

Supporting your able child's learning in primary school

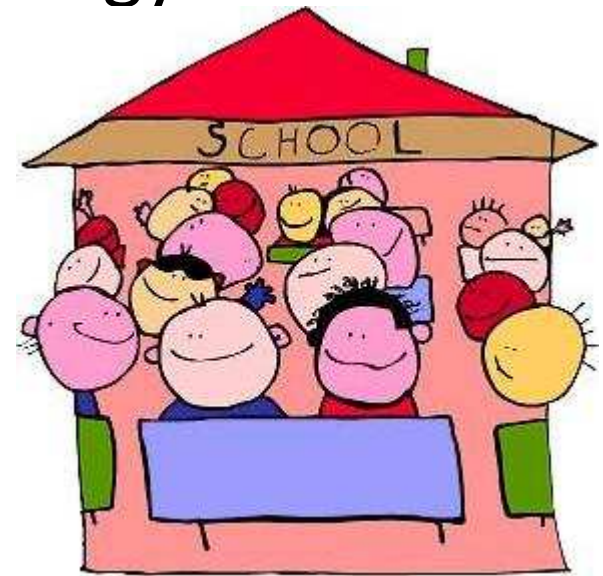
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Overview

- Childhood learning
- Myths about learning
- Building learning power
 - Asking questions
 - Encouraging independence
 - Modelling learning
 - Using learning language
- Advocating for your able child

Childhood Learning

- Learning doesn't start with school
 - Young children don't mind making mistakes
 - Boys and girls develop at slightly different rates
 - Three main aims of primary education:
 - to enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual
 - to enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society
 - to prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning
- NCCA website

“The term exceptionally able is used in the guidelines to describe students who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students”

NCCA, 2007

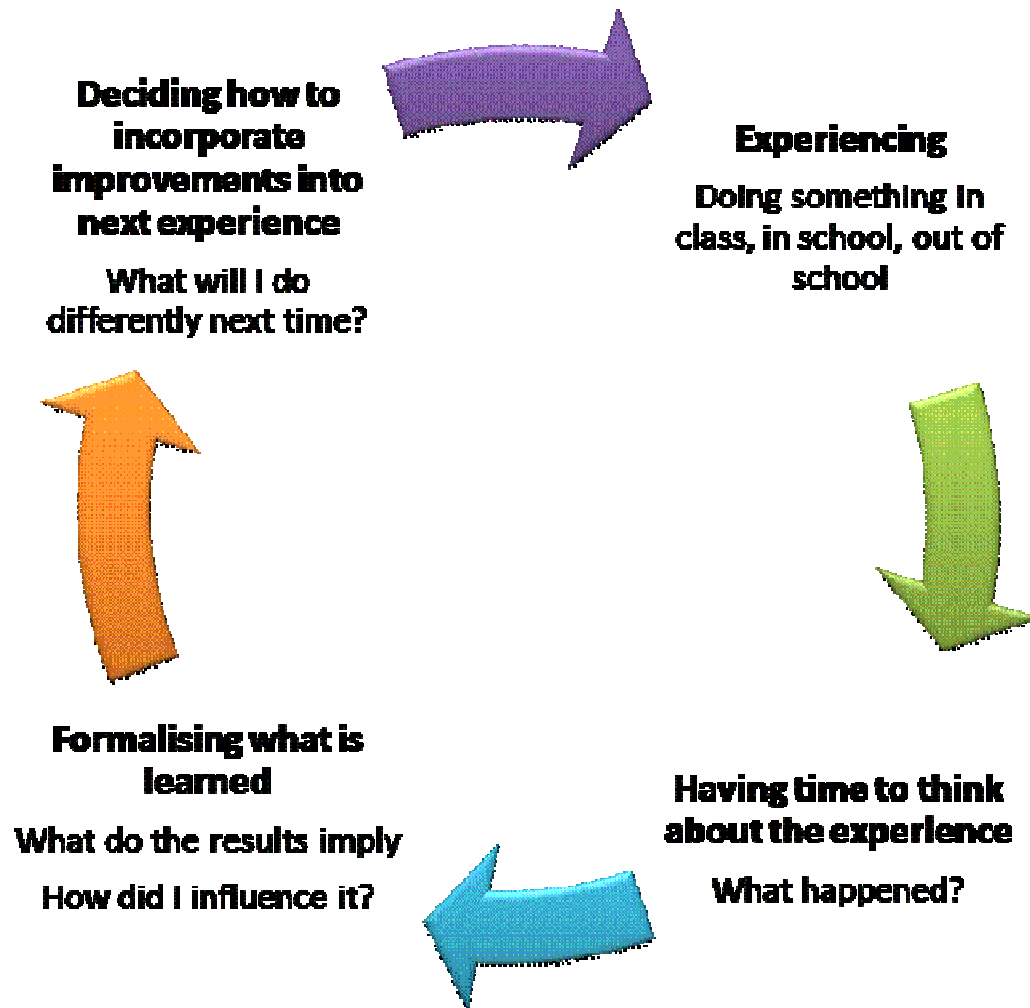
Gifted and Talented students are “...those students who are achieving or *who have the potential to achieve* a level substantially beyond the rest of their peer group inside their **particular school**, be that school a nursery, primary, selective and non-selective post-primary school or other educational setting.

CCEA, 2007

Myths about learning

- If I am “low-ability”, effort will not help. Conversely, if I am “high-ability” effort will not help.
- Learning is a smooth upward path
- Learning is lego-like
- Learning can (should) proceed without mistakes

The Learning Cycle



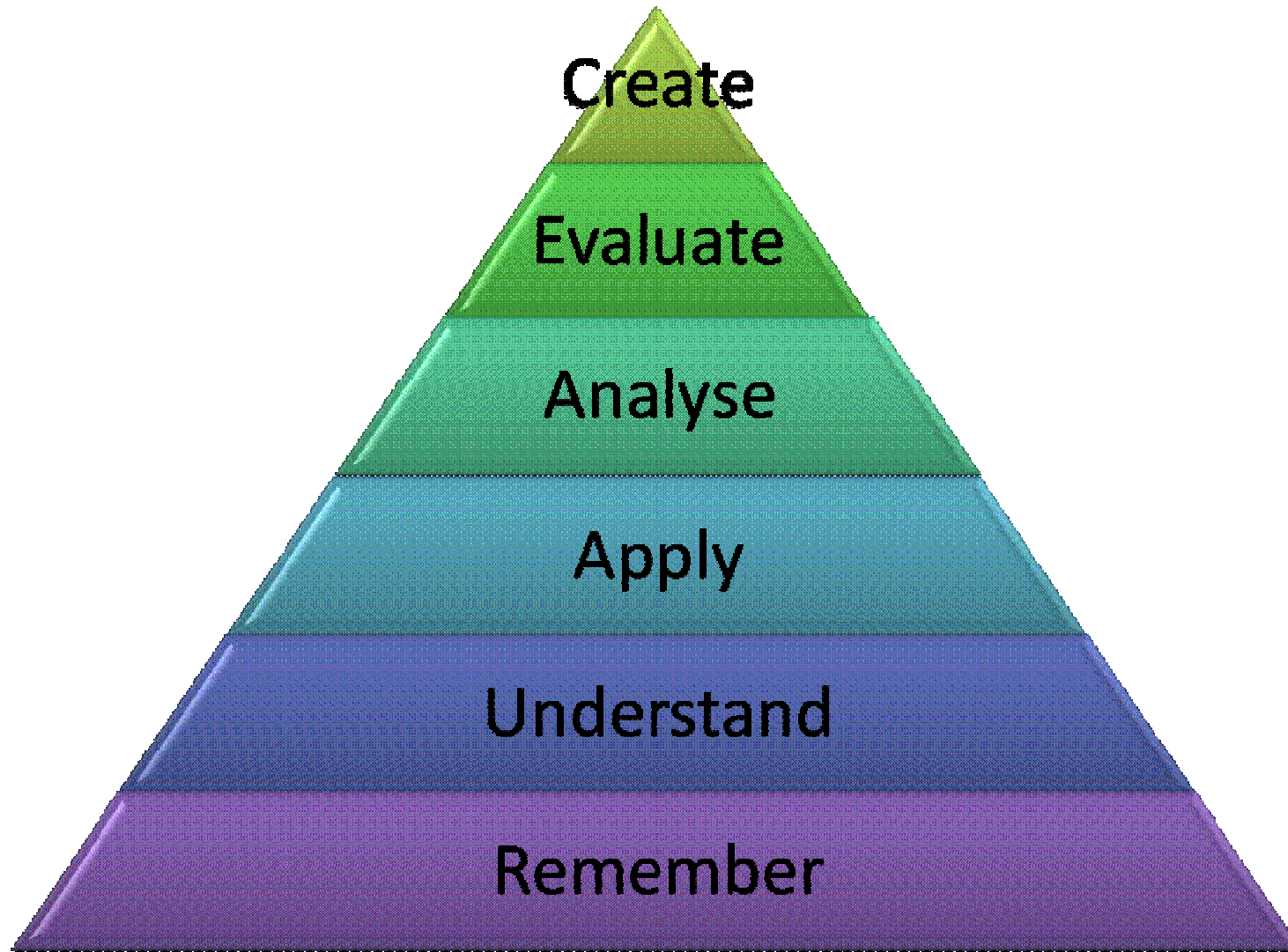
Assessment for Learning

- “[AfL]....emphasises the child’s active role in his/her own learning, in that the teacher and child agree what the outcomes of the learning should be and the criteria for judging to what extent the outcomes have been achieved...This level of involvement in shaping their own learning can heighten children’s awareness of themselves as learners and encourage them to take more personal responsibility for, and pride in, their learning”
 - Encouraging pupils to be self-regulated learners
 - Asking children to revisit completed work
 - Building portfolios that show *progress*

Myths about learning

- If I am “low-ability”, effort will not help
- Learning is a smooth upward path
- Learning is lego-like
- Learning can (should) proceed without mistakes
- Learning facts is baaaaaad.

Bloom's Taxonomy



Asking questions

- Research shows that questions in the classroom are not always put to best use.

Guess:

- How many questions a teacher asks on average per hour? How many do pupils ask?
- Where on Bloom's Taxonomy do they come from?
- How long is typically given to receive an answer?

Encouraging independence

- Sometimes “hands-off” is ok
 - “Imagination is the child of boredom”
 - Try not to rescue too early
 - Try not to hover
 - Ask questions later, don’t interrupt
 - “Just in time” learning
 - If stuck, children generally want just enough of a hint to get them going again
 - Refrain from “teaching” unless child is specifically interested
- Guy Claxton (2008)

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Step 37(e) Reproduction rights obtainable from
at PLANET (F), www.CartoonStock.com
FUSE (G)
* NOTE: Remember to open
WINDOW (K).
? TIP: Did you pack a snack?



Rocket Science: The
online course



Modelling learning

- Adults are very powerful models of learning for children – our every move is watched *and trusted*
- Demonstrate that learning is not only “what happens in school”
- What are you learning at the moment?

Using learning language

- Research shows that praising children's intelligence encourages
 - Belief that ability is fixed
 - Working for praise rather than for enjoyment
 - Anxiety about future performance
 - Refusal to persevere if things aren't going well
- Labelling?



Using “learning language”

- What was fun to learn today?
- What bits did you really have to think about?
- Did you make any interesting mistakes?
- Did you ask any good questions?
- Did you try something you’ve never done before?
- What was the most exciting thing you learned today?
- What would you do differently?

Advocating for your able child

- Does the school have a G&T policy?
- Whom should you contact?
- How should this contact be made?
- Prepare!
 - Determine what you believe your child's needs are. Prioritise.
 - Collect evidence. Keep a journal, note things your child says, bring samples of work/projects done at home, art work. Scores from an educational assessment if your child has had one.
 - Summarise concerns. Be specific – can you give examples?
 - What do you want? Have an answer ready for this!

Advocating for your able child

- Consider inter-individual, and intra-individual differences
 - Inter: comparing aspects of your child's own performance e.g. "average" compared to peers, but below what would be expected given reading ability.
 - Intra: comparing performance with same-age peers
- Age of child in comparison to class peers
 - Summer-born babies?
- Children with EAL
- Differentiation in terms of social/emotional needs

Advocating for your able child

- Think about the *language* you will use in discussion
 - Practice outlining your case beforehand. Role-play.
 - Stay focussed and be concise.
 - Do you have to say the word *gifted*?
 - Assume a positive outcome and that teacher is your ally.
 - Tact will always be appreciated. Be careful not to criticise.
 - *Objections* are not necessarily *rejections*.

Advocating for your able child

- What can you give back to the school?
- Advocacy is an incremental process – celebrate small successes, don't be disheartened if it all doesn't fall into place at once.
- Be willing to admit when things go wrong, and look for a solution.
- Acknowledge what has gone right, and say thank you in writing.