

The architecture of

Classroom cultures

Relating - How you relate to your students; gradually sharing more of the responsibility for learning with them

- **Surface the learning process**
 - » Train the tricky bits. Talk about it, nudge it along
- **Expect students to access resources independently**
 - » Ensure students have to anticipate and find the resources they need to solve problems
- **Generate team commitment**
 - » Show that teams rely on diverse contributions from individuals who are all pulling together towards common goals

A shift in relationships



Talking - How you talk about learning; the sort of language content and style you use to enhance and explain learning

- **Conflict resolution**
 - » Ensure group work encourages discussion and debate, conflict resolution and consensus building
- **Persuasive language**
 - » Build the vocabulary of influence and suggestion
- **Personal contribution**
 - » Enable students to talk about effective collaborative strategies and evaluate their personal contribution to group tasks

A shift in learning language



Constructing - How you construct learning activities; the tasks and classroom routines you use to build positive learning habits

- **Strengthen perseverance**
 - » Don't provide ready solutions; encourage teams to stick with challenges when immediate outcomes aren't forthcoming.
- **Move teams around**
 - » Don't let teams grow stale; require students to work in different ways with different people; value all constructive contributions.
- **Offer enquiry-based challenges**
 - » Present topics as a series of questions to be explored

A shift in how learning is constructed

Celebrating - What you celebrate about learning; what you prize, recognise, display; the outward signs of beliefs about learning

- **Value openness and honesty**
 - » Make sure students feel free to talk about how they think and feel
- **Develop a teamwork code of practice**
 - » Display and use a teamwork code of practice which you have developed and agreed with your students
- **Challenge the relevance of arguments and opinions**
 - » Require sound and speculative reasoning to substantiate ideas and attitudes
- **Prize effort**
 - » Ensure students understand what 'making an effort' means in practice.

A shift in what is celebrated and valued

Making the shift

Students will first need to embrace the language of learning and be offered opportunities that enable them to become conscious of using their learning behaviours. Teachers need first to gradually shift the culture of the classroom and devolve more responsibility for learning to students. Later they take a more forensic approach to designing classroom activities using the learning behaviours to deepen engagement and understanding.

For many teachers this shift is likely to call for changes in practice. Take it steady! Think about what you might...

Stop

Over-scaffolding learning

Start

Introducing thorny subjects to discuss a range of attitudes and ideas

Start slowly

Combining groups of students who wouldn't normally work together

Experiment with

Training teamwork skills