Learning Power and Values: reconciling the personal with the public in an inquiry based curriculum

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We made webs on the parachute, talking about making connections as we rolled the 'thread'.
Meaning Making Spiders

(to the tune of Incy Wincy Spider)

Web weaving spider
Had a silky thread
Connected all the thoughts
To make ideas in his head
Value

- A principle that guides how we behave
- A focus for our attention and resources
- A focus for public and private conversations
- A vehicle for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- A human investment - a verb – ‘to value’
- An end in itself - a noun
Values are:

- Expressed in relationships between people
- Carried in people’s hearts
- Embedded in narratives - big, medium sized, and little
- Experienced and recognised
- Encountered in the PROCESS and CONTENT of the curriculum
- Negotiated in public and private dialogue
- Analysed by academics
What is learning?

- An outcome to be measured or evaluated
- A process and a lifelong journey
- Almost the same as living and growing
Becoming a Knowledge Worker

Learning Power

Knowledge Skills
Understanding, Competence, knowledge use in the real world.

Values, Attitudes, Feelings, Dispositions, Motivation, Identity, Life story, Lifeworld.

(McGettrick 2002)
Seven Dimensions of Learning Power

- Changing and learning*
- meaning making*
- critical curiosity*
- creativity
- learning relationships
- strategic awareness
- resilience

- Being stuck & static
- Data accumulation
- Passivity
- Being rule bound
- Isolation & dependence
- Being robotic
- Fragility and dependence
Learning power dimensions - virtues which lead to personal and public well being

- Trust
- Justice/fairness
- Fulfilling my potential
- Truthfulnessness
- Care for self
- Care for others
Changing and learning v being stuck & static

I see learning as something I can get better at, and myself as an improving learner. This often reflects a more general interest in ‘self-improvement’, and faith that this is possible. I have a sense of history and of hope. I tend to take ownership of my own learning, and like to be responsible for what I’m learning and how I go about it. I’m usually quite ready to ‘sign up’ to learning tasks that are presented to me.
Critical curiosity v passivity

I like to get below the surface of things and see what is really going on. I like to work things out for myself, and to ask my own questions. I tend to go looking for things to understand better, rather than just responding to problems that come my way. I am usually excited by the prospect of learning, and have a good deal of energy for learning tasks and situations. In general, I’m attracted to learning and enjoy a challenge. I value getting at the truth.
Meaning making  v Data accumulation

I tend to look for patterns, connections and coherence in what I am learning, and to seek links between new situations and what I already know or am interested in. I’m on the look-out for ‘horizontal meaning’ I like to make sense of new things in terms of my own experience, and I like learning about what matters to me.
Creativity v Rulebound

I like new situations, and will sometimes create novelty and uncertainty ‘just to see what happens’. I’ll spice things up to stop them being boring. I like playing with possibilities and imagining how situations could be otherwise. I am able to look at problems from different perspectives. I like trying things out even if I don’t know where they will lead. I sometimes get my best ideas when I just let my mind float freely, and I don’t mind ‘giving up mental control’ for a while to see what bubbles up. I often use my imagination when I’m learning, and pay attention to images and physical promptings as well as rational thoughts.
Positive learning relationships

I like working on problems with other people, especially my friends. I have no difficulty sharing thoughts and ideas with others, and find it useful. I am quite capable of working away at problems on my own, and sometimes prefer it. I don’t feel I have to stick with the crowd for fear of being lonely or isolated, when I’m learning. I have important people at home and in my community who share with me in my learning. I am ready to draw on these when it seems helpful. I feel that I live within a supportive social context.
Strategic Awareness

I tend to think about my learning, and plan how I am going to go about it. I usually have a fair idea how long something is going to take me, what resources I am going to need, and my chances of being successful.

I am able to talk about the process of learning – how I go about things – and about myself as a learner – what my habits, preferences, aspirations, strengths and weaknesses are.
Resilience - dependence and fragility

I tend to stick at things for a while, even when they are difficult. I don’t give up easily. I often enjoy grappling with things that aren’t easy.

I can handle the feelings that tend to crop up during learning: frustration, confusion, apprehension and so on.

I have quite a high degree of emotional tolerance when it comes to learning. I’m not easily upset or embarrassed when I can’t immediately figure something out.

I don’t immediately look for someone to help me out when I am finding things difficult, or when I get stuck. I’m usually happy to keep trying on my own for a while. I don’t mind if there’s nobody around to ‘rescue’ me.
Type One ELLI Profile

Changing and learning

Critical Curiosity

Meaning Making

Creativity

Resilience

Learning relationships

Strategic Awareness

Very much like me

Quite like me

A little like me

Meaning Making
Type Two ELLI Profile

- Critical Curiosity
- Meaning Making
- Creativity
- Resilience
- Changing and learning
- Learning relationships
- Strategic Awareness
Critical Curiosity

![Bar Chart]

- Number of Students
- Categories: 0-10, 20-30, 40-50, 60-70, 80-90, 100+
ELLi profiles shown as pie charts

- Changing and Learning
- Critical Curiosity
- Meaning Making
- Creativity
- Resilience
- Learning Relationships
- Strategic Awareness
Some quantitative findings:

\[ N = 6045 \quad \text{Study 1} \quad \text{Schools} = 116 \]

Learning Power seems to get weaker and more fragile as children go through school.
Learning power is positively associated with:
- Attainment
- What teachers do AND what they believe
- Learner centred practices

N=851
Years 5 – 9
Age 9 – 14
Six west country schools
2003 -4
Learning Power and Underachieving Students
Study 4  N=1000 14 year olds ANOVA

- Changing and Learning: .003
- Meaning Making: .002
- Critical Curiosity: .001
- Creativity: .345
- Learning relationships: .691
- Strategic awareness: .011
- Fragility and dependence: .099
Tentative findings....

- Underachievers are characterised by:
  - Passivity in learning dispositions
  - Accepting things at face value
  - Lacking strategic awareness – of thinking, feeling and planning/doing
  - Not looking for meaning and sense making in their learning
  - Being ‘stuck and static’ in their sense of themselves as learners.
  - Being unable to ‘tell their story’
Learning Power and Character

- Studies 5 (N=550 16-19 yr olds)
- and 6 (N=60 13-19 year old young offenders)

  - strong correlations between learning power and character variables such as ‘critical social justice’
  
  - extremely distinctive patterns in the learning profile of young offenders in secure units
## Four stations on the learning journey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self</th>
<th></th>
<th>Competent Agent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Desire</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal qualities</td>
<td>Dispositions</td>
<td>Attitudes</td>
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## Personal | Public
ELLi is an assessment event

- That provides a framework for a mentored conversation that moves between SELF and TEXT (curriculum)

- or between self reflection and a negotiated and publicly assessable learning outcome
What the students say – examples of self reflection

I used to be quite bored; now I can always find things to do. I’m in charge. We control our own minds, so we can do it if we want to (11 year old)

I want to get better at being a learner; grow up and enjoy life. I want to learn! (10 year old)

Now I can ask questions, instead of wondering what the answer is (10 year old)

(What matters most is…) knowing all I can do; I’ve got all these things in my head that can help me. (six year old)
Learning Jigsaws
If we didn’t have the ELLI animals, we wouldn’t know other ways to learn and if we always learned the same way we’d get bored with it. Now we can choose a way that’s best for you (sic).

That’s the same for me because I used to sit quietly and think it out for myself but now if I’m stuck I ask questions.
How am I Growing and Learning? (morphing zone)

Critical Curiosity (detective zone)  Creativity (springboard zone)  Meaning Making (jigsaw zone)

passive  curious  rule-bound  creative  gritty  connecting

Resilience (gritty zone)  Strategic Awareness (pilot zone)  Learning Relationships (team zone)

giving up  gritty  robotic  aware  dependent/isolated  team-player
I have changed so much in my learning ability and this makes me feel a bit more confident in myself. Apart from just learning whatever I need, knowing **why** should I learn them is an important part for me and then analysing them.
Do you see a difference in other people in the class?

- In class, E is always with the class, answering questions and discussing – she’s always at the centre of the action – she doesn’t get shy or sulky anymore like she did (Shaun)

- C has improved in his reactions – he is learning to control his feelings, not throwing things around the table – now he hardly ever does it – it used to really bug us (Samantha)

- D always used to sit like that doing nothing (slouched in chair) he used to sit like that for ½ hour doing the title! – now he just gets on with it (Sam)

- S does ask as many questions, but they are now interesting ones which help, not just any questions all the time (Amy)
18 Year Old High Achiever

“Overall, there has been a marked improvement in my post-ELL1 diagram. In the past year, I have made a lot of effort to improve my academic grades and a direct corollary of that effort is the improvement in my learning ability as well as my whole outlook/perspective on education: Learning is no longer a one-off process to achieve good grades but I can honestly say that I have finally come to realise all the positive benefits that it can generate. I have become more analytical and more conscious of the events happening around me. It excites me when I can fit the pieces of the puzzle together and understand the meaning of the input I gained in class as well as from informal discussions with friends, the internet, books and magazines.”
Focusing in on....

Cultural synergy through
Metaphor, imagery, signs, symbols and story
Communication through metaphor, imagery and story

All of the studies involve teachers and learners accessing complex ideas through image and metaphor and story.

“It’s useful; you can BE that and then try and BE that” (an 11 year old from Cumbria)
Creativity

- Or ‘springboard zone.’
- Thinking around things
- Coming up with new ideas, sometimes a bit crazy!
- Trusting your hunches
Resilience

Or ‘gritty zone’!

Not giving up, even if it’s tough
Learning, Place and Identity

N= 20 11-16 year olds NSW
Introducing a language for learning

Cultural synergy through
- Narrative
- Imagery
- Metaphor
Naming the animals

**CHANGING & LEARNING: SNAKE**
- Sheds his skin
- Dislocates his mouth/jaw to fit in food
- Uses venom & constriction to capture its prey
- Changes shape to adapt to its environment

**CRITICAL CURIOSITY: EMU**
- Always looks up to see what is around its environment
- Curious
- Explores and is adventurous
- Stares
- Proud and strong
MAKING MEANING: PLATYPUS:
- Builds its own burrow
- Uses many resources from its environment

CREATIVITY: WILLY WAG TAIL:
- Proud, fun and playful
- Individual and challenges others, or takes on anything it encounters
- Not scared, fast, likes to show off.
**RESILIENCE: ECHIDNA**
- Digs into the ground when faced with danger
- Tough, smart, tricky
- Camouflages in the tall grass

**STRATEGIC AWARENESS: WEDGED-TAIL EAGLE**
- Spirals high in the sky to look for prey
- Patient, strategic, smart, stealthy, big, strong and proud
- Uses aerodynamics

**LEARNING RELATIONSHIPS: ANTS**
- Work together
- Each have a different job, scout and travel
- Can predict rain
Iconography of learning

The symbol mediates between experiential knowledge, traditional stories and knowledge about learning how to learn and co-create and use knowledge in the global information age.
Focusing in on

Learning power as scaffolding for the learning journey
Four stations on the learning journey

| Self | | Competent Agent |
|------|-----------------|
| Identity | Personal qualities |
| Desire | Dispositions |
| Motivation | Attitudes |
| My story as it is shaped by bigger stories | Values |

| Personal | | Public |
|----------|-----------------|
| | Skills |
| | Knowledge |
| | Understanding |
| | Competent learner citizen mathematician artisan etc |

| | | |
|----------|-----------------|
| | | Public |
| | | |

My story as it is shaped by bigger stories.
The learning self

- Story
- Identity
- Hope
- Experience
- Tradition
- World views, culture and values
Personal Power to Learn

- Changing and learning
- Meaning making
- Critical curiosity
- Creativity
- Learning relationships
- Strategic awareness
- Resilience
Knowledge creation and use

- Publicly valued and assessed knowledge and know how

- Qualifications, expert knowledge.
Competences for the real world

- Managing change
- Citizenship
- Problem solving
- Communication
- Assimilating technologies
- Managing own learning
The dynamics of a learner-driven enquiry

1. Personal Choice: concrete place/object
2. Observation - description
3. Generating questions
4. Uncovering Narratives
5. Mapping
6. Connecting with existing knowledge
7. Interface with curriculum requirements
8. Assessment - validation
9. Application in the real world
Thinking and Learning Skills

- Choosing/deciding
- Observing/describing
- Wondering/interrogating
- Discovering/storying
- Navigating/mapping
- Spanning/connecting,
- Interacting/incorporating
- Reconciling, validating
- Acting in the world
Sonny’s choice – my dog

- My dog and why he means a lot to me
- Why do animals end up in shelters?
- Why do they lock people up?
- Does locking people up make a difference?
- How have they got the power to lock people up?
- What are their rights?
Why Student N chose his ‘object’

- Yeah, I had to pick my top thing and then do one of those things about it.
- So we picked…?
- My dog Toby.
- I notice he’s got a lovely heart around him. ..tell me why you picked him?
- Well because I got him from my Mum’s cousin and I haven’t saw her for a long time, yeah and yeah, that’s probably it
- So what’s special about Toby?
- We’ve had him for a bit over three years and yeah, I just like him I guess.
- So has sharing the objects and talking to your [teacher] helped you understand yourself as a learner?
- Yep.
- So what do you think has been the most important lesson there?
- How much I like Toby.
- What makes Toby special?
- He’s the only dog that when he runs away, he comes back. (LAUGH)
- Oh well I’ll tell you, most of them run away don’t they?
- Yeah, because all my other dogs run away and then they don’t come back.
Shawanda’s choice

- My tangible object of choice was a picture of Anansi the spiderman.
- I chose this object based on my intrinsic drive to explore my ancestral heritage in regards to the West African connection.
Why is Anansi important to me?

- He inspires me.
- He exemplifies survival.
- He reminds me of the fact that my ancestors were not 'slaves' but were instead a powerful ethnic group befallen through the evils of slavery.
- He reminds me that my ancestors have heavily contributed to the wealth of many powerful countries.
- He reminds me that Christianity is not the end all of spirituality.
- He reminds me that poverty is a state of mind.
- And he reminds me to stay strong in the face of adversities.
Idea-Spinning!

in the....

Springboard zone

and the

Jigsaw zone

(Creativity)

(Meaning Making)
Jess’s choice: Cheddar Gorge

‘I chose this person and place because it was the time in my life when things were just normal at home and it was just me, my mum and my brother and we were all happy. It makes me a bit sad because we don’t have times like that any more but also happy because we had a good day’
My ELLi Profile

Changing & Learning
Very much like me

Critical Curiosity

Leaning Relationships

Meaning Making

Strategic Awareness

Creative Resilience

Creativity

Reminder:
really, try this week to do the 1/2 things that are circled from the where I am in a week.

Resilience

Things to try, to increase your creativity as a learner:
- Try engaging an alternative before working them out; see how good your guess was
- Play games with routine tasks; for I learning and writing up notes, e.g., turning yourself, inventing a board game, playing “any question?” or swapping pupil with a friend
- Make up characters and situations in which the tasks, ideas and facts in your learning came to life for you: write or imagine scripts and stories
- Use colour and draw pictures, diagrams, funny letters, etc., to illustrate your notes
- Make mind-maps with labels or draw “trees” with your thinking ability; “reaching branches” to show how possibilities multiply when you think about alternative outcomes
- Use a different kind of writing to present your work; e.g., a series of observations, diary, a section, a story article, try a story book with illustrations, to explain the topic to a much younger learner
- Think about the rules you tend to follow in your learning and use if you can bend them constructively by doing something differently
- Let your mind “have free” when you are stuck or puzzled; see if your “dramas” come up with a way forward
- Trust your subconscious mind as much as you do your thinking ability.
Questioning in the....

Detective zone

and the

Pilot zone

(Critical Curiosity)

and

(Strategic Awareness)
Jess’s questions

- What will be there in 15 years?
- What was there before?
- How many people have been there?
- How was the gorge made?
- Have any famous people been there?
- What kind of people used to be there?
- Why do relationships matter?
Reflecting
in the....

Jigsaw zone

and the

Gritty zone

(Meaning Making)

(Resilience)
**Themes**

* What used to be there?
* Who used to be there?

- My experience at Cheddar gorge.
- How were the stalactites & stalagmites formed?
- How did it get like that?
- Who used to live there?
- What kind of people lived there?
- What used to be there?
- Where did the people go?

* History & Sociology.
Evaluating in the....

Morphing zone and the

Team zone and the
Cheddar Gorge

What lies beneath?

Tel: 07835 547 104
The caves

We start our journey deep in the caves of Cheddar Gorge. Caves are huge mysterious holes under the ground where lots of beautiful sights have started to be uncovered. Inside the caves of Cheddar Gorge there are damp, dark caverns where the sunlight never enters, in which unbelievable rock formations are changing every day. Little lakes and even waterfalls are still to be found! Some of the rock formations are called stalactites and stalagmites. A stalactite is an icle shaped lump of calcite which forms by attaching itself to the top of a limestone cavern and over the years they grow in size. A stalagmite is again an icicle shaped lump of calcite which is formed by the drips of calcite from the stalactites and grows upwards from the floor of a limestone cavern, stalactites and stalagmites are mostly found together. But still to this day more strange and wonderful things are being discovered deep inside the caves....... if you dare to enter!

Cave men?

As we go through time a bit more you wonder, 'were these caves used by anyone else?' Well the answer to that is, yes. In 1908 the owners of Gough's Cave in Cheddar Gorge were blasting a hole for a drain, they discovered a skeleton of a man - the oldest complete skeleton ever to be found in Britain dating back to 9,000 years ago! Unfortunately when blasting the hole it destroyed any evidence of how this Cheddar man lived, but you can just imagine him out hunting, and driving wild animals over the edge of cliffs to Cheddar kill them.

Previous tests have shown that the Cheddar man suffered a violent death at the age of about 23 in 7150 B.C. To more amazement, in 1997, they matched a piece of DNA material extracted from the tooth cavity of the skeleton, with a 42-year-old history teacher, Adrian Targett. The tests proved, without a doubt, Adrian is a direct descendant of the skeleton, AKA: Cheddar man.

Here and now

Cheddar Gorge today, is a magnificent tourist attraction. You can take a walk around the lovely Cheddar village and admire all the beautiful sites, or maybe take a trip into the caves, in which every one is different. Overall Cheddar is a beautiful place to visit, with a lot to offer for all ages. Who knows, take a trip to Cheddar Gorge and you may be the next person to discover the hidden beauties that lie beneath!!!
‘It’s made me not so scared to learn other things,’ ‘It was a tiny little project and it spiraled into all these other things that were connected.’

‘I didn’t think I could learn any more but now I believe you can.’ It’s not just about Cheddar Gorge, it’s about life stuff.’
16 year old voices

“Learning how to tell your own story would make it easier to do all the other things you have to do – learn subjects, get grades etc”

“We’re all programmed in a way that makes our experience invisible”

“More measurable things are given far more attention than the less measurable”
Danny - a ‘NEET’ Learner with profound learning difficulties - targeted Critical Curiosity and Learning Relationships

“It’s changed what I think I can do.”
Finally.....

Let me tell you a story written by the group of students from the Learning Place and Identity project.....
This is a story about some animals that lived in a zoo called Taronga which is in Guringai country. Most of these animals came from different nations that were all over the land that is now called Australia. All the animals would dream about the time when they could return to their own country, hear the stories from the elders, learn the laws, know the ways of their land. At night when all the people were gone they would gather in their language groups and talk about the old ways, the good ways, when there were no fences and captivity. One group of animals were from the Wonnaruah nation and had their own names in the language. A willy wag tail or didijiri, the emu or kungkurung, the snake or ta nipa tang, the eagle or ka-wul, the echidna or kuntji kukan, the platypus or pikan and some ants or yunrring that were nearly always too busy to stop and talk. Always the talk would turn to their dreams and of the country that they all wished to return to.
For the first time since Willy Wagtail told him about his dreams, Snake felt a stirring of excitement wriggle all the way down his coils. He was beginning to get it. He started to feel himself grow and change. He was already learning to ask questions and be curious, like Emu. Now he was learning how important it is to be patient and stick at things, like Echidna. His skin felt tight, all of a sudden.
A shape flashed across the light of the moon and its shadow fell momentarily on the scene. All the animals fell silent. The Eagle landed, a little higher up the leaning gum tree, spread her wings magnificently and folded them away with a shake of her feathers. No one spoke. They were all curious to hear what the Eagle was going to say.

‘The moment has arrived. We have anticipated it. Now, everything is in place. Under the full moon, I have called you together to combine your strengths, summon the power of all your learning and fulfil your dream. I have planned for this night. I see everything, from the smallest ant to the whole zoo, the city and the vast bush, stretching out West as far as the eye can see. I see each moment: how it arrived on the wings of the past and how it will launch into the great sky of the future.

Learn from me as you have learned from each other. I give you your purpose, your direction, your focus and, most important of all, your readiness to accept your responsibility to yourself to achieve your dream.’

All the animals breathed a deep breath of the midnight air and solemnly vowed to accept their responsibility to themselves and the group. They knew that, before the night was over, if they all played their part, they would be free.
One day, they got together again and agreed that they should leave the bush. One dream had been fulfilled. The city children had been sad to lose them. The bush would always be there when they needed to go back to it. They had learned how to travel. They had all survived crossing the F3 the busiest road in their world, to get back to country. It had taken skill, determination and courage to do it but together they had made it, and had learnt together how to do it.

Now, they knew they would go on learning for the rest of their lives. They would never go back to the zoo. They had returned home to the Hunter Valley, home to the Wonnaruah people, their home. Today the animals are working around the schools of the Singleton area, helping children and students to grow and change by passing on their truths and being everlasting symbols of what they discovered on their adventure.

Ratified by the Wonnaruah elders