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The Intelligent Gaze:

Leadership, lead learners and
individual growth – a reflective
enquiry

“Leaders who concentrate on the product and process components of quality but ignore the people component will stifle spirit, common cause, co-participation, individual and team efficacy. Leaders who give equal billing to the people component of quality, encourage the development of trust, vision and spirit”.
(The Spirit of Leadership, Robert Spritzer)

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Introduction

At this moment there is a need for leaders with the desire, and the requisite qualities, to bring about the significant changes to the learning process in our schools. It is the contention of this report that schools need to change significantly if they are to fully develop people to help them succeed in the 21st century. There is a dilemma though – how is this change to be achieved as quickly as possible when the structures, systems and leadership in a significant proportion of our schools are still rooted firmly in the mid-20th century, if not earlier. Leadership is vital to bring about the changes needed. However, there do appear to be real problems with the readiness of our school leaders to take on this challenge. The original reason for this research was my increasing frustration with the growing number of school leaders who were bogged down with management tasks and appeared unwilling to look at their schools objectively with a view to radically improving the education being provided. There are many pressures and many reasons why senior leaders act and think in the ways that they do, but I want to see our leaders pushing at the boundaries and enjoying the process of changing our education system into one which satisfies the needs of everyone. At the outset I was totally unaware of how significantly my research would change me as a leader and change my school, its staff and students. What began as a strong view has now become a way of being.

The main tenet of this report is that if we are to fully prepare and equip our leaders for their roles we must concentrate on the individual growth of leaders and those they are responsible for. This, in my view, should be the central concern of all leaders and of leadership training. I argue that the type of leader needed in a school today is a lead learner who is constantly reinterpreting the things which are already understood, then letting go of these former understandings and techniques in order to move the school forward in the best interests of the individual learner.

To encourage such qualities in our leaders we need, I feel, to root their development in growth. Leaders need an intelligent gaze, to be able to look at themselves in the mirror of self-awareness and reflect on who they are as people. One way of doing this is for individuals, teams and organisations to embark on a continuous journey of self-discovery, during which individuals move towards the accomplishment of personal mastery and develop the skills to work with and support the development of others. If leaders know themselves they are more likely to effectively lead the development of people and organisations. It could be argued that you cannot lead others effectively unless you can lead yourself.

Schools for the 21st century?

I do believe we are entering a golden age of education, something we have not seen for 100 years or more. We will have the opportunity to really shape learning for the modern world, but only if we get the issue of leadership right. Claxton (2000) believes:

The school system seems to be in the hands of people often lacking in imagination, ingenuity and the ability to grasp the real depth of the problems the system is facing. People who are unable to acknowledge genuine complexity and seem incapable of ever saying 'I don't know', which is where all learning has to start, are not very good adverts for lifelong learning.

There is an increasing amount of discussion about the school of the 21st century. The present government is seemingly very keen to develop schools towards their increasingly clear vision of what such schools should look like. Tom Bentley (1998) says:

...schools will progressively transform themselves to become the hubs of learning networks, centres of learning excellence which aid the development of understanding by brokering learning opportunities with people and organisations in the communities around them. They would be staffed by learning specialists of different kinds. One group might be responsible for developing a long term mentoring and guidance relationship with their students, helping to plan and review activities and assist each individual in shaping their goals for the short, medium and long term. Others would be specialists in assessment, observing and recording progress and ability, not just within school but in the range of contexts where young people are learning. From the earliest age, students would be jointly responsible for planning and assessing their learning, discussing what they can do with a range of others, including parents, peers, professional educators and adults from the surrounding community.

My own belief is that we need to open up our minds to create schools that really do provide appropriate and effective learning for the modern world. We also need to take risks to make the necessary changes to our schools. School reform has so far been about structures and systems, and using them to improve the learning of individuals. Perhaps we should adopt strategies to develop the individual first and then modify school structures based on the developed need.

The future is in lead learners

I have visited many schools over recent years and met many school managers and, generally, it appears from my observations, that the schools where learning really is having a real impact on its students are those where the school managers are true leaders, interested and enthusiastic about learning and who are genuinely interested in people. The future lies in developing the leadership skills of all teachers, and indeed, all of our students – our future leaders!

The changing nature of leadership in our schools is highlighted by Hallinger (2001) who explained that in the 1950s principals were viewed as administrators who simply managed schools, in the 1960s as street level bureaucrats, in the 1970s as change agents, and in the 1980s principals were urged to accept a new and expanded role as instructional leaders, as well as continuing to be school managers. Principals were viewed as key to creating conditions in the school as a whole that would support improvement in student achievement. But principals began to be overwhelmed by the volume and diversity of their responsibilities coupled with high public expectations. With principals viewed as instructional leaders there is now, in the view of Hallinger, total confusion amongst them about their roles. This, he believes, is due to the conflict created by the current momentum toward shared teacher leadership for the whole cadre of principals who have been educated in the belief that they should be instructional leaders.

Hallinger argues that the context a school finds itself in is a key element in developing leadership style. Hallinger notes:

If you look more closely at the interaction between context, leadership and personality you see that there is not one leadership style that is likely to be effective across a wide range of contexts.

What successful principals do, he believes, is juggle the interaction between the school context, resources available to them, and their own leadership styles. Early school effectiveness studies didn't really study how principals make a difference in teaching and learning. Principals create conditions in which teachers can teach more effectively and where students can learn better. They do this through the ability to motivate, to create social structures, and work with social networks within the school. These features are all aided by the focus on individual growth.

Now that school restructuring, shared decision making, communities of learners and other concepts have entered our educational culture, there is a belief that the tenets of effective schools and instructional leadership are no longer there. To the contrary: these beliefs have been highly institutionalised over a 20 year period. (Hallinger, 2001)

We need to alter these long-held beliefs and encourage school leaders to focus on understanding the individual and to get involved in learning in every aspect.

The research process

I have undoubtedly taken into my subconscious a great deal from the wide range of leadership training I have experienced over the years. Yet the only time I can really remember leaving a session with real enthusiasm was during my National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) course when I was given a section of Peter Senge's book, *The Fifth Discipline* (1993) to read. The section was on personal mastery and, probably for the first time, a leadership writer connected with me. Senge's writing was so clear and made so much sense. Most of all, I could see the relevance of what he was talking about. I immediately went out and bought the book. I was gripped by the emphasis Senge placed on the development of the individual and the importance of knowing yourself and of coaching in the development of people.

Very soon after reading Senge I became a headteacher for the first time. The first few months were spent on using Senge's thinking to develop a shared vision for the school. I have always been concerned by the lack of focus on the individual in our education system – the industrial model still in operation in our schools merely pays lip service to individuals – both for our students and for the development of staff. It was very evident to me that in creating citizens for the future, schools needed to change enormously to fully develop individuals. Every successful leader I met displayed particular qualities that supported my belief that there had to be a stronger emphasis on the individual. The other feature I noticed as I began to meet more and more headteachers was that the schools which were really moving, with focused students and a buzz amongst the staff, were those with a head and other senior staff who were excited and interested in learning and wanted to improve it further.

It takes a great deal of courage to change things when they are going well. Yet if you are convinced as a leader that things could be even better you have to, in my opinion 'go for it'. All leaders who are 'going for it' feel quite exposed and lonely and need support, but the only real support you really take note of is from role models. My staff and I constantly search out and research good practice, locally, nationally and internationally – the aim is to set ourselves challenges to find ever improved ways of developing the education we provide and to find role models to support our thinking and actions.

One person that made a real impact on me a couple of years ago was Sheila Wallis, the head of Davison School in Worthing. Sheila and her senior team spent a whole day with me and two colleagues talking about the things they were doing to push the barriers of education forward. Halfway through the day I realised I was talking to a headteacher who was totally interested in the learning of all her students, of her staff and of herself. She was a real lead learner. Sheila inspired me to take things further in relation to the development of the individual, in particular we borrowed the Expert Trail Staff Development scheme from Davison. This was a scheme that helped the growth of individual staff.

At the same time as meeting Sheila I became more closely involved with the Cornwall Learning Forum and in particular its founder, Paul Bordeaux. Paul, a former primary head and an educational consultant, brought the idea of brain based learning and all the associated initiatives to Cornwall. Paul persuaded me to take part, with a few of my staff, in a course he was running which, he believed, would help to further develop the individual. Paul is a great thinker and he was fully on board with the thinking I was developing about individual growth. The course Paul was running was the Pacific

Institute's five-day Investment in Excellence (IIE) course. I was absolutely amazed by the power of the course. It was nothing new – psychology made simple. But the beauty of it is that it really makes you look at yourself as an individual and provides tools for you to develop yourself. It was the only course I had ever been on that was totally about me, and the only one that gave me strategies and tools to help me develop myself in every aspect of my life and to improve myself as a leader. I wasn't alone in my thinking – all four of the other staff from my school on the course felt the same.

Irene Hooper, a very experienced teacher at my school and our teaching and learning co-ordinator, also went on the IIE course and started thinking of how we could apply the principles of IIE to promoting individual growth in our school. She took Erikson's Stages of Growth Model and linked it to every aspect of a school's growth – the individual, teams, the whole college – and felt that the college development plan and performance management could be linked by the concept of growth. A small action group of staff, including myself, took Irene's ideas further and linked Erikson's concept with Senge's. We came up with a rough framework to work on, based on the notion that individuals, teams and whole organisations could grow in similar ways, with the starting point being self understanding but eventually leading to a stage where people are generative, supporting the growth of others.

The task now was to research ways of putting these ideas into practice on a number of fronts – to improve student learning, to develop the college as a whole and to develop staff and, in particular, leaders. Through Paul Bordeaux we discovered that there were IIE courses for students and so we invited a teacher called Sarah Bird and some of her sixth form students from Ferndown School in Dorset to talk about the impact of the IIE Breakthrough course for sixth formers which they had run for the past few years. The impact of this led us to send staff to visit the Ferndown School Breakthrough course in action. As a result of this visit we trained six of our staff to be Breakthrough facilitators and we ran the three-day course for 50 of our sixth formers with great success.

As a school we were discussing the idea of promoting individual growth a great deal, particularly in relation to staff development. Also, I was having an increasing number of conversations with particular headteachers within the networks I was involved in on this issue. The heads who appeared to be lead learners shone like beacons. The chance to do some research into the concept of lead learners and how individual growth could be the focus for the leadership development needed to create leaders to transform our schools came about with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL).

The research I undertook has taken a variety of forms.

I started by reading around the subject of leadership – although there is very little on the idea of individual growth and lead learners. The majority of research is still focused on leadership style, and there is very little discussion of growth. There is an increasing amount of writing on emotional intelligence – although this is only one aspect of individual growth. I used the internet and came across many good educational sites which were obviously pushing back the boundaries of learning and these provided a lot of good ideas about individual growth.

I also tried to attend as many seminars and talks by leading educationalists as possible – and managed to hear people such as Guy Claxton, Tom Bentley, Michael Fullan, Geoff Southworth, Michael Barber and Dean Fink amongst others. These speakers gave

me some ideas, but again, few really focused on the idea of leaders being lead learners and the importance of individual growth.

A more successful research approach was meeting, discussing with, and in some cases, interviewing, headteachers. The group of headteachers who formed part of the Research Associates group were very helpful and many discussions and ideas arose from our meetings. I met, and still do meet regularly with Bob Mitchell, then head of Mount's Bay School in Penzance and now head of Bodmin School, along with Paul Bordeaux, just to talk about individual growth and moving schools forward. I have also spoken at length to heads in my sports college network; Ray Tarleton of South Dartmoor Community College, Devon and Andrew Parsons, recently retired head at Plymstock School, Plymouth. Both these heads have really made a significant difference to their schools and are clearly lead learners.

International visits have also helped my research. In particular, I went to Maine in the United States for ten days with the heads and directors of sport from the Cornwall sports colleges. In Maine we visited the Hampden Academy, a typical US high school and saw another lead learner at work; the principal, Katie Donovan. Also, we visited the University of Maine and the National Centre for Student Aspirations and developed a link with a programme that works on raising the aspirations of students by developing the conditions for growth. Aspects of this could be applied to leadership training and the Cornish sports college heads are meeting Russ Quaglia, director of the programme to see how we can take things further.

Further research has been done in our local network where three secondary schools – Callington, Liskeard and Looe – and many of our primary feeder schools are committed to developing the concept of individual growth with our students, our staff and our parents. This has begun with staff from a range of schools taking part in IIE courses, run by myself and two other staff who have trained as facilitators. A main focus of these courses is the development of leadership skills and in providing the relevant tools for individual growth.

Finally, research has been carried out by staff in action groups in my school, looking at aspects of individual growth as it relates to curriculum, assessment, staff development and leadership. It is becoming a way of being in the school.

Lead learners: The key to future success?

The key is then, I believe, to fully focus on the learning of the individual, not at the expense of, but to the benefit of teams. For this to happen effectively, schools need to change fundamentally. This will, and can only happen, if the leaders in our schools are lead learners, actively leading their own development, helping others to grow, leading the development of teaching and learning, and continually looking for improved methods and strategies to further improve our schools. Leaders in the true learning organisations of the 21st century need to be, first and foremost, lead learners.

Every organization must be prepared to abandon everything it does to survive in the future. (Drucker, 2001)

The thesis here is that schools need to move away from the needs of the institution as a whole to focus on the best interests of the individual learner.

One aim of this research is, hopefully, to help people reflect upon the possibility of looking at schools in this way. Models and strategies are discussed which should help leaders develop schools as true learning communities.

There is no limit to the extent to which a person's mind can be expanded – the only true learning is that which enables an individual to change. (Bowring-Carr and West-Burnham, 1997)

“Leadership,” as Vaill (1997) believes is “mainly learning”. And a truly effective leader in a school today is a lead learner constantly reinterpreting things already understood and letting go of these former understandings and techniques in order to continually move the school forward in the best interests of the individual learner. The lead learner is constantly pushing at the limits of their, and the schools, comfort zone. Lead learners need to be effective coaches, with a genuine interest in, an active engagement in, and the ability to develop, the learning of individuals. If leaders are lead learners, interested in and actively promoting learning in everyone, they may forever escape the ranks of the disenchanted and become “enchanted leaders” (Ronnie Woods, 2002).

The concept of the lead learner needs to colonise the whole institution through coaching and personal development to include all staff, pupils and, where possible, even parents. The process of developing lead learners draws from a number of theoretical models and moves the individual leader to a position of personal mastery and generativity. The importance of the interrelationship between leadership and learning cannot be underestimated.

To be a lead learner you have to:

- actively think about your own learning and the learning of others
- know yourself, acknowledge your strengths and weaknesses and utilise the tools to enhance your own personal growth
- be generative and look to support the growth of all other people

A lead learner will always be striving for self-improvement.

A leader as learner, according to John L. Marriotti, is:

- a leader who respects ideas and knowledge
- a leader who desires to empower the minds of those he [or she] leads
- a leader who wants to enhance the intellectual capital of his or her people
- a leader from whom there is much to learn
- a leader who is tough and has high standards but who also cares deeply about the minds and hearts of those he [or she] leads

I believe you can 'learn to lead' but only if you first 'learn to learn'. An influential and important piece of educational thinking by Vaill proposes, "learning as a way of being" for "survival in a world of permanent white water" – that is the unpredictable environment of constant change. According to Vaill's innovative philosophy of learning, white water continuously puts people in the kind of challenging situations that they have never encountered or experienced, this is similar to the current situation of constant change in education. Vaill believes that learning how to successfully navigate such change cannot be left to formal, institutional training and degree programmes, but such learning must be integrated into everyday practice.

Learning as a way of being: strategies for survival in a world of permanent white water. (Vaill, 1997)

A leader then must be a good learner – not someone who is just good at learning but someone who lives and breathes learning, the leader must be a lead learner. There is a great deal of common sense in Vaill's statement, "Leadership is mainly learning". He believes that learning is a foundational element in effective leadership and he makes several key points worth noting:

- there is no limit to the amount of learning a contemporary organisational leader may have to engage in
- the reality that leaders are facing today – they are not just attempting to survive the shocks and surprises that are buffeting them and their organisations. They are trying to be proactive at the same time, pursuing intended changes in products, services, cost structures, technologies, organisational structures and cultures – and beyond these, seeking transformative change of basic mission and purpose. It is the planning and conduct of intended changes within a highly turbulent field of uncontrolled and frequently unanticipated change that is the reality for today's managerial leaders
- learning also means reinterpreting things already understood, letting go of former understandings and techniques, even if at the level of brain physiology one never literally unlearns
- to be immersed in newness is to feel like a beginner – an important quality for leadership

- a lead learning leader is one who realises, however reluctantly, that their role requires learning
- a key learning challenge for leaders is empowerment. This is a way of acting by that results in more initiative and responsibility taking by others, with more willingness shown by others to take risks and make mistakes, and less preoccupation with clearing everything up the management line before acting. Learning to be more non-disempowering involves learning many new actions that are more supportive and facilitative. For many leaders this means learning to give up control (Vaill, 1997)

This kind of thinking is supported by the writings of Piaget who felt that “... learning should be hard as it is an opportunity to get smarter” (Smith, 1993). The skills for learning are not fully developed or even fully understood and one essential role of the lead learner is to try to understand how they and others learn and to look for ways of improving the way we all learn. Leadership is about learning – it is about learning about people, about education, about management and about leadership, but, most centrally, leadership is about learning about yourself.

Leadership is about learning, and so it is not just a destination with fixed co-ordinates on a compass, but a journey with plenty of detours and even some dead ends. Stoll, Fink and Earl (2000) believe that:

Effective educational leaders are continuously open to new learning because the journey keeps changing. Their maps are complex and can be confusing. What leaders require for this journey is a set of interrelated learnings that look at school leadership in a holistic rather than a reductionist way. These learnings can be deepened, elaborated, nurtured, abandoned and connected and related to other learnings as the journey progresses.

Leaders should be primarily focusing on helping pupils, staff and parents to develop the skills for individual growth to take a greater responsibility for their own learning. Fink (2000) describes such action as:

‘Learning to be’ – developing the all round person who possesses greater autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility, through attending to all aspects of a persons potential – mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic sense and spiritual values – such that they can understand themselves and their world, and solve their own problems.

If leadership for the 21st century school needs to be transformational in relation to learning, then present and potential leaders might ask themselves a series of questions to reflect on whether they in a position to move the school forward in this direction:

- do you consider that too much of your time spent as a leader is actually spent managing?
- are you aware as to how effective student learning is in your school?
- are you interested in student learning and in finding ways to improve it?
- do you actively encourage your teaching staff and other staff to reflect on their work?
- are you always looking for ways to improve people and your organisation?
- do you lead your own learning and take responsibility for challenging yourself?
- do you expect all your staff to learn?
- do you challenge the learning process in your school?
- are you a lead learner?
- do you try to understand yourself?
- do you actively work at improving your weaknesses?

In order to become a lead learner the starting point has to be the development of the individual. Everyone should be encouraged to be a lead learner and so the concept is applicable to everyone connected with a school – staff, students and parents. The growth of the individual has to be the foundation for other learning and must provide the base for growing leaders. The need is for people to understand themselves, to recognise their strengths and weaknesses and to see a value to learning and to self-improvement. If the right tools are provided to develop the skills for an individual to continually aim for successively higher levels of personal mastery then the motivation to learn can be created.

... personal mastery... embodies two underlying movements. The first is continually clarifying what is important to us... the second is continually learning how to see current reality more clearly... (Senge, 1993)

The process of individual growth is vital for leaders. It helps them to understand themselves (and how can you expect to understand the needs of others if you cannot understand yourself) and it helps develop the skills to live and work in today's world. People need not only to understand themselves but to be able to work well with others, and most importantly for leaders to ultimately support the growth of others by being generative. Through focusing on individual growth we can develop the self-confidence of our leaders, our teachers, our students and other people connected to our schools. Self-confidence depends on whether:

- we feel accepted as a person
- we have had basic human love (from our parents?)
- we have the confidence to take on responsibility
- we have felt free within strict limits
- we have felt that someone believed in our talent and prospects

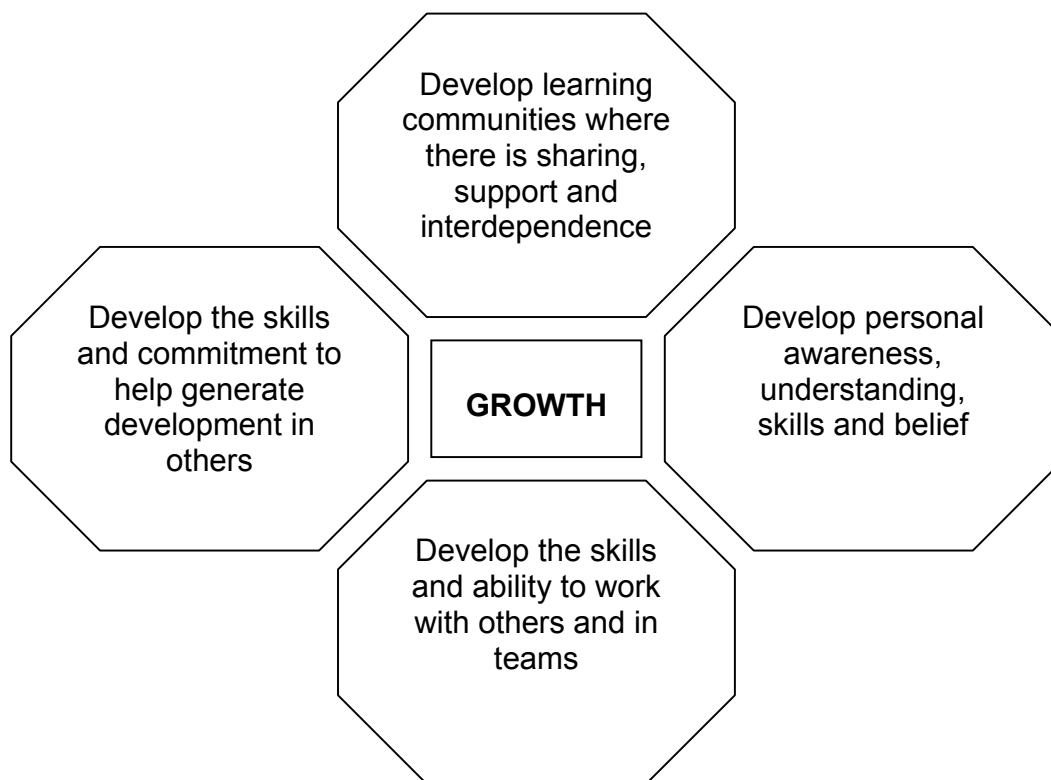
Unfortunately some leaders and teachers destroy self-confidence by always looking for faults. The development of self-confidence, for self and others, is an important part of being a lead learner. The key to developing lead learners is to focus on the development of the skills and tools needed to encourage individual growth.

Discovering yourself and developing personal mastery and generativity is central to becoming a lead learner. However, it is also the way in which a leader behaves that contributes to them becoming a lead learner. Lead learners teach, instruct, walk the talk; they model, read, research, talk teaching and learning, visualise teaching and learning and they value each individual person.

I believe the focus for the future development of schools needs to be centred on the individual learner, at all ages, to identify and satisfy their learning preferences with the aim of raising standards for all. It is this concept of promoting individual growth that, I believe, should be central to every leader's vision.

This process of individual growth (see Figure 1) starts with helping all individuals to believe they have a unique contribution to make to their community, to develop in them the skills to understand and value themselves, as well as encouraging them to see that they have the potential to improve.

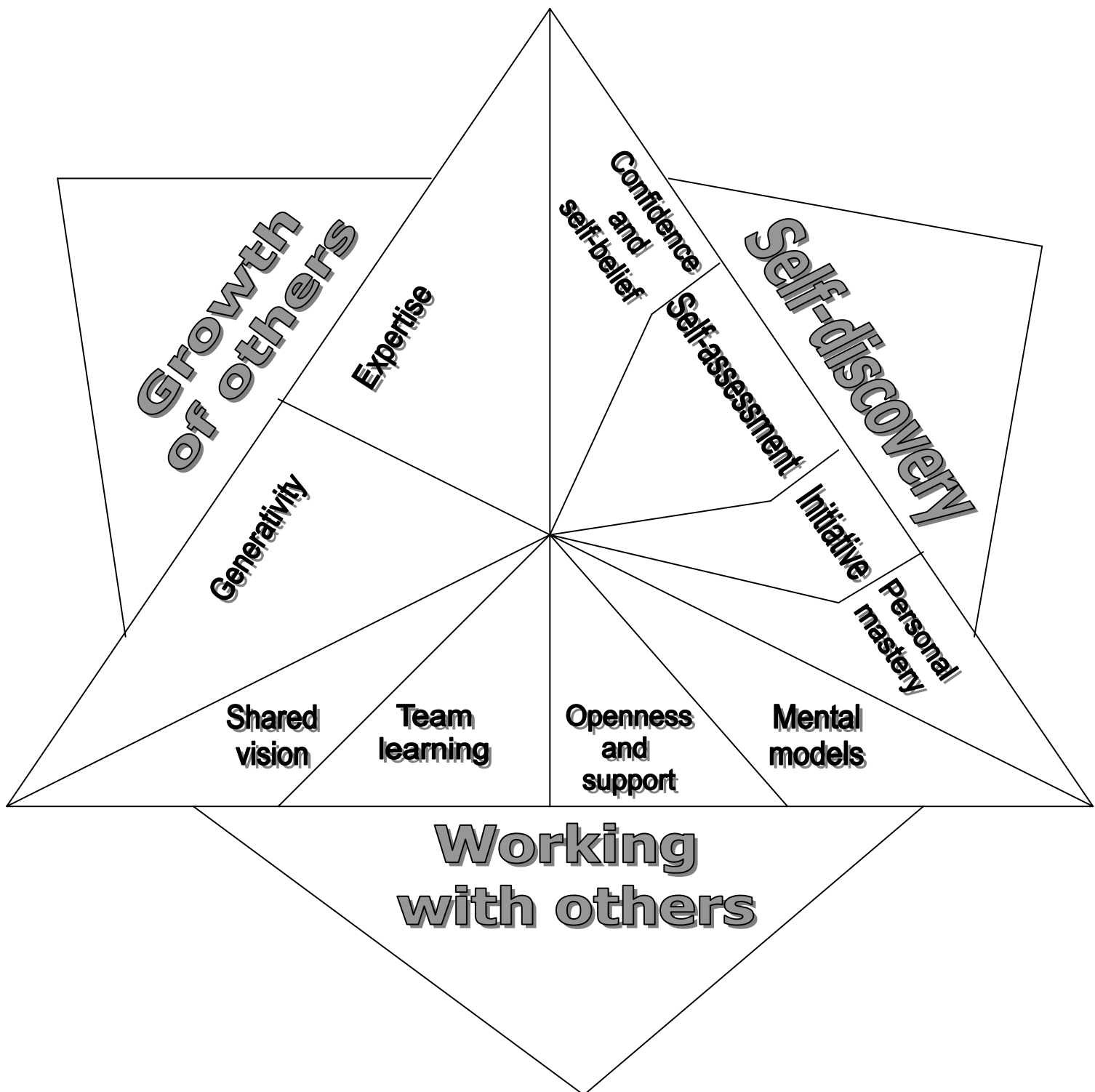
Figure 1: Individual, team and organisational growth



A crucial stage is to create a professional learning community where there is support and interdependence within the group, which is further enhanced by each member of the team possessing a solid self-understanding. This self-knowledge is then combined with looking outward – noticing the gifts and talents of others, as well as valuing the diversity of thought and experiences expressed by the others. When people are confident enough in their own abilities, they help nurture the development of others. The benefits of this kind of personal growth are potentially enormous, but to make it happen we need to

develop the skills and desire in people to take responsibility for their own learning – we need to get everyone to want to learn.

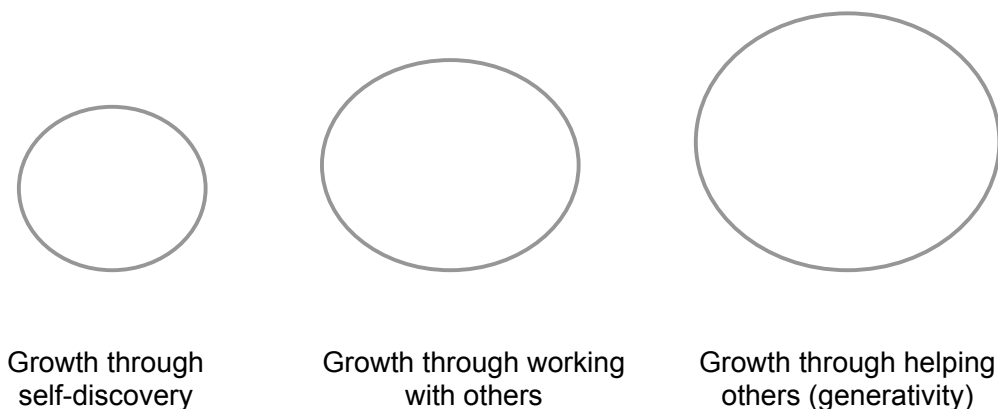
Figure 2: The Growth Star – for individuals, teams and organisations



I try to ensure that this vision of individual growth as a means of raising achievement and developing lifelong learners is central to whole school planning and development. Development planning, performance management, internal reviews and staff development should, I believe, use the framework for individual growth as a guide.

If we are successful in promoting the concept of individual growth we create true learning communities where everyone is continually learning and developing themselves whilst at the same time learning from and supporting the learning of others.

Figure 3



A lot more can be said about how much of an impact the concept of individual growth is having on my school, Callington Community College. We are changing to a more individualised curriculum, looking at individual learning plans, radically changing our assessment system, giving all students a personal tutor, and providing the tools for developing individual growth through running courses such as IIE's Go for it and Breakthrough, and putting in place a number of citizenship related programmes.

This focus on individual growth requires a particular perspective on leadership:

- the focus is always on the positive. People want to feel good about themselves and they look to leaders for this. People need to feel part of a positive environment if they are to be encouraged and have the confidence to grow
- leaders in this frame of mind make things happen for individuals. This not only makes people feel good and supportive of the leader, it also generates a feeling of momentum, and positive emotion is generated
- the leader models being the lead learner and encourages intellectual growth. Through this they build the capacity of their school. They grow their own teachers and leaders, they extend individuals, and they invest heavily in continuous professional development, set challenging targets and reward staff who respond to the challenge

- lead learners float ideas and get people thinking – then someone will make connections to help move things forward

There are many good examples of lead learners at work and where people have been encouraged to grow. Often people are naturally behaving as a lead learner or encouraging individual growth without really being aware of it. To recognise this I have highlighted some examples from a range of schools:

- Sheila Wallis, headteacher at Davison High School, Worthing is encouraging individual growth through the 'Expert Trail'. The Expert Trail is a continuing professional development (CPD) programme designed to encourage all staff to take responsibility for their own development. There are five levels, each with specific criteria designed to help people become better teachers and to develop themselves. Teachers decide when they are ready to be assessed against the criteria. When a teacher reaches level three they are rewarded by additional salary points.
- Callington Community College is encouraging individual growth through the IIE course. This is five days long and quite expensive! It is a course that operates for people from all backgrounds and is about helping people to understand themselves, to raise their self-esteem and to give them tools to develop themselves and others. Eighteen months ago six teachers went through the IIE course. Each one was significantly affected in their own way by the experience. One person in particular was transformed. She said, "Following the course I felt that anything I wanted to do I could do – what may have been impossible obstacles I now found could be got round, I just needed to approach them differently". The real impact of IIE was on the rest of the staff, who witnessed the change in the staff who had experienced the course. These staff were very positive, less stressed and were making things happen. I also went on the course and it not only helped me to understand myself but I also saw the potential to raise standards in the school by putting everyone through the course.
- Ray Tarleton, headteacher at South Dartmoor School, Ashburton, Devon is the best example of a lead learning headteacher I have met. He is perpetually looking at ways of developing learning for his students and staff. There are many good initiatives happening at his school, but one relatively small thing he has done is to encourage staff development through allowing them the freedom to take on initiatives and then rewarding them financially. What this has created is a school of lead learners that is dynamic and ever improving with the obvious benefits to the learning of the students.
- Darren Holmes, headteacher at Jesmond Road Primary School, Hartlepool is convinced of the benefits of coaching as a way of developing and encouraging individual growth. All the staff in Darren's school are coached to grow as individuals, providing them with guidance, tools and strategies to develop.
- Pam Flood, Ruth Fitzpatrick and Russ Quaglia at the University of Maine, United States, National Centre for Student Aspirations have developed a programme focused on developing students to their full potential. It is centred on eight conditions for growth. There is a training programme and materials for students, staff and parents.

- Bob Mitchell, whilst headteacher at Mounts Bay School in Penzance set up a learning forum for his staff. This was run by the staff and is a forum in which teaching and learning ideas and practice can be shared and discussed.
- Both Callington Community College and South Dartmoor Community College are training schools. This has involved all teaching staff in the schools being involved in the training of student teachers. As a result, both schools have witnessed significant individual growth in their staff as teachers have not only had to become reflective practitioners, they have also had the opportunity to get involved in the training of teachers in a wide range of ways, from mentoring to leading video conference sessions on teaching and learning.
- All the people interviewed or met during the period of research who I considered to be lead learners had the solid base of being very comfortable with themselves. This characteristic was displayed in the way that they were all very generative, more concerned with giving and developing others than concerned with how things reflected upon them. They were all also constantly learning and keen to move themselves and their schools forward.

Strategies for developing lead learners

If, as this paper is proposing, we need to radically rethink leadership in schools – the approach to and understanding of leadership, the type of leaders needed, the preparation and development of leaders – then we need some strategies as a starting point. The strategies outlined below are offered as ideas to reflect upon.

Strategy 1

As an individual develop yourself as a lead learner.

- look inside yourself and honestly assess your strengths and weaknesses (one way to do this is through an appropriate course, such as IIE or by using appropriate reading material to guide you)
- develop the tools to develop yourself (self talk, visualisation, resilience). Again, you may need support in doing this
- take responsibility for your own actions and development
- accept that you are not perfect and focus on further developing and utilising your strengths
- develop a capacity to constantly reflect and to assess if improvements can be made
- when you achieve real personal mastery you become generative – supporting the growth of others without wanting reflective glory

Strategy 2

Develop leadership in all people including students and staff. Promote the idea of all people being lead learners – interested in and taking responsibility for their own development.

- set up programmes for students, such as Junior Sports Leader Award, Duke of Edinburgh Award and other citizenship-related programmes
- develop leadership programmes with student teachers
- focus CPD on leadership development programmes at all levels, from main scale teacher to senior management
- provide leadership opportunities for all staff – this may be expensive but all staff should be encouraged to grow
- develop a CPD programme, such as the Expert Trail to encourage the development of lead learners

Strategy 3

Establish the concept of individual growth in your school. Value the concept, make it work and make it available for all.

- there are a range of ways of doing this – it could be by an in-house programme, although a ready-made, very effective programme is provided by the Pacific Institute entitled Investment in Excellence. This has programmes for adults, sixth formers, Key Stage 3 students, for primary pupils, and for parents

- develop the concept of individual growth by treating everyone as individuals – personal tutoring, individual interviews, individual learning plans, individual targets, personalised curriculum, and so on
- establish the value of respect in your school – respect for yourself and for others – by modelling it
- develop a belief system that values individuals and personal mastery. There are many systems available but one that is tried and tested, with development materials available for teachers, students and parents, is the National Centre of Student Aspirations eight conditions for growth

Strategy 4

Redevelop leadership training and create sustainability by growing your own leaders.

- think about what you want from your leaders in relation to learning. Don't necessarily just replace one leader with another of the same type or even into the same role
- find or develop a leadership training programme that meet the needs of learning in your school
- create flexible opportunities for all staff to be leaders – many staff will surprise you and you will not only energise your staff, you will grow leaders of your own. It is vital that any opportunities you generate are done so openly and without favour, purely on merit or potential

Strategy 5

Scan the educational world and establish your view of where education is going and what kind of schools we need to create. Then establish a shared vision.

- create networks, attend some conferences, read journals and books, get involved in research, develop a view about where education is going
- establish a vision. This could start as an idea and be developed by others but it is important to get people talking about moving the school forward

Final thoughts

Individual growth helps you to know yourself and as a lead learner you can develop yourself and others. I hope this paper has stimulated some thoughts in you. As leaders we need to grow ourselves if we are to grow others. We are fortunate, I believe, in education to be able to give real life opportunities to people of all ages. As leaders we have every opportunity to be generative and to make a real difference. My hope is that generativity becomes the central feature of our future leaders in our future schools.

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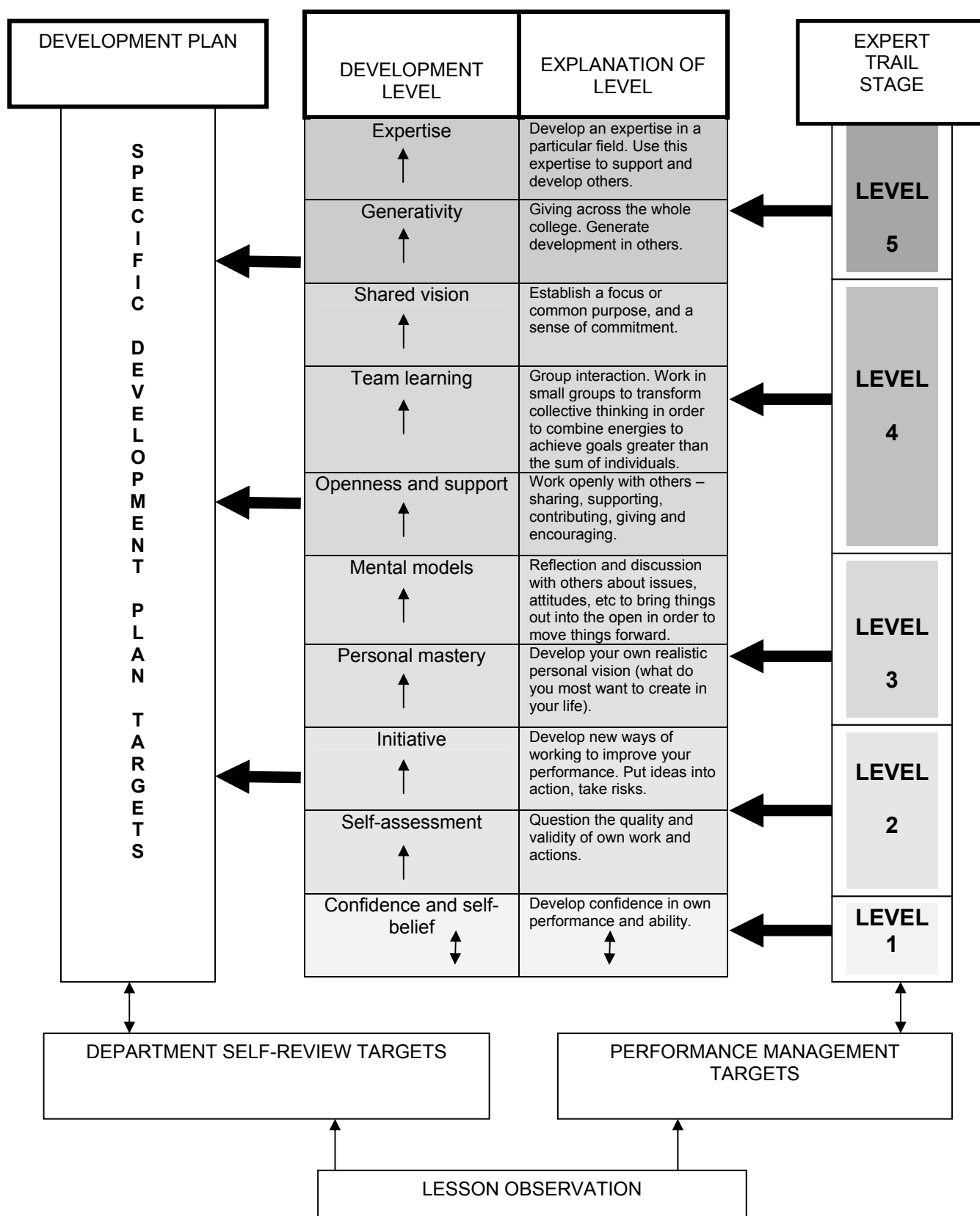
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Appendix 1: Framework for individual, team and organisational growth for the 21st century school



Guidance for individual, team and organisational growth

DEVELOPMENT LEVEL	EXPLANATION OF LEVEL	GUIDANCE	SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
Expertise	Develop an expertise in a particular field. Use this expertise to support and develop others.	'Less is more'. Ensure development of expertise rather than a superficial understanding of multiple skills and knowledge.	Expertise, coaching, mentoring, generativity
Generativity	Giving across the whole college. Generate development in others.	Focus on supporting the development of others, finding ways of helping others to progress through the levels.	Coaching, mentoring, generativity
Shared vision	Establish a focus or common purpose, and a sense of commitment.	Ensure that your efforts are collectively aligned with others in your group or organisation.	Tolerance, respect, understanding, team skills
Team learning	Group interaction. Work in small groups to transform collective thinking in order to combine energies to achieve goals greater than the sum of individuals.	Work in teams to achieve results and to further develop your group skills.	Team skills
Openness and support	Work openly with others – sharing, supporting, contributing, giving and encouraging.	Learn to trust and work with others in order to enhance your own learning and the learning of others.	Coaching, mentoring, trust
Mental models	Reflection and discussion with others about issues, attitudes, etc to bring things out into the open in order to move things forward.	Share views and ideas with others and learn tolerance and self-expression.	Reflection, tolerance, self-expression
Personal mastery	Develop your own realistic personal vision (what do you most want to create in your life).	Set realistic personal goals and use affirmations to achieve them.	Affirmations, visualisation
Initiative	Develop new ways of working to improve your performance. Put ideas into action, take risks.	Extend your comfort zone. Always seek to improve.	Thinking, lateral thinking
Self-assessment	Question the quality and validity of own work and actions.	Identify your strengths and weaknesses. Analyse self.	Self-analysis, judgment
Confidence and self-belief	Develop confidence in own performance and ability.	Develop positive mental images, use self-talk and visualisation.	Self-talk, visualisation

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