Pre reading: Characteristics/Dispositions of LEARNERS

Consider the following question as you read through the excerpts from the literature.

- What are the desired characteristics (i.e., learning dispositions) of learners you aspire to develop in your students?

Hattie argues that students bring a set of personal dispositions to their learning and that these dispositions can have a significant effect on the outcomes of schooling. The key dispositional ingredients include the way the student is open to new experiences, her or his emerging beliefs about the value and worth of investing in learning, and the manner in which they learn. "Whilst these dispositions are brought by the child into the school, they can be changed by the school-and indeed are so often changed" (Hattie, 2009, p. 40). Reinforcing and developing *learning* dispositions is fundamental for students to build their awareness of the way they learn and establish future-focused attitudes to learning, critical if they are to become lifelong, assessment-capable visible learners.

Different research identifies different dispositions but there is consensus about the importance of the learning dispositions furthering skills, engagement and deep understanding.

Outlined below are excerpts from the literature. You may want to also reflect on other related literature you may be aware of.

Reading 1:
Dispositions: Reframing Teaching and Learning
(Adapted from Costa and Kallick, Dispositions: Reframing Teaching and Learning, 2014)

We observe our students	Disposition They Might Need
Giving up easily without trying	Perseverance
Blurting out answers, starting a task without knowing what to do	Managing impulsivity
Lacking curiosity	Questioning
Responding with apathy. ("Who cares") ("It's boring")	Finding wonderment and awe
Being disrespectful to others	Listening with understanding and empathy
Unable to apply what they may have learned	Drawing on prior knowledge and applying it to new situations
Afraid to try	Being adventurous, risk taking
Believing that they lack creativity	Being creative, imaginative and innovative

Reading 2:
Definition of learning dispositions in the research

The term 'disposition' refers to a relatively enduring tendency to behave in a certain way. It involves motivation, feelings, values, stories, relationships as well as cognitive resources. Dispositions are like habits—they are acquired and manifest in the course of living in a particular place over a particular time. Carr and Claxton (2004) describe these elements of dispositions as being 'ready, willing and able' to engage profitably with a particular goal, whereas (Dweck, 1999) uses the term 'orientations' and Costa uses the term 'habits of mind' (Costa, 2000). Carr and Claxton suggest there is merit in translating 'disposition' into its verb form, with qualifying adverbs, instead of a noun, a thing to be acquired; they argue that a disposition is not 'acquired'; rather one becomes more or less disposed to respond in such-and-such a way. (Crick, Ruth 2018)

- Curiosity is a disposition. It is not a skill or knowledge but a tendency to respond to an experience in a certain way (Carr, 1997).
- "Dispositions are frequent and voluntary habits of thinking and doing" (Da Ros-Voseles & Fowler Haughey, 2007, p. 1).
- "Dispositions concern not only what people can do, but how they tend to invest their capabilities" (Perkins, Tishman, Ritchhart, Donis, & Andrade, 2000, p. 270).
- Dispositions are environmentally sensitive, meaning they are acquired, supported or weakened by interactive experiences in an environment with significant adults and peers (Bertram & Pascal, 2002).
- Education for lifelong learning has to attend to the cultivation of positive learning dispositions, as well as of effective learning skills (Carr & Claxton, 2002).
- Guy Claxton (2013, 2018) refers to learning dispositions as the "4Rs" and describes these as "Learning Powers." He defines them as follows:

  Resilience: Building resilient learners who are ready, willing, and able to lock on to learning. Being able to stick with difficulty and cope with feelings such as fear and frustration.

  Resourcefulness: Building resourceful learners who are ready, willing, and able to learn in different ways. Having a variety of learning strategies and knowing when to use them.

  Reflection: Building strategic learners who are ready, willing, and able to become more strategic about learning. Understanding their strengths and weaknesses.

  Reciprocity: Building learners who are ready, willing, and able to learn alone and with others.

Reading 3:
'It's a Gift': Disposed to Learn

The following is an excerpt from ["It's a Gift: Disposed to Learn"](#) by Ruth Crick.

A team of UK researchers at the University of Bristol, identified a set of learning dispositions or dimensions of learning power—which emerged through successive empirical studies (Deakin Crick et al., 2004). The task was first to identify those personal qualities that enable someone to learn more effectively, then find a means of measuring and assessing them so that the assessment data could be owned and used by the individual to convert diagnoses into strategies for change. The term Learning Power was used to describe these personal qualities—which embody values, attitudes, and dispositions—since this was the first time a research team had developed a data-driven measurement model for the concept of Learning Power.

Over 150,000 data points later, these dimensions of learning power have been demonstrated to be valid and reliable and, at the same time, extremely useful in practice as a vehicle for different conversations about learning that matter—a means of progressively handing over responsibility for learning to learners themselves.

This research programme identified 8 inter-related personal qualities that are necessary for people to engage effectively with "risk, uncertainty, challenge, and the unknown"—in other words with new learning opportunities (Deakin Crick et al., 2015, Deakin Crick et al., 2013, Deakin Crick and Yu, 2008).

The 8 Dimensions of Learning Power

Mindful Agency	Mindful Agency is taking responsibility for your own learning. It's about how you manage your feelings, your time, your energy, your actions, and the things you need to achieve your goals. It's knowing your purpose — then knowing how to go about achieving it; stepping out on the path towards your goals.
Hope and Optimism	Hope and Optimism is being confident that you can change and learn and get better over time. It is helped by having a positive learning story to reflect upon, that gives you a feeling of having "come a long way" and of being able to "go places" with your learning.
Sense Making	Sense making is making connections between ideas, memories, facts—everything you know—linking them and seeing patterns and meaning. It's about how learning matters to you, connecting with your own story and things that really matter.
Creativity	Creativity is using your imagination and intuition, being playful and "dreaming" new ideas, having hunches, letting answers come to you, rather than just "racking your brains" or looking things up. It's about going "off the beaten track" and exploring ideas.
Curiosity	Curiosity is your desire to get beneath the surface, find things out and ask questions, especially "Why?" If you are a curious learner, you won't simply accept what you are told without wanting to know for yourself whether and why it's true.

Collaboration	Collaboration is how you learn through your relationships with others. It is about knowing who to turn to for advice and how to offer it, too. It's about solving problems by talking them through, generating new ideas through listening carefully, making suggestions and responding positively to feedback.

Belonging	Belonging reflects how much you feel you belong as part of a "learning community"—at work or at home, or in your wider social network. It's about the confidence you gain from knowing there are people you learn well together with and to whom you can turn when you need guidance, support and encouragement.
Openness to Learning	Openness to learning is being open to new ideas and to challenge and having the "inner strength" to move towards learning and change, rather than either giving up and withdrawing or "toughing it out" and getting mad with the world. Becoming more open to learning is like a pathway to all the other dimensions of learning power, just as the other dimensions also help you become more open to learning.

Reading 4:
Self attributes and dispositions learners bring to their learning
(Adapted from Hattie, J. Visible Learning for Teachers 2012. pp44-51)

1. Self-efficacy is the confidence or strength of belief that we have in ourselves that we can make our learning happen.

Those who have high self-efficacy are more likely to see hard tasks as challenges rather than try avoid them, and when they have failures, they see them as a chance to learn and to make a greater effort or to look for new information next time.
Those with low self-efficacy are more likely to avoid tasks, which they view as personal threats and more likely, in 'failure' situations, dwell on deficiencies, obstacles encountered, or deny personal agency, and they are slow to recover their confidence.

2. Self-handicapping occurs when students choose impediments of obstacles to performance that allow them to deflect the cause of failure away from their competence towards the acquired impediments.
Examples include: procrastination, the choice of performance-debilitating circumstances (e.g. 'the dog ate my homework!'), engaging in little or no practice for upcoming tasks, having low challenge goals, exaggerating obstacles to success, and strategically reducing effort. In event of failure, the person has an immediate excuse.
We can reduce by providing more success in learning, reducing the uncertainty about learning outcomes, teaching students to become better monitors of their learning

3. Self-motivation can be towards intrinsic or extrinsic attributions- is the learning itself the source of satisfaction (intrinsic) or are perceived rewards the sources of satisfaction (extrinsic)?
Intrinsic – The greater the investment in learning, which then leads to greater learning gains. How do I move to the next, more challenging task? Now I understand….
Extrinsic – Greater shallow learning of surface features and completion of work regardless of the standard and for the sake of praise or small rewards. Is it on the test? Do I get sticker? Is this enough to pass?

4. Self-goals. There is a rich literature on the goals that students can have. There are three major types of goals, as follows:

Mastery- Students aim to develop their competence and consider ability to be something that can be developed by increasing effort.
Performance- Students aim to demonstrate their competence particularly by outperforming peers and consider ability to be fixed, rather than malleable or able to be changed.
Social- Students are most concerned about how they interact with, and relate to, others in the class

5. Self-dependence occurs when students become dependent on adult directives, students aim to do everything that the teacher asks to the point at which they do not learn how to self-regulate, self monitor and self-evaluate

Implications – while they may gain esteem and success on tasks by attending to directives, their longer-term success is far more assured when directives are not present.
Many students work for extrinsic reasons, develop self-dependent strategies, and start to fail when they are expected to regulate their own learning (especially when they attend university).

6. Self-discounting and distortion

This can be invoked by students 'dismissing' information such as praise, punishment, or feedback as not valuable, accurate or worthwhile. For example….a teacher tells a student that he/she is doing a great job, but the student discounts the feedback claiming the teacher always says the same thing.

7. Self-perfectionism. This can come in many forms….

We can set standards for ourselves that are so demanding that, when we do not meet them, we see it as a failure.
We can demand that the resources be perfect and blame the absence of resources (e.g. time) when we do not succeed.
We can procrastinate because conditions are not perfect for success.
We can attend to irrelevant details and overzealously invest time in tasks that may not be worth that increased investment.
We can demand an 'all or nothing' approach, believing the task to be not at all, or very much, worth completing.

8. Hopelessness

This refers to the student expecting the achievement gains will not occur for him or her and that he or she is helpless to change the situation. Occurs when the student avoids and does not engage in achievement tasks, the student learns to devalue school learning etc..

9. Social comparison

Students often monitor others' behavior for cues and attributions to explain or enhance their own conceptions of self.

Other examples of learning dispositions

Curious	Visualises	Practises
Independent	Perseveres	Inquires
Creative	Questions	Playful
Self-motivated	Plans	Imaginative
Resilient	Revises	Disciplined
Self-directed	Making links	Relating
Self-managing	Reasons	Thoughtful
Innovative	Bravery	Reflective
Co-operative	Wonders	Adaptable
Persistence	Critical	Relational
Concentration	Bold	Challenge
Risk taking	Attentive	Reciprocity
Communication	Connects	Building
Optimism	Researches	
Self-control	Ownership	

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