

What habits do good learners have?

Curiosity (engage and puzzle things out beneath the surface; are open-minded; look for new perspectives and interests; go deeper in to own understanding; ask good pertinent, productive questions; challenge and don't take yes for an answer; healthily skeptical; remain open to continuous learning)

Courage (not afraid of uncertainty or complexity; confidence to say 'I don't know', up for a challenge; willing to take responsible risks and try something new; stick with things that are difficult; put in hours of hard work as necessary; bounce back from mistakes; understand mistakes are for learning from; patient and persistent; not afraid of failure; able to reappraise the need to know)

Exploration (like finding things out; enthusiastic researchers; attend carefully and mindfully to situations, take time and don't jump to conclusions; concentrate; sift and evaluate; trust in good evidence; capitalise on resources; opportunistic; alive to new possibilities and resources, absorbed in learning)

Experimentation (like to try things out; tune and adjust things/skills; enjoy looking at work in progress; redraft and revise; mess about to uncover the potential of situations, materials, people; try different approaches; make mistakes)

Imagination (use the creative test bed of inner world to generate and explore possibilities; know value of running 'mental simulations'; good at mental rehearsal, practise and smooth performance in mind's eye; make use of reverie; respect and scepticism for own hunches and intuition; know how to test and check; find links and make connections inside mind; use imagery, analogy and metaphor; put oneself in other people's shoes; look at world from perspectives that are not one's own)

Rigour (ability to think carefully, rigorously and methodically' analyse and evaluate as well as take imaginative leap; hard thinking; construct and follow rigorous trains of thought; apply past knowledge to new situations; create explanations that are clear and which lead to new ideas/predictions; spot holes in own arguments; create plans and structures to support learning but open to serendipity and to thinking again; craft things and apply knowledge and skill to balance more creative 'brainwaves'; strive for accuracy; think and communicate with clarity, feel and express wonderment and awe; seek coherence, relevance and meaning; draw out lessons from experience)

Dialogue (know how to make good use of the social space of learning; happy to collaborate, share ideas and resources; effective team members; give views whilst holding debate; open-minded; give feedback and suggestions skillfully and receive graciously; pick up useful strategies/perspectives from others; socially discerning; know when to talk and when not; judiciously balance sociability with solitariness; listen with understanding and empathy; managing distractions; find humour; think interdependently)

Reflectiveness (think carefully and step back to take stock; examine assumptions; mull over own modus operandi; consider alternative strategies/possibilities; don't get stuck being too over-reflective, analytical or self-critical; self aware; contemplate own habits/strengths/weaknesses; think strategically about how to get stronger and more rounded in approach; use rich vocab for talking about learning and self as learner; not stuck in view of self as 'bright' or 'average')

(Ideas developed from Art Costa www.artcostacentre.com, Alexandria VA 'Discovering and Exploring Habits of Mind'; Guy Claxton 'Building Learning Power' and 'What's the Point of School', Robin Alexander 'Dialogic Teaching')

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