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Progression skills module 4: Getting ahead: personal learning and thinking skills

Teacher notes

Department for Education

Progression skills module 4: Getting ahead: personal learning and thinking skills

Teacher notes

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Preface to Progression skills modules

Aims of this series

Progression skills modules are designed to support schools in delivering practical pupil workshops to help focus gifted and talented (G&T) or potential gifted and talented pupils to aim high and achieve their best. For example, over the course of the series, pupils will be asked to assess their prior achievements and successes, as well as some of the barriers they have overcome and may still face; they will reflect on what it means to be gifted and/or talented and how this may impact on their identity; they will be supported with strategies for learning and achieving the highest grades and they will be encouraged to think ahead and plan for an ambitious future. Although the materials are designed with Key Stage 4 in mind, they can easily be adapted for use with younger pupils as appropriate.

Each skills module comprises:

- a teacher or tutor guide with notes, plans and resources for a sequence of workshops;
- linked pupil handouts to accompany the activities (pupils' handouts are also supplied in these teacher notes);
- linked presentation slides

How to use these resources

Each progression skills module consists of a number of workshops that are designed to last for up to 90 minutes. However, these can be adapted and used selectively, as separate activities, with gap tasks for pupils to complete independently.

It will be helpful to provide pupils' handouts as a workbook for pupils to keep and use. Pupils' handouts have been offered in Word™ format to provide schools with the flexibility to adapt and tailor them to their own needs. Some of the handouts, such as the *Progression workshop contract, Handout 1: Top tips for action* and *Handout 2: The good word guide*, are the same in every module, to encourage pupils actively to capture learning and apply it elsewhere. Similarly *Handout 18: Conclusion: how to learn from this workshop* is provided in every module for pupils to read for themselves. Teachers should prompt pupils to use these pages.

The activities can work with small groups of pupils or larger groups, but a minimum membership of six is recommended. The optimum group size is 10 to 15 pupils. The social networks built up in these skills workshops are a key to their success and it is important to try and create new friendships and peer groups by bringing different types of pupils together. For example, passive compliant pupils could be encouraged to work with more extrovert pupils; bright under-achieving pupils may benefit from working with high-achieving pupils. Schools and local authorities (LAs) may wish to consider pooling resources with other schools and working collaboratively on providing opportunities for their pupils to work together in the Progression skills workshops. Teachers who run workshops for larger groups will find it helpful to recruit mentors to support small-group and paired work. Non-teaching staff or older pupils, for example Year 12 and Year 13 students, can be briefed for this role. Ensure every adult in the room knows how to facilitate rather than tell; at every opportunity they should encourage pupils to think about how the topics link back to their everyday lives, and how they may use what they have learned to change their future.

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Some practical tips

Before workshops start, set up the room with all the chairs in a U-shape or circle (or two U-shapes, one inside the other) around the centre of the room. The mentors' and teachers' chairs should be part of the circle or U-shape. Place name stickers on each chair and arrange for the pupils to be in mixed groups. Try to avoid friendship groups. Explain that the learning objectives include developing social skills and building new social networks. It is good for pupils to work with people they don't know.

Explain how important it is to build up friendships in life beyond school and that college and university students enjoy making new friends, once they get over the initial awkwardness.

Optional: Ask mentors (or a few pupils) to take responsibility for a camera and take pictures throughout the workshop. They can put these pictures onto a screensaver slide show and play this and music at appropriate times, and in future workshops.

Useful resources

- Laptop, slides and music or relevant, illustrative movie clips
- Music list
- Slide presentations
- Camera
- Flipchart paper, pens and reusable sticky pads
- Sticky notes
- Paper
- Pens
- Glue
- Pupils' handouts
- Envelopes
- Name stickers

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Key themes and objectives addressed in this skills module

Key theme or concept	Main aims and goals	Pupils' starting points	Outcomes
Getting ahead – learning to learn (personal learning and thinking skills)	Developing learning skills that enable the highest level of achievement, e.g. critical thinking skills; study skills; independent research skills	Has not acquired the attributes and skills for attaining higher grades Dependent on teacher support May have poor study skills and be unable to tackle challenge independently	Knows what to do when an independent study task is set Has strategies to support tackling new and challenging tasks

This module will answer the following questions:

- What do I know about independent study/revision skills?
- What do I know about critical thinking skills?
- What do I know about research skills?

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1 Introduction: you can make it happen!

Objectives

- To set the context and motivate and enthuse pupils
- To develop their understanding of what it means to be gifted and talented in terms of learning
- To consider the skills they may need to become the most successful student they can possibly be

Resources

Progression workshop contract handout

Handout 1: Top tips for action

Handout 2: The good word guide

Handout 3: Pupil skills self-assessment

Handout 4: Pupil skills log

Handout 5: Skills for success (optional)

Slide 2: Skills for success

Flipchart paper and pens

Reusable sticky pads

Sticky notes

Important note: Make sure pupils are aware of and encouraged to use *Handout 1: Top tips for action* and *Handout 2: The good word guide*. It will be helpful to print off multiple copies for pupils of *Handout 4: Pupil skills log* as required.

Activity

Explain who everyone is, why they are all here and, in particular, why the pupils are here. Read the *Progression workshop contract* handout together to make the expectations clear to everyone. Congratulate pupils for taking the time and effort to improve their study skills.

Ask pupils what they think makes 'gifted' and 'talented' pupils successful at learning. Collect their thoughts on sticky notes and attach them to flipcharts around the room. Mentors should help.

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You may find it helpful to show slide 2 and draw their attention to *Handout 5: Skills for success*, which will be used in more detail later in the module.

Encourage pupils to look at all the notes around the room to see if there are any there they hadn't included.

Ask pupils what skills they think are required to achieve this success – list these on a flipchart.

Then ask them to complete *Handout 3: Pupil skills self-assessment*, filling in both columns:

- Skills I have
- Skills I need to develop

Note: This task will provide teachers with evidence of pupils' starting points for this module. You will return to this summary later in the module. Point out that pupils will begin to learn and develop these skills throughout this series of workshops. Teachers will need to tailor and/or supplement the workshops to suit the skills needs of their pupils.

Ask pupils what they are expecting: what they have been told or have heard about the Gifted and Talented programme so far. Use this as a basis to build confidence and reinforce the message of individuality and individual journeys. If necessary, correct any erroneous assumptions about the programme. Talk about the aims of this series of workshops, in particular:

- to gain increased self-awareness;
- to develop the skills and expertise they need to achieve their best;
- to help pupils identify and develop their hopes and ambitions and begin to see a pathway towards realising them.

Optional task

Lead a discussion about why it might be useful for pupils to understand themselves better. Record the responses on a flipchart for later reference. A pupil can be asked to do this for the group.

Take it further

Develop pupils' metacognition (self-awareness of personal study skills in lessons, strengths and areas for development) by asking them to keep a learning log for the next few weeks and note the skills they are using on *Handout 4: Pupil skills log*.

Ask them to bring their log to the next workshop. Teachers will find this information useful for individual support and mentoring. The log will be referred to again in *Workshop 9: So what have I learned?*

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2 So what are study skills?

Objectives

- To define the skills that are necessary for higher level learning
- To evaluate which we use where/when
- To identify pupils' skills gaps
- To make links to everyday life and work

Resources

Handout 5: Skills for success

Slide 3: A day in the life of…a teacher

Flipchart and pens

Sticky notes

Activities

1 Brainstorm – What do I do when I study and learn?

Explain that this workshop will improve pupils' understanding of what exactly they do when they learn. If they understand this process they can more effectively improve their learning. The word for this awareness is 'metacognition'. Even more important is the link between these skills and everyday life – the understanding that transferable skills can be used for all sorts of purposes.

Pupils who have completed learning logs from the Take it further task in Workshop 1 can lead this activity, starting off by summarising what skills they have used most since the previous workshop.

Split the pupils into two groups.

Ask group 1 to think of as many study skills as they can and write each item on a separate sticky note. Point out that a skill is something you can transfer to a range of contexts in life and is useful beyond the classroom. Display the notes on a large sheet of flipchart paper. The teacher or tutor may wish to add skills from their own teaching and learning. The aim is to have as rich a range as possible.

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For example:

- Listen carefully
- Make notes
- Read
- Discuss
- Answer questions
- Evaluate own work
- Write essays
- Practise against the clock
- Memorise
- Listen to classmates
- Organise ideas or tasks
- Time management

Ask group 2 to make a list of all the different learning tasks they have been asked to do this week at home or in school. You may need two sheets of flipchart paper – display these on the wall.

For example:

- Revision
- Investigate sources
- Learn from books
- Carry out an experiment
- Prepare coursework or essay
- Solve a problem
- Complete a project
- Work in groups
- Study articles on the internet
- Prepare arguments or debates
- Apply new knowledge
- Evaluate answers
- Work in a group or team

Bring the groups together. Ask them to work together to match the appropriate skills to each of the learning tasks. Help them to notice any gaps or patterns or other observations about the match or mismatch between the groups. Restate the importance of developing skills for success that they can all learn and practise.

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Optional task: A day in the life of…

Ask pupils to analyse the information on slide 3 and list the skills that a teacher would need to get through a day like this. You may wish to reproduce this slide as a handout for pupils.

This task could be repeated with a different sort of daily job, or you could talk through your day and ask pupils to note down at each task what skills are required.

Alternatively, ask pupils in trios to write up a day in the life of one of their parents, or a friend or sibling; then list the skills that the person uses in a day.

Ask a few pupils to present their work using the title: 'Skills for life'. Make the link between these skills and their learning. Make the point that many of the study skills they will be developing will transfer to other parts of their lives.

Take it further

Explain that very successful pupils share important characteristics that they too can develop with support and practice.

Using *Handout 5: Skills for success*, ask pupils to consider each characteristic of a successful learner and score themselves from 1–5, where 1 is very weak and 5 very strong. Ask them to try to identify the skills and strategies that will help them address the areas that score less than 3 and write their ideas in the final column.

Review pupils' responses to support planning for future workshops.

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3 Reading

Objectives

- To explore five different reading skills
- To understand the purpose of each and when to use them
- To practise skills of reading

Resources

Handout 6: Five ways to improve reading: skim, scan, speed read, read for meaning, read for pleasure

Handout 7: Street gangs

Handout 8: Read a book in 20 minutes: the time challenge

Slide 4: Five ways to improve reading

Flipchart and pens

Activities

1 Reading is important!

Explain that reading adds value to your learning by going beyond the textbook and the basic minimum that can be covered in lessons. Pupils who gain the highest grades will have demonstrated they have wider knowledge of a topic, they have more examples to compare and contrast, they can add detail and depth to their answers and they have the confidence to know what they are writing about. (This draws on and develops work in *Progression skills module 2: Getting ahead in learning* (00036-2010PDF-EN-03)). They will have developed some very significant transferable skills that will help them in study and also in their working and adult life.

Once pupils have mastered the skills in this workshop they will never again be daunted by a reading list!

Task

Ask pupils to work in threes and list on a flipchart all the formal and informal reading they may do over the course of a week. For example:

- checking email;
- reading texts;
- opening mail;
- reading a newspaper;
- reading a book;
- reading over work;
- reading an exam paper;
- noticing adverts on TV or on the road, train or bus.

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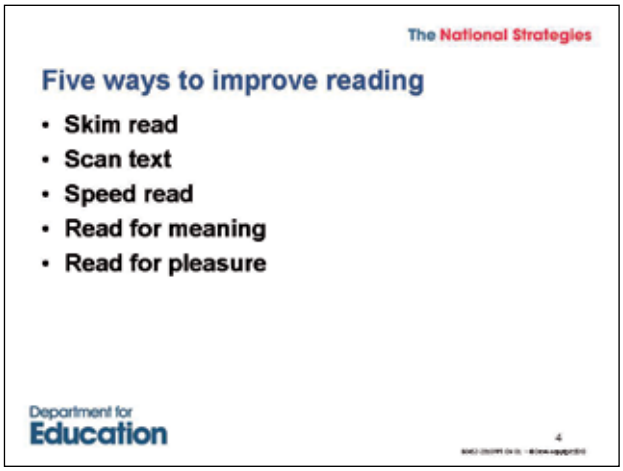
Show slide 4 and refer pupils to *Handout 6: Five ways to improve reading: skim, scan, speed read, read for meaning, read for pleasure*. Briefly discuss the five strategies and ask pupils to add examples of when they use these techniques already:



Refer back to the flipchart. Ask pupils to indicate which type of reading they use in each case.

Discussion point

Ask:

- *Which type of reading do you use most often?*
- *Which type of reading do you need to develop further?*

Optional activity

Use a written source such as *Handout 7: Street gangs*, or an article from a broadsheet newspaper or similar level of material to practise one of the above skills. If you have time, practise all five techniques.

Take it further

Challenge pupils to read a book in 20 minutes. Explain that this task will build their confidence and develop their understanding of how to use a textbook for study. It will save them lots of time and help them find the most useful extra reading to support their learning.

Pupils should use a textbook that was recommended in one of their subjects, or ask a teacher or tutor for suggestions. Their aim is to find out what is in the book that may help them with a current subject-related written task, without having to read it all word for word. In order to do this, advise pupils to use the skim reading techniques given on *Handout 6: Five ways to improve reading: skim, scan, speed read, read for meaning, read for pleasure*.

They should consider what they find and how it will support their current coursework or class work, recording their findings on *Handout 8: Read a book in 20 minutes: the time challenge*, and be prepared to share their findings at the next workshop.

Pupils can also share their summary with the tutor or teacher who recommended the book to get feedback on how accurately they have summed it up.

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4 Précis

Objectives

- To understand the purpose of précis
- To practise précis
- To consider how to use précis to improve learning

Resources

Handout 7: Street gangs

Handout 9: Précis

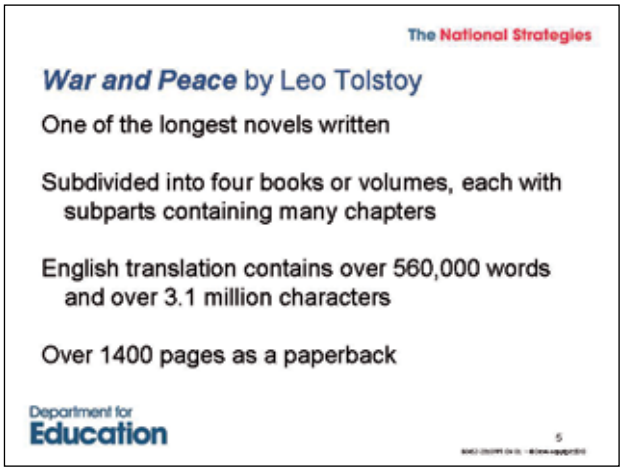
Slide 5: *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy

Slide 6: Précis is not easy

Activities

1 What is a précis and why would I use it?

Show slide 5.



Imagine being able to tell the story of *War and Peace* in a page! Explain to pupils that a précis is a shortened summary of a piece of writing or an argument or a report. It is not meant to present any of your views on, or responses to, the text. It is an entirely factual 'replica' of the original piece but significantly shortened. It is a very useful skill for note-making or recording what you have read or heard accurately. For that reason it is useful for revision, for preparing for a discussion, a piece of coursework or an exam. A Level pupils and university students have to be able to do this. In adult life it is also useful for summing up and communicating effectively with people and organisations (e.g. in a letter, briefly summing up a sequence of events).

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Task

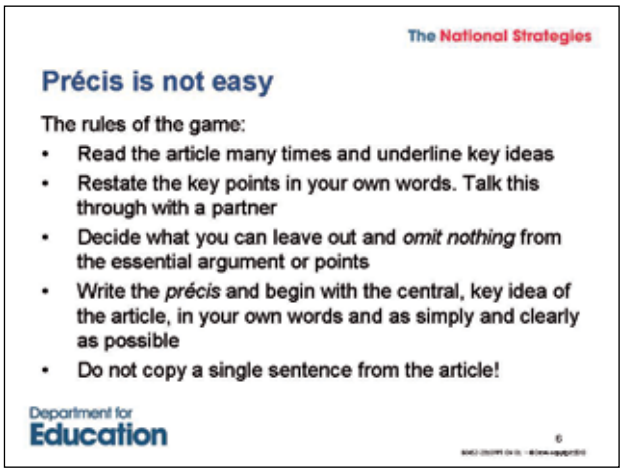
Divide pupils into groups of three, and ask them to:

- think of an example of when they had to summarise – even informally (e.g. telling a friend what happened on a holiday; writing a report of a football match for a school newsletter);
- think of an example of parents or family using a précis (e.g. reporting on an accident for an insurance claim);
- consider how they could use the ability to summarise or précis in their current schoolwork.

2 Let's DO it!

Refer pupils to *Handout 7: Street gangs* or a similar text. Tell pupils that they are going to work in pairs to write a précis or summary of the text in about 100 words.

Show slide 6 and refer pupils to *Handout 9: Précis*.



Before they start, discuss the following strategy for writing a précis.

1. Read the article/text very carefully using the reading skills already learned (*Workshop 3: Reading*). Annotate and underline any important points and unfamiliar words, and add these to *Handout 2: The good word guide*.
2. Identify the key points and the main steps in any argument, storyline or discussion.
3. Try to reduce the text to one-quarter or less of its original length without copying any sentences. Aim to use your own words, apart from any key technical words the author has used.
4. Many documents have more than one theme; paragraph your précis accordingly. You do not have to describe the ideas conveyed by the text in the order in which they appear, but aim to give a sense of their importance in your précis.

Optional task

Pupils compare their efforts, awarding each other marks out of 10 for:

- accuracy;
- clarity;
- sticking to the rules!

Pupils then consider the following:

- Which subjects they may want to use this technique with.

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- Three benefits of précis to persuade a friend why they should have a go.
- What key tips they would recommend in order to help someone improve their précis skills.
- Why might a doctor, lawyer or policeman use précis skills, and when?

Take it further

Pupils practise their précis skills by repeating the same task with the current play or novel they are working on in English, and compare their work in groups at the next workshop.

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5 So what is critical thinking and why do I need it?

Objectives

- To further develop critical thinking skills from *Progression skills module 2: Getting ahead in learning* (00036-2010PDF-EN-03)
- To provide a method for questioning and judging sources and texts

Resources

Handout 10: Critical thinking and question skills for A*

Handout 11: Critical thinking scenarios (teachers may wish to provide their own stimulus texts and scenarios based on the local context)

Slide 7: Critical thinking is essential to…

Slide 8: Critical thinking scenario 1

Slide 9: Critical thinking scenario 2

Slide 10: Critical thinking scenario 3

Important note: This workshop develops work started in *Progression skills module 1: Who am I?* (00031-2010PDF-EN-01) and *Progression Skills Module 2: Getting ahead in learning* (00036-2010PDF-EN-03). Both these modules can be accessed at **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** by searching using the reference numbers.

Activities

What are critical thinking skills?

Explain to pupils that we are continually bombarded by information from the media – on radio, on TV, in papers and online, and if we are to respond and act intelligently we need to have a way of interpreting and judging (or evaluating) what we are hearing and seeing.

Critical thinking skills help us with this, and are the opposite of précis where our sole task was to recreate what we were reading without questioning it.

Critical thinking is all about carefully questioning what we are hearing, seeing and reading. Good questioning is fundamental to critical thinking. It is also deeply embedded in classroom learning. Good and outstanding teachers model the process in their practice. In excellent lessons, pupils use these concepts in their self- and peer-assessment and speaking and listening tasks. Critical thinking is important in everyday life and even more so as we go on in our studies and in our future work.

Show slide 7 and ask pupils what they think about it. Ask: *Any questions or comments? What else is critical thinking essential for?* Use their responses to assess pupils' strengths and weaknesses and to help you monitor progress throughout the next two workshops.

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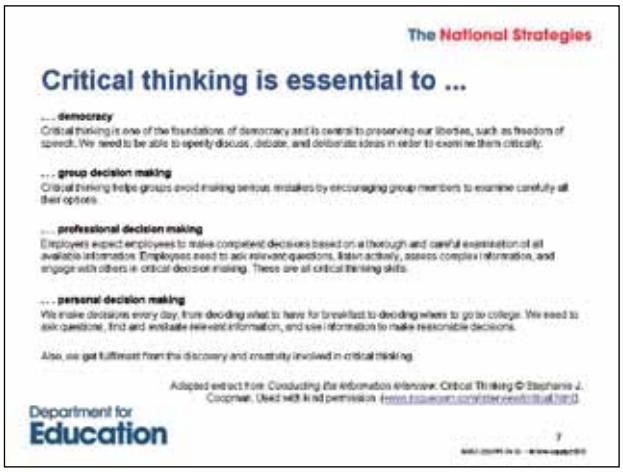
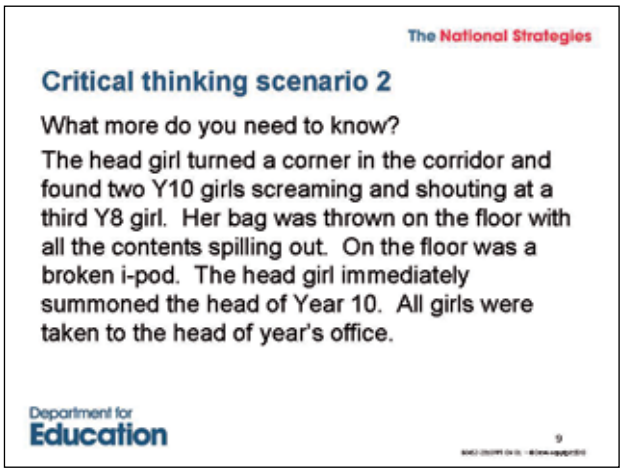


Now ask pupils to read through *Handout 10: Critical thinking and questioning skills for A**.

Show slides 8–10 and/or refer pupils to *Handout 11: Critical thinking scenarios*.



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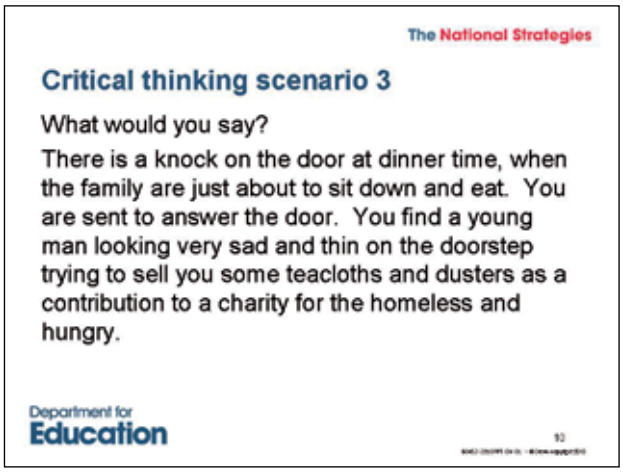

Explain that these scenarios illustrate situations where making a quick judgement at face value would be a weakness.

Divide pupils into groups of three and ask each group to choose a scenario, and discuss. *Handout 10: Critical thinking and questioning skills for A** will provide useful prompts. Then ask them to share their responses with the group. Probe their work, and help them to articulate their thought processes and how they reached their answers.

Ask: *What could be consequences of failing to ask suitable questions?* (e.g. inaccuracy leading to error; lack of clarity leading to wrong assumptions; lack of prioritising or significance leading to wasted time or money).

Optional activity

Using a school curriculum example (e.g. history or science), ask pupils to develop good questions for evaluating a source. Adverts and film trailers also make useful stimulus material.

Take it further

Ask pupils to watch an interview on the news and consider to what extent the interviewer uses critical thinking approaches. Pupils should note down some of the questions used and decide which they think were good questions and which were weaker questions. Pupils bring their notes to the next workshop, and should be prepared to explain their responses.

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6 Critical thinking in action

Objectives

- To raise awareness of more key critical thinking concepts and encourage higher standards of clarity, credibility, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, significance
- To be able to apply 'relevance' and 'significance' to a specific task

Resources

Handout 12: Some more critical thinking concepts

Handout 13: 'Relevance' and 'significance'

Handout 14: 'Accuracy' and 'precision'

Highlighter pens

Slide 11: Some more critical thinking concepts

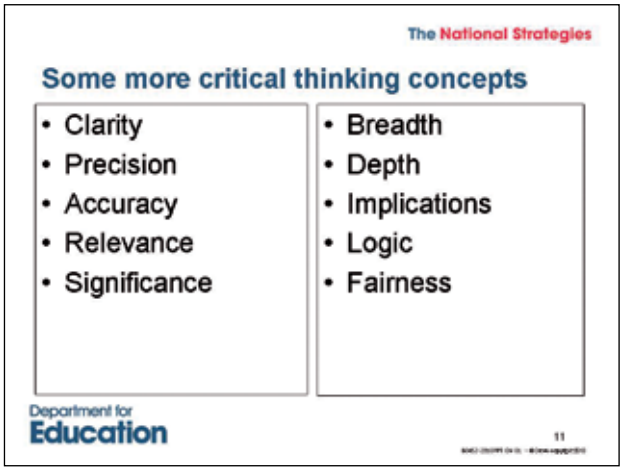
Slide 12: Choosing a school

Activities

1 Choosing a school: relevance and significance of different aspects of schools

Explain that critical thinking has to be more than just asking awkward questions. How do we make choices? How can we make judgements about which texts or speeches are more useful, reliable, interesting to study or to recommend? It helps if we have some idea of key tests you can apply: for example, you would want to judge a novel by how good the plot is; how convincing the characters; how well the writer uses English; how much you enjoyed it and so on.

Show slide 11 and refer pupils to *Handout 12: Some more critical thinking concepts*. Discuss the broad standards you can apply to most texts. Explain that they can be turned into really good questions for sharpening up thinking and answers. Explain also that most professionals apply these concepts all the time in their daily work, which shows how important they are for their future working lives.



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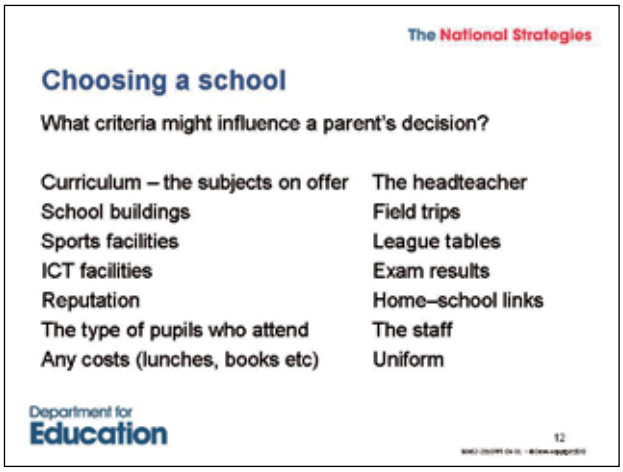
Remind pupils to note down any words they are not sure of on *Handout 2: The good word guide*.

Explain that the focus of this workshop is on advising a parent how to select a new secondary school for their primary child. They may find it helpful to imagine someone they know as they do this task.

Ask pupils to discuss as a group (or in threes if the group is large) what is most important to them as users of education. They need to brainstorm a list of criteria that may influence a parent's decision. How different are a parent's priorities from their own? Some pointers are provided on slide 12 and *Handout 13: 'Relevance' and 'signficance'*.



Then ask them to consider which three or four are the most **relevant** (how **connected** is this to a child's school experience?) and **significant** (how **important** is this for most people?).

Finally, ask pupils to recommend some good questions that parents may wish to ask the schools. Ask them to probe each other's answers with an emphasis on relevance and significance.

Optional activity

Ask pupils to assess some texts according to two other 'standards' of critical thinking, for example provide pupils with *Handout 14: 'Accuracy' and 'precision'* and ask them to consider the recipes. Ask: *If you were cooking dinner for your family, which of these two recipes would be the most useful for you? Explain why, using the terms 'accuracy' and 'precision'.*

Take it further

Either ask pupils to critically assess a series of adverts or film trailers using at least two of the standards. They should be prepared to share their findings at the next workshop.

OR

Ask volunteers to try out one of the chicken recipes at home and report back on how accurate and precise the instructions were.

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7 Research skills: what is research?

Objectives

- To distinguish clearly between journalism and research
- To outline some of the skills that researchers need
- To practise these skills

Resources

Handout 15: Research or journalism?

Handout 16: Steps to good research

Slide 13: Research or journalism scenario 1

Slide 14: Research or journalism scenario 2

Slide 15: Definitions

Slide 16: Steps to good research

Slide 17: Research scenario

Flipchart and pens

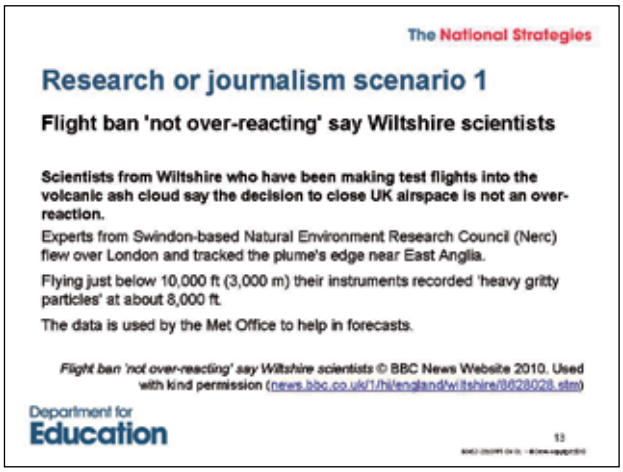
Sticky notes

Activities

1 Spot the difference: research or journalism?

Explain that pupils are often asked to find out more or research into topics or questions, and sometimes teachers feel this is not well done (e.g. when pupils simply download material found using Google). This workshop is about understanding the process of research to make it easier for pupils to produce better work.

Show slides 13 and 14 and refer pupils to *Handout 15: Research or journalism?*


The National Strategies

Research or journalism scenario 1

Flight ban 'not over-reacting' say Wiltshire scientists

Scientists from Wiltshire who have been making test flights into the volcanic ash cloud say the decision to close UK airspace is not an over-reaction.

Experts from Swindon-based Natural Environment Research Council (Nerc) flew over London and tracked the plume's edge near East Anglia.

Flying just below 10,000 ft (3,000 m) their instruments recorded 'heavy gritty particles' at about 8,000 ft.

The data is used by the Met Office to help in forecasts.

Flight ban 'not over-reacting' say Wiltshire scientists © BBC News Website 2010. Used with kind permission (news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/wiltshire/8628028.stm)

Department for Education

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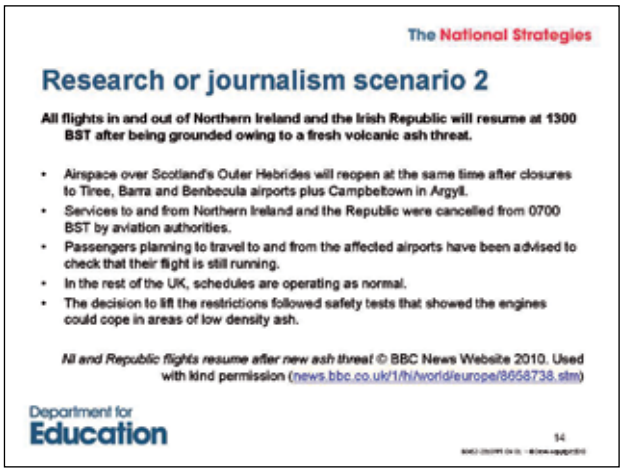


Ask pupils to read the scenarios individually and silently, using the reading techniques learned in *Workshop 3: Reading* and the critical thinking skills from *Workshop 5: So what is critical thinking and why do I need it?* and *Workshop 6: Critical thinking in action*.

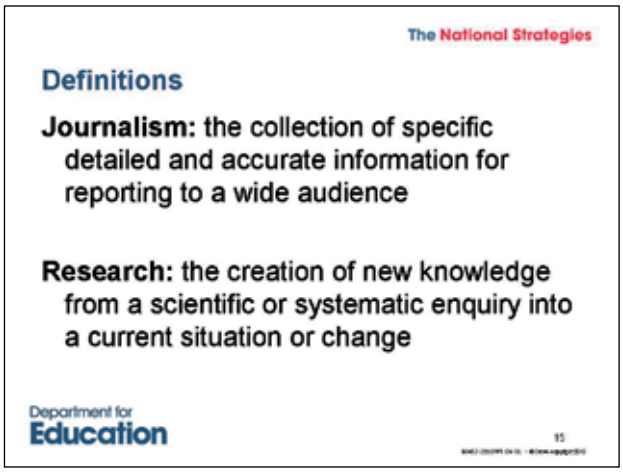
Ask pupils to discuss the following questions in threes:

- *What are the similarities?*
- *What are the differences?*
- *One is based on journalism; one is based on research. Which is which?*

Ask pupils to agree in their groups a definition of journalism or research. Make sure both terms are covered by one or two groups at least.

Write both terms on a flipchart and ask pupils to add comments or suggestions for each using sticky notes.

Show slide 15 and ask pupils if they agree with the definitions. Critique them, using the terms from *Workshop 6: Critical thinking in action*. Encourage pupils to add both 'research' and 'journalism' to *Handout 2: The good word guide*.



Discuss with pupils the fact that journalism can be of a very high quality and research can be poor quality – there is no value judgement intended. However, they are very different. If pupils are asked to research a task, they need to make sure they understand what is expected of them.

Pupils need to decide if they are simply being asked to fact-find or reproduce information in another form. Fact-finding is important and should be done accurately and precisely. Pupils may be asked simply to précis a series of articles. This is more like a pure form journalism.

However, if they are required to research or add a critical dimension to their reading of a series of articles, this is closer to research as it involves processing information and producing new understanding for

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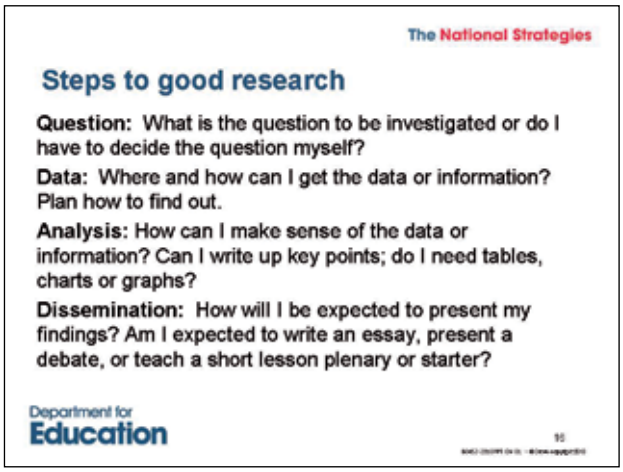
themselves; for example, they may be asked to investigate a given question and find information to support or contradict this (e.g. 'Child workers in the developing world should be made to go to school' – read several sources and consider whether you agree with this statement). Make clear that research is going to be more and more important as they progress in their studies.

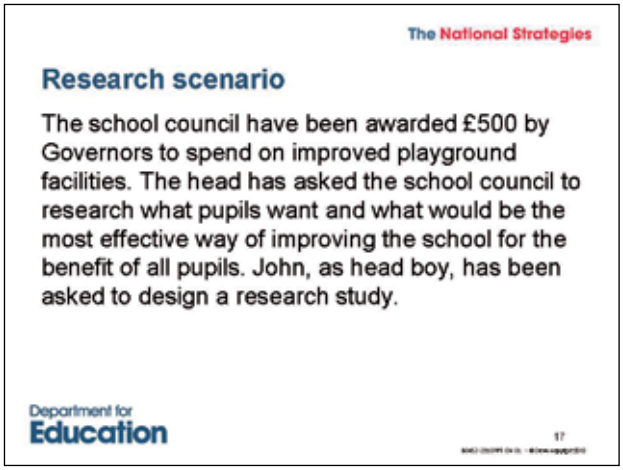
2 Steps to good research

This sequence of steps will help pupils know what to do when they are asked to carry out research.

Show slide 16 and refer pupils to *Handout 16: Steps to good research*.



Show slide 17 and make sure pupils understand the task (described on *Handout 16: Steps to good research*).



If necessary, guide pupils through the research task on *Handout 16: Steps to good research* and use the following prompts:

- *Who should John ask?*
- *Should he ask all year groups – a fair sample of age groups?*
- *How many?*

Once pupils have completed the task, take feedback from the groups. If there are more than three groups, ask pupils to display their flip-charted responses for all to review.

Assess pupils' responses by reflecting on the following:

- *Which research plan is most 'credible'?* (Use critical thinking skills from *Workshop 6: Critical thinking in action*.)
- *What skills are involved in John's task?*

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Take it further

Set up a short research project for the group, using the model above, to enable them to practise their new skills in preparation for *Workshop 8: Tackling problems and projects*.

Ask pupils to decide on:

- a good question;
- the data they will collect;
- how they will make sense of this data;
- how they will present the data;
- who they will present it to.

If possible, they could plan a timeline for how to do this within one term.

Suggested topics

- Investigate the impact of the progression skills workshops on pupils in your group.
- How has coming to workshops (e.g. on a Monday morning) helped improve attitudes to learning in this group?
- Are there any difference in attitudes to the workshops between boys and girls?
- What are the main universities that our school pupils go on to?
- What are the most popular career choices for students leaving this university?

Further reading

Kellett, M. (2005) *How to Develop Children as Researchers: A Step by Step Guide to Teaching the Research Process*, Sage Publications Ltd, UK

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8 Tackling problems and projects

Objectives

- To learn to use the TASC wheel – a tool for organising problem-solving activity

Resources

Handout 17: Problem solving using the TASC wheel (Thinking Actively in a Social Context)

Slide 18: The TASC wheel

Activities

1 The TASC wheel

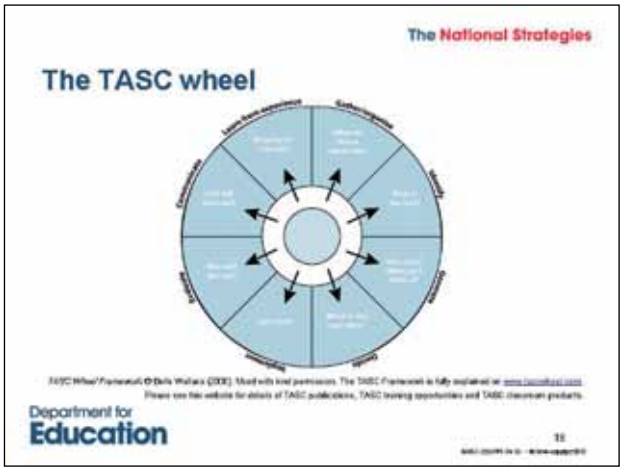
In *Workshop 7: Research skills: what is research?* pupils were shown how to structure and plan a research task. However, in conducting that research they will have to tackle new problems and issues and enquire into new or unfamiliar topics. The TASC wheel provides a framework for helping them structure their thinking – for helping them 'know what to do when they don't know what to do'.

Explain to pupils that adults often have to tackle new challenges and having a framework or structure means they have a tool at their disposal. The TASC wheel can provide them with this support.

Ask pupils to choose one of the following challenges or problems to pursue:

- Referring back to the topics suggested for the Take it further activity in *Workshop 7: Research skills: what is research?*, pupils choose an enquiry to investigate further.
- Pupils consider how to reduce the amount of stress and anxiety being felt before exams.
- Pupils consider another problem of their own choice.

Show slide 18 and refer pupils to *Handout 17: Problem solving using the TASC wheel* (*Thinking Actively in a Social Context*).



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Ask pupils to consider their chosen challenge or problem in the light of the TASC wheel, writing their thoughts in the appropriate sections of *Handout 17: Problem solving using the TASC wheel*.

Review pupils' use of the wheel using the following reflective questions:

- *How effective is the wheel in supporting your thoughts?*
- *Which elements did you find most useful?*
- *Which aspects were harder?*
- *What use could you make of this in your own work?*

Take it further

Pupils develop greater fluency in using the TASC tool by using it to tackle a challenge of their choice outside of school with friends or family, and then reporting back to the group.

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9 So what have I learned?

Objectives

- To review all the skills developed in this module
- To identify progress
- To identify areas to further develop

Resources

Skills flipchart and handouts from Workshop 1

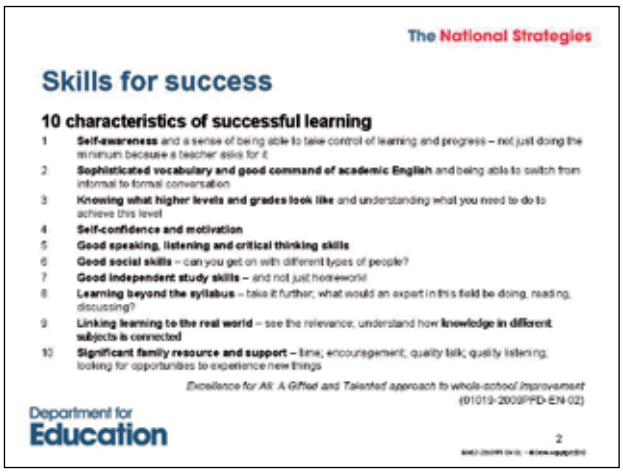
Handout 4: Pupil skills log (completed)

Handout 5: Skills for success

Slide 2: Skills for success

Activity

Show slide 2.



Review all the skills pupils have covered in these workshops. Congratulate them on taking the time and effort to improve their skills. Remind pupils that highly successful students have these characteristics, but that many very able pupils fail to achieve their potential because they lack higher level study skills. You may wish to refer back to the flipcharts produced in *Workshop 1: Introduction: you can make it happen!* and *Handout 4: Pupil skills log*.

Ask pupils to reflect on how they assessed their skills on *Handout 5: Skills for success* and ask them to update their notes by:

- re-rating themselves from 1–5 on each skill;
- adding in any new skills they have acquired
- marking with an asterisk those they find most useful
- putting a question mark against skills they need to develop further.

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Take it further

Discuss with pupils how they can continue to develop their skills – and co-plan a programme to deliver any support. Consider where the support may come from (e.g. sixth form college, sixth-form head of year, local university).

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10 Close (use at end of each workshop)

Objectives

- To encourage pupils to engage further in the topics and apply the learning between workshops
- To ensure all pupils are clear about the key learning points and what they have gained from the workshop
- To check how everyone is feeling and to address any unresolved issues
- To elicit feedback on the materials and check that aims have been met
- To check motivation for the task and programme in order to ensure continued attendance
- To finish on a high, so that pupils leave feeling upbeat and positive.

Resources

Handout 18: Conclusion: How to learn from this workshop

Activity

1. Encourage networking; ensure pupils have a buddy or group to support them in the use of new skills and knowledge between workshops. Mentors can help here.
2. Ask pupils to summarise key learning points, reiterating and clarifying if necessary.
3. Ask pupils to complete the handouts or learning logs as necessary. Mentors can also check how pupils are doing with this.
4. Encourage pupils who can, or wish to, to try the Take it further tasks.
5. Ask pupils to congratulate each other (in pairs or groups) for something they did well during the workshops.

Encourage pupils to read *Handout 18: Conclusion: how to learn from this workshop*.

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Handouts

Progression workshop contract

I want to take part in a workshop that is fun and engaging, and where I feel free to relax, be myself, challenge myself and learn from everyone around me, with an open mind. To make this true for everyone I will do my bit to contribute. Specifically, I will:

- Show respect for others by looking at them and listening to them.
- Show respect for myself by not putting myself down.
- Be positive about the contribution of others by seeing what's good in what they say before I think of what I disagree with.
- Make others feel safe to speak their mind by not making fun of them, but by encouraging them.
- Think of how I can build on or add to the discussion (I may have a key link that will help everyone).
- Cooperate with the task instructions so the workshop can run as intended.
- Feel free to disagree or challenge (politely) anything I need to, so that I can understand the skills I'll need to succeed.
- Be curious and open-minded about others' opinions and ways of doing things.
- Ensure I allow the space for others to make contributions too and not hog all the air-time.
- Appreciate that what I, and others, are good at will differ; that it's not a competition and it's fine just to be myself.
- Understand that everyone learns at different speeds and in different ways; sometimes I'll get something done more quickly than others and sometimes it will take me longer.

So that's OK.

Signed:	Date:

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Handout 1: Top tips for action

Record your big ideas and thoughts here to remind you and give you something to look back on.

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Handout 2: The good word guide

Successful pupils use a wide vocabulary – sometimes called the academic word list. Keep a note of good words you can use again. Note down any you are not sure of and look them up in a dictionary. Ask your teachers for help in how to use the word if you are not sure.

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Handout 3: Pupil skills self-assessment

Skills I have	Skills I need to develop

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Handout 4: Pupil skills log

This reflective log will help you understand your own learning and make you more aware of the skills you are developing.

Describe one lesson in which you made good progress

What was the subject? What were you doing? What was the teacher doing? What were others doing? Why was this a good lesson? What skills were you using?

Describe one lesson in which you made little or no progress

What was the subject? What were you doing? What was the teacher doing? What were others doing? Why was this a poor lesson? What skills were you using?

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Handout 5: Skills for success

Use the ten characteristics of successful learners below to rate yourself from 1–5. For any that you have scored three or less, consider which skills you need to work on and complete the final column.

Characteristics of successful learners	Score 1–5	Skills I need to develop for this characteristic
1. **Self-awareness** and a sense of being able to take control of learning and progress – not just doing the minimum because a teacher asks for it		
2. **Sophisticated vocabulary and good command of academic English** and being able to switch from informal to formal conversation		
3. **Knowing what higher levels and grades look like** – and understanding what you need to do to achieve this		
4. **Self-confidence and motivation**		
5. **Good speaking, listening and critical thinking skills**		
6. **Good social skills** – can you get on with different types of people?		
7. **Good independent study skills** – and not just homework!		
8. **Learning beyond the syllabus** – take it further; what would an expert in this field be doing, reading, discussing?		
9. **Linking learning to the real world** – see the relevance; understand how knowledge in different subjects is connected		
10. **Significant family resource and support** – time, encouragement; quality talk; quality listening; looking for opportunities to experience new things		

Score 1–5 where 1 = very weak, 2 = basic, 3 = developing, 4 = getting stronger, 5 = a strength

Excellence for All: A Gifted and Talented approach to whole-school improvement (01019-2009PDF-EN-02)

00452-2010PDF-EN-01

Handout 6: Five ways to improve reading: skim, scan, speed read, read for meaning, read for pleasure

Add examples of when you use any of the following techniques. The first is completed for you.

1. **Skim** read to assimilate quickly what is in a text to get the overall 'shape' of the material	You may skim read when you are selecting an item from the web to read. When skimming, you: • look at the pictures and the layout; • read the first and last paragraph in a chapter or article; • then read the first sentence in each paragraph. Or you may skim read when reviewing what is in a book, newspaper or magazine in the library or a shop. To get the gist of what the book or article is about, you can: • use clues in the title and on the cover; • read the foreword, introduction and conclusion (in books) to understand what the author is trying to achieve in a nutshell; • study the contents page to get an idea of structure. You can use this information to help you select the relevant chapters or sections to read.
2. **Scan** a text to find a key word or number (e.g. telephone directory)	
3. **Speed read**, looking at groups of words at a time, and not reading each single word	
4. **Read for meaning** by going through a text and absorbing the main points and the detail of what is written	
5. **Read for pleasure**, taking time to switch off from everything else and reading for enjoyment	

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Further reading

BBC. *Skillswise: Scanning* (**www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/reading/techniques/scanning/index.shtml**).

BBC. *Skillswise: Skimming* (**www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/reading/techniques/skimming/index.shtml**).

Pick The Brain (2009). *5 Ways To Improve Reading Comprehension* (**www.pickthebrain.com/blog/5-ways-to-improve-reading-comprehension/**)

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Handout 7: Street gangs

by Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP

This article first appeared in Blueprint Summer 2008 and can be found online at:
http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/default.asp?pageRef=283

In the wake of a sustained spate of violence, in which hardly a day seems to go by without the newspaper reporting yet another stabbing or shooting, the topic of street gangs isn't far from everyone's lips. As each story unfolds, 'middle Britain' is exposed to a level of criminal behaviour supposed to be the preserve of the USA.

Just last month a group of young men in their teens received long prison sentences for an attack on another innocent man. In this case, an ex-soldier, who had the misfortune to be cycling home one evening through a tunnel, was beaten to the ground and kicked until he lost consciousness. He later died; they stole only £5. A couple of years ago, a lawyer in north London coming home by tube was attacked and murdered just outside the tube station – he was due to be married within days. They took only his Oyster card. A year ago, a young boy in Liverpool, returning home from a football game, was gunned down by another youngster on a BMX bike – the gunman didn't even know the boy.

These are just three of the attacks that captured the imagination and the sympathy of the public. As in the case of the father who tried to stop a gang causing mayhem outside his house and who was then kicked to death. The reason why some cases like these create widespread concern is because they affect 'law abiding innocents'.

Yet every week in towns and cities across the UK, there are many more such attacks, more often against members of other gangs, often drug related and always violent. In London there is a tendency to see these attacks as mostly confined to the Afro-Caribbean community, as so many of the victims and perpetrators come from that community. This assumption is a mistake, as there are many other ethnic groups involved in such gangs. This is just an example of the confusion about how widespread gangs are and why the crime figures seem to be at odds with the experience of most living in London and beyond.

A recent Metropolitan Police report estimated there were 171 gangs in London with a quarter involved in murders and half involved in serious assaults. Interestingly 80% of those accused of gun or knife crime were younger than 25 years old. However, there is some concern that the police do not know exactly how many gangs there are and they are more extensive than at first thought. John Pitts recently carried out a study of street gangs in parts of London and in Lambeth alone, he found there were some 40 gangs as opposed to the Police estimate of 27. The children growing up in this culture are becoming more and more used to serious violence as an everyday part of their lives. The Centre for Social Justice is looking at street gangs and recently interviewed some boys in a youth project. The majority claimed to know someone who possessed a gun and over half said they carried a knife for self defence. Knives and guns have, they indicated, become part of their culture.

Who then are the people who run with the gangs and why? Well, both in the USA and here the profile is similar. The gang members tend to be aged between 11/12 years old and 25 years old. They are predominantly male and come almost exclusively from broken homes. They will have failed at school, many leaving years before they were meant to and will have a long record of truancy and exclusion. Often they will have grown up in the shadow of the gang, with friends or family already in the gang. The gang offers, in a perverted sense, an alternative family from the family they never had. Brutal and disciplined, its code of belonging is both a strength and a reason for the high levels of violence. They learn early on that if someone isn't part of the gang then they are an enemy and must be dealt with. The culture is also very misogynistic, with girls treated as goods and chattels, often abused.

Things aren't as bad as in the USA, where the gang culture in cities like Los Angeles and Boston is deeper and even more violent. In these cities, gang membership can run into the thousands, with territories staked out and inter-gang 'warfare' widespread. However, we shouldn't be complacent. The growing

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number of gangs in the UK and the correspondingly higher levels of violence are indicators of a direction of travel. You only have to look back twenty years to see how far we have already come. Who reading this would have forecast the type and scale of the violence now on our streets? In this we have a great deal to learn from the USA. Cities like Boston have begun to deal successfully with the violence and in doing so have slashed their gang related murder rate. They show us that to deal with the street gangs you need an integrated approach. Police, working with the voluntary agencies and social services, to draw the gang members out and place them back in education and drugs and alcohol rehabilitation.

But we don't have to look at the USA to see how this can be done; here in London, a voluntary organisation called Kids Company is already bringing gang members off the streets and changing their lives. What they show us is that neither Social Workers nor Police working alone can do the job. What we need to do now is to rethink our whole strategy. Too many people are still in denial about the scale of the problem.

In the short term, we need to draw gang members back into the mainstream again. In the longer term we have to tackle the contributing causes; the high levels of family break up and lone parenting in the UK as well as drug and alcohol abuse. Stabilising family life is critical, for then we stand a chance of keeping the children in full time education long enough for them to garner knowledge and skills to keep them in the mainstream of society.

Once upon a time middle Britain was immune to the goings on of a few dysfunctional young men. Now they are coming to call. The choice is ours, act now or watch our cities go the way of the USA.

Street Gangs article by Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP © Centre for Social Justice. Used with kind permission (**www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/default.asp?pageRef=283**)

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Handout 8: Read a book in 20 minutes: the time challenge!

This technique will save you lots of time and help you find the most useful extra reading to support your learning.

Ask one of your tutors or teachers for suggestions, or use a textbook that was recommended in one of your subjects. Your task is to know what is in the book that can help you improve a current subject-related written task, without having to read it all word for word.

Book title: **Author:**	
How useful is this book likely to be? What clues are there in the title and cover? Jot any useful point down.	
Read the foreword, introduction and conclusion and note what the author is trying to achieve in a nutshell.	
Study the contents page to get an idea of structure. Which chapters will be most useful for your task?	
Have a quick look at the first and last paragraph in each chapter so you can narrow down further what you need to read in depth. Note page numbers.	
What have you found that will support your current coursework or class work? How useful is this book?	

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Handout 9: Précis

> "A summary or a *précis* is *NOT* a personal interpretation of a work or an expression of your opinion of the idea; it is, rather, an exact replica in miniature of the work, often reduced to one-quarter to one-fifth of its size, in which you express the complete argument!"

As a student or professional you will have to read and remember large amounts of prose (and poetry) as well as scientific and other articles. For example, to demonstrate that you have *assimilated* the central argument and proof of another scholar's critical interpretation, you must be able to summarise *or compose a précis* of an argument.

What actually happens when you write a *précis*? First, you must understand the complete text so that you can *abstract* the central argument and express it clearly and completely. Next, you must develop the argument *exactly as the writer has presented it* **and** reduce the work by 75–80 per cent of its size. Of course, this is possible when you consider exactly how you 'learn' to read the work.

How you actually go about writing a *précis* depends largely on your ability to restate the writer's central ideas after you have assimilated them in your own mind. So it is crucial to read and understand the text you are intending to summarise.

Here are the rules of the game:

1. Read the article many times and underline key ideas.
2. Restate the key points in your own words. Talk this through with a partner.
3. Decide what you can leave out and *omit nothing* from the essential argument or points.
4. Write the précis and begin with the central, key idea of the article, in your own words and as simply and clearly as possible.
5. Do not copy a single sentence from the article!

Note: You may use key words and phrases only when you are expressing ideas which are technically precise or when you feel comfortable using the writer's own words, i.e. you understand exactly he or she means, and there is really no better way to express the concept.

Precis is not easy! But the rewards are there. When you have completed it well, you will never forget the argument, the examples, and the development of the article. In the process, you will also be developing and practising the concepts of analysis, synthesis, comparison, and other key, higher order thinking skills absolutely required for your success in school, college and in the profession or career you choose to follow when you graduate.

Adapted extract from *Writing the Precis* © Michael S. Seiferth. Used with kind permission (**www.lonestar.texas.net/~mseifert/precis1302.html**)

Further reading

BBC. *Skillswise: Summarising worksheets*
(**www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/reading/summarising/worksheet.shtml**)

School of Architecture, University of Waterloo. *How to Write a Précis*
(**www.architecture.uwaterloo.ca/faculty_projects/terri/precis2.html**)

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Handout 10: Critical thinking and question skills for A*

Developing good questions – some structure and prompts to get you started

Point of view	What is this person's point of view? Do I agree with it? Is it genuine? How do I know?
What is the purpose of this article, web page, speech?	Is it entertainment? Is it propaganda? Trying to sell me something? Is it clear and well made? Are there hidden meanings or 'sub-texts'?
What is the key point or message this writer/ speaker is trying to say/communicate?	Have they explained it clearly? Is there confusion in what is being said? Do we agree what the key point is?
What information is the piece providing?	How accurate is it? How complete is it?
What conclusions or assumptions are being made?	Is there a logical argument? Is there a flaw in the argument? Is the writer assuming we know something or share their beliefs?
What are the implications of this text or speech?	What impact is this likely to have on the reader/listener? How would people react?

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Handout 11: Critical thinking scenarios

Scenario 1: With a partner, prioritise the following suggestions for tackling teenage alcohol abuse. What thought processes do you need to go through to decide? Present and explain your decision to the group.

UK Teen Binge Drinking Is Serious And Chronic

Once more UK teenagers reported high levels of binge drinking, intoxication and alcohol-related individual, relationship, sexual and delinquency problems. They ranked third highest (after Bulgaria and the Isle of Man) in relation to such problems.

- "More and more younger people are dying prematurely due to their alcohol use. Alcohol education and mass media campaigns are expensive and don't work well enough." Professor Martin Plant (University of the West of England)

Suggestions for tackling the problem include:

- Increase taxation to make alcohol less affordable
- Introduce minimum price of 50p per unit of alcohol
- Raise the minimum age for consuming or purchasing alcoholic beverages to 21
- Give police special powers to confiscate alcohol from anyone seen drinking on the street or on public transport

UK Teen Binge Drinking Is Serious And Chronic © University of the West of England (Bristol UWE). Used with kind permission (info.uwe.ac.uk/news/UWENews/article.asp?item=1462&year=2009)

Scenario 2: What more do you need to know to understand what has happened? Describe and explain your thought process. What questions do you need to ask?

The head girl turned a corner in the corridor and found two Year 10 girls screaming and shouting at a third Year 8 girl. Her bag was thrown on the floor with all the contents spilling out. On the floor was a broken i-pod. The head girl immediately summoned the head of Year 10. All girls were taken to the head of year's office.

Scenario 3: What would you do? What would you say to this person? Describe and explain your thought process. On reflection, what questions would you want to ask before you decide what to do?

There is a knock on the door at dinner time, when the family are just about to sit down and eat. You are sent to answer the door. You find a young man looking very sad and thin on the doorstep trying to sell you some teacloths and dusters as a contribution to a charity for the homeless and hungry.

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Handout 12: Some more critical thinking concepts

Clarity	**Could you elaborate further?** **Could you give me an example?** **Could you illustrate what you mean?**
Accuracy	**How could we check on that?** **How could we find out if that is true?** **How could we verify or test that?**
Precision	**Could you be more specific?** **Could you give me more details?** **Could you be more exact?**
Relevance	**How does that relate to the problem?** **How does that bear on the question?** **How does that help us with the issue?**
Depth	**What factors make this a difficult problem?** **What are some of the complexities of this question?** **What are some of the difficulties we need to deal with?**
Breadth	**Do we need to look at this from another perspective?** **Do we need to consider another point of view?** **Do we need to look at this in other ways?**
Logic	**Does all this make sense together?** **Does your first paragraph fit in with your last?** **Does what you say follow from the evidence?**
Significance	**Is this the most important problem to consider?** **Is this the central idea to focus on?** **Which of these facts are most important?**
Fairness	**Do I have any vested interest in this issue?** **Am I sympathetically representing the viewpoints of others?**

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Handout 13: 'Relevance' and 'significance'

Choosing a school: relevance and significance of different aspects of schools

You have to advise a parent how to select a new secondary school for their primary child.

Think about what is most important to you as a user of education. Would parents have different views? Brainstorm a list of criteria that may influence a parent's decision. Some pointers are provided below to get you started. Add any more that you can think of.

Consider which three or four are the most **relevant** (how **connected** is this to a child's school experience?) and **significant** (how **important** is this for most people?).

Curriculum – the subjects on offer	The head teacher
School buildings	Field trips
Sports facilities	League tables
ICT facilities	Exam results
Reputation	Home–school links
The type of pupils who attend	The staff
Any costs (lunches, books, etc.)	Uniform

Which criteria are most relevant for a parent to consider?

What good questions could they ask schools to help them decide which to apply for?

Which criteria are most significant for a parent to consider?

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Handout 14: 'Accuracy' and 'precision'

You might like to try these recipes. Which of them do you judge as giving you a more accurate and precise set of instructions?

1 Easy roast chicken

Ingredients

- 1 medium sized chicken, preferably free-range or organic
- 1 medium onion
- 1 bulb of garlic
- 1 lemon
- A small bunch of fresh herbs (whatever you have available)
- Olive oil
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preparation

- Preheat your oven to a high setting.
- Prepare the onion, garlic and lemon. Simply remove the onion and garlic skin and cut into large chunks. Cut the lemon into quarters, with peel left on.
- Stuff the onion, lemon and garlic into the chicken cavity with the herbs. It will infuse the chicken with flavour and keep the breast meat moist.
- Drizzle the chicken with olive oil and season well with salt and pepper, rubbing it all over the bird.

Cooking

- Place the chicken in the roasting tray and put it into the preheated oven.
- Turn the heat down immediately to a moderate setting and cook the chicken for approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes. Check carefully to make sure it is fully cooked.
- Baste the chicken every so often throughout cooking to keep it moist and golden.
- When cooked, take the tray out of the oven and transfer the chicken to a board to rest until you are ready to serve.

2 My favourite roast chicken

Ingredients

- 1.6 kg farm-raised chicken
- 4 rashers of smoky bacon
- 1 tablespoon of salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 teaspoons of minced thyme (optional)
- 1 tablespoon of sunflower oil

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Method

Before you start, remove the chicken from the fridge so it is at room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 240 °C/475 °F/gas 9.

Meanwhile, using kitchen paper, wipe the chicken carefully inside and outside. If it is dry, the skin will crisp up much better.

Salt and pepper inside the cavity, and lightly salt the outside of the chicken. Place the bacon rashers over the breast. Season to taste with pepper.

Oil a roasting tray with the sunflower oil, and place the chicken in the tray. Once the oven has reached the required temperature, put the chicken in the oven. After 20 minutes turn the heat down to 190°C, or equivalent. Roast it until it's cooked fully, or until the juices run clear when you insert a skewer into the fattest bit of the thigh, for approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes.

Remove it from the oven and sprinkle the chopped the thyme into the tray. Baste the chicken with the juices and thyme and let it rest for 15 minutes on a carving dish before you serve with salad and chips.

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Handout 15: Research or journalism?

Scenario 1

Flight ban 'not over-reacting' say Wiltshire scientists

Scientists from Wiltshire who have been making test flights into the volcanic ash cloud say the decision to close UK airspace is not an over-reaction.

Experts from Swindon-based Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) flew over London and tracked the plume's edge near East Anglia.

Flying just below 10,000 ft (3,000 m) their instruments recorded 'heavy gritty particles' at about 8,000 ft.

The data is used by the Met Office to help in forecasts.

Flight ban 'not over-reacting' say Wiltshire scientists © BBC News Website 2010.
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Scenario 2

All flights in and out of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic will resume at 1300 BST after being grounded owing to a fresh volcanic ash threat.

- Airspace over Scotland's Outer Hebrides will reopen at the same time after closures to Tiree, Barra and Benbecula airports plus Campbeltown in Argyll.
- Services to and from Northern Ireland and the Republic were cancelled from 0700 BST by aviation authorities.
- Passengers planning to travel to and from the affected airports have been advised to check that their flight is still running.
- In the rest of the UK, schedules are operating as normal.
- The decision to lift the restrictions followed safety tests that showed the engines could cope in areas of low density ash.

NI and Republic flights resume after new ash threat © BBC News Website 2010.
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Handout 16: Steps to good research

Question: What is the question to be investigated or do I have to decide the question myself?

Data: Where and how can I get the data or information? Plan how to find out.

Analysis: How can I make sense of the data or information? Can I write up key points; do I need tables, charts or graphs?

Dissemination: How will I be expected to present my findings? Am I expected to write an essay, present a debate, or teach a short lesson plenary or starter?

Research scenario: The school council have been awarded £500 by governors to spend on improved playground facilities. The head has asked the school council to research what pupils want and what would be the most effective way of improving the school for the benefit of all pupils. John, as head boy, has been asked to design a research study.

Your task:

Discuss the four questions below in groups of four. One of you takes the role of teacher and poses the questions. One scribes the responses. One prepares to present your advice to John to the whole group. One checks you have answered to a good standard. Now answer the next four questions.

Question 1:

What question should John ask to get the best insight into what would be best and fair?

What would I like to see in the playground?

What is the worst thing about our playground?

What is the difference between younger and older pupils' answers?

What is the difference between girls' and boys' views?

Question 2:

Data: Where and how can John get the data or information?

Help him plan how to conduct the research. Should he interview a few pupils? Survey a lot? Observe behaviour in the playground for different groups?

Question 3:

Analysis: How can John analyse the answers he gets?

How can he organise and make sense of the data or information? Should he write up key points? Should he collate data onto tables, display data on charts or graphs?

Question 4:

Dissemination: How should John present the findings for the best effect?

Should he write a report, chair a debate, or make a presentation to the school council or head?

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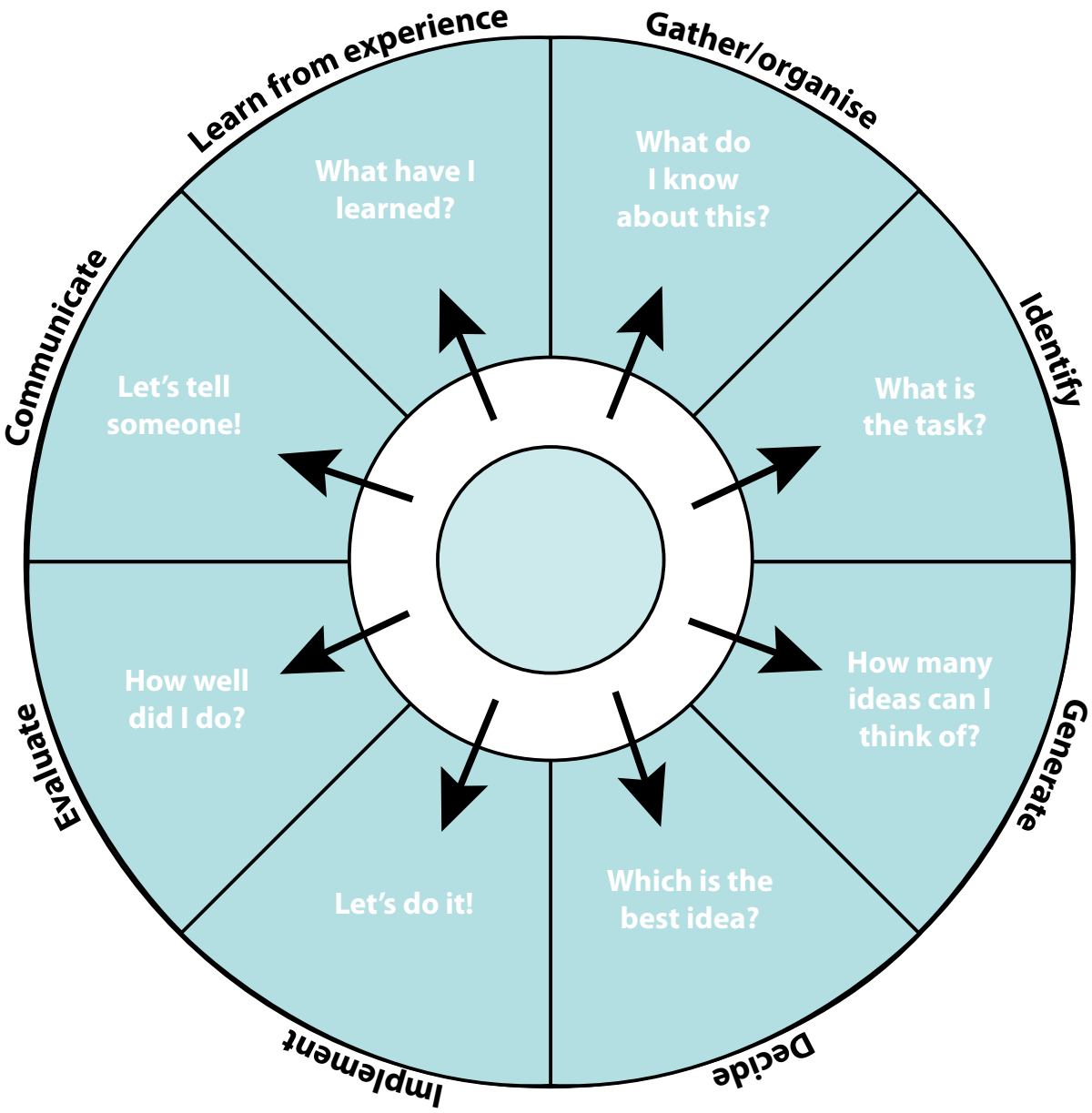
Handout 17: Problem solving using the TASC wheel (Thinking Actively in a Social Context)



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Handout 18: Conclusion: how to learn from this workshop

Your learning is your responsibility. You have probably heard the expression 'You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink'. It's the same with learning. You can have all the information you need but no one can make you learn; you have to do the majority of the work yourself.

Part of the learning process is considering the actual journey of learning as you build your skills and knowledge. Looking back at how far you have come is very rewarding and you will see patterns in your approach that can help you become an even more skilful pupil.

What can you do for yourself to build on the learning from this workshop?

Try out these techniques and apply them to other situations.

- When you meet someone for the first time, think about the initial impression you will make on them, and also that they make on you. Make a note of it somewhere and have a look back after you've known them a while to see how accurate you were.
- Before you ask a question, think about the kind of response you want, then phrase the question accordingly.
- Seek feedback about yourself; ask people what you do well and what you could do better in some areas, then thank them for sharing that with you.
- It's not easy for people to do this, so don't make it any more difficult for them.
- Pay attention and evaluate either another aspect of yourself or someone else, according to one of the models you learned about (such as personality or the 'onion' model).
- Work on 'future-proofing' your brand. Starting today, develop skills that you will need in the near future – it comes more quickly than you think.
- Look at profiles of other people and the way they present themselves. Consider what aspects would work for you and apply them to your profile too, if they fit.
- Think about some groups or organisations you could join that would help you develop some aspects of either yourself or your skills or gift or talent.

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Useful resources and further reading

BBC. *Skillswise: Scanning* (**www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/reading/techniques/scanning/index.shtml**).

BBC. *Skillswise: Skimming* (**www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/reading/techniques/skimming/index.shtml**).

BBC. *Skillswise: Summarising worksheets* (**www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/reading/summarising/worksheet.shtml**)

DCSF (2009) *Excellence for All: A Gifted and Talented approach to whole-school improvement.* Ref: 01019-2009PDF-EN-02 (**www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** search using the reference number)

DCSF (2009) *Progression skills module 1: Who am I?* Ref: 00031-2010PDF-EN-01 (**www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** search using the reference number)

DCSF (2009) *Progression skills module 2: Getting ahead in learning*. Ref: 00036-2010PDF-EN-03 (**www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** search using the reference number)

DCSF (2009) *Progression skills module 3: Getting ahead – strategies for success*. Ref: 00039-2010PDF-EN-01 (**www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** search using the reference number)

DfE (2010) *Progression skills module 5: How do I manage the journey towards my future career?* Ref: 00455-2010PDF-EN-01 (**www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** search using the reference number)

DfE (2010) *Progression skills module 6: Capturing success*. Ref: 00458-2010PDF-EN-01 (**www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies** search using the reference number)

Foundation For Critical Thinking. *Critical Thinking: Where to Begin* (**www.criticalthinking.org/starting/#2399**)

Kellett M. (2005). *How to Develop Children as Researchers: A Step by Step Guide to Teaching the Research Process*. Sage publications Ltd

National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE). *TASC: Thinking Actively in a Social Context* (**www.nace.co.uk/tasc/tasc_home.htm**)

Pick The Brain (2009). *5 Ways To Improve Reading Comprehension* (**www.pickthebrain.com/blog/5-ways-to-improve-reading-comprehension/**)

School of Architecture, University of Waterloo. *How to Write a Précis* (**www.architecture.uwaterloo.ca/faculty_projects/terri/precis2.html**)

TASC International. *TSAC wheel* (**www.tascwheel.com**)

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Adapted Extract from *Writing the Precis* © Michael S. Seiferth. Used with kind permission (**www.lonestar.texas.net/~mseifert/precis1302.html**).

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Extract from *UK Teen Binge Drinking Is Serious and Chronic Article* © University of the West of England (Bristol UWE). Used with kind permission (**info.uwe.ac.uk/news/UWENews/article.asp?item=1462&year=2009**)

Extract from the article *Flight ban 'not over-reacting' say Wiltshire scientists*, BBC News website © BBC 2010. Used with kind permission (**news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/wiltshire/8628028.stm**).

Extract from the article *NI and Republic flights resume after new ash threat*, BBC News website © BBC 2010. Used with kind permission (**news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8658738.stm**).

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