show that he/she understands an important part of learning is making mistakes and learning from them?

Is he/she willing to ask and answer questions to increase understanding?

Does he/she look at things from more than one angle, using imagination and look to make links?

Reflection

Does he/she listen to other people in a way that he/she can then take their ideas and build on them to further their own learning?

Does he/she read and respond to teachers' feedback thoughtfully – using it to improve the way he/she thinks and works?

Organisation

Is he/she organised in their planning, meeting deadlines, recording the tasks set and using a wide variety of appropriate resources?

Does he/she present work with care?

So how can you tell whether an approach to learning can be judged as dynamic, positive, passive or disengaged? Here are our attempts to describe what each approach to learning would look like.

1. Dynamic 2. Positive 3. Passive 4. Disengaged

Home Learning

- 1 Continually enhances work done at school significantly/ continually demonstrates exemplary attitudes to learning.
- 2 Usually enhances work done at school/ usually demonstrates positive attitudes to learning.
- 3 Sometimes unreliable/ does the minimum/ little or no evidence of extending self or independent thought.
- 4 Regularly not done/ incomplete/ tokenistic/ attitudes to independent learning are a serious cause for concern.

Reflection

- 1 Prompts the review of approaches to learning/ routinely reflects and acts on feedback with enthusiasm.
- 2 Open to reviewing approaches to learning/ responds to opportunities for reflection and feedback positively.
- 3 Will participate in the process of reviewing approaches to learning and go through the process of responding to feedback but it brings about little or slow change.
- 4 Unwilling and uninterested in reviewing approaches to learning/ rarely or never reflects and acts on feedback.

Enquiry

- 1 Continually asks appropriate questions/ very keen to collaborate/ clearly relishes challenge/ continually demonstrates creative approaches to overcome difficulties.
- 2 Regularly asks appropriate questions/ usually keen to collaborate/ usually responds positively to challenge/ often demonstrates thoughtful approaches to overcome difficulties.
- 3 Limited evidence of a willingness to ask appropriate questions/ limited evidence of collaboration/ an over-reliance on the work and views of others/ doesn't adapt to challenge/ waits to be guided in challenging situations.
- 4 Rarely or never engages in the questioning process/ unwilling or unable to collaborate effectively/ avoids challenge/ shows no resilience or creativity when presented with difficulty or when in error.

Organisation

- 1 Invariably prepared/ strategic in planning/ happy to assist others.
- 2 Well prepared/ reliably meets deadlines/ equipped for learning.
- 3 Generally prepared though occasional slips occur which impede learning.
- 4 Regularly under- or unprepared/ frequently misses deadlines