

# REAL GOOD TEACHERS

TALK ABOUT ...

## DEVELOPING

## EXPERT LEARNERS



Scan me to watch the Expert Learners video at [ako.ac.nz](http://ako.ac.nz)

## KUPU ARATAKI

## INTRODUCTION

The term “expert learner” refers to students who are actively engaged with the materials learned and take responsibility for their own learning. Being an expert at learning is a life skill, as well as for formal study. If teachers recognise the learning strategies of expert learners, we can show our learners how to become more expert.

Therefore good teachers promote meta-cognitive (thinking about thinking) capability in their learners. They talk explicitly about thinking. Making learning about learning an integral part of the curriculum increases the opportunities for students to consciously develop their capacities as expert learners.

Developing the habit of reflection can have a profound impact on learning how to learn better. It is a skill that helps to focus how learning happens, and complements what is being learned.

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## TAKE-AWAY

Learning how to learn better is for teachers too. If they can demonstrate that they are enthusiastic, skilled, autonomous, reflective learners, then they will be inspirational models for their own students.

### Principles of adult learning

Teachers set the context for learning and for becoming an expert learner. Jane Vella says adults have enough life experience to be in dialogue with any teacher about any subject and will learn new knowledge, attitudes, or skills best in relation to their life experience. Her twelve principles of adult learning, are ways to begin, maintain, and nurture the dialogue:

1. Needs assessment: participation of the learners in naming what is to be learner
2. Safety in the environment and the process. We create a context for learning
3. Sound relationships between teacher and learner and among learners
4. Sequence of content and reinforcement
5. Praxis: action with reflection or learning by doing
6. Respect for learners as decision makers
7. Ideas, feelings, and actions: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of learning
8. Immediacy of the learning
9. Clear roles and role development
10. Teamwork and use of small groups
11. Engagement of the learners in what they are learning
12. Accountability: how do they know they know?



## EXPERT LEARNERS

### SOME HABITS OF EXPERT LEARNERS

- + Recovers from setbacks
- + Is self motivating
- + Shows persistence
- + Prepared to challenge their own preconceptions
- + Selects appropriate strategies for learning
- + Can identify support needed & ask for it
- + Is resilient
- + Co-operates with peers
- + Understands how they learn
- + Contributes to the wider learning community
- + Monitors & evaluates their progress
- + Understands the value of different forms of assessment
- + Shows curiosity
- + Is an autonomous learner
- + Articulates thoughts & ideas
- + Is able to work independently

#### RAUEMI AKO – LEARNING RESOURCE

Haisman, G. (2001). Swot: Study without tears, for university, polytechnic and secondary students. Wellington, NZ: New Zealand Council for Educational Research. Learning and Skills Network. Effective practice in teaching and learning: Improving Own Learning and Performance. The Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA) 2008 Retrieved from: <https://bit.ly/2yYLC2E>

Vella, J. (2002). Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults. Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning. Jossey-Bass, Inc. Retrieved from <http://actxlearning.pbworks.com/f/Vella.pdf>

#### VIDEO

The Expert Learner. In this short video David Jolly of Exeter College explains the learner going from unconscious incompetence to conscious competence. <https://youtu.be/533TqJDLgk>

- + Brings energy to learning
- + Plans what to do and then does it
- + Knows how to identify and use resources
- + Uses thinking skills at an appropriate level
- + Tolerates uncertainty
- + Is proactive
- + Takes risks
- + Explores different ways of doing things
- + Learns from mistakes
- + Understands course or qualification requirements
- + Is well organised
- + Negotiates effectively
- + Is adaptable
- + Is confident
- + Gives attention to detail
- + Is flexible in approaching new situations
- + Establishes goals and works towards them
- + Reflects on what works well and less well, and why
- + Can be an advocate for themselves and for others
- + Organises and analyses information

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## THINGS TO DO

1. Check out strategies to support learning, such as, Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, Costa’s Habits of Mind, Bloom’s Taxonomy, and Thinker’s Keys. Design tasks for your learners to experience how these specific approaches help them to learn more effectively.

2. Complete this table for your own students:

Strategies my students use at the moment

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.....

.....

Strategies my students need to develop (that they aren’t doing yet)

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.....

Ways in which I can help them to do this

.....

.....

.....

3. Locate the book SWOT “Study without tears”. It provides guidelines and techniques to help students become confident in taking charge of their learning. ‘You can do it!’ is the underlying motivational message of this book written for senior secondary and tertiary students.