



A New Paradigm for Education

Some Current and Possible New Models of the Learning and Teaching Processes

by JEFF Lewis

How much pain, angst and anxiety do we have to experience before we are prepared to say - 'STOP! Hold on a minute. Something is seriously wrong with and within our current educational system. It's not working in so many ways and not sustainable in the way it is currently being pushed and cajoled.'

We need a major paradigm shift in relation to our formal education system

- from one based on teaching and instructing to one based on supporting and facilitating learning
- from one where the primary focus is on the providers and what they need to achieve to one where the focus is on the clients (the learners) and how to support their growth and development
- to one where our educational institutions are proactive in creating working models for our society – eg based on our needs for lifelong learning

We need to redefine the Purpose

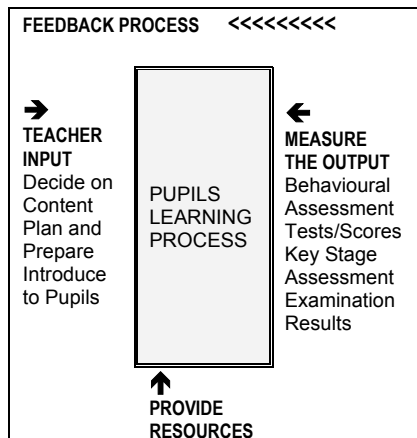
- To celebrate each and every individual as they are
- To support and facilitate their learning
- To be proactive in developing and creating models for our broader society

Imagine a learning centre, an LEA, a Government Department where everyone behaved as if the following principles/beliefs were true:

- we are all unique and experience the world in different ways
- the map is not the territory – people respond to their map of reality, not to reality itself

- the mind and the body form a linked system
- behind every behaviour is a positive intention
- there is no failure only feedback – if what you are doing isn't working, do something else
- choice is better than no choice
- we are always communicating – the meaning of our communication is the response we get
- anything can be accomplished if the task is broken down into small enough parts

A MODEL OF CURRENT GENERAL EDUCATIONAL CLASSROOM PRACTICE

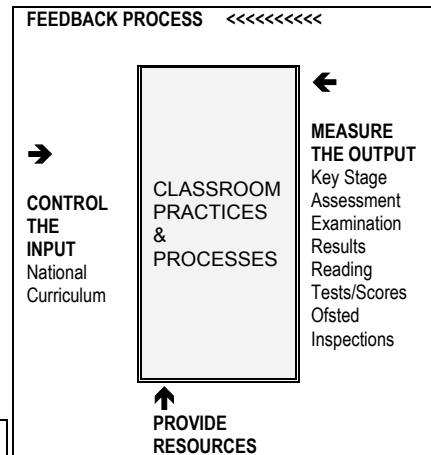


INSIDE THE BOX - THE PUPIL LEARNING PROCESS

A major key to improving standards and raising achievement would be understanding and appreciating what might be going on 'inside the box' –

- the internal thinking processes (eg the styles and strategies,
- the values and beliefs,
- how we perceive ourselves as learners) and
- how we manage our feelings (emotional states) that lead to our learning behaviours.

A MODEL OF CURRENT GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO RAISING QUALITY + ACHIEVEMENT



INSIDE THE BOX - CLASSROOM PRACTICES & PROCESSES

A major key to improving standards and raising achievement levels would be understanding and appreciating what might be going on 'inside the box'

- the practices and processes (eg the styles and strategies,
- the values and beliefs,
- how we perceive ourselves as teachers) and
- how we manage our own feelings and those of our pupils (be it individuals or groups) that lead to our teaching behaviours – the classroom practices and processes.

A LEARNING AND TEACHING PEDAGOGY

It is generally agreed that the focus of our educational system (and the many services that support it) is to facilitate (lifelong) learning; this would benefit through having an agreed pedagogy relating to understanding how we learn and how we teach the processes involved – something that currently does not exist.

NLP provides a set of models that help us understand the learning and teaching processes, together with a growing set of tools and methodologies on its applications.

THE LEARNING PROCESS

What is clear to us is that amongst the major factors affecting learning are Outcomes, Emotional States, Learning Styles, Learning Strategies, and Relationships:

Learning Outcomes - knowing what we want to achieve through our learning and what it will be like when we've achieved it

Learning States - how we manage our own emotional state – and influence the emotional state of others - in our own unique way

Learning Styles - our unconscious internal thinking preferences that dramatically influence how we take in the world around us

Learning Strategies - the unconscious thinking and learning strategies we utilise inside our minds when we are undertaking any task

Learning Relationships - how we relate to

1: ourselves as a learner (our self-esteem),

2: significant others (our peers, our teachers)

3: our learning environment (the curriculum, learning materials)

An appreciation of the structure underpinning each of these provides some crucial perspectives for anyone involved in learning - and teaching, supporting and facilitating learning.

THE TEACHING PROCESS

What is clear to us is that amongst the major factors affecting teaching are Outcomes, States, Styles of Teaching, Strategies, Relationships, Awareness and Acuity, Flexibility, Congruence, Presence and Presentation:

Teaching Outcomes - knowing what we want to achieve through our teaching – for ourselves and for each pupil - and what it will be like when we've achieved it.

Teaching States

- how we manage our own emotional state

- how we influence the emotional states of our pupils (individuals and groups)
- eventually how we help pupils manage their own states

Teaching Styles

- knowing our own internal thinking preferences - and those of our pupils'
- our ability to vary our approach to reach our pupils' preferences and styles and thus enrich them to create more success – through our language patterns, voice, gestures, actions and activities – tapping into their visual, auditory and kinaesthetic modalities and their metaprogrammes

Teaching Strategies

- knowing our own thinking strategies that we utilise when we are undertaking and presenting any task
- helping our pupils understand and appreciate their own learning strategies
- helping our pupils enrich their own learning strategies and, where necessary, installing new, more effective ones

Teaching Relationships

- how we relate to ourselves as a teacher (our self-esteem)
- how we relate to our students – our ability to build rapport, pace them (their states, styles, values and beliefs) and then lead them (to enrich their maps)

Teaching Acuity - our ability to 'read them' – awareness if we are on track to achieve our Outcomes - through our ability to pick up clues from student behaviour, attitudes and language

Teaching Flexibility - the flexibility to vary what we are doing to meet the particular needs of our pupils and to achieve our Outcomes – with creativity, elegance, ease and integrity

Teaching Congruence - our ability to 'be real' and authentic – with congruent messages of openness, honesty and fairness

Teaching 'Presence' - ability to make a gift of our experience and let others into our lives through self-disclosure

Teaching Presentation - our ability to present our ideas and materials with energy and passion

An appreciation of the structure underpinning each of these provides some crucial perspectives for anyone involved in teaching, supporting and facilitating learning.

IDENTIFYING, MODELLING AND SHARING EXCELLENCE

The best way to share excellence is to find people who are recognised as 'excellent practitioners', find out how they do what they do and share this with others.

The Government has recognised this and has various approaches to sharing excellence – identifying excellent teachers, excellent heads and excellent schools – and providing incentives to encourage them to share their excellence with others.

One major drawback to this approach is that it seems that when we are 'being excellent' we are working from a point of 'unconscious competence' – that it is likely to be something that we habitually do, so we are simply doing what we are doing, not really thinking very much about it; what we often describe as 'going with the flow'.

Excellence is achieved when we apply all our unconscious skills and competencies – our habits – and most people will appreciate that they are unaware of most, if not all, of their habits. More often than not, if you observe someone when they are 'being excellent' and then afterwards ask them 'How did you do that?' their response is likely to be 'Do what?'

If this is true, then asking someone to share their excellence with others is likely to be quite challenging – it will involve not simply what they do, but how they do it – not simply their behaviours but their unconscious thinking patterns and strategies, their values and beliefs that drive and motivate them to act in a particular way, their perceptions of who they are when they act in this way, etc!

We can make this even more useful if we can go beyond how an individual does something excellently by identifying a number of different people who are excellent in similar behaviours (eg in building rapport and relationships) – which they will inevitably do in their own, individual unique way - and identifying what they might have in common – what is sometimes described as 'the difference that makes the difference'

Jeff Lewis has spent over thirty years working in and for Education and during his career has been a Primary Headteacher, Adviser, Assistant Education Officer and Director of a Teachers' Professional Development Centre.

He is a Master Practitioner of NLP, Director of The NLP Education Network and New Oceans Education.

