Building Learning Power

Independent Schools Victoria has introduced Building Learning Power (BLP) to its Member Schools. The BLP three-year project has been developed in conjunction with Professor Guy Claxton, Research Director at the Centre for Real-World Learning, University of Winchester in the United Kingdom.

BLP better prepares young people for an uncertain future. Today’s schools need to be educating students not just for exam results but for lifelong learning. To thrive in the 21st century, it is not enough to leave school with a clutch of examination scores. Students need to have learned how to be tenacious and resourceful, imaginative and logical, self-disciplined and self-aware, collaborative and inquisitive.

BLP systematically helps students develop the general habits of mind that underpin confident, curious and creative learning. It works on helping young people to become better learners, both in school and out, and systematically cultivates habits and attitudes that enable young people to face difficulty and uncertainty calmly, confidently and creatively. This work has demonstrated that students who are more confident of their own learning ability learn faster and learn better. They concentrate more, think harder and find learning more enjoyable.

Participation in this Independent Schools Victoria – initiated project is providing wonderful opportunities to build learning power, and includes two visits each year to participating schools by Professor Claxton and ongoing professional support from Independent Schools Victoria. Participating schools identify in-school champion/s (one or two people per school) to lead the project within the school and facilitate in-school learning. These people will have additional meetings and training with Professor Claxton and Professor Bill Lucas, together with Independent Schools Victoria support throughout the project.
A small number of schools are already participating in this project, where they are being guided and supported in putting BLP into practice, and introducing skills and behaviours that will enable students to thrive in the complex and uncertain world in which they are living.

In visits to the schools towards the end of second term, the enthusiasm and commitment of the in school project working groups and clear support from school leadership were evident. Each school is working on its own clearly defined project, distributing questionnaires, collecting baseline data, exploring ideas and seeing and making connections between BLP and their own goals for teaching and learning this year.

The project in schools has commenced with the development of an Action-Research project, creating a Research Question, distributing Action Research questions for Expansive Education or the Learning Power Questionnaire, reframing the way tasks are introduced and the use of questioning strategies, exhibitions of student work, coaching days, independent learning days and more – and this is just the beginning.

It has been a very strong start and we encourage Member Schools to keep an eye on this space.

For further information, please contact Karin Morrison, Director, The Development Centre via email or on (03) 9825 7208.