

2026 UPDATE

THE AWARD WINNING GLOBAL APPROACH



Skills Builder

HANDBOOK FOR
EDUCATORS

Teaching and assessing
essential skills

Tom Ravenscroft



SkillsBuilder
UNIVERSAL
FRAMEWORK 2.0

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Building skills feels like magic



Building skills feels like magic. Before the skill is learnt, it can seem impossible. Yet once mastered it seems intuitive to the fortunate individual - barely conceivable as something that might not be innate to anyone and everyone.

All of us have built a plethora of skills in our lives. Reading these words might feel straightforward, but when we're faced with a foreign language or unfamiliar alphabet we're reminded just how meaningful a skill reading is.

Whether swimming, driving, or cycling; whether making measurements or solving formulae; whether coding or bricklaying or cleaning, the world is built on skills: the ability to enact a repeatable process. Or, more succinctly, to reliably do something.

We read ever more about the threats to skills. New technologies highlight the shortening period before those skills become obsolete. In tandem, more skills emerge - to use new technologies, to adapt to a changing climate, or to respond to new demands.

We want to set ourselves up to thrive in a world that is increasingly uncertain and volatile. One starting point is to realise that some skills are more transferable than others and provide a powerful foundation: essential skills.

Essential skills

Essential skills are those highly transferable skills which support individuals to use their technical skills and knowledge. They ease how individuals work with other people, structure a problem to solve, or communicate what should happen.

Since I started my career in teaching in 2007, calls for these skills have grown from educators, NGOs and employers alike. The research case for building them is robust too: higher levels of essential skills are linked to higher levels of employability, higher earnings, and higher job and life satisfaction.

The challenge for every educator is how to take these appealing but broad and potentially vague skills and turn them into practical teaching, learning and assessment in a busy classroom.

That is the challenge that we have grappled with at Skills Builder Partnership over the last decade through our work with more than 950 partners in 20 countries. We have developed models, materials and approaches which supported more than 1.8 million individuals to build their essential skills in the last year alone.

This Handbook shares the model that we have built - honed from working with children from 4-years-old, all the way through their schooling, alternative learning settings, colleges and apprenticeships across six continents.

Universal Framework 2.0

The core of the model that we have built together is the Universal Framework. This model takes essential skills and breaks them down into four pairs of skills:



It goes further by breaking each skill down into a sequence of 16 steps, going from an absolute beginner in essential skills through to a high level of mastery. Each step is a micro-skill in its own right - whether *note-taking*, *prototyping*, or *being diplomatic* - which also contributes to the mastery of the overall skill.

The sequencing of the steps has been tested and refined over eight years so that while no individual's journey of mastering essential skills is exactly the same, there is a clear data-driven model and age- and stage-related expectations to guide the educator.

This Handbook

This Handbook takes each of the essential skill steps in turn and shares the knowledge base that learners need to be able to apply and practice those skills. That means understanding:

- *What* the skill step is
- *Why* and when it is useful
- *How* to put it into practice.

It summarises exactly what learners need to know, while giving flexibility for educators to cover the content in the way and at the pace that works for your learners.

Finally, it helps educators to assess the progress of learners in three ways through:

- Structured *questioning*
- *Observation* of the skill in action
- Gathering a portfolio of *evidence*.

Putting it into practice

The joy and magic of seeing learners mastering these skills step-by-step and opening up new capabilities and opportunities has never left me. I hope you have exactly the same moments of satisfaction and wonder as you build your learners' essential skills - and set them up to thrive in the rest of their lives.

Tom Ravenscroft
March 2025

Essential skills

How essential skills fit in

Our starting point has to be how essential skills fit into a complete and well-rounded education. Across the world, countries have found different balances and priorities for their education systems, but all aspire to some combination of:

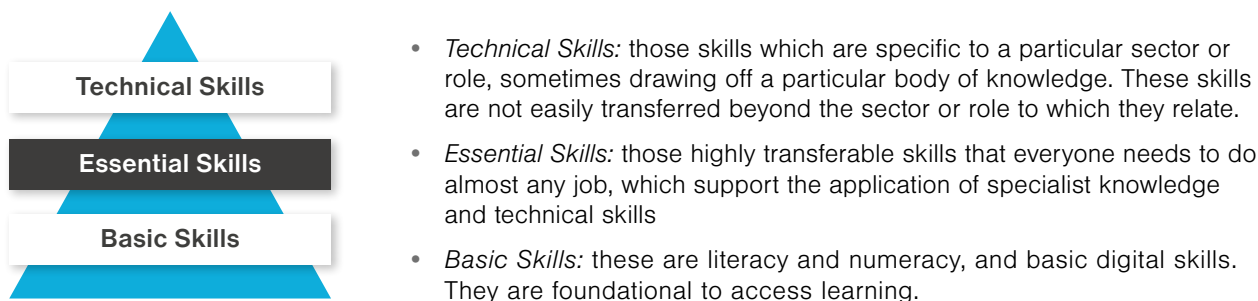
- *Knowledge*: Teaching content which can be recalled, understood and explained.
- *Character attributes*: Shaping the choices individuals make, manifested as attitudes or behaviours.
- *Skills*: Building learners' ability to successfully enact a repeatable process.

The reality is that we combine all of those elements together in our wider lives but this separation is helpful when it comes to teaching and building them, since each has different prevailing pedagogies and approaches. In order to deliberately build each aspect, they need to be sufficiently isolated first.

We can then dig more deeply into skills - which are myriad. Within that world of skills, essential skills are those:

'Highly transferable skills which are needed by almost everyone to do almost any job, and which support the application of technical skills and knowledge'

They are known by many names, including transferable, employability, 21st century, and soft skills.² Indeed, it is this very confusion which makes the work that follows so important. Critically, they are distinct from technical skills which are required for specific occupations; and from basic skills of literacy and numeracy.³ From this, a simple and increasingly widely adopted model is possible:



The question of *transferability* is worth one final remark. In some settings, the notion of whether skills can ever be transferable beyond a particular domain or subject area is hotly debated. While expertise does not automatically translate across all areas, elements of skills do cross traditional boundaries. After all, those boundaries are simply human constructs. For example, a proficient car driver has a headstart on cycling on the road or driving a lorry compared to the novice.

The approach we have honed at Skills Builder is to identify those processes, models and tools which then *combine* with domain-specific knowledge or technical skills. Essential skills are insufficient alone to solve a problem, communicate, work collaboratively or create a plan because they require that domain of knowledge. But they are also necessary because without the ability to structure a problem, generate ideas, communicate those ideas, or plan and adapt then the potential of knowledge or technical skills will go unrealised.

1. Ravenscroft & Baker (2020) *Towards a Universal Framework for Essential Skills*. London: Essential Skills Taskforce.

2. UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) (2009) *The Employability Challenge: Full Report*, UKCES

3. Cheese (2021) *The New World of Work: Shaping a Future that Helps People, Organizations and our Societies to Thrive*. London: Kogan Page

The case for essential skills

For those of us who have worked with children and young people or in wider education, it might seem intuitive that of course these skills are necessary. Over the last five years, the measurability that the Universal Framework introduced has helped to strengthen that case rigorously. Evidence shows essential skills help individuals thrive across their lives:



Ability to learn effectively in school

Higher levels of essential skills correlate with higher levels of achievement at the ages of 10 and 16.⁴ This makes perfect sense when you consider the components of listening, structuring problems, communicating ideas, and self-management and how, of course, they would help individuals to learn better.



Effective transition into the world of work

Describing these skills as 'life skills', the Sutton Trust (2017) found that 94% of employers, 97% of educators and 88% of young people saw these skills as being at least as important as academic grades to learners' future success.⁵ Indeed, more than half of educators surveyed (53%) felt that these skills were more important than academic achievements in future success. It has often been employers who have been the strongest champions and advocates for building essential skills as a normal part of a good education - a perennial call from business organisations including the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) since 1989.



Reduced likelihood of being out of work or employment

Essential Skills Tracker 2023 found that moving from the 25th percentile in essential skill levels to the 75th percentile was associated with a reduction in the likelihood of being out of work or training from 5.2% to 3.9%.⁶ This is a meaningful reduction but should not be a surprise when we think about the skills we are talking about and the increased nimbleness and flexibility that they imbue an individual with.



Higher earnings

There is also evidence of an increase of up to 15% per year in higher earnings in the UK, comparing lowest quartile and highest quartile essential skill scores (Craig & Seymour, 2023). This finding was also borne out by separate research from NFER⁷ and likely driven by increased productivity as a result of having essential skills.



Higher job and life satisfaction

Finally, individuals with higher essential skill levels have higher levels of life and job satisfaction (Craig & Seymour, 2022). This is likely linked to both more interesting and varied roles, made possible through the transferability of those skills, and the realisation of one's potential.

4. Kashefpakdel & Ravenscroft (2021) *Essential skills and their impact on educational outcomes*. London: Skills Builder Partnership. [<https://www.skillsbuilder.org/file/essential-skills-and-their-impact-on-education-outcomes>]
5. Cullinane, C. & Montacute, R. (2017) *Life Lessons: Improving essential life skills for young people*, The Sutton Trust. [https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Life-Lessons-Report_FINAL.pdf]. The terms used were: self- control, confidence, communication, motivation, and ability to cope with stress.
6. Seymour & Craig (2023) *Essential Skills Tracker 2023*. London: Skills Builder Partnership [<https://www.skillsbuilder.org/file/essential-skills-tracker-2023>]
7. Boccock, L., Del Pozo, J. and Hillary, J. (2024). *Rethinking skills gaps and solutions. Working Paper 4 of The Skills Imperative 2035: Essential skills for tomorrow's workforce*. Slough: NFER.

So, the case for having higher levels of essential skills is compelling. Indeed, when asked in the report, young people overwhelmingly saw the value of essential skills across key aspects of their lives including academic performance (78%), university entrance (66%), successful recruitment (91%), progression in employment (91%), and overcoming wider life challenges (89%).

However, while the research demonstrates that essential skills have a real impact on life outcomes, opportunities to build those skills are not fairly distributed. Higher levels of essential skills are correlated with higher social advantage and greater levels of parental engagement, and inversely correlated with attending a specialist setting or having a special educational need.

The challenge we have grappled with at Skills Builder Partnership for more than 15 years, is how can you build those essential skills with the same rigour and focus as we would take to any other academic learning - and that's what we turn to next.

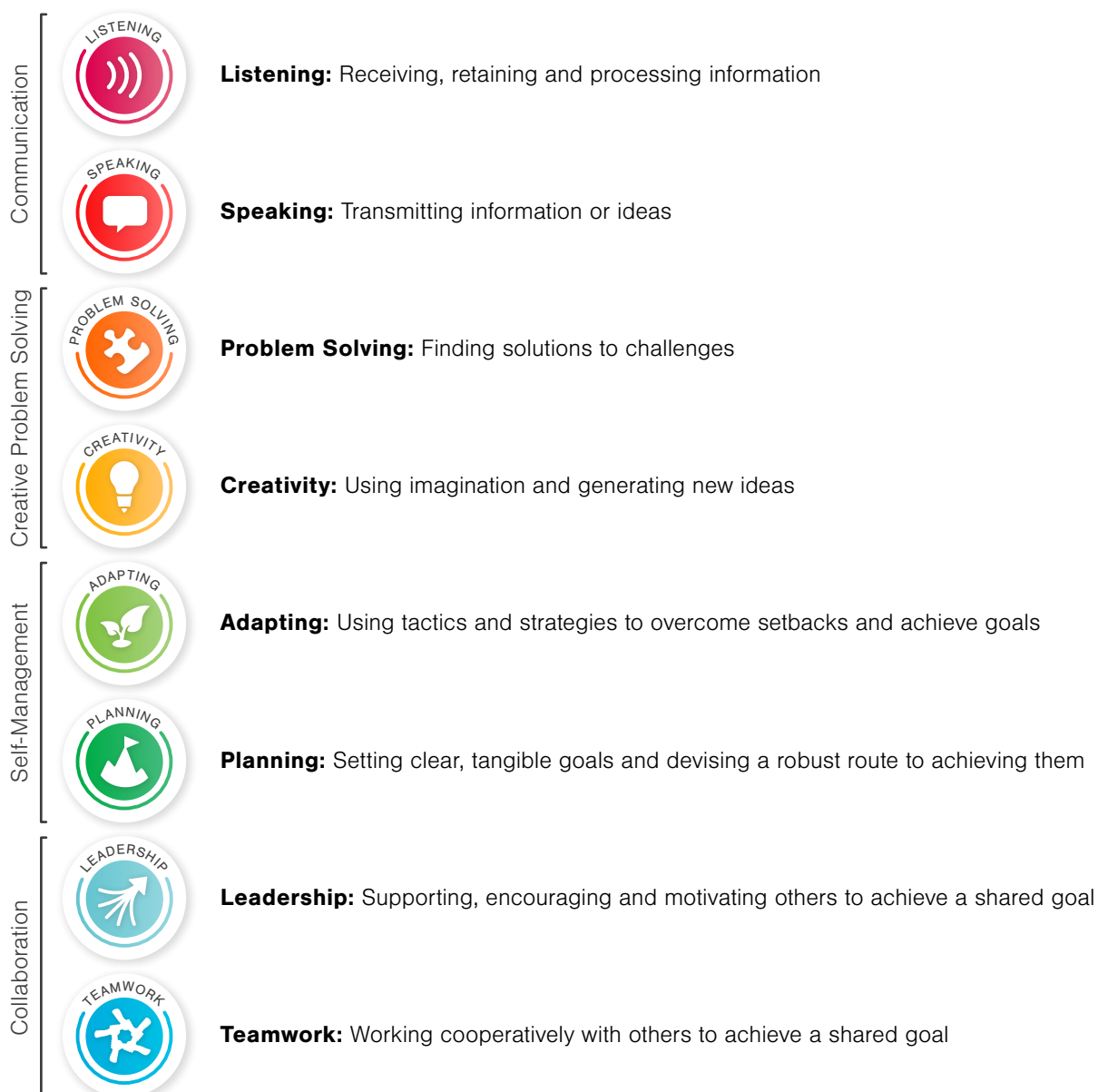
Universal Framework 2.0

Essential skills have often suffered because they are too broad and ill-defined when teaching effectively requires precision and clarity. The Universal Framework was originally launched back in 2020 after a four-year development to solve that problem by helping educators and employers to much more tightly define what those skills meant.

After five years of increasingly widespread use across twenty countries and millions of learners, the second iteration of the model was created in 2025: Universal Framework 2.0. This evolution reflects a 12-month process that has spanned widespread consultation, technical evaluation, comparison with international models, external validation, and extensive user testing. The result is a complete, robust and highly usable model for building and assessing essential skills.

The eight skills

Universal Framework 2.0 works by turning the broad idea of essential skills into four pairs and eight specific skills:



Skill steps

As educators, the challenge was how to translate our ambition that all of our learners should have these essential skills into a practical approach. How could we understand our learners' existing strengths and weaknesses in essential skills? What learning objectives should we be pursuing? What were reasonable age- or stage-related expectations?

Universal Framework 2.0 tackles this by breaking each of the eight essential skills down into a series of 16 steps, going from the expectations of a complete beginner through to a high level of mastery. In this way, we can support progression in these essential skills in children from as young as 4 years-old through school, college, and well into working life.

Each step is a micro-skill in its own right and can be directly taught and assessed before being put into practice by learners.

For example, in Listening, the opening steps are:

Getting started	Step 1	Focusing I can listen for at least a short time
	Step 2	Recalling I remember simple instructions
	Step 3	Checking I ask questions if I don't understand
	Step 4	Retelling I pass on information accurately
	Step 5	Recognising purpose I know why someone is communicating with me

The steps take the learners' voice because ultimately they are the learners' essential skills.

The steps also follow a logical sequence, allowing them to be built one at a time and in an effective order. This sequencing has been calibrated and tested over seven years and with assessments of more than 100,000 individuals. As with all learning, learners do not move in lockstep through the steps - but this is a helpful tool for setting expectations and having a much greater level of precision and focus.

From an educator perspective, it means that rather than trying to cover too much, energies can be focused on building one step at a time.

Expectations and targets

We know that every learner is an individual. As with any other learning, individuals will progress at different rates and have other factors in their lives that will make it easier or more challenging to build these skills. Where individuals have additional learning needs or disabilities this can lead to 'spiky' profiles where they may excel in some essential skills and find others much more challenging. We return to inclusive practice momentarily.

Universal Framework 2.0 has been deliberately designed as a flexible tool to support educators to adapt to the learners in front of them. At the same time, we have tried to use data to calibrate the Framework to support educators to target the right ages in the classroom, or for colleges and universities to set the right aspirations for older learners.

Simple age- or stage-related expectations

Many educators find it helpful to use this as a guide:

Stage	Step
Getting started (Potential target for ages 5-9 or Pre-Level 1 learners)	Step 1
	Step 2
	Step 3
	Step 4
Intermediate (Potential target for ages 9-13 or Level 1 learners)	Step 5
	Step 6
	Step 7
	Step 8
Advanced (Potential target for ages 13-17 or Level 2 & 3 learners)	Step 9
	Step 10
	Step 11
	Step 12
Mastery (Potential target for ages 17+ or Level 4+ learners)	Step 13
	Step 14
	Step 15
	Step 16

Four-step range for practicing

When designing cross-curricular learning to practice essential skills, a broader target range can be helpful. This means that while completing activities using subject content and essential skills, learners can be working at different step levels while still making a contribution and practicing the skills deliberately. Though some learners will, of course, fall outside of the range, this should still be useful:

Year group	Below expectations	Approaching expectations	Meeting expectations	Exceeding expectations
Pre Year 1	Step 1A*	Step 1A+B*	Step 1A+B+C*	Step 1
Year 1	Step 1A+B*	Step 1A+B+C*	Step 1	Step 2
Year 2	Step 1A+B+C*	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Year 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Year 4	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Year 5	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Year 6	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7
Year 7	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8
Year 8	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9
Year 9	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10
Year 10	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10	Step 11
Year 11	Step 9	Step 10	Step 11	Step 12
Year 12	Step 10	Step 11	Step 12	Step 13
Year 13	Step 11	Step 12	Step 13	Step 14

As learners get older, the range of steps that they might be working at expands as they pursue different courses and qualifications at different levels. As such, it's important to understand the level your learners are working at and where their development needs are in each skill. This is discussed more shortly.

** Note: For pre-Step 1, building blocks A, B and C provide a structure for teachers. This is demonstrated in the following pages which break down each skill step.*

Inclusion

From the outset, Skills Builder Partnership has worked with learners of all ages and abilities, including children, young people and adults with special educational needs or disabilities. This has included both individuals learning in mainstream and specialist settings.

The previous pages provided some rough guidelines as to how we might choose the right steps to focus on with our learners. Ultimately though, educators should start with the learner in front of them and to consider their strengths and development areas against the steps.

Our experience is that sometimes learners with additional needs might have a more 'spiky' profile where they are strong in some skills but not in others. For example, some learners might be adept at problem solving but find teamwork more challenging.

In other cases, for example if individuals are deaf or non-verbal, then Speaking and Listening are best recast as *Sharing Communication* and *Receiving Communication*. The steps can still work well to reflect other non-verbal modes of communication including sign language or text-based communication.

Sometimes, a whole step at a time can seem too much for an individual. In response, we developed the three *Building Blocks* that you can find within each skill step (A, B and C). These *Building Blocks* help to break down the step into smaller increments that can be built one at a time.

Finally, we have seen schools make great use of the Universal Framework to build essential skills into individualised learning plans – sometimes known as Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs). The specificity of the Framework allows educators to focus on particular steps or even Building Blocks as targets and assess learners' progress accordingly. This can also provide a shared language between home and school too, celebrating learners' achievements beyond just academic grades.

We have worked with learners with special educational needs or disabilities in hundreds of settings. We have seen that learners with diverse needs can make progress in these essential skills, and hugely benefit from doing so too.

You can find case studies of special schools and alternative provision settings at www.skillsbuilder.org/showcase

How to use this Handbook

The goal of this Handbook is to provide educators with a complete guide on the underlying knowledge that is required for learners to build their essential skills. However, as the principles of building essential skills set out, this is necessary but insufficient.

Just as a proficient driver needs to master the theory test - like what signs mean, what the pedals do, the rules of the road - they also need to practice so that they build the intuition of how to navigate the roads and drive the vehicle itself.

This Handbook is the *theory* of essential skills. It needs to be combined with deliberate and practical application to really transform learners' essential skills.

It covers the key definitions, ideas and tools that a learner should become familiar with but it is designed for the educator rather than the learner directly. We recognise the expertise of the educator to take the content and make it work for your learners - flexing explanations, activities, curriculum links and assessment approaches accordingly.



Skills Builder Hub

www.skillsbuilder.org/hub

Skills Builder Hub is a key complement to this Handbook. It enables educators to gauge the needs of your class, teach essential skills, and track progress.

Its contents include short lessons which directly teach each skill step, longer projects which give learners the space and scope to apply and practice those skills, ideas for reinforcing skill application across the curriculum, and other useful tools and materials like learner worksheets and posters.

Skills Builder Benchmark

www.skillsbuilder.org/benchmark

Skills Builder Benchmark enables individuals to reflect on their own essential skills. It is appropriate to use with young people from the age of 14+ and so widely used in further education colleges, universities, and other adult learning settings. The structured reflections allow for individuals to explore their own strengths and development areas and produce useful output reports for them to use.



Skills Builder Principles

In the last decade, we have had the privilege of working with thousands of educators across primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and colleges across 20 countries. Despite the huge diversity of these organisations, we have found remarkable consistency in what they do well.

Educators, schools and colleges who are building essential skills effectively are following six principles:



Align: Effective schools and colleges are aligned behind a common goal for building learners' essential skills, and a common language from the Skills Builder Universal Framework.



Plan: Effective schools and colleges have planned regular opportunities to support learners' essential skills progression across their education.



Measure: Effective schools and colleges assess learners' essential skills to support planning, teaching and tracking progression.



Teach: Effective schools and colleges are making focused time available to directly and explicitly teach learners essential skill steps.



Practise: Effective schools and colleges are practising learners' essential skills across the curriculum.



Apply: Effective schools and colleges are using projects and links to the wider world to allow learners to apply their essential skills.

The following pages explore how each of these principles can be realised in your classroom, school, or college.

The Bronze, Silver and Gold indicators relate to what we expect to see for a school or college to achieve a Skills Builder Award. They are included here, because they help to illustrate what realising these principles might tangibly look like.

Explore further

You can also find case studies of how other schools and colleges have applied these principles at www.skillsbuilder.org/showcase



Principle 1

Align

The principle

Effective schools and colleges are aligned behind a common goal for building learners' essential skills, and a common language from the Skills Builder Universal Framework.

Why this matters

This principle matters because any effective approach starts with an aligned vision behind a common goal. This means that there is a shared sense among educators, learners, school or college leaders, and the wider community that building essential skills is a vital part of a good education.

Alignment also requires a shared understanding of what essential skills are and a common language so that everyone is talking about and understanding essential skills in the same way. The Skills Builder Universal Framework was created to achieve just this.

What we should be aiming for

Schools and colleges should be looking to ensure that their vision for learners' essential skills is widely shared and championed by leaders and educators across the institution.

This can then be made tangible by using the Skills Builder Universal Framework to be clear on which essential skills are the focus and how they will be built for every learner. This language should then be used consistently so that learners, educators, leaders and the community have a shared understanding of what is intended.

Putting it into practice

Schools and colleges who are putting this into use effectively often do the following:

- *Champion the value of essential skills:* They advocate and demonstrate that achievement in the essential skills is valued alongside academic achievement. For example, by updating parents and carers on their learners' progress in essential skills in reports or update meetings or through other recognition.
- *Build awareness of the essential skills:* For example, by having them up on the walls of hallways and in classrooms and by training educators on how to define and to build them.
- *Ensure learners understand:* They introduce learners to the Universal Framework as a consistent way of thinking about how the skills are built, step by step.
- *Use the language consistently:* They use the language of the skills and skill steps across school or college life.



Skills Builder Award descriptors

The descriptors from the Skills Builder Awards help to define good practice:

	Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award
Descriptor	Some members of the school or college community, including learners, educators, and leaders, use the language of Skills Builder Universal Framework.	A majority of members of the school or college community, including learners, educators, and leaders, use the language of Skills Builder Universal Framework	Almost all members of the school or college community, including learners, educators, and leaders, use the language of Skills Builder Universal Framework.
Reach	You should confirm that this has been achieved with at least some learners.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 50% of learners in the institution.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 80% of learners in the institution.
Evidence required	<i>At least two pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least three pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least four pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.
Evidence options	Potential pieces of evidence can include: • Events which promote essential skills (like community or learner events) • Recognition of learner effort and achievement in relation to essential skills • Learning spaces having visual cues or reminders of the skills, such as posters on display. • Training completed by educators on essential skills • Newsletters or other media promoting essential skills • School or college development or improvement plans Evidence can include photographs, news items, videos, documents.		

Reflection questions

- How have you raised awareness of essential skills in your school or college?
- How have you ensured that learners, educators and leaders in your school or college are consistently using the language of skills from the Skills Builder Universal Framework?

Skills Builder Hub resources

On Hub, you can find tools to help raise awareness of essential skills across your school or college, including display *materials* with the skills icons on, *reward systems* based around essential skills, and *assembly materials* to introduce the Skills Builder approach.



Principle 2

Plan

The principle

Effective schools and colleges have planned regular opportunities to support learners' essential skills progression across their education.

Why this matters

This principle is important because these skills help learners at every stage of their education - and beyond. As such, it is important that these skills are neither only seen as important for the youngest or oldest learners but instead form a strand of regular opportunities for learners to build essential skills throughout their time in school or college.

Planning for progression matters. While all learners differ, setting age- and stage-related expectations is important to structure progression for learners to avoid them just using the skills but not actually having scope to improve them.

Similarly, an inclusive approach to essential skills means planning for learners' differing needs and making essential skills accessible to all.

What we should be aiming for

Schools and colleges see essential skills as being important all the way through education, and at all ages. We know that learners who can listen effectively and articulate their ideas will get more out of class and be able to share more too. Similarly, learners who can set their own goals and plans are better able to take ownership of their own progress and take responsibility for achieving their educational goals. It is also important to start early because differences in learners' essential skills often become obvious very early in education.

At the same time, it is important to keep going and that progression is planned. The essential skills are complex. Against Universal Framework 2.0 we anticipate that most learners will get to between Steps 8-12 during their time in school or college - so there is still plenty more to learn to really master those skills. Adult learners continue to benefit from building these essential skills across college or careers too.

Putting it into practice

Educators, schools, and colleges who are doing this effectively are doing some of the following things:

- *Essential skills as a journey:* They talk about their long-term aspirations for their learners' essential skills, creating a shared objective over a long time period.
- *Step by step approach:* They then break this down into what they want learners to be able to do at each age or stage, using the Skills Builder Universal Framework.
- *Planning:* They create a shared plan for how these essential skills will be built for learners across their education with a focus on inclusive practice.



Skills Builder Award descriptors

The descriptors from the Skills Builder Awards help to define good practice:

	Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award
Descriptor	Some learners benefit from planned regular opportunities to progress in essential skills.	A majority of learners benefit from planned regular opportunities to progress in essential skills.	Almost all learners benefit from planned regular opportunities to progress in essential skills.
Reach	You should confirm that this has been achieved with at least some learners.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 50% of learners in the institution.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 80% of learners in the institution.
Evidence required	<i>At least two pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least three pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least four pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.
Evidence options	Potential pieces of evidence can include: • Curriculum planning for essential skills which covers the full range of ages reached • Planning which shows how inclusion is achieved • Evidence of regular usage of learning materials on the Hub • Timetables which include evidence of essential skills lessons or projects • Homework including essential skills for different ages • Anonymised photographs of different year groups using Skills Builder Evidence can include photographs, news items, videos, documents.		

Reflection questions

- How do you approach these essential skills for learners of different ages or stages?
- How do you take an inclusive approach to essential skills building?

Skills Builder Hub resources

On Hub, you can find tools and resources which help to make essential skills engaging for learners of all ages. These span *stories* to introduce essential skills for the youngest learners, to *virtual work experience* for the oldest learners. There are also lots of resources to support *inclusion* approaches too so every learner is involved.



Principle 3

Measure

The principle

Effective schools and colleges assess learners' essential skills to support planning, teaching and tracking progression.

Why this matters

This principle matters because an informed understanding of learners' essential skill levels helps to set the right priorities in terms of teaching. For example, identifying the correct target skill steps for learners.

It is also important because assessment helps to track progress - both to encourage learners and educators to see the impact of their efforts, and also to make clear what is working most effectively in supporting learner progress in those skills.

What we should be aiming for

We should recognise that assessing essential skills is sometimes challenging, and so it is important to be as objective as possible. This means thinking carefully about learners' understanding of the underpinning knowledge for the skill steps and the consistency of how they demonstrate the skill steps.

While age- or stage-related expectations can be a helpful guide, it is important to recognise diversity in learners' needs, particularly where learners have additional or special educational needs.

Putting it into practice

Different approaches can be effective in assessing essential skills and help to provide the insights that we need to ensure progression:

- *Questioning:* The skill steps all have an underlying knowledge base which can be questioned and to assess learners' understanding as with any other knowledge. However, this is only the starting point because while this underpinning knowledge is important, it is not sufficient.
- *Observation:* Seeing whether learners actually use the essential skills in practice is therefore also important. In the Skills Builder Handbook, what an educator can look for when assessing learners is made clear.
- *Evidence building:* Additionally, learners can build out a portfolio of evidence against the skill steps. This can strengthen learners' self awareness of their own essential skills and also be an important formative tool.

In combination, these approaches can help provide critical formative insights into learners' essential skills - including which skill steps are already secure and therefore what the next focus should be.



Skills Builder Award descriptors

The descriptors from the Skills Builder Awards help to define good practice:

	Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award
Descriptor	Some learners' essential skills are assessed to inform teaching of essential skills.	A majority of learners' essential skills are assessed to inform teaching of essential skills.	Almost all learners' essential skills are assessed to inform teaching of essential skills.
Reach	You should confirm that this has been achieved with at least some learners.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 50% of learners in the institution.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 80% of learners in the institution.
Evidence required	<i>At least two pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least three pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least four pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.
Evidence options	Potential pieces of evidence can include: • Data from Skills Builder Hub showing assessments of learners (anonymised) • Data from Skills Builder Benchmark showing learner assessments (only aged 14+ and anonymised) • Your own data showing assessment of learners' essential skills (Anonymised) • Evidence of learner reflections (Anonymised) • Evidence of appropriate target setting process • Evidence of peer feedback (anonymised) Evidence can include photographs, news items, videos, documents.		

Reflection questions

- How do you assess learners' essential skills to inform teaching and track progress?

Skills Builder Hub resources

On Hub, you can find assessment tools for educators to use, and *self assessment* learning passports that allow learners to reflect on their essential skill steps offline. For older learners, you could also use Skills Builder Benchmark which combines learner self-assessment and educator feedback.



Principle 4

Teach

The principle

Effective schools and colleges are making focused time available to directly and explicitly teach learners essential skill steps.

Why this matters

This principle matters because each of the skill steps has an underpinning knowledge content which learners need to acquire. Most of these concepts are best taught directly because they form tools which users can use in the future. For example, how to create a mind map, approaches to having a difficult conversation, or the difference between causes and effects are all directly teachable.

This direct teaching is often overlooked when it comes to essential skills, but once we have isolated the skill steps then we can be much more focused about building them.

What we should be aiming for

The insight of what learners can and cannot already do means that we can use this information to focus our efforts on the next critical step. This is a big shift away from the idea of just *using* the skills and hoping that learners pick up what we need them to achieve from the practice.

Instead, with the understanding gained from measuring those skills, we can directly teach the underpinning knowledge for the next skill step. That might mean teaching about what it means to demonstrate active listening, why and when using open questions is helpful, or how to create goals in your stretch zone.

While this underpinning knowledge is not sufficient by itself, it is necessary for learners to be able to use the skills effectively and transfer them between settings adeptly.

Putting it into practice

Schools and colleges find the approaches that work for them, depending on their context:

- *Create essential skills lessons:* This might only be between 20 minutes to 1 hour per week, focusing on a single skill step at a time and taking time to ensure it is built.
- *Deliberately teach essential skills:* If particular time is not available on the timetable, different subjects might take responsibility for different skill steps.
- *Directly instruct in the skills:* Using the Handbook pages that follow allows for the underpinning knowledge for each skill step to be directly taught.



Skills Builder Award descriptors

The descriptors from the Skills Builder Awards help to define good practice:

	Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award
Descriptor	Some learners are directly taught essential skills using steps from the Universal Framework.	A majority of learners are directly taught essential skills using steps from the Universal Framework.	Almost all learners are directly taught essential skills using steps from the Universal Framework.
Reach	You should confirm that this has been achieved with at least some learners.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 50% of learners in the institution.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 80% of learners in the institution.
Evidence required	<i>At least two pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least three pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least four pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.
Evidence options	Potential pieces of evidence can include: • Data from Skills Builder Hub showing completion of short lessons or other direct instruction • Timetables or plans showing dedicated time for essential skills teaching • Lesson materials showing direct teaching of essential skills including plans, worksheets, or slides Evidence can include photographs, screenshots, videos, or documents.		

Reflection questions

- How are you ensuring that learners are being directly taught essential skills steps from the Universal Framework?

Skills Builder Hub resources

On Hub, you can find *short lesson* resources which can be easily used by educators to teach the underpinning knowledge of each skill step. There are three twenty minute lessons for each skill step which take each of the three Building Blocks in turn along with activities and exercises to consolidate understanding.



Principle 5

Practise

The principle

Effective schools and colleges are practising learners' essential skills across the curriculum.

Why this matters

While it is vital to teach essential skills directly, that is not sufficient by itself. As with all skills, deliberate practice across different areas of the curriculum is important for them to become intuitive to learners.

This principle also supports making the most of opportunities to apply those skills to other learning across the curriculum, and using opportunities for deliberate application and reflection on those skills in other contexts.

This ensures learners connect essential skills to wider learning in the curriculum and the full range of different subject areas.

What we should be aiming for

The importance of direct teaching in the skills that was highlighted in the previous principle does not mean that practising is less important. Deliberate practice is about focused attention on a particular goal, in this case by focusing on a target range of skill steps.

Schools and colleges who do this well weave opportunities to practice the essential skills through the curriculum without the need to make lots of additional time available. This works best by taking a view across the learning of a particular year group and spotting the natural opportunities to practise applying the appropriate *four-step range* of the Universal Framework. For example, by giving the opportunity to create a presentation in English, to apply research methods in Geography or to structure problem solving through Maths.

Putting it into practice

Schools and colleges who are applying this principle effectively often:

- *Plan for how essential skills will be practiced in the curriculum:* A strategic view is required for how different skill steps can be practiced in the curriculum so that every subject area has a stake in helping learners practice their essential skills.
- *Using the four-step range:* The four step range is a powerful tool for designing activities across the curriculum to deliberately practice essential skills. The same activity can be used while allowing learners to practice skill steps at their right level.
- *Reinforce regularly:* Schools and colleges often find other opportunities to reinforce the continuity of essential skills in different curriculum and subject areas - for example, through displays, inclusion in planners or on exercise books. It is good to be consistently explicit about the essential skill steps being built.



Skills Builder Award descriptors

The descriptors from the Skills Builder Awards help to define good practice:

	Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award
Descriptor	Some learners practise essential skills across the curriculum in different subject areas.	A majority of learners practise essential skills across the curriculum in different subject areas.	Almost all learners practise essential skills across the curriculum in different subject areas.
Reach	You should confirm that this has been achieved with at least some learners.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 50% of learners in the institution.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 80% of learners in the institution.
Evidence required	<i>At least two pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least three pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least four pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.
Evidence options	Potential pieces of evidence can include: • Essential skills incorporated into curriculum teaching plans • Lesson materials showing essential skills in other curriculum lessons including plans, worksheets, or slides • Materials showing connections being made between subjects and essential skills practicing • Photographs of essential skills being practiced through curriculum learning Evidence can include photographs, screenshots, videos, or documents.		

Reflection questions

- How do you ensure that learners have opportunities to practice their essential skills across the curriculum?

Skills Builder Hub resources

On Hub, you can find *curriculum guides* which can be easily used by educators of different subjects to think about how they can effectively practice essential skills as part of their subject content. These help model how to use the four-step range too which is fully explained in the Skills Builder Handbook..



Principle 6

Apply

The principle

Effective schools and colleges are using projects and links to the wider world to allow learners to apply their essential skills.

Why this matters

This principle matters because it is vital for learners to connect the essential skills that they have been developing to their real-life application.

This supports learners to build up the experience of using these skills which ultimately makes them intuitive and transferable to other contexts.

It also ensures that they can see the value of their skills and can articulate examples of where they have put them into practice.

What we should be aiming for

Learners should ideally have varied, extended opportunities to put their essential skills to use. When combined with connections to the working world this particularly helps skills to be transferable across life and beyond education.

Schools and colleges can create extended opportunities to apply essential skills in different ways. Some use a specific project as a basis to apply the essential skills to a real-life challenge like creating a radio show or a school performance or creating an extended research project.

Extended opportunities outside the classroom are also helpful as they support the skills' transferability into the workplace. That might be through community or extracurricular projects or engagements with the world of work like visits, volunteering or work experience.

Putting it into practice

There are several approaches that schools and colleges use to put this principle into practice effectively:

- *Project-based learning:* The project can be focused on a challenge or problem linked to curriculum learning.
- *Working with external partners:* Depending on the context of the school or college, it might mean taking learners out of the classroom to engage with employers or other organisations
- *World of work:* Finally, for older learners, visits, volunteering or work experience can all be valuable extended opportunities to put their essential skills to use.



Skills Builder Award descriptors

The descriptors from the Skills Builder Awards help to define good practice:

	Bronze Award	Silver Award	Gold Award
Descriptor	Some learners have real life experiences to apply and reflect on essential skills.	A majority of learners have real life experiences to apply and reflect on essential skills.	Almost all learners have real life experiences to apply and reflect on essential skills.
Reach	You should confirm that this has been achieved with at least some learners.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 50% of learners in the institution.	You should confirm that this has been achieved with more than 80% of learners in the institution.
Evidence required	<i>At least two pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least three pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.	<i>At least four pieces of evidence</i> from the last 12 months, which shows the range of learner ages reached.
Evidence options	Potential pieces of evidence can include: • Evidence of projects learners have completed with community or employer links with how they have applied skill steps directly • Evidence of using projects or challenge days through the Skills Builder Hub • Photographs of essential skills connecting with activities beyond the curriculum • Anonymised learner reflections on developing essential skills through projects, employer or community engagement • Overviews of extra-curricular activities, linked to essential skills Evidence can include photographs, screenshots, videos, or documents.		

Reflection questions

- How do your learners apply their essential skills through projects or other real-life experiences?

Skills Builder Hub resources

On Hub, you can find challenge days (projects to complete in one day), *extended projects* of 10 taught hours, and a *guide* on how to create your own projects. There are also resources to support work experience and *virtual employer encounters*.





Overview: Listening

Receiving, retaining and processing information

This skill is about how learners receive information – whether from a peer, an educator, or someone else.

Getting started

(potential target for ages 5-9)

Initially, learners reliably receive information by maintaining adequate focus, recalling simple instructions, checking they understand, and passing on information accurately.

Intermediate

(potential target for ages 9-13)

Next, learners listen actively, recognising communication's purpose, making notes, demonstrating their engagement, and using open questions.

Advanced

(potential target for ages 13-17)

Then, learners become critical consumers of information by summarising, recognising tone and influencing techniques, and comparing perspectives.

Mastery

(potential target for ages 17+)

Finally, learners explore why different perspectives come about, investigate biases, challenging and probing different views, and integrating and evaluating them.

Inclusive practice: The definition of listening can be expanded to other ways of receiving information. Age-related expectations are approximate based on data and learners will vary meaningfully.



Universal Framework 2.0: Listening

Receiving, retaining and processing information

Getting started	Step 1	Focusing I can listen for at least a short time
	Step 2	Recalling I remember simple instructions
	Step 3	Checking I ask questions if I don't understand
	Step 4	Retelling I pass on information accurately
Intermediate	Step 5	Recognising purpose I know why someone is communicating with me
	Step 6	Note-taking I record important information
	Step 7	Active listening I show I am paying attention
	Step 8	Questioning I ask open questions to understand more
Advanced	Step 9	Summarising I rephrase or summarise what I learnt
	Step 10	Recognising tone I recognise tone of communication
	Step 11	Identifying influence I recognise when someone is trying to influence me
	Step 12	Comparing views I compare different points of view
Mastery	Step 13	Analysing views I explore why different views might come about
	Step 14	Investigating bias I analyse where bias is shown
	Step 15	Strategic questioning I use questions to challenge perspectives
	Step 16	Evaluating perspectives I objectively evaluate and integrate different perspectives



Focusing

I can listen for at least a short time



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to listen
- B)** I know why listening without interrupting matters
- C)** I know how to listen without interrupting



Core ideas

A

What it means to listen

Listening means hearing what someone says and thinking about it so you can understand. You might listen with your ears, but sometimes we get information in other ways - for example, by reading subtitles or sign language.

Listening matters because:

- It helps keep you safe by learning important information.
- It helps you understand how someone else feels.
- It helps you learn how to do things better.
- It helps you understand new ideas.

B

Why listening without interrupting matters

Interrupting happens when you stop someone from speaking. This can be by talking over them, looking away, or doing something that shows you've stopped listening.

Sometimes there are good reasons why people interrupt:

- You're excited to share an idea.
- You want to say something quickly before you forget.
- You agree with the speaker and want to tell them.
- You're short on time.

But often, the reasons aren't good:

- You disagree and want to say your opinion.
- You're not interested in what they're saying.
- You're bored.

Interrupting can lead to problems:

- It can make the speaker feel like you don't care or find them boring.
- It shows you think your opinion is more important than theirs.
- You might miss something important they were going to say.
- Letting them finish might surprise you with something new or interesting.



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How to listen without interrupting

With practice, you can get better at not interrupting. At first, you'll need to think about it on purpose, but over time it will become a habit.

- *Try to stay quiet*, especially if you like to talk a lot.
- *Focus on understanding* what they're saying.
- *Say sorry if you interrupt* and let them keep talking.
- *Check they've finished* before you start speaking.
- *Don't assume you know* what they're going to say.
- *Don't use every pause as a chance to talk* - they might just be thinking.

If you must interrupt – like if time is running out or there's an emergency – do it politely and say sorry.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to be listening?
- Why is listening important and why should we not interrupt?
- How can you listen without interrupting?
- When have you shown you can listen without interrupting?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to *focus* on listening for at least a short period of time?
- Is the learner able to listen *without interrupting* for at least a short period of time?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Recalling

I remember simple instructions



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to recall simple instructions
- B)** I know why recalling instructions matters
- C)** I know how to listen and recall simple instructions



Core ideas

A

What it means to recall simple instructions

Instructions are clear, step-by-step directions. They tell you *what* to do, *when* to do it, and *how* to do it, so you can do something correctly.

Listening and recalling instructions means paying close attention when someone gives you directions or explains what needs to be done, and then remembering those details to follow them correctly. It involves:

- *Listening carefully:* Focusing on what is being said.
- *Understanding the details:* Making sure you understand each part of the instructions.
- *Recalling the information:* Being able to remember the instructions later, to do the task correctly.

For example, if someone explains how to bake a cake, listening and recalling would mean remembering the ingredients and steps they mentioned, so you can bake it properly.

B

Why recalling instructions matters

Listening to instructions is important in many parts of life, whether learning something new, completing tasks, or doing jobs.

It is important to listen and recall instructions in many situations, to help you with:

- *Completing tasks correctly:* Following instructions helps you do things right, whether at home, during a project, or in other activities.
- *Avoiding mistakes:* If you don't listen or recall instructions, you may forget important steps, leading to mistakes.
- *Saving time:* When you follow instructions properly, you don't waste time trying to redo tasks because of mistakes.
- *Ensuring safety:* Some instructions, like safety rules or guidelines, are important to stay safe.

For example, if you're learning to cook, listening to and recalling the recipe instructions is important to making sure the dish turns out right and that you use the ingredients in the right order.



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How to listen and recall simple instructions

People might find it hard to follow instructions if:

- They assume they already know what to do.
- They are distracted by their own thoughts.
- They are distracted by things around them, like noise, movement, or fiddling.

Here are some tips to help you listen carefully and remember instructions:

1. *Stop distractions:* Put down anything being used, like pens or tools. Avoid reading, writing, or letting noise distract you.
2. *Focus:* Look at the speaker and focus on listening carefully.
3. *Repeat:* Go over the instructions in your head to understand and remember them.

By practising these tips, you can improve your ability to listen, remember, and follow instructions accurately, making tasks easier and more successful.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to recall instructions?
- Why and when is it important to listen and recall instructions?
- How can you listen and recall simple instructions?
- When have you shown that you can listen and recall simple instructions correctly?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to focus when listening to instructions?
- Is the learner able to demonstrate recalling three simple instructions?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, observations from others, or completion of tasks based on three simple verbal instructions.

Checking

I ask questions if I don't understand



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to ask questions to check understanding
- B)** I know why it is important to check understanding by asking questions
- C)** I know how to ask questions to check understanding



Core ideas

A

What it means to ask questions to check understanding

Checking your understanding through questions means making sure you fully understand what someone is saying by asking questions. It helps you avoid mistakes and confusion.

This involves:

- *Listening carefully:* Paying full attention to what is being said.
- *Asking questions:* Asking for more details if something is unclear.
- *Repeating key points:* Saying back what you understood and asking if it is correct.

For example, if someone is explaining how to complete a task, you might ask, “*Just to check, do I need to do step one before step two?*” This helps confirm you have understood correctly.

B

Why is it important to check understanding by asking questions

If you do not understand what you have heard, then it is important to ask questions to check what someone meant.

It is also important to check your understanding when:

- *Instructions are complex:* If there are many steps, asking questions can help you understand them better.
- *The information is new:* If you are learning something for the first time, questions help you remember details.
- *The speaker is unclear:* Sometimes, people speak quickly or use unfamiliar words, so asking questions can help make things clearer.
- *You need to avoid mistakes:* Checking your understanding helps ensure you do the task correctly the first time.

For example, if someone gives you directions to a location, asking, “*So, I should turn left at the second street?*” helps avoid getting lost.

However, there are times when it may not be necessary to ask questions, such as when the information is very simple or when you already fully understand what is being said.



C

How to ask questions to check understanding

Even good listeners may misunderstand if the communication is unclear. To avoid confusion, it helps to check what you've understood before acting.

Simple ways to check understanding include:

- *Repeating back* what you heard.
- *Rephrasing* to confirm meaning.
- *Making comparisons*, for example., "*Is this like when...?*" or "*Is this similar to...?*"

To ask helpful questions, reflect on what you already understand. Use question words to help you:

- *Who*: Who is involved?
- *What*: What is happening?
- *Where*: Where is it happening?
- *When*: When is it happening?
- *How*: How will it work?

Good questions save time and show you've been listening.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to check your understanding when listening?
- Why is it important to check your understanding?
- How can you use questions to check if you understand what you have heard?
- When have you used questions to check your understanding?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to check their understanding when listening by checking key details?
- Is the learner able to check their understanding by asking clarifying questions?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Retelling

I pass on information accurately



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to pass on information accurately
- B)** I know why and when it is important to pass on information accurately
- C)** I know how to recall and pass on information when listening



Core ideas

A

What it means to pass on information accurately

Passing on information accurately means sharing what you have heard without changing or missing key details. It ensures that the next person receives the correct message.

This involves:

- *Listening carefully:* Paying full attention to what is being said.
- *Remembering key details:* Focusing on the most important points.
- *Using clear language:* Explaining things in a way that is easy to understand.
- *Not adding or changing information:* Sticking to the original message.

For example, if someone tells you a time and place to meet, you should pass it on exactly as you heard it. If you change the details, others may get confused or show up at the wrong time.

B

Why and when is it important to pass on information accurately

It is particularly important to pass on information accurately when:

- *People need to complete tasks:* If details are wrong, things may not get done properly.
- *Timings and locations are involved:* If you mix up the time or place, people might miss important events.
- *Health or safety is a concern:* Giving incorrect information in these situations can lead to someone getting hurt.
- *A message is being shared between many people:* If each person changes small details, the final message may be very different from the original.

For example, if you are told that an event has changed from Friday to Wednesday, passing this on correctly ensures that everyone attends at the correct time.

However, if you are unsure about the information, it is better to check before passing it on. It is also important not to pass on private or sensitive information if it is not appropriate to do so.



C

How to recall and pass on information when listening

Remembering everything word-for-word is hard. Instead, people remember information by:

- *Making connections*: Linking new ideas to what they already know, like activities, people or places.
- *Creating a story*: Turning information into a sequence or narrative helps make it easier to remember.
- *Considering implications*: Thinking about the meaning or emotions connected to what they hear aids understanding.

Taking time to think after listening helps make sense of and remember the information.

Sharing information works best after making sense of it. Focus on the *main points* rather than repeating every word. To help you try to:

- Turn the details into a *story* or link them to *familiar ideas*.
- Identify and share the *key points* that are most important for the situation.
- Taking time to *prepare* ensures the information shared is clear and accurate.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to pass on information accurately after listening?
- Why and when is it important to pass on information accurately after listening?
- How can you recall and share information with others after listening?
- When have you had to recall and share information accurately after listening?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to stay focused while receiving information?
- Is the learner able to successfully and accurately pass on information to another?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, the results of 'retelling' challenges, and observations from others.

Recognising purpose

I know why someone is communicating with me



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by purpose of communication
- B)** I know why it matters why someone is communicating
- C)** I know how to identify why someone is communicating



Core ideas

A

What is meant by purpose of communication

The *purpose of communication* is the reason *why* people share information, ideas, or feelings. People communicate for:

- *Sharing information:* To give or receive knowledge, facts, or ideas.
- *Expressing feelings:* To show how they feel, like happiness, sadness, or anger.
- *Building relationships:* To connect with others, make friends, or maintain bonds.
- *Giving instructions:* To explain what needs to be done or how to do something.
- *Making decisions:* To discuss options and agree on a choice.
- *Seeking support:* To ask for help, advice, or encouragement.
- *Persuading:* To encourage you to do something.

Sometimes communication might combine two or more of these purposes - for example:

- To give instructions and encourage someone to follow them
- To share both information and their opinion on that information

B

Why it matters why someone is communicating

Understanding the purpose behind someone's communication with us helps us to be as prepared as possible for making sense of what is going on and responding appropriately.

If we misunderstand the purpose of the communication, we might be unprepared to take any actions. For example, if we think someone is presenting information, we might not be prepared to follow instructions. Or if we think someone is trying to be encouraging, we might be unhappy when they express a different opinion to us.

We also have to be careful - for example, if someone is trying to persuade us, we should think about what they are trying to do and why. We should always think about what is really in our best interest.

Communication always works better, and is easier to listen and respond to, when we are clear on what the purpose of the communication is.



C

How to identify why someone is communicating

There are some signs to help understand why someone is communicating with you:

Purpose	How you can tell
Sharing information	They might start with ' <i>Did you know...</i> ' and talk in terms of facts and events
Expressing feelings	They might use phrases like ' <i>I feel...</i> ' and use emotional language or adjectives (describing words)
Building relationships	They might be asking questions or sharing small pieces of personal information followed by related questions about you. They might speak positively about you or what you have done.
Giving instructions	They will talk directly and normally with a focus on actions and verbs (doing words)
Making decisions	They will outline what the problem is and ask for your ideas. They might use phrases like ' <i>I think that...</i> ' or ' <i>In my opinion...</i> ' or ' <i>what do you think about...?</i> '
Seeking support	A request will normally be posed as a question, although sometimes it is easier to say ' <i>No</i> ' than at other times
Persuading	They might try to make you feel that you should do something you would not have done otherwise.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are some of the main reasons people might communicate with you?
- Why is it important to know why someone is communicating with you?
- How can you tell why someone is communicating with you?
- When have people communicated with you for different reasons?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to accurately identify the likely purpose of communication when provided with a range of examples?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and the results of tasks linking examples of communication with their purpose.

Note-taking

I record important information



Building blocks

- A)** I know what note-taking means
- B)** I know why and when note-taking is important
- C)** I know how to take notes effectively to record important information



Core ideas

A

What note-taking means

Note-taking means writing down key information while listening to someone speak. It helps to remember important details later. Good notes focus on the most useful points rather than writing down everything word for word.

People take notes when listening to:

- *Summarise important information:* Writing the main ideas in a short and clear way.
- *Organise thoughts:* Making it easier to understand and review later.
- *Remember details:* Helping to recall instructions, ideas, or facts.
- *Track discussions:* Keeping a record of what was said for future use.

For example, if someone is explaining how to complete a task, taking notes can help you follow the instructions correctly later.

B

Why and when note-taking is important

Taking notes is useful in many situations, especially when you need to remember or act on information.

Note-taking is particularly important:

- *During long conversations:* If a lot of details are shared, notes help to keep track.
- *When receiving instructions:* Ensures you complete tasks correctly.
- *In discussions or meetings:* Helps remember important points or agreements.
- *When learning something new:* Makes it easier to review and understand later.

Note-taking is helpful because it:

- *Prevents forgetting important details:* Especially when there is a lot of information.
- *Helps with accuracy:* Notes reduce mistakes caused by misunderstanding or memory gaps.
- *Saves time later:* You won't need to ask for the same information again.
- *Improves focus:* Taking notes keeps you engaged in listening.

However, note-taking may not always be needed. If the information is very simple or already recorded, listening carefully without writing may be enough.



C

How to take notes effectively to record important information

Firstly, it is important to start by concentrating. Do this by removing distractions, avoiding interruptions, staying comfortable and planning breaks.

People speak faster than we can write, so it's impossible to capture everything said. The goal is to focus on the most important points.

- *Be selective:* Write down key facts, like dates or names, rather than the full story.
- *Pay attention to repetition:* If something is said more than once or emphasised, it's likely important.

You might decide that it is better to use tools like a *mind map* to capture and organise ideas rather than writing line after line, particularly if the conversation is going in lots of different directions.

Effective note-taking helps organise information and makes it easier to understand later.

- *Know the topic:* Start with a clear idea of the purpose and subject.
- *Use bullet points:* Write short, clear points grouped by theme.
- *Show connections:* Use arrows or diagrams to link ideas and concepts.
- *Use shorthand:* Find abbreviations or symbols to save time (e.g., "=" for "means" or "→" for "leads to").

After note-taking, review your notes and summarise the main points to help your understanding. Try to do that before too much time has passed.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is note-taking when listening?
- Why and when is note-taking a helpful part of listening?
- How can you keep notes of important information when listening?
- When have you shown you can keep good notes when listening?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to record key information when given a range of inputs in different forms - for example, listening to an audio recording, watching a video, or attending a lecture or meeting?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, notes that they have made when listening, and observations from others.

Active listening

I show I am paying attention



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by active listening
- B)** I know why and when active listening is important
- C)** I know how to demonstrate active listening



Core ideas

A

What is meant by active listening

Active listening means using your body language, eye contact, and small verbal responses to show that you are paying attention and understanding what someone is saying. It is more than just hearing words – it is about making the speaker feel listened to and valued.

When you listen actively, you:

- *Use positive body language:* Nod, smile, and face the speaker to show interest.
- *Make eye contact:* Look at the speaker naturally (without staring) to stay engaged.
- *Give small verbal responses:* Say things like “I see”, “That makes sense”, or “Go on” to encourage the speaker.

For example, if someone is explaining an idea, an active listener might nod slightly, maintain friendly eye contact, and say “That’s interesting” or “I understand” to show they are engaged.

Some people find maintaining eye contact challenging, so you can find other ways to show that you are listening.

B

Why and when active listening is important

Active listening is important in many situations because it helps people understand each other better and avoid misunderstandings.

There are some times when active listening is particularly important:

- *During conversations:* Helps understand others and build good relationships.
- *When receiving instructions:* Ensures the speaker knows you are listening to the instructions.
- *In group discussions:* Helps follow ideas and encourages contributions.
- *When someone needs support:* Shows care and helps others feel heard.

Active listening is helpful because it:

- *Improves understanding:* Listening carefully prevents mistakes.
- *Shows respect:* Makes the speaker feel valued and appreciated.
- *Helps solve problems:* Encourages teamwork and better decision-making.
- *Reduces conflicts:* Misunderstandings are less likely when people listen properly.



C

How to demonstrate active listening

Your body language affects how others see your interest in the conversation. To show you are listening:

- *Face the speaker:* Turn towards them so you look engaged. If you seem uncomfortable, they may think you are uninterested.
- *Avoid fidgeting:* Moving your hands, feet, or objects can be distracting and suggest you'd rather be elsewhere.
- *Keep your arms open:* Crossing your arms can seem defensive. Open gestures show you are receptive.
- *Lean in slightly:* This signals interest and helps you listen more closely.
- *Show engagement on your face:* A relaxed expression or a natural smile (when appropriate) makes the speaker feel at ease.

Making *eye contact* shows you are listening and not distracted. It also helps you pick up on the speaker's emotions and understand what they find important. However, too much eye contact can feel uncomfortable. Aim for around 60-70% to strike the right balance. If you find eye contact uncomfortable try using short bursts or look between someone's eyes.

Finally, *small verbal responses* can show you are listening to an individual speaker by giving short replies such as "*I see*", "*That makes sense*", or "*Really?*". These small words and phrases encourage the speaker to continue and show that you are following what they are saying. Even smaller cues like "*hmmm*" might be helpful.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is active listening?
- Why and when can active listening techniques be helpful?
- How can you use active listening techniques like positive body language, eye contact, and positive verbal signs?
- When have you used active listening techniques in different settings?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate that they are listening and engaged through their eye contact, body language or verbal responses when listening to an individual?
- Is the learner able to demonstrate this as part of an audience in a larger group setting?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Questioning

I ask open questions to understand more



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by open questions
- B) I know why and when open questions are helpful
- C) I know how to use open questions effectively



Core ideas

A

What is meant by open questions

An important part of asking good questions is to know the right type of question to ask at the right time. There are two big types of questions:

- *Closed questions* are those which can be answered with a 'yes' or 'no' response - for example, 'Is that...' or 'Did...'. Other questions like 'when' and 'who' often tend to get a short factual answer only.
- *Open questions* are those that cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no' response. They tend to start with the bigger question words like 'what', 'why', and 'how' which give the speaker more space to expand on their ideas and answers.

For example:

- *Open question*: "What do you think could be improved?"
(Encourages ideas and discussion.)
- *Closed question*: "Do you think this should be improved?"
(Can be answered with a simple yes or no.)

Both types of questions are important and useful in different situations.

B

Why and when open questions are helpful

There are times when open or closed questions are better:

- *Closed questions* are useful for confirming or denying facts. However, they are not good at expanding conversations further.
- *Open questions* are useful for broadening out a conversation, showing an interest in the speaker, and learning about new things that you might not have thought to directly ask about. However, sometimes they allow the speaker to avoid giving information that they don't wish to.

It is possible to combine a closed question with an open question to extend the conversation further too. For example, 'did you consider doing that, and how did you make your decision?' or 'do you like this, and why?'



C

How to use open questions effectively

To communicate well, it is helpful to use both types of questions in the right situations.

Open questions often start with 'What', 'How', or 'Why' and invite the speaker to explain their ideas. These types of questions help you learn more about their thoughts and feelings.

Use open questions to:

- Start a discussion: *'What do you think about this idea?'*
- Understand someone's experience: *'How did you handle that challenge?'*
- Encourage creative thinking: *'What are some possible solutions?'*
- Learn more about a topic: *'Why do you think that happened?'*

Use closed questions to:

- Confirm facts: *'Did you finish the task?'*
- Get a quick answer: *'Do you agree with this?'*
- Clarify a choice: *'Would you prefer option A or B?'*
- Check for understanding: *'Is that clear?'*

A good balance of both open and closed questions helps conversations flow naturally and ensures that you get useful information. Asking the right type of question at the right time can improve teamwork, problem-solving, and understanding.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is the difference between open and closed questions, with examples?
- Why and when are open questions more useful than closed questions?
- How can you use open questions effectively?
- When have you used open questions to deepen your understanding?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to ask appropriate open questions that are relevant?
- Is the learner able to ask closed questions when that is more appropriate?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, examples of open and closed questions in response to a stimulus, and observations from others.

Summarising

I summarise or rephrase what I learnt



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by summarising and rephrasing
- B)** I know why and when summarising and rephrasing are useful when listening
- C)** I know how to use summarising and rephrasing effectively in conversation



Core ideas

A

What is meant by summarising and rephrasing

Summarising means repeating the key points without changing their meaning. This works well for simple instructions, directions, or processes.

It can be helpful to check you have heard correctly, and shows the speaker that you have been paying attention.

Rephrasing goes a step further than *summarising*. It involves putting the speaker's main points into your own words, which helps when dealing with complex ideas or abstract concepts. If you can rephrase something accurately, you likely understand it well.

B

Why and when summarising and rephrasing are useful when listening

Summarising and rephrasing are useful in many situations, such as:

- *Checking understanding:* When someone gives a lot of information, summarising helps confirm you have understood the main points.
- *Avoiding misunderstandings:* Rephrasing can help clear up confusion if something was unclear.
- *Keeping a conversation on track:* Summarising helps to refocus a discussion, especially if it has gone in different directions.
- *Helping others feel heard:* When you repeat what someone has said in your own words, it shows you are listening and value their ideas.
- *Bringing different ideas together:* If several people share their thoughts, summarising can link their points and find common ideas.

However, summarising and rephrasing might be less helpful if the conversation is very simple as repeating information may not be needed. Similarly, if someone is already being very clear, rephrasing too often can slow down the conversation.



C

How to use summarising and rephrasing effectively in conversation

To *summarise* effectively:

- *Pay attention* to what the speaker is saying. Try to pick out key points, such as instructions, important facts, or key arguments. Ignore unnecessary details.
- *Ask yourself: What is the speaker really trying to say?* Think about the overall meaning rather than just individual words.
- *Keep it brief and to the point* when summarising. Avoid repeating everything word for word. Instead, focus on the most important parts.

To *rephrase* effectively:

- Think about what the *key concepts* are that the speaker is trying to get across.
- Ask yourself whether there are other *similar* concepts or *examples* that you have come across before.
- When rephrasing, try to *keep it brief* and check your *understanding* by phrasing something differently, or checking whether what the speaker has shared is like another example or concept you are familiar with.

Timing is important so you do not break the speaker's flow and make them feel cut-off nor wait so long that you miss a moment. Look for pauses in speech and use phrases like:

- "So, what you're saying is..."
- "To check my understanding, do you mean...?"
- "Is it the case that...?"

If timed well, the speaker should appreciate your effort to understand. If too early, they may seem flustered. If too late, they might start doubting whether you are following.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are summarising and rephrasing?
- Why and when are summarising and rephrasing helpful in conversation?
- How can you use summarising and rephrasing effectively in conversation?
- When have you used summarising and rephrasing effectively in conversation?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to summarise and rephrase in a conversational setting when encouraged to do so?
- Is the learner able to use these techniques in conversation without prompting?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, examples of being able to summarise and rephrase information they may have heard, and observations from others.

Recognising tone

I recognise tone of communication



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by tone and how it varies
- B)** I know why recognising tone is important when communicating
- C)** I know how to recognise and understand tone when listening



Core ideas

A

What is meant by tone and how it varies

Tone is *how* something is said, not just the words used. The same sentence can sound polite, frustrated, relaxed, or like a command - depending on tone:

Pitch: How high or low the voice sounds.

- High pitch: Can suggest stress, anxiety, or uncertainty.
- Low pitch: Often sounds calm and confident but may seem disengaged.

Tempo: The speed of speech.

- Fast: Can show energy and excitement but may also suggest nervousness.
- Slow: Can seem authoritative and calm but might sound uninterested if too slow.

Volume: How loudly or quietly someone speaks.

- Quiet: Can show control and confidence, but too quiet may seem uncertain.
- Loud: Can sound strong and authoritative, but too loud may seem aggressive.

Intonation: How the voice rises and falls.

- Falling intonation: Sounds confident, often used for statements or instructions.
- Rising intonation: Sounds like a question or uncertainty.

Stress: Emphasising different words to change meaning.

- *Could* you give me that? (Focus on ability)
- Could *you* give me that? (Focus on who should do it)

B

Why recognising tone is important when communicating

For now, imagine that someone is saying the same thing - for example, "*Could you get that piece of work to me tomorrow?*"

Without changing the words, the way they sound and the meaning they convey can change a lot depending on the way in which someone says them. It is amazing how much meaning comes from the way that something is said, rather than just *what* is being said. This simple sentence could sound:

- *Positive*: you are doing them a favour by getting the piece of work done for tomorrow.
- *Exasperated*: the piece of work should have been done today or sooner.
- *Relaxed*: getting the piece of work done for tomorrow would be great, but it could plausibly be at a later date.
- *Like a direct instruction*: it is actually a command, not a question.

Understanding tone helps you to recognise what the communicator's purpose is.



C

How to recognise and understand tone when listening

Different emotions: As listeners, we might be able to interpret something of how the speaker is feeling depending on their tone.

- Anger could be suggested by a loud voice and falling intonation
- Anxiety could be suggested by speaking quickly and with a high pitch
- Confidence could be suggested by moderate volume and steady speaking pace
- Excitement could be suggested by a louder voice and quick speaking
- Doubt could be suggested by stressing an uncertain element of a statement

The purpose of the communication: As listeners, we can also infer the purpose of the communication from the tone. For example:

- Instructions tend to have a falling intonation
- Questions tend to have rising intonation
- An invitation for discussion will often have falling and then rising intonation

There are a lot of different combinations of the five elements of tone (pitch, tempo, volume, and intonation, stress). As such, this is a skill step that is worth exploring in greater depth through listening carefully and then identifying the elements of tone.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is tone and what are the five ways that it varies?
- Why is it important to understand the tone being used?
- How can you understand meaning from tone, sharing some examples?
- When have you had to understand tone in a conversation?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to interpret tone when hearing different examples?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, examples of interpreting the tone of what they might have heard, and observations from others.

Identifying influence

I recognise when someone is trying to influence me



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by influence
- B)** I know why it is important to recognise someone's influence
- C)** I know how to recognise and manage others' influence



Core ideas

A

What is meant by influence

Influence is when someone tries to shape your thoughts, feelings, or decisions. Influence is not always bad - it can be positive, like when someone encourages you to work hard. However, it can also be used to persuade you to do something that benefits the other person more than you.

People try to influence others for different reasons, including:

- *To persuade you:* They may want you to agree with their opinion or support their idea.
- *To sell something:* A business or salesperson may use influence to encourage you to buy a product.
- *To gain power or control:* Some people try to influence others to maintain authority or get what they want.
- *To change your behaviour:* This could be positive, like encouraging healthy habits, or negative, like peer pressure.

B

Why it is important to recognise someone's influence

It is important to recognise when someone is trying to influence you in conversation so that you can think carefully before making decisions. People may try to persuade you for different reasons—some may have good intentions, while others may be trying to benefit themselves.

By noticing influence, you can ask questions, consider different viewpoints, and make informed choices. It also helps you to stay confident in your own opinions rather than feeling pressured. Recognising influence allows you to respond thoughtfully rather than reacting too quickly, ensuring that you stay in control of your own decisions and actions.

C

How to recognise and manage others' influence

When listening, it's important to be aware of when someone is trying to influence your thoughts, feelings, or decisions. Here are some key signs to look out for:

1. *Strong emotional appeals:* If someone is using emotional language or trying to make you feel guilty, excited, or fearful, they may be trying to influence you. For example: *"If you really cared about me, you would do this"* (Guilt) or *"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity – don't miss out!"* (Excitement)
2. *Repeating key messages:* When people repeat the same phrase or idea several times, they are reinforcing their point to make it seem more important or true. This can make you more likely to agree, even if you weren't convinced at first.



3. *Using flattery or personal connections:* If someone compliments you a lot or highlights things you have in common, they might be trying to gain your trust to influence your decision. For example, *"You're such a smart person – I know you'll see that this is the right choice."*
4. *Creating a sense of urgency:* If someone pressures you to make a quick decision, they may be trying to stop you from thinking too much about it. Phrases like *"You must decide now"* or *"This deal won't last"* are common tactics.
5. *Only sharing one perspective:* Influencers may leave out key facts or only tell you the side of the story that supports their point.
6. *Claiming to be an expert or authority:* Someone may try to influence you by saying an expert or authority figure agrees with them. Be cautious and check if the source is reliable.
7. *Peer pressure:* Messages like *"Everyone else is doing it"* or *"You don't want to be left out"* are designed to influence you through social pressure.

Recognising these tactics will help you think clearly and make choices based on facts rather than pressure or manipulation.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is influence?
- Why is it important to recognise when someone is trying to influence you?
- How can you recognise attempts at influencing you?
- When has someone or something tried to influence you and how did you know?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify when someone is trying to influence them?
- Is the learner able to avoid being unduly or inappropriately influenced?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, examples of being able to identify influencing techniques, and observations from others.

Comparing views

I compare different points of view



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by different points of view
- B) I know why it is helpful to explore different points of view
- C) I know how to compare similarities and differences in points of view



Core ideas

A

What is meant by different points of view

A *point of view* is how someone sees or understands a situation. People often have different points of view because of their experiences, beliefs, or knowledge.

Sometimes it is easy to understand why a point of view comes about, but not always. Identifying where points of views come from is explored more in Step 13.

It is important to understand that *points of views* are opinions which are different to facts. As such, points of view are harder to outright disprove unless they are built on incorrect facts.

B

Why it is helpful to explore different points of view

Listening to different points of view helps us make better decisions and understand the world more clearly. If we only hear one side of a story, we may not see the full picture.

Here's why it's important:

- *Better understanding:* Learning different views helps us understand issues more deeply.
- *Avoiding mistakes:* Considering different perspectives can help prevent poor decisions.
- *Building empathy:* Understanding others' opinions makes us more understanding and respectful.
- *Encouraging open thinking:* It helps us challenge our own ideas and grow intellectually.

Seeking different views doesn't mean we have to agree with everyone, but it allows us to make informed choices. It also improves communication and collaboration. By being open to different viewpoints, we learn, grow, and make better decisions.

C

How to compare similarities and differences in points of view

To compare different points of view, it's important to look at them fairly and logically. Here are some useful steps:

1. *Identify the key ideas:* What is each person or side saying? Focus on the main message.
2. *Consider the reasons:* Why does each person hold their view? Look at their experiences, evidence, or emotions.
3. *Check the facts:* Are opinions based on facts or personal beliefs? Reliable information is important.
4. *Look at strengths and weaknesses:* What makes each point of view strong or weak? Think about logic, fairness, and evidence.
5. *Find common ground:* Are there any areas where different views overlap? This can help in finding solutions.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by different points of view, and why might they come about?
- Why is it helpful to consider different points of view?
- How can you compare and contrast points of view?
- When have you been able to compare and contrast different points of view?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to show openness to hearing different points of view and recognise their potential value?
- Is the learner able to listen to and compare and contrast different perspectives?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written analysis or comparison of perspectives they have heard, and observations from others.

Analysing views

I explore why different points of view might come about



Building blocks

- A)** I know what might cause different points of view
- B)** I know why it is helpful to understand where points of view come from
- C)** I know how to analyse where differences in points of view come from



Core ideas

A

What might cause different points of view

Everyone sees the world differently. Our *perspective* or *point of view* is shaped by several key factors:

- *Knowledge and experience:* Our education, skills, and life experiences affect how we understand things.
- *Personal interests:* What we think about daily shapes our views. For example, a business owner may focus on profit, while an employee values fair pay and job security.
- *Beliefs and values:* These guide our sense of right and wrong. They may be religious, cultural, or personal principles about how people should behave.
- *Assumptions:* We all hold unconscious beliefs about the world, such as views on time, human nature, or life after death.

Because of these layers, no two people see the world in exactly the same way.

B

Why it is helpful to understand where points of view come from

When people share their opinions, they often express only the surface level - what they know and have experienced. This is easier to explain and less likely to be challenged.

It's harder to discuss *personal interests* because people want to appear objective, rather than self-serving. *Beliefs and values* are even more sensitive, as they can highlight deep differences. *Underlying assumptions* are rarely discussed because people may not even be aware of them.

This means that when someone shares a perspective, we might only be hearing a small part of what truly shapes their opinion. Understanding this can help us listen more openly and respectfully. It also means that we can unpick what is really driving someone's perspective and help us to think differently about something.

C

How to analyse where differences in points of view come from

We often don't fully understand where our own views come from, let alone someone else's. Since we only ever have partial information about others, we should be careful when interpreting their perspective.

To better understand different viewpoints, consider these questions:

- What other reasons might someone have for their opinion?
- What knowledge, skills, or experiences shape their view?
- How does this issue affect them personally?
- Could their beliefs or values influence their stance?

Asking these questions helps us see beyond the surface and gain a deeper, more balanced understanding of different perspectives.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What might cause differences in points of view?
- Why is it helpful to understand where points of view come from?
- How can you learn what drives different points of view?
- When have you had to explore where different points of view come from?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to discuss where points of view come from?
- Is the learner able to explore drivers of differences in points of view?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written analysis of points of views they have heard, and observations from others.

Investigating bias

I analyse where bias is shown



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by bias
- B) I know why it is important to recognise biases when listening
- C) I know how to recognise biases when listening



Core ideas

A

What is meant by bias

Bias is when someone forms an opinion about a person or situation without considering all the facts. This can be based on limited details rather than the full picture.

Prejudicial bias involves judging people based on characteristics such as: Age; Appearance; Disability; Ethnicity; Gender; Income background; Nationality; Political views; Religion; Sexuality; or Social class.

Discrimination where people are treated differently based on these factors is generally illegal in the UK. However, biases are often subtle and difficult to prove. Even when they don't result in outright discrimination, they can still disadvantage certain groups - for example, by designing services or products for one user group which disadvantages another.

B

We might also have *cognitive biases*, which stem from the brain's shortcuts in processing information. Examples include:

- *Anchoring bias*: Giving too much importance to the first piece of information received.
- *Attribution bias*: Making assumptions about why someone behaves in a certain way without enough information.
- *Confirmation bias*: Seeking information that supports our existing beliefs while ignoring opposing facts.
- *Framing bias*: Oversimplifying complex events to fit a particular narrative.
- *Halo effect*: Seeing only the good in someone because of a positive first impression.
- *Horn effect*: Focusing on the negatives in someone because of a bad first impression.
- *Loss aversion*: Fearing loss more than valuing gain, leading to risk avoidance.
- *Self-esteem effect*: Taking credit for successes but blaming others for failures.

Why it is important to recognise biases when listening

Recognising biases helps people listen more openly and fairly because:

- *It helps you stay open-minded*: If you are aware of bias, you can challenge unfair thoughts and consider different views.
- *It prevents misunderstandings*: Recognising bias helps you avoid making wrong assumptions about people or ideas.
- *It leads to better decisions*: When you notice bias, you can make choices based on facts rather than personal opinions.



- *It improves relationships:* Listening without bias makes conversations more respectful and productive.

The key is to be aware of when bias is stopping you from listening and understanding others.

C

How to recognise biases when listening

Identifying bias takes practice, but there are some simple ways to do it:

- *Pause before reacting:* If something makes you feel strongly, take a moment to think about why. Are you reacting based on facts or personal feelings?
- *Ask yourself questions:* Consider if you are only listening to ideas you agree with. Try asking, “What other viewpoints exist?”
- *Listen to a variety of people:* Hearing different opinions can help you recognise your own biases and think more broadly.
- *Notice emotional language:* If a speaker uses very strong or one-sided language, they might be biased. Pay attention to how they present information.
- *Check the facts:* If someone makes a claim, see if there is evidence to support it. Bias often appears when opinions are mistaken for facts.
- *Be open to changing your mind:* If new information challenges your beliefs, be willing to think again.

By practising these steps, you can become a better listener and understand conversations more fairly and clearly.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is bias, and what are cognitive and prejudicial biases, with examples?
- Why is it important to be aware of our own and others’ biases?
- How can you recognise biases when listening (both your own and others’)?
- When have you identified biases when listening (both your own and others’)?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to recognise their own biases and to respond appropriately to manage them?
- Is the learner able to recognise the biases of others they are listening to?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections, written analysis of cognitive or prejudicial biases they have identified, and observations from others.

Strategic questioning

I use questions to challenge perspectives



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by strategic questioning
- B) I know why and when strategic questioning is useful
- C) I know how to use strategic questioning effectively



Core ideas

A

What is meant by strategic questioning

Strategic questioning is a way of asking thoughtful questions to help people think more deeply. Instead of just getting simple answers, these questions encourage people to explore different options, challenge their own thinking, and consider new perspectives.

Strategic questioning can:

- *Illuminate options:* Help people see different choices they may not have thought about.
- *Challenge cognitive biases:* Encourage people to recognise when they are thinking in a limited or one-sided way.
- *Change perspectives:* Help people understand different viewpoints and reconsider their opinions.

For example, instead of asking, “*Do you agree with this idea?*”, a strategic question might be, “*What other ways could we approach this problem?*”. This encourages more open thinking and discussion.

B

Why and when strategic questioning is useful

Strategic questioning helps improve conversations by making them more meaningful and productive. It allows people to understand situations more clearly and make better decisions.

Strategic questioning can be a useful part of advanced listening because it:

- *Encourages critical thinking:* People are less likely to accept information without thinking carefully.
- *Helps solve problems:* Good questions can lead to new ideas and solutions.
- *Reduces bias:* Encourages people to challenge their own assumptions.
- *Improves understanding:* Helps people see different sides of an issue.

Strategic questioning can be used when:

- *Discussing complex issues:* Helps break down big problems into smaller, clearer ideas.
- *Someone is stuck in their thinking:* Encourages them to see new possibilities.
- *Making decisions:* Ensures all options are considered.
- *Trying to understand someone’s point of view:* Helps explore their reasoning.

However, strategic questioning is not always helpful. It may not be useful when someone just needs emotional support rather than deep analysis. Also, if used too much, it can make a conversation feel like an interrogation.



C

How to use strategic questioning effectively

To use strategic questioning well:

- *Ask open-ended questions:* These questions encourage discussion rather than simple “yes” or “no” answers. For example: “*What other possibilities could we explore?*” or “*What would happen if we took a different approach?*”
- *Be curious, not confrontational:* Ask questions in a way that invites conversation rather than making the other person feel defensive.
- *Encourage deeper thinking:* If someone gives a quick answer, follow up with, “*Why do you think that?*” or “*Can you explain more?*”
- *Use ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions:* These questions encourage problem solving, such as: “*How could we look at this differently?*” or “*What steps could we take to improve this?*”
- *Listen carefully to responses:* Pay close attention so that you really understand as well as so you can ask the next question based on what the person has said.
- *Avoid leading questions:* Don’t ask questions that obviously push someone toward a certain answer. Instead of “*Don’t you think this is a bad idea?*” try “*What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of this idea?*”

By using strategic questioning thoughtfully, you can help yourself and others think more clearly while effectively understanding and challenging perspectives.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by strategic questioning and what can it do?
- When and why is strategic questioning helpful, and when is it not?
- How can you use strategic questioning effectively?
- When have you used strategic questioning and what was the result?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to use strategic questions effectively to explore perspectives when they are listening?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections and observations from others.

Evaluating perspectives

I objectively evaluate and integrate different perspectives



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to objectively evaluate and integrate perspectives
- B)** I know why it is helpful to evaluate and integrate perspectives
- C)** I know how to evaluate and integrate perspectives



Core ideas

A

What it means to objectively evaluate and integrate perspectives

When you listen to different people, they may have different ideas, opinions, or experiences. Objectively evaluating and integrating perspectives means looking at each viewpoint fairly and deciding how they fit together to build a clearer picture.

- *Objectively evaluate:* This means considering each perspective *without personal bias*. Instead of agreeing or disagreeing right away, you take time to understand the reasoning behind different viewpoints.
- *Integrate perspectives:* This means bringing together different ideas in a way that makes sense, rather than just choosing one and ignoring the others.

For example, if two people have different suggestions for solving a problem, you would listen to both, think about their strengths and weaknesses, and see if you can combine the best parts of each idea.

B

Why it is helpful to evaluate and integrate perspectives

Looking at different perspectives helps to:

- *Get a more complete understanding:* No one person has all the answers. By listening to different ideas, you get a better picture of a situation.
- *Make fairer decisions:* When you consider multiple viewpoints, you are less likely to make decisions based only on personal opinions.
- *Reduce misunderstandings:* Listening to different perspectives can help you see why others think the way they do, reducing unnecessary conflict.
- *Find better solutions:* Sometimes, the best answer is not just one idea, but a combination of several.
- *Encourage open-mindedness:* Being willing to consider different perspectives helps create respectful and meaningful conversations.

C

How to evaluate and integrate perspectives

Not all perspectives should be given equal weight. To evaluate them, consider:

- *Identifying the source:* Think about influence and reliability. Ask:
 - Does this person have relevant experience or knowledge?
 - Do they have a personal interest influencing their view?
 - Are they presenting facts, opinions, or assumptions?



- *Looking for evidence:* Strong arguments rely on facts, not just beliefs. Ask:
 - What data supports this?
 - Is the source reliable?
 - Are alternative explanations possible?
- *Being aware of bias:* Both the speaker and listener may have biases, such as:
 - *Confirmation bias:* favouring views that match our own.
 - *Halo effect:* trusting someone's view just because we respect them.
 - *Framing bias:* being influenced by how information is presented.

To fairly evaluate and integrate perspectives:

- *Listen carefully:* Give your full attention to each person and avoid quick judgments.
- *Ask questions to understand:* If something is unclear, ask: “Can you explain why you think that?” or “What experiences led you to this conclusion?”
- *Compare ideas fairly:* Consider the logic, evidence, and reasoning behind each perspective rather than just focusing on who said it.
- *Look for connections:* Ask yourself: “Do these perspectives have common ground?” or “Is there a way to combine ideas to make them stronger?”
- *Challenge personal bias:* Be aware of your own opinions and make sure they do not stop you from fairly considering other perspectives.
- *Summarise what you have learned:* Take an approach like: “From what I’ve heard, there are different views on this. One suggests..., while another highlights... A possible way forward could be...”

By carefully evaluating and combining different perspectives, you can develop a clearer, more informed view and contribute to better discussions and decisions.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to objectively evaluate and integrate perspectives?
- Why is it important to objectively evaluate and integrate perspectives?
- How can you objectively evaluate and integrate perspectives?
- When have you had to do this and can you talk me through what you did?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Can the learner demonstrate objectively evaluating and integrating perspectives?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

SPEAKING





Overview: Speaking

Transmitting information or ideas

This skill is about how learners transmit information and ideas – whether to peers, educators, or others.

Getting started

(potential target for ages 5-9)

Initially, learners communicate clearly with individuals they know, in small groups, and then with new people while organising points to be understood.

Intermediate

(potential target for ages 9-13)

Next, learners communicate effectively by thinking about what their audience already know, choosing appropriate language, tone, expression and gesture, and bringing in facts appropriately.

Advanced

(potential target for ages 13-17)

Then, learners become more adaptable communicators by bringing in visual aids, managing sensitive topics, and being engaging and adaptive.

Mastery

(potential target for ages 17+)

Finally, learners can negotiate effectively, maintain communication in difficult situations, present complex ideas and share a vision.

Inclusive practice: The definition of speaking can be expanded to other ways of transmitting information. Age-related expectations are approximate based on data and learners will vary meaningfully.



Universal Framework 2.0: Speaking

Transmitting information or ideas

Getting started	Step 1	Sharing clearly I communicate clearly with someone I know
	Step 2	Discussing together I communicate clearly in a small group
	Step 3	Meeting others I communicate with new people when I need to
Intermediate	Step 4	Organising thoughts I order my points to be understood
	Step 5	Knowing the audience I adapt my communication to what my audience already know
	Step 6	Choosing language I choose appropriate language for the situation
	Step 7	Expressing self I use tone, expression and gesture to be understood
	Step 8	Using facts I use facts and examples to support my communication
Advanced	Step 9	Sharing visuals I use images, charts or diagrams when it helps my communication
	Step 10	Communicating sensitively I talk about difficult or sensitive topics effectively
	Step 11	Speaking engagingly I communicate in a way that is engaging for my audience
	Step 12	Adaptive communicating I adapt my communication depending on audience reactions
Mastery	Step 13	Negotiating I manage discussions effectively to reach an agreement
	Step 14	Constructive communicating I maintain clear and constructive communication in challenging situations
	Step 15	Presenting I present to an audience when required
	Step 16	Inspiring others I communicate a vision persuasively



Sharing clearly

I communicate clearly with someone I know



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to speak and communicate
- B)** I know why speaking and communication are important
- C)** I know how to speak clearly



Core ideas

A

What it means to speak and communicate

Communication is how we share information, ideas, and feelings between people. It helps us understand each other and work together. Communication can take different forms:

- *Verbal communication:* Using spoken words to express thoughts.
- *Non-verbal communication:* Using body language, facial expressions, and gestures.
- *Written communication:* Sending messages through writing, such as emails, letters, or texts.
- *Visual communication:* Using images, signs, or videos to convey a message.

Speaking is a way of communicating using spoken words. It allows us to share information, express emotions, and connect with others.

B

Why speaking and communication are important

Good communication helps build relationships, solve problems, and work effectively. It can be formal, like a business meeting, or informal, like chatting with a friend.

We speak for different reasons, such as:

- *Sharing information:* Explaining ideas, giving instructions, or teaching.
- *Expressing emotions:* Showing happiness, anger, or excitement.
- *Building relationships:* Making friends, meeting people, or supporting others.
- *Persuading or influencing:* Encouraging people to agree with our ideas.

Some individuals do not speak *verbally*, but use other tools to communicate. Lots of the ideas for how to get better at speaking also apply to using these other tools.



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How to speak clearly

Speaking clearly ensures that others understand you. Some ways of making sure we are speaking clearly are:

- *Speak at a steady pace:* Avoid talking too fast or too slowly.
- *Pronounce words carefully:* Say each word so it is easy to understand.
- *Use simple language:* Avoid long or difficult words when they are not needed.
- *Pause sometimes:* Give listeners time to process information.
- *Control your volume:* Speak loud enough to be heard but not too loudly.
- *Use body language:* Gestures and facial expressions help make your message clearer to the listener.

By practising these skills, you can communicate your message effectively and ensure people understand what you are saying.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is communicating, and what are some ways to do it?
- Why are speaking and communication important?
- How can you speak clearly?
- When have you shown that you can speak clearly?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to speak clearly to others?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Discussing together

I communicate clearly in a small group



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to communicate in a small group
- B) I know why communicating in a small group balances speaking and listening
- C) I know how to communicate in a small group



Core ideas

A

What it means to communicate in a small group

When we communicate, we often have to talk to more than one person at a time. For this step, a small group might be 2-4 other people.

Generally, people find it more challenging to talk in front of a small group than to an individual, for several reasons:

- There are more people to engage, and it can be harder to know whether you are successfully engaging all of the individuals in the group
- You might also feel that more people are looking at you, and so you might feel more shy or self-conscious
- Other people might also want to speak, so you might worry about whether you will be interrupted
- You might need to talk louder for more people to hear you

This is very normal, and you should not worry if you don't feel comfortable speaking in front of a group to start with, even if they are all people that you know well.

B

Why communicating in a small group balances speaking and listening

In a small group, good communication means balancing speaking and listening. If one person speaks too much, others may not get a chance to share their ideas. If someone listens too much without speaking, their thoughts and contributions may be missed.

Speaking allows you to share ideas, explain your views, and contribute to discussions. However, *listening* is just as important. It helps you understand others, learn new perspectives, and add information that is new and useful to people.

A balanced conversation makes sure that everyone is heard and valued. It also helps to avoid misunderstandings and ensures better *teamwork*.



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How to communicate in a small group

Many of the same things that help you speak clearly to an individual that you know will also help you speak to a small group that you know.

It is useful to be reminded about the things that help you speak clearly, whatever the setting:

- Thinking about what you want to say before you start speaking
- Taking a deep breath
- Making sure you have the attention of the people who will be listening
- Looking at them and speaking loudly enough so that they can hear
- Speaking slowly so that they can follow what you are saying
- Not trying to say too much all in one go

The big difference between this step and the previous step is that you will need to think about how to engage more than one person. That means:

- Making sure that you *look at everyone* that you want to be listening to you – not just focusing on one person. That way, everyone will know that you are speaking to them.
- *Speaking more loudly* because in a group you are likely to be stood further apart, and it is harder to hear otherwise.
- *Leaving more space to check that everyone has understood you.* You can check that everyone is following what you're saying by looking around.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to talk to a small group, and why is that different to talking to one person?
- Why is it important to balance speaking and listening in groups?
- How can you speak clearly in a small group?
- When have you shown you can speak clearly in a small group?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate speaking clearly in a small group?
- Is the learner able to balance speaking and listening in a small group?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections or observations from others.



Meeting others

I communicate with new people when I need to



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to communicate with new people
- B)** I know why communicating with new people is important
- C)** I know how to communicate clearly with new people



Core ideas

A

What it means to communicate with new people

Most people find it more difficult to speak to people that they do not know well than to people they do already know.

There are several reasons for this:

- When you know someone, it is easier to predict what their reactions will be to something that you say
- You are likely to feel less shy when speaking to someone who you already know
- When you know someone, you have a better idea of how much they already know about what you are talking about

However, many of the same things that help you speak clearly in front of individuals and groups who you already know will also help you to speak clearly in front of those you do not know as well.

B

Why communicating with new people is important

Speaking to new people can be helpful in many situations, such as when meeting new team members, joining a group, or attending an event.

It is important because:

- *It helps build relationships:* Talking to new people allows you to make connections and work better with others.
- *It creates opportunities:* New conversations can lead to useful information, fresh ideas, or chances to do something together.
- *It develops confidence:* The more you talk to new people, the easier it becomes to communicate in different situations.
- *It improves understanding:* Speaking with different people helps you learn about different views, experiences, and ways of thinking.



C

How to communicate clearly with new people

Introducing yourself to new people can make you feel a bit nervous, but it's an important starting point.

- Different cultures have different ways of making introductions. Often beginning with a smile and a friendly tone helps to make a positive first impression. Start by saying your name clearly, like, *"Hello, I'm [Your Name]."*
- Next, you could share a little bit about yourself. This could be something simple, like where you're from, what you do, or why you want to speak to them.
- It's also good to show interest in the other person. After introducing yourself, ask their name or something about them, like, *"How are you today?"*

Many of the same principles that help you to speak clearly to people you already know – whether as individuals or in a group – will also help you with those you don't already know.

The significant differences when you don't know the people you are speaking to are:

- *Spending a bit more time thinking* about how to be as clear as possible – you don't know what the people you are speaking to know already
- *Making sure you are looking at them* as this will help you to see whether they understand what you are saying or not
- *Trying to make what you are saying as simple as possible* as this will help to ensure that individuals can understand you

With practice, it is possible to build the confidence to speak clearly in front of individuals and groups who you do not already know.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is different about speaking to new people?
- Why is it important to introduce yourself to new people and speak with them?
- How can you communicate clearly with new people?
- When have you shown you can communicate clearly with new people?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to introduce themselves confidently to new people?
- Is the learner able to speak clearly with new people?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.



Organising thoughts

I order my points to be understood



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to organise points to be understood
- B) I know why organising points to be understood is important
- C) I know how to organise points to be understood when communicating



Core ideas

A

What it means to organise points to be understood

Organising points means putting ideas in a clear and logical order so that others can easily follow what is being said. When communicating, this helps to make sure the message is clear and avoids confusion.

- *Starting with the main idea:* Beginning with the most important point so that the listener or reader understands the topic straight away.
- *Using a clear structure:* Arranging points in a way that makes sense, such as step by step, from most to least important, or by grouping similar ideas together.
- *Keeping it simple and focused:* Avoiding unnecessary details that may distract from the main message.
- *Linking ideas smoothly:* Using words like “first,” “next,” “because,” and “therefore” to show connections between points.

Good organisation makes communication clearer and helps people understand and remember what is being said.

B

Why organising points to be understood is important

Organising points well makes communication more effective. It ensures that the listener or reader can follow along without getting lost or confused.

It is important because:

- *It makes the message clear:* A well-structured message helps others understand what is being said.
- *It saves time:* When points are presented in order, there is less need for repetition or explanation.
- *It helps avoid misunderstandings:* Poor organisation can lead to confusion or misinterpretation.
- *It keeps people engaged:* If ideas are scattered or difficult to follow, people may stop listening or lose interest.
- *It improves confidence:* When points are well-organised, the speaker feels more prepared and communicates more clearly.

If points are shared in a confusing or disorganised way, people may struggle to understand or remember the message. Taking the time to organise information properly makes communication smoother and more effective. When speaking for longer, the importance of putting ideas into a logical order is even greater.



C

How to organise points to be understood when communicating

To make sure a message is clear and well-organised:

- *Plan before communicating:* Take a moment to think about what needs to be said and in what order.
- *Start with the main idea and context:* Clearly introduce the topic before going into details.
- *Use a logical structure:* Arrange points in a way that makes sense for the situation, such as:
 - *Chronological order:* Explain events in the order they happened.
 - *Cause and effect:* Show how one thing leads to another.
 - *Problem and solution:* Present a challenge and then explain how to fix it.
 - *Comparison:* Highlight differences or similarities between ideas.
- *Summarise at the end:* A short recap of the key points can reinforce the message.

By following these steps, communication becomes clearer, helping others to understand and respond effectively.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to put points in a logical order when communicating?
- Why does putting your points in a logical order matter when communicating?
- How can you structure your communication to be more easily understood?
- When have you shown that you can structure your communication in this way?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to arrange ideas in a logical order?
- Is the learner able to structure what they are saying to be understood in extended speaking?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of planning an extended talk, and observations from others.

Knowing the audience

I adapt my communication to what my audience already know



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to adapt communication to what the audience knows
- B)** I know why to adapt communication to what the audience knows
- C)** I know how to adapt communication to what the audience knows



Core ideas

A

What it means to adapt communication to what the audience knows

Adapting communication means changing the way information is shared based on what the audience already understands. Different people have different levels of knowledge, so it is important to adjust language, detail, and explanations to make sure they can follow along.

- *Using familiar words:* Avoiding technical words or complex terms when speaking to people who may not know them.
- *Providing background information:* If the audience is new to a topic, giving extra details to help them understand.
- *Keeping it simple or detailed as needed:* Some people may need a short, clear message, while others may need more depth.

By making these changes, communication becomes clearer and easier for others to follow.

B

Why to adapt communication to what the audience knows

Effective speaking is about sharing ideas in a way that your listeners can understand. This means considering what your audience already knows. For example:

- *When talking about people,* we adjust our language depending on whether the listener knows them or not. If they do not, we explain who they are.
- *We may use technical terms or acronyms,* assuming listeners understand them. If they do not, it can cause confusion.
- *When discussing events or ideas,* our opinions are not helpful if the listener lacks context.

If listeners know less than we assume, they may become lost or misunderstand what we are saying. If they know more, they may get bored and stop paying attention.

To keep your listeners engaged, it is important to understand their knowledge level. This ensures your message is neither too simple nor too complicated, helping them to stay focused and understand your points.



C

How to adapt communication to what the audience knows

To communicate effectively, it is important to first understand the audience and then adjust the way information is shared. Here are some ways to do this:

- *Ask questions before speaking:* If unsure, checking what people already know can help avoid over-explaining or missing key details.
- *Listen to the audience's responses:* Paying attention to questions or confused expressions can show when more explanation is needed.
- *Start with a general idea:* Beginning with a simple explanation and adding more details if needed can help keep communication clear.
- *Use everyday language when possible:* If the audience is not familiar with a topic, avoiding technical or complex words makes it easier to understand.
- *Check for understanding:* Asking questions or encouraging feedback ensures that the message is clear.

By following these steps, communication can be adjusted to suit the audience, making it more effective and meaningful.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to adapt your communication to what your audience knows?
- Why is it important to understand what your audience already knows?
- How can you assess what your audience already knows and use this information to adapt to your audience?
- When have you assessed what your audience already knows and adapted as a result?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Are learners able to accurately assess what an audience should already know?
- Are learners able to adapt how they speak to an audience's existing knowledge?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, planning for speaking, and observations.

Choosing language

I choose appropriate language for the situation



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by appropriate language for the setting
- B)** I know why it is important to choose appropriate language for the setting
- C)** I know how to choose appropriate language for the setting



Core ideas

A

What is meant by appropriate language for the setting

There are lots of ways to communicate to get the same meaning across - but some of those will be better understood or appreciated by your audience than others.

Register is the term used to describe the kinds of words we choose to communicate something. There are three broad registers or types of language that we need to consider:

- *Informal:* This is relaxed language, where we might be speaking to friends. We might use slang or speak in a jokey way. We can use this because there is a shared understanding of what we mean that might be particular to those relationships.
- *Formal:* We would avoid using slang or speaking in a jokey way. Instead, we use full sentences, conjunctions, and more complex vocabulary. This way of speaking can be understood much more widely, and so we can use it in lots of different settings.
- *Technical:* This is advanced language that we might use when working closely with someone where we have shared expertise. For example, two plumbers or lawyers or teachers might be able to use language, abbreviations, or acronyms with each other that would not make any sense in the wider world. This way of speaking works well for people who share that technical understanding, but it is impossible to understand if you do not.

B

Why it is important to choose appropriate language for the setting

The language you use should always match the setting to ensure your message is understood and respectful.

Choosing the right language shows respect for the setting and your audience. By adjusting your register, you create the right atmosphere and help others feel comfortable and engaged. It is essential to be aware of what is and is not appropriate and adapt your communication for effective interaction in every situation.



C

How to choose appropriate language for the setting

It is crucial to select the right register for the setting so that those people who are listening to you have the best chance of understanding what you are telling them:

- It would feel strange to use formal language with your friends although they would understand you. They might not continue to understand you if you start using unfamiliar technical language.
- Similarly, many people would feel uncomfortable being spoken to informally by someone who they did not know well. They might be confused about what their relationship is with you or think that you were disrespectful towards them.
- Finally, anyone who does not have the same sort of technical expertise as you would find it very hard to follow technical language and might feel that they were looking foolish if they could not understand what you were saying.

In summary:

- *Informal language:* For friends and people you know well
- *Formal language:* For most people and settings, and people you don't know
- *Technical language:* For speaking to others with shared technical expertise



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to choose the right language, and what are different registers?
- Why is it important to use appropriate language for the setting?
- How can you choose the right register for the setting?
- When have you used different registers for different settings and why?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to use appropriate language in different settings?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Expressing self

I use tone, expression and gesture to be understood



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by tone, expression and gesture
- B) I know why tone, expression and gesture matter
- C) I know how to use tone, expression and gesture when communicating



Core ideas

A

What is meant by tone, expression and gesture

When we speak, we do not just use words. The way we say things and how we move our bodies can also show what we mean. This includes:

- *Tone of voice:* The way our voice sounds, such as soft or loud, calm or excited, serious or playful.
- *Facial expressions:* How our face looks, such as smiling to show happiness or raising eyebrows to show surprise.
- *Gestures:* Movements we make with our hands or body, such as nodding to show agreement or using hand movements to explain something.

These things help make our message clearer and help others understand how we feel.

B

Why tone, expression and gesture matter

Using tone, expression, and gestures helps make communication more effective and interesting. It is useful because:

- *It makes the message clearer:* The way we say something helps people understand the meaning behind our words.
- *It shows emotions:* A friendly tone and a smile can make us seem warm and approachable, while a serious tone can show importance.
- *It keeps people interested:* Speaking with a lively tone and using gestures can keep people engaged in what we are saying.
- *It helps avoid misunderstandings:* If words alone could have different meanings, our tone and expressions can help explain what we really mean.
- *It makes communication feel more natural:* People connect better when they can see emotions and reactions through tone and gestures.

Without these elements, speech can sound dull or unclear, making it harder for others to stay engaged and understand the message.



C

How to use tone, expression and gesture when communicating

Tone is *how* we say words, not just the words themselves. The same phrase can mean different things depending on tone. Tone is shaped by:

- *Pitch*: How high or low someone is speaking (high sounds anxious, low sounds calm).
- *Tempo*: How quickly someone is speaking (fast sounds energetic, slow sounds authoritative)
- *Volume*: How loudly someone is speaking (loud sounds confident, quiet sounds controlled)
- *Intonation*: How the pitch of the speaking rises or falls over a sentence (rising sounds uncertain or questioning, falling sounds confident)
- *Stress*: How some words are said more strongly for emphasis (emphasising words changes meaning)

Facial expressions add meaning beyond words, showing emotions like joy, anger, or surprise. People often take more meaning from expressions than speech or interpret the words that you are saying with the emotion that they read from your expressions.

Gestures are movements of the body which might convey meaning, alongside tone and expression. For example:

- An outstretched arm inviting someone in
- Crossed arms which suggest defensiveness
- Leaning forwards when speaking to show engagement

It is important to remember that in different cultures, the same tone, expressions or gestures might have different meanings.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are tone, expression and gesture when speaking?
- Why is it important to be aware of your tone, expression and gesture?
- How can you use tone, expression and gesture to communicate effectively?
- When have you used tone, expression and gesture to support your communication?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to use tone, expression and gesture appropriately to convey the meaning they want and to support their communication?
- Is the learner able to do this when trying to support a range of communication purposes and in different settings?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Using facts

I use facts and examples to support my communication



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by facts and examples
- B)** I know why facts and examples can support communication
- C)** I know how to use facts and examples effectively when communicating



Core ideas

A

What is meant by facts and examples

Facts are things that are known or proven to be true. They include *statistics* which are pieces of numerical data - for example, the size of a country, the proportion of people who like pizza, the number of fish in the average lake.

Alongside facts which might include *quantifiable* data - numbers - it is also helpful to share examples. This helps your listeners to imagine how your argument or ideas might apply to 'real life'.

B

Why facts and examples can support communication

Facts and statistics are important when speaking because they provide *evidence* that adds truth to the argument that you are making. Proper use of facts and statistics make it more difficult for other people to disagree with you and will be more effective in convincing people of your argument.

When used well, facts and statistics are also interesting – they might help someone to learn something new, and humans respond positively to learning new things.

Examples are also important because humans are hardwired to appreciate stories. Good examples tend to support a narrative and include:

- *Where:* A context that people can understand
- *Who:* An individual or group who are affected by a problem
- *Why:* An explanation of why this is a problem
- *How:* A connection with how your solution could help solve the problem
- *What:* A call to take some action or implement an idea



C

How to use facts and examples effectively when communicating

Using facts and examples effectively is all about using them at the right moment when you are speaking - and not using them too much!

Facts or statistics must be relevant to the argument that you are making or what you are saying otherwise they become distractions. They should also be accurate, or you can quickly lose the trust of your listeners, and they stop listening to what you are saying. You should be able to say where your facts are from and why they are reliable.

Similarly, the *examples* you choose should help to strengthen your points and help create a clear story so it is important to pick them carefully.

One simple structure that is widely used for sharing an argument is:

- Opinion
- Rationale
- Facts or statistics that justify your opinion
- An example of what this looks like in reality
- Conclusion that restates your opinion, connected to facts and the example

An even simpler model is to use: [*My opinion*] because [*Facts*]. For example, [*example*].

This sort of approach is the basis of *debating*, where individuals talk about different topics and present different ideas or arguments about them – the team who speaks most convincingly about a topic wins.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are facts and examples?
- Why are facts and examples important when communicating?
- How can you use facts and examples together effectively when communicating?
- When have you used facts and examples to support your communicating and what was the effect?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to use appropriate and well-sourced facts to reinforce their points?
- Is the learner able to bring in appropriate examples to bring their argument to life?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, records of speaking, and observations from others.

Sharing visuals

I use images, charts or diagrams when it helps my communication



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by visual aids
- B)** I know why visual aids can support communicating
- C)** I know how to use visual aids effectively when communicating



Core ideas

A

What is meant by visual aids

Visual aids enhance communication by supporting spoken words with images, charts, or diagrams. They help make ideas clearer, keep audiences engaged, and make key messages stronger. Common types of visual aids include:

- *Images and photographs:* useful for illustrating concepts, places, or people.
- *Bullet points or written summaries:* help listeners follow key points.
- *Charts or graphs:* help to visualise facts, data, or trends.
- *Diagrams:* offer a way to demonstrate concepts or relationships.

B

Why visual aids can support communicating

Using visual aids can improve understanding in several ways:

- *Making complex ideas clearer:* Some topics are difficult to explain with words alone. An image, chart or diagram can make things easier to grasp.
- *Helping audiences stay engaged:* People remember a mix of what they hear and see. Visual aids add variety and help maintain interest.
- *Structuring longer talks:* Listening for an extended period can be tiring. Introducing visual elements helps maintain focus.
- *Clarifying data and statistics:* Graphs and charts make numerical information more accessible.
- *Providing context:* Images can help set the scene for what you're discussing.

By appealing to both sight and hearing, visual aids can make speaking more memorable.



C

How to use visual aids effectively when communicating

While visual aids can enhance communication, they need to be used correctly. Here are some key principles to follow:

- *Ensure visibility:* If your audience can't see your visuals clearly, they won't be effective. Make sure images, text, and objects are large enough and positioned well.
- *Check technology beforehand:* If you're using slides or videos, test the equipment in advance to avoid technical issues.
- *Keep them relevant:* Visual aids should support what you're saying, not distract from it. Avoid unnecessary images or text.
- *Make them clear and simple:* Visuals should enhance understanding, not create confusion. Keep slides uncluttered, using short bullet points instead of long paragraphs.
- *Use high-quality visuals:* Poorly designed slides, pixelated images, or unclear diagrams can make your presentation look unprofessional. Ensure visuals are polished and appropriate for your audience.
- *Vary the types of aids:* Mixing different types of visuals (for example, images, graphs, and short videos) can make your presentation more dynamic.

Even well-designed visual aids can lose their impact if not used correctly. Here are some common mistakes to avoid:

- *Introducing visuals too soon:* As soon as a visual appears, people focus on it. Only reveal it when it directly supports what you are saying.
- *Reading directly from slides:* If you display full sentences or paragraphs, your audience will read ahead and stop listening. Instead, summarise key points and expand on them in your speech.
- *Using too many visuals:* Too many slides, images, or graphs can overwhelm your audience and make your message harder to follow. Keep things simple and focused.
- *Overcomplicating design:* Avoid overly complex charts, distracting fonts, or excessive animations that can make your message harder to understand.

By using visual aids wisely, you can enhance your presentation, make your points clearer, and keep your audience engaged. If you're unsure how to create effective visuals, there are many resources available on designing slides and using tools like PowerPoint.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are visual aids and what different forms do they take?
- Why can visual aids support communication?
- How can you use visual aids effectively, and what should you avoid doing?
- When have you successfully used different visual aids and what worked well or not?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to use a range of visual aids when communicating?
- Is the learner able to justify their choices and approach when asked?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, recordings of presentations or speeches, preparatory notes and visual aids, and observations from others.

Communicating sensitively

I talk about difficult or sensitive topics effectively



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by difficult or sensitive topics
- B)** I know why it is important to communicate about difficult or sensitive topics
- C)** I know how to have conversations on difficult or sensitive topics



Core ideas

A

What is meant by difficult or sensitive topics

A topic may be difficult or sensitive for several reasons:

- *Strong emotions:* Some subjects bring up feelings like anger, sadness, or fear. Topics such as loss, illness, or mistakes can be hard to talk about.
- *Different opinions:* Issues like politics, religion, or ethics can cause disagreement, especially if people have strong beliefs.
- *Personal impact:* Conversations about relationships, performance, or personal behaviour can feel uncomfortable because they directly affect the people involved.
- *Social or cultural sensitivity:* Some topics relate to identity, background, or personal experiences, making them more delicate to discuss.

Being aware of why a topic is potentially difficult or sensitive can help you approach it more carefully and with greater understanding.

B

Why it is important to communicate about difficult or sensitive topics

Although these conversations can feel uncomfortable, they are important because:

- *They help solve problems:* Avoiding difficult topics can lead to misunderstandings and unresolved issues.
- *They improve relationships:* Honest and respectful conversations build trust and understanding between people.
- *They show care and respect:* Talking openly about sensitive matters shows that we value others' feelings and opinions.
- *They help us learn and grow:* Hearing different views and handling difficult discussions helps us develop important communication skills.
- *They create a positive environment:* Being able to discuss concerns openly can reduce tension and make working with others easier.

However, it is also important to respect an individual's boundaries if they do not want to talk about personal information or views that are not relevant to the work being done.



C

How to have conversations on difficult or sensitive topics

Good preparation makes it easier to talk about sensitive issues:

- *Think about your goal:* What do you want to achieve from the conversation? Be clear on the outcome you want, whether it's understanding, problem solving, or support.
- *Consider the other person's feelings:* Think about how they might react. Will they be upset, defensive, or confused? Being ready for their emotions can help you too.
- *Choose the right time and place:* A private and calm setting is best for sensitive conversations. Avoid places with distractions or where others might overhear.
- *Plan what to say:* You don't need a script, but thinking through your key points in advance can help you stay focused and avoid saying something you regret.
- *Stay open-minded:* Be prepared to listen as well as speak. The conversation should be a two-way discussion, not just you delivering your own message.

Once the conversation starts, handling it well is key. Here's how:

- *Start gently:* If possible, ease into the topic rather than being too direct. For example, instead of saying, "I need to talk to you about something serious," you could say, "There's something on my mind that I'd like to discuss."
- *Be clear and honest:* Say what you need to in a calm and respectful way. Avoid blaming or accusing, as this can make the other person defensive. Use "I" statements, like "I feel concerned about..." rather than "You always..."
- *Listen carefully:* Give the other person time to respond. Show that you are listening by nodding, making eye contact, and reflecting on what they say.
- *Manage emotions:* If the conversation becomes emotional, stay calm. If the other person gets upset or angry, give them space to express their feelings.
- *Stay solution-focused:* If the conversation is about solving a problem, try to move towards possible solutions rather than just discussing the issue. Ask questions like "What do you think would help?"
- *Know when to pause:* If the conversation becomes too heated, it is okay to take a break and return to it later.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What sorts of topics might be sensitive or difficult to discuss?
- Why is it important to be able to communicate about difficult or sensitive topics?
- How can you prepare for and manage sensitive or difficult conversations?
- When have you had to have a conversation on a sensitive or difficult topic?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to manage difficult or sensitive conversations effectively?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, examples drawn from scenarios designed by an educator, and observations from others.

Speaking engagingly

I communicate in a way that is engaging for my audience



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to use tone, expression and gesture to be engaging
- B)** I know why it is helpful to use tone, expression and gesture to be engaging
- C)** I know how to use tone, expression and gesture to be engaging



Core ideas

A

What it means to use tone, expression and gesture to be engaging

When speaking to an audience, whether it is one person or a group, it is important to keep their attention and make your message interesting. Simply saying words is not enough - how you speak matters. Using tone, facial expressions, and gestures helps to capture interest and make what you are saying more engaging.

- *Tone of voice:* A lively and varied tone helps keep an audience engaged. Speaking in a flat or dull voice can make people lose interest, while adjusting your tone to match your message keeps them focused.
- *Facial expressions:* Smiling, raising eyebrows, or showing concern can help communicate emotions and make your words feel more real. Audiences connect better with a speaker who looks expressive rather than neutral or serious all the time.
- *Gestures:* Using hand and body movements helps emphasise key points and adds energy to your speech. Simple gestures, like using open hands to invite engagement or pointing to highlight key ideas, can help make your message more dynamic.

By using these elements effectively, you can hold your audience's attention, make your message clearer, and encourage them to stay engaged with what you are saying.

B

Why it is helpful to use tone, expression and gesture to be engaging

Being engaging when speaking is important because it helps your audience stay interested and understand your message better. Some key benefits include:

- *Keeping attention:* People are more likely to listen if your voice and expressions are varied and interesting. A flat delivery can make it harder for them to stay focused.
- *Making your message clearer:* Your tone and expressions help give meaning to your words. For example, a serious tone can highlight important points, while a warm expression can make a message feel more welcoming.
- *Building a connection with your audience:* When you appear confident and expressive, people are more likely to feel engaged with what you are saying.
- *Helping your audience remember key points:* Gestures and vocal emphasis can highlight important information, making it easier for people to remember later.
- *Encouraging interaction:* When you show enthusiasm through your voice and expressions, people are more likely to respond and engage with your ideas.

Effective communication is not just about *what* you say, but *how* you say it. Engaging speaking techniques make a big difference in how well your message is received.



C

How to use tone, expression and gesture to be engaging

To keep your audience interested, here are some key ways to use tone, expression, and gestures effectively:

- *Vary your tone of voice:* Avoid speaking in a monotone. Use changes in pitch and volume to highlight key points and create interest.
- *Match your tone to your message:* A serious point needs a calm, steady tone, while enthusiasm and excitement should be reflected in a more energetic voice.
- *Use facial expressions to reinforce your message:* Smiling, raising your eyebrows, or looking serious at the right moments helps show emotion and makes your words feel more meaningful.
- *Make eye contact:* Engaging with your audience through eye contact builds connection and makes them feel included in the conversation.
- *Use gestures to add emphasis:* Movements such as pointing and open hand gestures can make your speech more engaging.
- *Be aware of your body language:* Standing or sitting in an open, confident way makes you look approachable and keeps your audience engaged.

By practising these techniques, you can make your speaking style more engaging, ensuring your audience stays focused and connected with your message.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to communicate in an engaging way, and how are tone, expression and gesture relevant?
- Why is it helpful to be engaging when communicating?
- How can you use tone, expression and gesture to be engaging?
- When have you used tone, expression and gesture to be engaging?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to use tone, expression and gesture effectively when speaking to an audience?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, recordings of the learner speaking, and observations from others.

Adaptive communication

I adapt my communication depending on audience reactions



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to adapt to audience reactions
- B) I know why it is important to adapt to audience reactions
- C) I know how to adapt to audience reactions when communicating



Core ideas

A

What it means to adapt to audience reactions

Adapting to audience reactions means changing *how* you communicate based on how people respond. Communication is not just about delivering a message - it is also about making sure the audience understands and stays engaged.

People show their reactions in different ways, such as:

- *Facial expressions:* Smiling, frowning, looking confused, or nodding can show if they are interested or need more explanation.
- *Body language:* Leaning forward can mean engagement, while crossed arms or looking away might suggest boredom or disagreement.
- *Verbal responses:* Asking questions, responding with enthusiasm, or staying silent can indicate whether the message is clear or needs adjustment.

By paying attention to these reactions, you can adjust your tone, pace, or wording to keep the audience engaged and ensure they understand your message.

B

Why it is important to adapt to audience reactions

Adapting to audience reactions helps make communication more effective.

Some key reasons include:

- *Keeping engagement:* If people seem distracted or uninterested, adjusting your tone, speed, or approach can help regain their attention.
- *Ensuring understanding:* If the audience looks confused or asks for clarification, explaining things in a simpler way can help them follow along.
- *Building connection:* Showing awareness of how people are responding makes them feel valued and included in the conversation.
- *Encouraging positive interactions:* If people seem uncomfortable or defensive, adjusting your words or tone can make the conversation smoother and more productive.
- *Preventing misunderstandings:* If you notice that people are reacting differently than expected, you can check whether your message is being understood correctly.

Effective communication is about more than just speaking; it is about making sure the message is received and understood.



C

How to adapt to audience reactions when communicating

To communicate effectively, it is important to notice how people are reacting and adjust accordingly. Here are some ways to do this:

- *Watch facial expressions and body language:* If people look confused, slow down and explain in a different way. If they look interested, continue as planned.
- *Listen for verbal feedback:* If someone asks for clarification or responds with enthusiasm, adjust your approach to match their level of understanding and engagement.
- *Change your tone and pace:* Speaking too fast may overwhelm listeners, while speaking too slowly may make them lose interest. Adjusting your tone and speed can help maintain engagement.
- *Ask questions to check understanding:* Phrases like “Does that make sense?” or “Would you like me to explain further?” can help you gauge whether your message is clear.
- *Encourage interaction:* If the audience seems disengaged, asking questions or inviting opinions can help bring them back into the conversation.
- *Stay flexible:* Be prepared to change your approach if you notice that people are not responding as expected. This could mean simplifying your language, using examples, or shifting to a more conversational style.

By being aware of audience reactions and adjusting your communication style, you can ensure that your message is clear, engaging, and well-received.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to adapt to your audience’s reactions when communicating?
- Why is it important to adapt to your audience’s reactions?
- How can you respond effectively to your audience’s reactions?
- When have you shown that you can respond to your audience’s reactions?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner aware of audience reactions as they are speaking?
- Is the learner able to adapt their approach to keep their audience engaged?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections, analysis of others speaking, and observations from others.

Negotiating

I manage discussions effectively to reach an agreement



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by negotiation
- B) I know why and when negotiations are helpful
- C) I know how to plan for negotiations effectively



Core ideas

A

What is meant by negotiation

A *negotiation* is a discussion to reach an agreement on something. Sometimes negotiations are high-profile, high-stakes events like trade negotiations or international treaties. We sometimes see negotiations in legal dramas or the news when two giant corporations are looking to merge, or one is seeking to acquire the other.

Most negotiations are much lower-key – they involve two or more parties seeking to overcome an obstacle or deciding to do something together. That includes buying a house, selling a car, dividing assets in a divorce, choosing what to have for dinner, or trying to establish a fair price for a service.

B

Why and when negotiations are helpful

Negotiations happen when the answer is not obvious or pre-decided. Good negotiations should reach a conclusion that is a good outcome for *both* parties – there is a mutual benefit from whatever is agreed. However, there will be differences in how the benefits are shared between the two parties. Each is interested in securing as much of the benefit for themselves or their organisations as they can.

Generally, negotiations will happen between the two or more parties who have an interest in the decision. Sometimes though, there will be a facilitator to help to reach an agreement – and this might be essential in particularly difficult or complex negotiations.

C

How to plan for negotiations effectively

Several key concepts are essential to understand when planning for a negotiation:

- *What is your goal from the negotiation?* Plan ahead to be clear on what you want to achieve, and how you will know if you have achieved it.
- *What are your non-negotiables?* Think about which things you absolutely cannot agree to in the negotiation. These are sometimes referred to as 'red lines'.
- *What are you willing to give up?* Choose those things that you are ready to compromise on if it helps to reach an agreement.
- *What are elements of mutual benefit?* Identify those 'easy wins' which will be easy to agree as you both benefit from them.
- *What happens if you can't reach an agreement?* Identify what the *Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA)* is for you. This is the best thing you could do if you were unable to reach an agreement. This is your 'walk away' position and is vital to know.



It is vital to think not only from your perspective, but also to predict what the *other party* is likely to be thinking about. Negotiation is often compared to a game of chess – you cannot only think about your plan, but you need to be constantly aware of the intention of your opponent too. Some things to think about in advance:

- *What is the goal of the other party?* Think about what success will look like for them and challenge yourself to be sure that this is really the case.
- *What might be their non-negotiables?* Identify what they might feel unable to compromise on at all.
- *Where might they be willing to compromise?* Think about where they might be ready to make concessions.
- *What will happen for them if you can't reach an agreement?* Trying to identify what their *Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA)* is – this can help to work out how much the other party need the agreement and so how much they might compromise.

Spending time on this planning means that you are best prepared to speak adaptively and to achieve your goals.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are negotiations?
- Why are negotiations helpful?
- How can you prepare for negotiations?
- When have you had to prepare negotiations and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to analyse their own position and the perspective of the other party before a negotiation?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written plans for a negotiation, and observations from others.

Constructive communicating

I maintain clear and constructive communication in challenging situations



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by constructive communication
- B)** I know why constructive communication in challenging situations is important
- C)** I know how to use constructive communication in challenging situations



Core ideas

A

What is meant by constructive communication

Constructive communication means communicating in a way that is helpful, respectful, and focused on finding solutions. During negotiations, constructive communication involves:

- *Listening carefully:* Understanding the other person's point of view is key.
- *Staying calm:* Keeping emotions under control to avoid unhelpful arguments.
- *Being clear and honest:* Sharing your thoughts without being harsh.
- *Looking for solutions:* Focusing on how to solve a problem, rather than just highlighting issues.
- *Being respectful:* Showing that you value the other person's perspective.

Constructive communication helps both parties move towards a positive outcome, even in tough situations.

B

Why constructive communication in challenging situations is important

Constructive communication is important in challenging situations because it:

- *Helps find solutions:* By focusing on problem solving, both sides can reach a better agreement.
- *Reduces conflict:* Calm, respectful communication lowers the chance of arguments or misunderstandings.
- *Builds trust:* When both sides communicate openly, trust grows, making future conversations easier.
- *Keeps the conversation productive:* Constructive communication keeps discussions focused on resolving the issue, rather than becoming unhelpful or negative.

In challenging situations, constructive communication is key to turning tension into progress.



C

How to use constructive communication in challenging situations

Planning for constructive conversations or negotiations is essential, but participating in one is different. Most successful conversations follow several stages to reach an agreement:

- *Build trust:* Before progress can be made, both sides must feel that the discussion is fair. Show you are open to a productive conversation and act with integrity.
- *Agree a structure:* If the conversation is complex, decide how to approach each issue logically. A clear structure keeps discussions focused and helps avoid confusion.
- *Understand their perspective:* Before pushing your argument, check your assumptions. What is their goal? What are their non-negotiables? Where can they compromise? What will they do if no agreement is reached? These insights help shape your approach.
- *Work through point by point:* Stick to the agreed structure, ensuring each key point is discussed in turn. Clear communication is essential.
- *Identify agreements:* Take note of areas where you both agree, as well as those still in dispute. Recognising common ground helps build momentum.
- *Resolve disputes:* Be flexible. If disagreements arise, consider alternative solutions to reach a compromise that works for both sides.
- *Reach an agreement:* The goal is to secure an outcome that satisfies all parties. Ideally, both sides should leave the conversation feeling their needs have been met.

People take different approaches in these conversations. Understanding these strategies can help you respond effectively, whether they choose to be:

- *Accommodating:* Willing to compromise to keep things positive.
- *Avoiding:* Steering away from difficult topics to prevent tension.
- *Competing:* Determined to 'win' in the negotiations.
- *Compromising:* Preferring quick agreements where both sides give something up.
- *Collaborating:* Trying to find a win-win solution.

Each of these approaches requires a different response. Being flexible and adapting to your counterpart's behaviour makes the difference between a failed or successful conversation.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is constructive communication and how does it link with negotiating?
- Why is constructive communication important in challenging situations?
- How can you use constructive communication in challenging situations?
- When have you used constructive communication and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to maintain clear and constructive communication in challenging situations?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Presenting

I present to an audience when required



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by presenting
- B) I know why and when presenting is important
- C) I know how to present effectively



Core ideas

A

What is meant by presenting

Presenting involves public speaking - sharing information or ideas in a formal way, normally in front of an audience. It often involves:

- *A clear structure:* A beginning, middle, and end.
- *Preparation:* Organising your thoughts and material before presenting.
- *Professional language:* Using respectful and clear language, often avoiding casual phrases.
- *Visual aids:* Tools like slides or charts to help explain your points.

Presenting is used to communicate something serious, organised, complex, or important.

B

Why and when presenting is important

Presenting is important because it helps to:

- *Share information clearly:* Presenting to a group means that you can organise your information and messages clearly.
- *Create a professional image:* It shows you are serious and prepared, which can help build trust and credibility.
- *Influence decisions:* If you need to persuade others, a formal presentation can help you explain your ideas in a convincing way.
- *Ensure everyone is informed:* It is a way to share key points with a group of people at once, making sure everyone gets the same message.

It is especially important in situations where decisions, ideas, or new information need to be shared with a larger group, like at meetings or conferences.

C

How to present effectively

Good *preparation* reduces nerves and helps you deliver a clear, engaging presentation.

- *Know your audience:* Think about who they are, what they already know, and what they need from you. Tailor your message to their interests and level of understanding.
- *Plan a clear structure:* A well-structured presentation is easier for both you and your audience to follow. Use the simple format:
 - *Introduction:* Grab attention and outline what you will cover.
 - *Main content:* Present your key points logically, using examples and explanations.
 - *Conclusion:* Summarise your key points and leave a strong final message.



- *Practise out loud:* Reading your notes silently is not enough. Saying your words aloud helps you refine your delivery and spot any awkward phrasing.
- *Time yourself:* Make sure your presentation fits within the allocated time.
- *Use visual aids wisely:* Slides or props can support your message, but keep them simple. Too much text or clutter can distract from what you are saying.
- *Anticipate questions:* Think about what your audience might ask and prepare answers in advance.

When it is time to speak, focus on engaging your audience and delivering clearly.

- *Project confidence:* Stand tall, make eye contact, and smile.
- *Speak clearly and at a steady pace:* Avoid rushing. Speaking too quickly can make you sound nervous and harder to understand. Use pauses to emphasise points.
- *Use gestures and facial expressions:* These help bring your words to life and make you more engaging. Avoid standing stiffly or crossing your arms.
- *Make eye contact:* Looking at (or above) your audience (rather than your notes or the floor) builds connection and keeps them engaged.
- *Involve your audience:* Ask questions, encourage participation, or use stories to make your message more relatable.
- *Manage nerves with pauses:* If you lose track of what you are saying, take a breath and pause. It will feel longer to you than it does to your audience.
- *Adapt to audience reactions:* Pay attention to their body language. If they look bored, add energy to your voice. If they seem confused, slow down or explain differently.
- *End strongly:* Summarise your points and finish with a memorable statement or call to action.

With practice, presenting will become easier and the more natural and confident you will feel.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by presenting and how does it differ from normal speaking?
- When and why is presenting important?
- How can you present effectively - both in preparation and delivery?
- When have you presented and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to present effectively in front of an audience?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, recordings, and observations from others.

Inspiring others

I communicate a vision persuasively



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by communicating a vision
- B) I know why and when communicating a vision is helpful
- C) I know how to communicate a vision persuasively



Core ideas

A

What is meant by communicating a vision

A *vision* is a clear mental view of something that is going to happen in the future. This is closely linked to creativity, as it is *imagining* something that has not happened or that does not exist yet.

Many organisations, particularly in the not-for-profit sector, have vision statements which outline what it is that they are working towards, or want to achieve: For example, the end of poverty, deaths from a particular disease, or inequality of opportunities.

An inspiring vision is a clear and powerful idea of what the future could look like. It should be exciting, meaningful, and motivating, giving people a strong sense of *purpose*. A great vision is easy to understand and helps people see how their efforts contribute to something bigger.

To be inspiring, a vision should be ambitious but achievable. It should push people to aim high while still feeling possible. It must also connect with people's values and emotions, making them feel personally invested.

A strong vision is clear and specific, not vague or confusing. It should paint a picture of success and show why it matters.

B

Why and when communicating a vision is helpful

An inspiring vision must be shared effectively. Leaders should speak about it with passion and belief, helping others see its importance. When people feel inspired by a vision, they are more likely to work towards making it a reality.

For a vision to inspire people, there is certain content that needs to be covered:

- What is the goal that you are working towards?
- What is the problem that will be solved?
- How will the world be better as a result?
- Why is your vision credible? What is the evidence that it is possible?
- What will the benefit be to the people who are listening?
- What do you need your listeners to do?

It is important to find the right time and place for this sort of communication - it requires the right planning and for the audience to be aware and receptive to hear it.



C

How to communicate a vision persuasively

To make a vision a compelling one, it has to cover all of the key points above, but then it how you speak about it needs to go further than that, by painting a mental picture, and also:

- *Building trust*, by building up your credibility and demonstrating your empathy with the problem and why you are invested in your vision.
- *Getting an emotional response*, by using stories, real examples and expressing your own emotional response to the challenge or problem. You can also build off that to demonstrate your enthusiasm and excitement about your vision, and how the world would be different if it could be achieved.
- *Using facts and logic* to show that what you are proposing is achievable and that your vision is credible.
- *Moving to action*, by showing what you are already doing to bring this vision about, and what the listeners should do to support you.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is an inspiring vision?
- Why and when is it useful to communicate an inspiring vision?
- How can you communicate an inspiring vision effectively?
- When have you communicated an inspiring vision, and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to create and communicate an idea or vision compellingly and convincingly?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, recordings of them speaking, and observations from others.





Overview: Problem Solving

Finding solutions to challenges

This skill is about how individuals effectively solve problems, recognising that while knowledge and technical skills are vital, there are also transferable techniques between settings.

Getting started

(potential target for ages 5-9)

Initially, individuals solve simple problems by following instructions, seeking support and sharing what the problem is, or finding information themselves.

Intermediate

(potential target for ages 9-13)

Next, individuals explore complicated problems by creating multiple potential solutions, analysing them, using success criteria for evaluation, and bringing in extra research effectively.

Advanced

(potential target for ages 13-17)

Then, individuals investigate complex problems by exploring causation, recognising patterns and principles, thinking about parts of a system, and reasoning logically.

Mastery

(potential target for ages 17+)

Finally, individuals tackle complex problems by creating and testing hypotheses, and then creating, implementing and refining strategic plans.

Inclusive practice: The order of skill steps is based on data and the best training approach but individuals may not always secure those steps in sequence.



Universal Framework 2.0: Problem Solving

Finding solutions to challenges

Getting started	Step 1	Following instructions I follow instructions
	Step 2	Seeking support I find help from someone if needed
	Step 3	Sharing problems I describe problems to others
Intermediate	Step 4	Finding information I find information to complete a task
	Step 5	Creating options I create different possible solutions to a problem
	Step 6	Analysing options I identify advantages and disadvantages of potential solutions
	Step 7	Evaluating options I choose between possible solutions based on success criteria
Advanced	Step 8	Researching I research to build my understanding
	Step 9	Exploring causation I analyse causes and effects
	Step 10	Recognising patterns I identify patterns to gain insight
	Step 11	Systems thinking I identify how parts of a system impact each other
Mastery	Step 12	Logical reasoning I use logical reasoning to structure problems
	Step 13	Hypothesis testing I structure ideas so that I can test them
	Step 14	Strategic planning I develop strategic plans to address complex problems
	Step 15	Evaluating approaches I evaluate the success of strategic plans
	Step 16	Continual learning I improve strategic plans based on new insights



Following instructions

I follow instructions



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by instructions
- B) I know why following instructions is important
- C) I know how to follow instructions well



Core ideas

A

What is meant by instructions

Instructions are clear steps or directions that tell you what to do. They help people complete tasks correctly and safely. Instructions can be spoken, written, or even shown through actions. They are used in many situations, such as following a recipe, building furniture, or learning new skills at work or school.

Good instructions are simple, clear, and easy to follow. They often include telling you the right order to do things. Some instructions also include warnings or extra details to make sure you do things safely and correctly. If instructions are not followed properly, mistakes can happen, tasks might not be completed, or people could even get hurt.

B

Why following instructions is important

Following instructions is important because it helps:

- *Ensure accuracy:* Instructions guide you to complete a task correctly and efficiently.
- *Save time:* Understanding and following steps properly prevents mistakes and the need to redo work.
- *Maintain safety:* Some instructions are designed to prevent harm or accidents.
- *Complete the task:* By following instructions, you meet the goal.

It is especially important to follow instructions when:

- You are learning something new.
- The task involves safety risks.
- You are handling important or detailed work.

Ignoring instructions can lead to confusion, mistakes, or even accidents.



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How to follow instructions well

To follow instructions properly, you need to listen carefully and be prepared. Here are some ways to get ready to receive instructions:

- *Pay attention:* Stop what you are doing and focus on the person or materials giving instructions. Avoid distractions like phones or background noise.
- *Ask questions:* If something is unclear, do not be afraid to ask. It is better to ask for help before you start than to make mistakes later.
- *Think about the end goal:* Understanding what you are aiming towards will help you understand the instructions.
- *Prepare what you need:* Gather any tools or materials before you begin so you can follow the instructions smoothly.

Once you have received instructions, following them correctly is important. Here are some ways to make sure you do this:

- *Follow the order:* Instructions are often given in a specific order. Skipping steps or doing things out of sequence may cause problems.
- *Take your time:* Rushing can lead to mistakes. Work through each step carefully.
- *Check your progress:* If possible, pause and review what you have done to make sure you are following correctly.
- *Stay focused:* Try not to get distracted while following instructions, especially if they involve safety or accuracy.
- *Ask for feedback:* If you are unsure whether you have followed instructions correctly, ask someone to check your work.
- *Practise:* The more you follow instructions, the easier it becomes. Over time, you will get better at understanding and following them without difficulty.

By preparing to receive instructions carefully and following them step by step, you can complete tasks correctly, safely, and efficiently.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are instructions and what are some examples?
- Why is it important to follow instructions carefully?
- How can you follow instructions well?
- When have you followed instructions well?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to reliably receive and follow instructions?
- Is the learner able to manage different types of instructions?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of having followed instructions to create a final product or output, and observations from others.

Seeking support

I find help from someone if needed



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by help or support
- B) I know why and when to find help or support
- C) I know how to find someone who can help



Core ideas

A

What is meant by help or support

Help or support is when someone gives you guidance, advice, or assistance to complete a task. It can come in different forms, such as explaining something, showing you how to do it, or providing extra things to help you.

Everyone needs help at times, and asking for support is a normal part of learning and improving. For example, if you are working on a project and do not understand a certain step, getting help from a teacher, colleague, or friend can prevent mistakes and save time. Support can also mean working together with others, such as in a team, to share ideas and complete tasks more efficiently.

Getting help does not mean you have failed - it simply means you are making sure you do the task correctly and learning for the future.

B

Why and when to find help or support

Recognising when you need help is important because it allows you to solve problems before they become bigger issues. Here are some signs that you might need support:

- *You do not understand what to do:* If instructions are unclear or confusing, asking for help can prevent mistakes.
- *You feel stuck:* If you have tried several times and still cannot complete the task, it might be time to seek help.
- *You are making mistakes:* If you keep doing something wrong, getting support can help you understand where you are going wrong.
- *You are running out of time:* If a deadline is coming up and you are struggling to finish, asking for help can make sure the task is completed on time.
- *You feel unsure about your work:* If you are not confident that you are doing the task correctly, asking for feedback can give you reassurance and help you improve.

If these things are true, it is often helpful to ask for help or support early rather than waiting until a problem becomes too difficult to fix.



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How to find someone who can help

Finding the right person for support depends on the task and the type of help you need. Here are some ways to identify who can assist you:

- *Ask someone with experience:* If you are struggling with a work-related task, a supervisor or experienced colleague can give useful advice. If it is a school task, a teacher or classmate might be able to help.
- *Look for someone who explains things well:* Some people are good at breaking things down in a way that is easy to understand. If one person's explanation does not help, try asking someone else.
- *Choose someone who is available:* If a teacher or manager is busy, consider asking a classmate or colleague who has already completed the task. They might be able to help straight away.
- *Use written or online resources:* Sometimes, you do not need to ask a person directly. Reading a guide, watching a tutorial, or checking a manual can give you the information you need.

By recognising when you need help and finding the right support, you can complete tasks more effectively and learn valuable skills for the future.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to get help or support?
- Why and when do you need to get help or support?
- How can you find someone who can help or support you?
- When have you asked someone for help or support?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to recognise when they need support or help?
- Is the learner able to identify an appropriate source of that support or help?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections or observations from others.

Sharing problems

I describe problems to others



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by a problem
- B)** I know why and when to describe problems to others
- C)** I know how to describe problems to others well



Core ideas

A

What is meant by a problem

A *problem* is a situation that needs to be solved or improved. It can be something that causes difficulty, confusion, or stops progress. Problems can be big or small, simple or difficult.

Some common types of problems include:

- *Practical problems:* Issues that make it harder to complete a task, such as not having the right tools or resources.
- *Communication problems:* Misunderstandings or unclear messages that lead to confusion.
- *Decision-making problems:* Situations where choosing the best option is difficult.
- *Relationship problems:* Disagreements or arguments between people.

A problem is something that needs attention and effort to fix, whether by yourself or with the help of others.

B

Why and when to describe problems to others

Talking about problems can be useful because it helps:

- *Find solutions:* Others might have good ideas or advice that can help fix the issue.
- *Get support:* Sharing a problem can make it easier to deal with emotionally or practically.
- *Avoid misunderstandings:* Describing a problem clearly helps others understand the situation better.
- *Make improvements:* Identifying a problem is the first step in making things better.

It is helpful to describe problems when:

- *You need help:* If you cannot solve the problem alone, asking for advice or support can make a difference.
- *The problem affects others:* If a problem is causing difficulties for a group, sharing it can help everyone find a solution.
- *There is a risk of making mistakes:* Explaining a problem before acting can prevent errors.
- *You are unsure what to do:* If a situation is unclear, describing it to someone else can help you understand it better.

Keeping a problem to yourself can sometimes make it worse. Speaking about it can lead to new ideas and better outcomes.



C

How to describe problems to others well

To describe a problem clearly and effectively, you can:

- *Be specific:* Explain exactly what the problem is rather than speaking in general terms.
- *Stick to the facts:* Describe what has happened carefully and clearly.
- *Give details that matter:* Share important information, such as when and where the problem occurred.
- *Explain why it is a problem:* Make it clear why the issue needs attention.
- *Stay calm and polite:* Communicating in a respectful way makes others more likely to listen and help.
- *Suggest possible solutions:* If you have ideas about how to fix the problem, share them.

For example, instead of saying “*Everything is going wrong,*” you could say “*I am struggling with this task because I don’t fully understand the instructions.*” This makes it easier for others to offer useful help.

By describing problems well, you make it easier to solve them.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by a problem, and can you give some different examples?
- Why and when could you share a problem with someone else?
- How can you describe problems well to someone else?
- When have you had to describe a problem to someone else and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify a problem where they need help or support?
- Is the learner able to describe a problem to someone else for help or support?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections and observations from others.



Finding information

I find information to complete a task



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to find information to complete a task
- B)** I know why and when to find information to complete a task
- C)** I know how to find information to complete a task



Core ideas

A

What it means to find information to complete a task

Finding information to complete a task means looking for details, instructions, or guidance that will help you do something correctly and efficiently. It involves gathering useful facts, checking sources, and making sure you understand what is needed before taking action.

Different types of information may be required, depending on the task. For example:

- *Step-by-step instructions:* Clear guidance on how to do something.
- *Facts and figures:* Data that helps with making decisions.
- *Rules or guidelines:* Information on what is allowed or required.
- *Advice from others:* Asking someone with experience or knowledge.

Finding the right information can make a task easier, quicker, and more effective.

B

Why and when to find information to complete a task

Finding information is important because it helps:

- *Ensure accuracy:* Making sure the task is done correctly.
- *Save time:* Preventing mistakes that could slow things down.
- *Increase confidence:* Knowing what to do helps reduce stress or uncertainty.
- *Improve quality:* Better information leads to better results.
- *Solve problems:* If something is unclear, looking for information can help.

It is helpful to find information when:

- *Starting something new:* If a task is unfamiliar, finding details before beginning can make it easier.
- *There are different options:* Comparing information helps in choosing the best approach.
- *There are rules to follow:* Checking for guidelines ensures things are done properly.
- *You are unsure about something:* Finding the right details can remove confusion.

Without the right information, mistakes can happen, tasks may take longer, or results may not be as good as they could be.



C

How to find information to complete a task

To find useful information, you can:

- *Read any instructions:* Many tasks come with written steps or guides. Checking these first can help you understand what to do.
- *Ask someone who knows:* If you are unsure, speaking to someone with experience can give you useful advice. This could be a person who has done the task before or someone who understands it well.
- *Use reliable sources:* Not all information is correct. It is important to check trustworthy sources, such as official guides or experts, instead of guessing or relying on unclear details.
- *Break the task into smaller steps:* Some tasks seem difficult at first. Splitting them into steps and finding information for each part can make them easier to understand.
- *Check more than one source:* If you can find information in different places, comparing them can help make sure it is correct. This can prevent mistakes from using old or wrong details.
- *Write down key points:* Taking notes can help you remember important information. This is useful if there are many steps or if you need to check the details later.

Using these methods can help you get the right information and complete a task well.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to find information you need to complete a task?
- Why and when might you need to find information to complete a task?
- How can you find the information you need to complete a task?
- When have you had to find information to complete a task and how did you do it?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify information they need to complete a task?
- Is the learner able to effectively find and use information to complete a task?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of completing a task that required them to seek and use additional information, and observations from others.

Creating options

I create different possible solutions to a problem



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to create different possible solutions to a problem
- B) I know why and when it is important to create different possible solutions
- C) I know how to create a range of different possible solutions to a problem



Core ideas

A

What it means to create different possible solutions to a problem

Some problems have clear technical solutions, like fixing a broken machine by replacing a part or following a set of instructions. However, other problems are more complex and need creative thinking. Spotting these problems early helps in finding the right approach to solving them.

A problem without a simple technical solution often has multiple possible causes. For example, if a team project is delayed, it may not just be because one person is behind. The delay could be due to unclear instructions, lack of resources, or poor communication. Identifying all the factors involved can prevent wasted effort on solutions that don't work.

Another sign of a complex problem is when one solution might create new difficulties. If a customer is unhappy with a product, simply offering a refund might not address their concerns. The company may need to review its processes to prevent similar issues in the future.

For these problems there are no single 'correct' answers. Instead, there are a range of possible ways that the problem might be solved but each option will have its own advantages and disadvantages (these are explored more in future steps).

B

Why and when it is important to create different possible solutions

When a problem does not have a single clear answer, it is important to explore different possible solutions. This means thinking beyond the first idea that comes to mind and considering other approaches.

Creating different solutions allows for comparison, helping to choose the best option. For example, if an event is running over budget, one option might be to reduce costs by finding cheaper suppliers, while another might be to raise more funds through sponsorship. Each solution has its own advantages and challenges, and considering multiple options helps in making a balanced decision.

It also means being open to creative and unexpected ideas. Some solutions may not seem obvious at first but could be the most effective. For instance, if a workplace struggles with low motivation, one solution might be offering bonuses, while another might be improving the working environment to make it more engaging.

By generating different solutions, you can also prepare for challenges. If one approach fails, having alternative ideas means you can quickly adapt and try something else.



C

How to create a range of different possible solutions to a problem

To create a range of options for solving a complex problem:

- *Start by fully understanding the issue.* Break the problem down into smaller parts. This helps you think more widely about potential solutions.
- *Come up with as many ideas as possible without judging them too soon.* Write down everything that comes to mind, even if it seems unlikely at first. Creativity is key, and unusual ideas can sometimes lead to the best solutions (this is explored a lot more in *Creativity*).
- *Look for inspiration from different sources.* Research how similar problems have been solved elsewhere or ask others for their thoughts. Talking to people with different experiences can bring fresh ideas that you might not have considered.
- *Try thinking in different directions.* Can the problem be solved by changing a process, using new technology, or working with others in a new way? Consider both simple and more ambitious ideas to give yourself plenty of choices.

Once you have a wide range of options, you will be in a strong position to decide which is best. It is important to push yourself to come up with lots of options because as humans we often just work with the first idea we have. It takes effort to come up with more options, but it will be worth it, as the first option is rarely the best.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to create different possible solutions to a problem?
- Why and when is it important to create different possible solutions to a problem?
- How can you create a range of options to solve a complex problem?
- When have you had to create a range of options so solve a problem?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Are learners able to identify problems without a simple technical solution?
- Are learners able to create a wide range of options to solve a complex problem?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of learners creating a range of options in response to a complex problem they have been given, and observations.

Analysing options

I identify advantages and disadvantages of potential solutions



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by advantages and disadvantages
- B) I know why it is important to identify advantages and disadvantages of solutions
- C) I know how to identify advantages and disadvantages of solutions



Core ideas

A

What is meant by advantages and disadvantages

Complex problems are those that do not have one obvious answer or solution – there are a range of possible answers or solutions.

When we are thinking through the different possible answers or solutions, we have to find some way of choosing between them. One of the simplest approaches to this is to think about:

- *Advantages:* this is the positive side of a possible answer or solution, which could also be called the pro of the solution.
- *Disadvantages:* this is the negative side of a possible answer or solution, also known as the con of the solution.

As an example, we might decide that the question we want to answer is how to travel on a trip. We can make a list of different options – we might choose to fly, to take the train or to drive. This problem does not have one easy answer, but we should be able to get to the best solution for us.

B

Why it is important to identify advantages and disadvantages of solutions

Thinking about both the positive and negative sides of different solutions can help in many ways:

- *Better decision-making:* It helps you choose the most effective option instead of picking the first idea that comes to mind.
- *Avoiding problems:* Considering disadvantages in advance means you can prepare for or avoid difficulties.
- *Using resources wisely:* If a solution takes too much time, effort, or money, you may need to find a different option.
- *Making fair choices:* Looking at all sides of a solution ensures you think about how it affects different people and situations.
- *Improving solutions:* If a solution has disadvantages, you may be able to adjust it to reduce the negative effects.



C

How to identify advantages and disadvantages of solutions

To compare different solutions effectively, you can:

- *List different possible solutions:* Before choosing an answer, think of different ways to solve the problem. You could set yourself a target number of potential solutions, to stop you just being satisfied with the first possibility.
- *Write down advantages and disadvantages:* For each solution, list its good and bad points. This makes it easier to compare them.
- *Think about short-term and long-term effects:* A solution might work well now but cause problems later, or it might be difficult at first but helpful in the future.
- *Consider different viewpoints:* A solution that is good for one person or group might not work well for another. Thinking about how different people will be affected can help find a fair option.
- *Use facts and experience:* Looking at past experiences or checking facts can help you understand which solutions have worked before and which ones might fail.
- *Ask for advice:* If you are unsure, discussing options with others can provide new ideas and perspectives.

By following these steps, you can analyse which solution is most likely to work well and avoid unexpected problems later on.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by advantages and disadvantages?
- Why is it important to identify advantages and disadvantages of solutions?
- How can you identify advantages and disadvantages of solutions?
- When have you had to create potential solutions and identify their advantages and disadvantages?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify advantages and disadvantages of different options to solve a problem?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of having created options to solve a problem and identifying advantages and disadvantages of those options, and observations from others.

Evaluating options

I choose between possible solutions based on success criteria



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by success criteria
- B) I know why and when success criteria are useful
- C) I know how to use success criteria to choose between options



Core ideas

A

What is meant by success criteria

Success criteria are the specific factors or standards used to determine whether a task or project has been completed successfully. They are clear, measurable goals that help to track progress and assess outcomes. By setting success criteria, you know exactly what is expected and how to achieve it.

For example, if you're asked to complete a report, success criteria might include:

- The report must be 1,000 words long.
- The report should include at least three recommendations.
- The report must be submitted by 5 pm on Friday.

For more complicated problems, success criteria for a project might include:

- We minimise the environmental impact of the project as far as possible.
- The solution costs less than X money to implement.
- The solution is suitable for a full age range of 6-16 years old.

Success criteria help to keep the task focused and give you a clear target to aim for.

B

Why and when success criteria are useful

Choosing the right success criteria means thinking about what is most important for solving a complex problem. Success criteria should be:

- *Relevant*: The criteria should directly relate to the task and its goals. For example, if you're writing an essay, the success criteria should focus on things like structure, research quality, and clarity, rather than irrelevant details like colour of the font.
- *Clear and measurable*: Make sure the success criteria are specific enough that you can tell when they've been met. Instead of saying "do your best," set a concrete goal like "complete the task with 90% accuracy."
- *Achievable*: Set criteria that are realistic and possible within the time and resources available. If a project requires extensive research, don't set criteria that expect a flawless final product within a day.
- *Time-bound*: Setting a deadline or timeframe can help keep focus and ensure progress.

Defining the success criteria as carefully and thoroughly as possible will ensure that they are as useful as possible when choosing between options to solve problems.

C

How to use success criteria to choose between options

Once you have success criteria in place, they can help guide your decision-making when there are multiple options to choose from. Here's how:

- *Compare options:* Look at each option and assess how well it meets your success criteria. For example, if one solution offers a quicker completion time but doesn't meet your quality standards, you may need to reconsider it.
- *Weigh the importance:* Not all success criteria are equally important. For example, in a writing task, accuracy and clarity might be more important than completing it on time if there's a little flexibility with the deadline. Think about which criteria matter most and prioritise them.
- *Avoid overcomplicating:* Sometimes, it's tempting to look at too many criteria or focus too much on minor details. Stick to the most important criteria and make sure your chosen option fits within them.

For example, if you have several possible ways to complete a project and one option provides the best outcome with the least cost, but takes a little longer, and another option offers faster results with a lower quality, the success criteria will help you decide which trade-offs are best based on what is most important for your task.

Using success criteria makes the decision process clearer and helps you choose the best option for solving the problem.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are success criteria and can you give examples?
- How can you define success criteria effectively?
- How can you use success criteria to choose between different options?
- When have you used success criteria to choose between options?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to define appropriate success criteria for a problem?
- Is the learner able to demonstrate that they can evaluate possible solutions using success criteria to solve a problem?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of creating and applying success criteria to solve a problem, and observations from others.

Researching

I use research to build my understanding



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by research
- B) I know why and when it is important to carry out research
- C) I know how to use research effectively to solve a problem



Core ideas

A

What is meant by research

Research is the process of gathering, analysing, and interpreting information to gain a better understanding of a topic, answer questions, or solve problems. It helps you find facts, develop ideas, and make informed decisions. There are two main types of research:

- *Primary research:* This involves collecting new, original data. This could be through surveys, interviews, experiments, or observations. It is the first-hand information you gather specifically for your research. For example, if you're researching how well people understand a new product, you might conduct a survey to ask people directly about their thoughts and experiences with it.
- *Secondary research:* This involves using data that has already been collected by someone else. You use published reports, books, academic articles, or online resources to gather information. For example, if you are working on a project about climate change, you may review scientific articles, government reports, and studies that have already been conducted in the field.

B

Why and when it is important to carry out research

Carrying out research is important when you need to:

- *Understand a topic better:* If you are tasked with completing a project, writing a report, or solving a problem, research helps you gather the necessary information. It is crucial to do research before taking action so that you have a solid understanding of the situation. For example, before planning a marketing campaign, you might research customer preferences and market trends.
- *Solve a problem:* When faced with a challenge, research helps you understand the wider context or find other similar examples. If you are trying to solve an issue with a project, such as low productivity, you might research different strategies to improve efficiency or read case studies from businesses who faced similar challenges.
- *Make informed decisions:* Research provides the evidence you need to make better choices. For instance, when choosing the best supplier for your company, you would research different options to compare costs, quality, and reliability.
- *Verify information:* Sometimes, you may have to verify information or check if something is true. For example, when reading a news article, you might research the facts to ensure they are accurate before sharing the information with others.



C

How to use research effectively to solve a problem

To make research more effective and focused on solving a problem, you should follow these steps:

- *Define the problem clearly:* Before starting your research, make sure you understand the problem you are trying to solve. Be as specific as possible. For example, if you're trying to improve customer satisfaction in a retail store, focus your research on factors that affect customer satisfaction, such as store layout or product range.
- *Set clear objectives:* Once you have defined the problem, set a clear question for your research. What exactly do you want to learn from your research?
- *Choose the right type of research:* Decide whether primary or secondary research is best for your problem.
- *Narrow your focus:* Instead of trying to research everything about a topic, limit your focus to the specific aspects related to your problem. This will save time and make your research more relevant.
- *Organise your findings:* As you gather information, take notes and keep your findings organised. Group similar ideas together, and make sure you can easily access the most important information.

By following these steps, you can ensure that your research is focused, effective, and aligned with solving the problem at hand.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by research and what are the different types?
- When is it important to carry out research?
- How can you focus research effectively to solve a problem?
- When have you carried out primary and secondary research to help solve a problem?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to choose appropriate times to carry out additional research?
- Is the learner able to use primary research effectively to solve a problem? Can they use secondary research too?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of research which has been carried out to solve a problem, and observations from others.

Exploring causation

I explore causes and effects



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by causes and effects
- B) I know why it is important to analyse causes and effects
- C) I know how to analyse causes and effects



Core ideas

A

What is meant by causes and effects

Causes and effects help us understand why things happen and what results they create. A *cause* is the reason something happens, while an *effect* is the result or consequence of that cause. Identifying causes and effects is important in solving problems because it helps us see connections between actions and outcomes.

For example, if a neighbourhood has a problem with litter, possible causes could include a lack of bins, individuals not being aware of the impact of littering, or windy weather blowing rubbish around. The effects might be an untidy environment, increased cleaning work, or harm to wildlife. Understanding these connections allows the best action to be taken.

Some situations have a single clear cause and effect, while others are more complex with multiple causes and effects. For instance, if a shared project is not progressing well, the causes could be unclear roles, poor communication, or lack of motivation. The *effects* might include missed deadlines, arguments within the group, and not achieving the goal.

B

Why it is important to analyse causes and effects

Analysing causes and effects is essential for solving complex problems because:

- *It helps find the root cause:* Instead of only treating symptoms of a problem, you can address the underlying issue. For example, if a sports team keeps losing games, simply telling them to try harder might not help. Identifying whether the real issue is lack of practice, poor teamwork, or ineffective strategies allows for a better solution.
- *It improves decision-making:* Understanding causes and effects allows you to make informed choices. If you know why a problem happens, you can take steps to prevent it in the future. For example, if individuals are struggling with their work, leaders might discover that the cause is unclear instructions or a lack of resources.
- *It allows for better problem-solving:* When you analyse causes and effects, you can think of different ways to fix a problem. If a neighbourhood association is losing members, you might find that the cause is a clash with other activities, uninteresting meetings, or lack of awareness. Once you understand the cause, you can decide whether changing the schedule, making meetings more engaging, or improving promotion is the best solution.
- *It prevents unintended consequences:* Acting without understanding the causes can sometimes make a problem worse. For example, a neighbourhood wanting to reduce littering which increases littering fines might overlook the real cause is a lack of bins.



C

How to analyse causes and effects

1. To analyse causes and effects effectively, follow these steps:
2. *Clearly define the problem:* Be specific about what the issue is. Instead of saying, “There is too much litter,” define the problem more precisely, such as “The amount of litter in the park has increased by 30% over the past three months.”
 - *Ask ‘Why?’ multiple times:* Use a technique called the “Five Whys,” where you ask “why” repeatedly to get to the root cause. For example:
 - *There is a lot of litter in the neighbourhood. Why?*
 - *People are dropping rubbish. Why?*
 - *They find it easier to drop rubbish than use a bin. Why?*
 - *There aren’t enough bins, and they are hard to find.*
 - This process helps uncover the true cause of a problem rather than just its surface-level symptoms.
3. *Gather evidence:* Base your analysis on facts rather than guesses. Talk to people involved, check records, and compare similar situations. For example, if students are struggling with a school subject, asking them about their challenges and looking at their work might reveal whether the cause is unclear teaching, difficult material, or lack of practice.
4. *Consider possible effects:* Once you identify causes, think about the short-term and long-term effects of different solutions. If you decide to run a campaign about littering, consider whether you will need posters, neighbourhood announcements, or other methods to reinforce the message over time.

By carefully analysing causes and effects, you can tackle problems more effectively, create better solutions, and avoid future issues. This approach ensures that the actions taken are based on real insights rather than guesswork.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by causes and effects?
- Why can understanding causes and effects help solve complex problems?
- How can you analyse causes and effects?
- When have you analysed the causes and effects of something?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to explore the causes and effects when given a complex problem?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections and observations from others.

Recognising patterns

I identify patterns to gain insight



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to recognise patterns
- B)** I know why and when recognising patterns can lead to insights
- C)** I know how to use pattern identification to gain insights



Core ideas

A

What it means to recognise patterns

Recognising patterns means noticing repeated behaviours, trends, or relationships in different situations. This skill helps in solving problems, making better decisions, and predicting future outcomes. Patterns can appear in different ways, such as:

- *Repeated actions:* If something happens regularly, it might indicate a pattern. For example, if certain tasks always take longer than expected for a common cause.
- *Similar outcomes:* If the same approach leads to the same result multiple times, there is likely a pattern. For instance, if a group activity is always delayed when five or more people are involved, that pattern suggests large groups need a new approach.
- *Trends over time:* Some patterns take time to appear. If something gradually increases or decreases, such as the number of people using a particular service, this could suggest a larger trend.
- *Cause and effect relationships:* Patterns often reveal what happens when certain actions are taken. If every time instructions are unclear people ask the same questions, this pattern shows that better instructions could prevent confusion.

B

Why and when recognising patterns can lead to insights

Recognising patterns is useful because it can explain past events, predict future outcomes, and support decision-making. It helps:

- *Make sense of large amounts of data:* Instead of looking at random numbers or facts, patterns help organise information in a meaningful way.
- *Identify causes and effects:* Understanding how one factor influences another can help solve problems.
- *Predict future events:* If something has happened in a pattern before, it may happen again.
- *Spot unusual changes:* Finding something that does not follow the pattern can highlight errors or important shifts.
- *Improve decision-making:* Recognising trends allows for better planning and problem solving.

Pattern recognition is especially helpful when analysing data, solving complex problems, or making informed decisions.



C

How to use pattern recognition to gain insights

To use pattern recognition effectively when solving complex problems, follow these steps:

- *Collect and organise information:* Gather data in a structured way so that it is easy to compare. This could involve listing key details, creating charts, or grouping similar information together.
- *Look for repeated trends:* Identify patterns that appear over time or across different situations. For example, if a problem keeps happening under similar conditions, this may point to a cause.
- *Ask why the pattern exists:* Consider possible reasons behind the trends. Are they caused by certain actions, external factors, or changes in behaviour?
- *Compare with other information:* Check if similar patterns appear in other situations or if there are exceptions. Identifying differences can help refine understanding.
- *Spot unusual changes:* Look for anything that does not follow the usual pattern. An unexpected result may highlight an issue or provide a new perspective.
- *Use insights to guide decisions:* Once patterns are recognised, they can help predict future events, prevent problems, or improve processes.

By carefully analysing patterns you can develop better strategies for solving complex problems and making informed decisions.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to recognise patterns?
- Why and when is it helpful to try to recognise patterns?
- How can you apply pattern recognition to create insights to solve complex problems?
- When have you used pattern recognition to create insights to solve complex problems?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to spot patterns, create insights, and apply these to solving complex problems?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written work, and observations from others.

Systems thinking

I identify how parts of a system impact each other



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by systems and systems thinking
- B) I know why and when principles of systems thinking are useful
- C) I know how to apply systems thinking to complex problems



Core ideas

A

What is meant by systems and systems thinking

A *system* is a group of connected parts that work together to achieve a purpose. Systems can be found everywhere, from nature to human activities. For example, a transport system includes roads, vehicles, and traffic rules, all working together to help people travel from one place to another.

Systems thinking is a way of looking at problems by understanding how different parts of a system interact. Instead of focusing on just one part, systems thinking considers the bigger picture. This approach helps to identify underlying causes of problems and find long-term solutions.

For example, if deliveries are often late, instead of blaming one driver, a systems thinker would look at all possible factors, such as traffic conditions, planning issues, or delays in packaging. By understanding how different parts of the system affect each other, better solutions can be found.

B

Why and when principles of systems thinking are useful

Systems thinking is useful when dealing with complex problems that involve many connected parts. It helps to see how different factors influence each other rather than looking at issues in isolation.

This approach is especially helpful when making decisions that affect multiple people, processes, or long-term outcomes. By understanding the bigger picture, systems thinking can lead to better solutions that address root causes rather than just symptoms.

Several key principles help in understanding and improving systems:

- *Interconnectedness*: Everything within a system is connected. A change in one part can affect other parts.
- *Cause and effect*: Actions within a system lead to certain results, sometimes in ways that are not immediately obvious.
- *Feedback loops*: Systems often respond to changes through feedback. Positive feedback strengthens a process, while negative feedback corrects errors. For example, if a new way of organising information helps people work more efficiently, they will likely continue using it.
- *Adaptation*: Systems change over time, especially when new information or challenges arise. Effective solutions take this into account and allow for adjustments.
- *Looking at the whole picture*: Instead of focusing on one detail, systems thinking considers how all parts of the system interact. This prevents short-term fixes that might cause bigger problems later.



C

How to apply systems thinking to complex problems

Applying systems thinking can lead to better solutions by addressing the root causes of problems rather than just their symptoms. Here's how:

1. *Identify the system and its parts:* Clearly define what is being examined and what elements are involved. If a task is not being completed efficiently, consider all the steps and people involved.
2. *Look for connections and patterns:* Notice how different parts of the system interact. If one delay in a process causes several other delays, that could be an important area to focus on.
3. *Understand the causes of problems:* Instead of fixing a surface issue, look deeper to find what is really causing it. If communication problems keep causing mistakes, the issue might not be with individuals but with the way information is shared.
4. *Consider long-term solutions:* Quick fixes may only help temporarily. A good solution should improve the whole system in a lasting way.
5. *Use feedback to improve:* Test changes and see how they affect the system. If a new approach does not work well, adjust it based on what is learned.

By thinking in systems, people can find more effective and lasting solutions to problems, leading to better outcomes in different areas of life.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by systems and systems thinking?
- Why and when can systems thinking principles be useful?
- How can you apply systems thinking to explore complex problems, with examples?
- When have you applied systems thinking to complex problems?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to look at complex problems through systems thinking to analyse how different parts of a system interact?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written work or analysis using systems thinking in response to a complex problem presented, and observations from others.

Logical reasoning

I use logical reasoning to structure problems



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by deductive and inductive reasoning
- B) I know why and when deductive and inductive reasoning are helpful
- C) I know how to use deductive and inductive reasoning



Core ideas

A

What is meant by deductive and inductive reasoning

Deductive reasoning is a way of thinking that moves from general principles to specific conclusions. It follows a logical structure where, if the starting information is true, the conclusion must also be true. For example:

- *General principle:* All metal objects conduct electricity.
- *Specific case:* A wire is made of metal.
- *Conclusion:* The wire will conduct electricity.

Inductive reasoning works in the *opposite* way to deductive reasoning: it moves from specific observations to broader generalisations. It looks at patterns and evidence to make an educated guess, rather than starting with a fixed rule. For example:

- *Observation:* The last five times a certain approach was used, it led to a successful outcome.
- *Pattern noticed:* This approach seems to work consistently.
- *General conclusion:* This approach is likely to work again in similar situations.

B

Why and when deductive and inductive reasoning are helpful

Deductive and inductive reasoning are both useful when solving complex problems because they help approach challenges from different angles.

Deductive reasoning is useful when applying general principles to specific cases. It helps ensure logical conclusions based on known facts. This is helpful when a problem has clear rules or frameworks that can guide decision-making.

Inductive reasoning is useful when identifying patterns and making general conclusions based on specific observations. It is helpful when there is little existing knowledge about a problem, allowing new insights to emerge. For example, if similar issues arise in different situations, inductive reasoning can help predict future outcomes.

By combining both approaches, problem solving becomes more effective, balancing new discoveries with structured reasoning.



C

How to use deductive and inductive reasoning

Both deductive and inductive reasoning can be useful in problem-solving, especially when dealing with complex situations where some information is known and some needs to be discovered.

- *Using deductive reasoning to apply what is already known:* When facing a problem, deductive reasoning helps by applying established rules or facts. If a method has been proven to work under certain conditions, it can be used again in similar circumstances.
- *Using inductive reasoning to discover patterns:* When there are no set rules for a problem, inductive reasoning helps by looking at past experiences and patterns. If a certain approach has worked several times before, it might be the best option to try again.
- *Combining both methods for better solutions:* Often, the best way to solve a problem is by using both types of reasoning. Deductive reasoning provides structure and reliability, while inductive reasoning allows for flexibility and learning from experience.

For example, if a task is not being completed efficiently, deductive reasoning could be used to check whether all the known best practices are being followed. If no clear rule exists, inductive reasoning could help by looking at past successes and identifying what worked best.

By understanding and applying both deductive and inductive reasoning, individuals can solve problems more effectively, adapt to new challenges, and make well-informed decisions.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is deductive reasoning, with examples? What is inductive reasoning, with examples?
- Why and when are deductive or inductive reasoning most useful?
- How can you apply deductive and inductive reasoning to explore complex problems?
- When have you used deductive or inductive reasoning effectively?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to apply principles of deductive and inductive reasoning when presented with a complex problem? Are they able to articulate the logical process that they are going through?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written work demonstrating use of inductive and deductive reasoning to explore a complex problem, and observations from others.

Hypothesis testing

I structure ideas so that I can test them



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by a hypothesis
- B) I know why and when testing hypotheses is helpful
- C) I know how to turn ideas into testable hypotheses



Core ideas

A

What is meant by a hypothesis

A *hypothesis* is an idea or assumption that can be tested to see if it is true or false. It is often used when trying to understand a problem or find the best way to complete a task. A hypothesis is not just a guess—it is a reasoned statement based on what is already known.

For example:

- If plants receive more sunlight, then they will grow faster.
- If a new method is used to organise tasks, then tasks will be completed more efficiently.

A good hypothesis is clear, focused, and testable. It allows someone to explore possible solutions by gathering evidence to prove or disprove it.

B

Why and when testing hypotheses is helpful

Testing hypotheses helps solve complex problems because it allows ideas to be checked before making important decisions. Instead of acting on assumptions, testing helps gather evidence to see what actually works.

Testing hypotheses is useful when:

- There are *different possible explanations* for a problem, and you need to find out which one is correct.
- You need to *reduce uncertainty* before making a choice.
- You want to *avoid mistakes* by testing small changes before making big decisions.
- You are trying to *improve something* and need to check if a new idea works better than an old one.

For example, if a team wants to improve how people understand their messages, they might test whether using pictures alongside text makes information clearer.

C

How to turn ideas into testable hypotheses

Turning an idea into a testable hypothesis involves a few simple steps. A well-formed hypothesis should be clear, specific, and possible to test using evidence. Here's how to do it:

1. *Identify the problem or question:* Start by thinking about what you want to understand or improve. Clearly define the issue so you can create a focused hypothesis. For example, you notice that people seem more productive at certain times of the day. You want to find out if working in the morning leads to better performance.
2. *Make an assumption:* Consider what you believe might be influencing the situation or causing the problem. This should be based on observations or existing knowledge. For example, you assume that people are more productive in the morning because they have more energy.
3. *Turn it into a clear statement:* A good hypothesis predicts a relationship between two things. Use a simple structure like: *If X happens, then Y will happen because of Z.* For example, if people work in the morning, then they will complete tasks faster because they have more energy at the start of the day.
4. *Decide how to test it:* Think about how you can gather evidence to support or challenge your idea. You need a way to measure the effect you're investigating. For example, you could track how long it takes people to finish tasks at different times of the day and compare the results.
5. *Make sure it's specific and measurable:* A testable hypothesis should be clear enough that others can understand and repeat the test. Avoid vague statements that are too broad or subjective. For example, a specific and testable hypothesis might be: "People who start work before 10am will complete 20% more tasks than those who start later."
6. *Test and refine:* After testing, you may need to adjust your hypothesis based on the results. If the evidence does not support your idea, you can revise it and test a new version.

By following these steps, you can create strong, testable hypotheses that help you make better decisions and solve complex problems with confidence.

Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is a hypothesis and why might it be helpful?
- Why and when can you use hypothesis testing to help solve complex problems?
- How can you test hypotheses to explore complex problems?
- When have you used hypothesis testing as part of problem solving?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to create and test a hypothesis which supports exploring a complex problem?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, a write-up of where they have created and tested a hypothesis to explore a complex problem, and observations from others.

Strategic planning

I develop strategic plans to address complex problems



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by a strategic plan
- B) I know why and when strategic plans support problem solving
- C) I know how to develop strategic plans



Core ideas

A

What is meant by a strategic plan

A *strategic plan* is a structured approach to achieving a long-term goal. It outlines key objectives, the steps needed to reach them, and the resources required. Unlike short-term plans that focus on immediate tasks, a strategic plan looks at the bigger picture and considers how different factors influence success.

A good strategic plan:

- *Defines a clear goal:* It states what needs to be achieved in a specific and measurable way.
- *Identifies key steps:* It breaks the goal into smaller actions that can be followed.
- *Considers risks and challenges:* It takes into account obstacles and how to manage them.
- *Uses available resources effectively:* It ensures time, money, and effort are used wisely.
- *Is flexible:* It allows for changes if circumstances shift.

For example, if a person wants to improve their financial stability, they might create a strategic plan that includes saving a certain amount each month, reducing unnecessary expenses, and investing in education or skills development.

B

Why and when strategic plans support problem solving

Complex problems often do not have one simple solution. They may involve multiple factors, require long-term effort, and need careful decision-making. A strategic plan helps by:

- *Providing clarity:* It gives a clear sense of direction, making it easier to focus.
- *Encouraging logical thinking:* It helps break down big problems into steps.
- *Improving decision-making:* It allows people to compare options and make choices.
- *Helping to manage risks:* It prepares for potential challenges, reducing uncertainty.
- *Increasing efficiency:* It ensures time and resources are not wasted.

Strategic planning is particularly useful when:

- *Facing a complex situation* where multiple steps are needed to reach a solution.
- *Long-term* success depends on making the right decisions now.
- *Resources are limited*, and careful allocation is needed.
- *Adjustments may be required* over time as circumstances change.

For example, if someone wants to switch careers, they may need a strategic plan that includes gaining new skills, networking with people in the industry, and applying for relevant roles over time.



C

How to develop strategic plans

A strategic plan is only as strong as the information and insights used to create it. It must be informed by the sorts of analysis and problem solving approaches which have been explored so far in Problem Solving:

- *Evidence and data:* Decisions should be based on facts rather than assumptions. This might include surveys, research studies, or past experiences.
- *Systems thinking:* Thinking not just about the immediate problem but also about the underlying causes and effects and connections between different factors.
- *Using logical reasoning:* Using inductive and deductive reasoning to develop ideas about what might work and approaches that can be tested.
- *Proven hypotheses:* Approaches should be tested before being scaled, otherwise the efforts could go into the wrong things.
- *Thoughtful prioritisation:* There will always be more things that can be done - the test is to choose those elements that will be most useful.
- *Long-term thinking:* Effective plans look beyond immediate concerns and consider how actions today will impact the future.

By ensuring that strategic plans are well-researched, built on an understanding of the system, logically designed, thoughtfully tested, prioritised and focused, individuals and groups can make meaningful progress towards solving complex problems.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is a strategic plan?
- Why and when can strategic plans be part of problem solving?
- How can you develop a strategic plan to solve a complex problem?
- When have you developed a strategic plan to solve a complex problem?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to create a strategic plan to solve a complex problem?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, strategic plans that they have created to solve a complex problem, and observations from others.

Evaluating approaches

I evaluate the success of strategic plans



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to evaluate strategic plans
- B) I know why and when it is helpful to evaluate strategic plans
- C) I know how to evaluate the success of strategic plans



Core ideas

A

What it means to evaluate strategic plans

Evaluating the success of a strategic plan means assessing whether it has effectively addressed a complex problem. Strategic plans provide a structured approach to problem-solving, but because complex problems often involve uncertainty and multiple factors, evaluation is necessary to understand their effectiveness.

Key aspects of evaluating a strategic plan include:

- *Measuring outcomes:* Checking if the plan has led to meaningful progress in solving the problem.
- *Assessing effectiveness:* Identifying which strategies worked well and which did not.
- *Considering unintended effects:* Looking at any unexpected consequences, both positive and negative.
- *Making necessary adjustments:* Updating the plan as new information emerges or circumstances change.

For example, if a strategic plan is designed to reduce delays in a large project, evaluation would involve checking whether those delays have actually been reduced and identifying any remaining challenges.

B

Why and when it is helpful to evaluate strategic plans

Evaluating a strategic plan is important because complex problems rarely have straightforward solutions. Regular evaluation ensures that actions are effective and resources are used efficiently, because it:

- *Ensures the strategy remains relevant:* Complex problems can evolve, so evaluation helps keep plans aligned with changing circumstances.
- *Prevents wasted effort:* By identifying ineffective approaches early, time and resources can be redirected.
- *Supports decision-making:* Understanding what works helps refine current and future strategies.



When to evaluate a strategic plan:

- *At key milestones:* Checking progress at regular intervals ensures that adjustments can be made if needed.
- *When new information becomes available:* If new insights emerge, the plan may need to be refined.
- *At the end of the plan:* A final evaluation helps assess overall success and provides lessons for future strategies.

For example, if a strategic plan is created to improve access to essential services in a community, evaluation would help determine whether the plan has led to real improvements or if further changes are needed.

C

How to evaluate the success of strategic plans

To effectively evaluate a strategic plan for solving a complex problem, follow these steps:

1. *Review the original problem and goals:* Ensure the problem is still relevant and assess whether the goals were realistic.
2. *Measure progress with clear criteria:* Use defined success indicators to track improvements.
3. *Gather diverse perspectives:* Complex problems often affect multiple people, so gathering input from different sources provides a fuller picture.
4. *Analyse unexpected outcomes:* Look at both intended and unintended consequences of the plan.
5. *Compare different approaches:* If multiple solutions were tried, determine which was most effective.
6. *Decide on next steps:* If the problem is not fully solved, refine the plan or explore alternative solutions.

Regular evaluation helps ensure that strategic plans remain effective and adaptable when dealing with complex problems.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to evaluate strategic plans?
- Why and when should you evaluate strategic plans?
- How can you evaluate the success of strategic plans?
- When have you evaluated the success of strategic plans, and how did you do so?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to evaluate the success of a strategic plan, including evaluating progress against targets and milestones?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evaluation of progress against a strategic plan to solve a complex problem, and observations from others.

Continual learning

I improve strategic plans based on new insights



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by continual learning
- B) I know why continual learning is important
- C) I know how to implement continual learning cycles



Core ideas

A

What is meant by continual learning

Continual learning is the process of constantly improving knowledge, skills, and approaches over time. When solving complex problems through strategic plans, continual learning means regularly reviewing progress, identifying what works and what does not, and making adjustments based on new insights.

Key aspects of continual learning include:

- *Seeking new information:* Looking for fresh ideas, research, or data that may improve the plan.
- *Reflecting on past actions:* Evaluating what has been successful and what needs improvement.
- *Being open to change:* Adjusting approaches based on new understanding.
- *Learning from others:* Gaining insights from different perspectives or expert advice.

For example, if a strategic plan is designed to improve efficiency in a process, continual learning involves testing different methods, analysing results, and refining the approach over time.

If we are open to this sort of learning, then we can revisit some of our assumptions, improve them with what we see in reality, and then adjust our strategic plan accordingly.

B

Why continual learning is important

Continual learning is essential when dealing with complex problems because these problems often change over time, and solutions may not be immediately obvious. Regularly updating knowledge and adjusting strategies helps ensure long-term success.

Key benefits of continual learning:

- *Keeps approaches effective:* What works today may not work tomorrow, so learning helps adapt to changes.
- *Reduces mistakes:* By learning from past experiences, future errors can be avoided.
- *Encourages innovation:* New ideas emerge when strategies are reviewed and improved.
- *Enhances decision-making:* More knowledge leads to better choices.

Continual learning is most helpful:

- *At regular review points:* Checking progress at key stages of a strategic plan.
- *When new challenges arise:* Adjusting strategies when unexpected problems occur.
- *When new insights become available:* Using new research or feedback.

For instance, if a strategic plan is aimed at reducing delays in a project, continual learning allows adjustments based on what has been effective and what has not.

C

How to implement continual learning cycles

A *continual learning cycle* is a process of regularly improving skills, knowledge, or strategies based on experience and feedback. It involves four key stages that repeat over time:

1. First, *gather information* by observing and measuring what is working well and what could be improved. This could involve reviewing past experiences, collecting feedback, or analysing data.
2. Next, *reflect on insights* to understand the reasons behind successes or challenges. Asking questions like “*What worked?*” and “*What could be done differently?*” helps identify useful lessons. If you’ve managed to prove or disprove hypotheses, this new learning should be integrated.
3. Then, *make adjustments* by developing new approaches, improving current methods, or setting fresh goals based on what has been learned.
4. Finally, *apply changes* and test the updated approach in real situations. The cycle then begins again as new information is gathered.

By repeating this process, strategic plans can keep improving, stay adaptable, and find better ways to achieve their goals and solve complex problems over time.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by continual learning?
- Why and when is continual learning helpful?
- How can you build a continuous learning cycle?
- When have you used continual learning approaches, and what did it achieve?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate continual learning when implementing a strategic plan to solve a complex problem?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections, written evidence of reviewing and adapting strategic plans and showing continuous learning, and observations from others.





Overview: Creativity

Using imagination and generating new ideas

This skill is about how individuals expansively create new ideas and possibilities in a wide range of settings and is the complement to problem solving.

Getting started

(potential target for ages 5-9)

Initially, individuals use their imagination to imagine different possibilities, share and express them, and create ideas when given a simple prompt.

Intermediate

(potential target for ages 9-13)

Next, individuals apply their creativity to suggest improvements, combine concepts, identify opportunities for innovation, and develop success criteria.

Advanced

(potential target for ages 13-17)

Then, individuals explore creative thinking more deeply by challenging their own assumptions, reflecting critically, seeking perspectives, and prototyping ideas to develop them further.

Mastery

(potential target for ages 17+)

Finally, individuals drive creativity more widely by incubating ideas, curiously seeking out new ideas and opportunities, and facilitating and championing creativity and innovation more widely.

Inclusive practice: The order of skill steps is based on data and the best training approach but individuals may not always secure those steps in sequence.



Universal Framework 2.0: Creativity

Using imagination and generating new ideas

Getting started	Step 1	Imagining I imagine different things
	Step 2	Sharing imagination I share what I imagine with someone
	Step 3	Expressing imagination I share what I imagine in different ways
Intermediate	Step 4	Generating ideas I create ideas to solve a problem
	Step 5	Suggesting improvements I create ideas to make something better
	Step 6	Combining concepts I can combine ideas to make new ones
	Step 7	Identifying opportunities I identify opportunities for innovation
Advanced	Step 8	Defining success I set out success criteria for creating new ideas
	Step 9	Flexible thinking I challenge my assumptions about ideas
	Step 10	Reflecting critically I question my own ideas to improve them
	Step 11	Seeking perspectives I seek different perspectives to develop my ideas
Mastery	Step 12	Prototyping I create quick tests of an idea
	Step 13	Incubating ideas I give ideas time and attention to evolve
	Step 14	Using curiosity I seek new concepts and ideas to innovate from
	Step 15	Facilitating creativity I share creative tools for collective innovation
	Step 16	Championing creativity I nurture cultures of creativity and innovation



Imagining

I imagine different things



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by imagining
- B) I know why imagination is important
- C) I know how to use imagination



Core ideas

A

What is meant by imagining

Imagination is the ability to create ideas, images, or possibilities in your mind. It allows you to picture things that do not yet exist, think beyond what is familiar, and explore new ways of doing things. Imagination can be used to solve problems, invent new things, or simply think creatively.

It is not just about being artistic. It also plays a role in everyday *planning*, *adapting*, and *problem solving*.

For example, when faced with a challenge, imagination helps you picture different solutions before trying them out. It allows you to see situations from different perspectives and come up with fresh ideas.

B

Why imagination is important

Using imagination is important because it helps to:

- *Solve problems creatively:* When faced with a challenge, imagination allows you to think of different possibilities and explore new approaches.
- *Innovate and improve:* Many new inventions come from people imagining what could be possible.
- *Adapt to change:* Imagination helps you think about the unexpected.
- *Make decisions:* Before taking action, imagining the possible results helps make better choices.
- *Express creativity:* Whether writing, designing, or planning, imagination makes it possible to bring new ideas to life.

For example, if a group is planning an event, imagination helps them consider different themes, activities, and ways to make the experience fun for everyone.



C

How to use imagination

Imagination is a skill that can be built and used in many ways. Here are some ways to make the most of it:

- Ask *“what if”* questions: Thinking about different possibilities helps you explore new ideas. For example, “What if we went there?”
- *Visualise different outcomes*: Before making a decision, try to picture how different options might turn out.
- *Use storytelling*: Creating stories in your mind can help bring ideas to life, whether for personal projects or problem-solving.
- *Day dream*: Sometimes, imagination works best when you take a break from a task and let your mind wander.

Imagination is a powerful tool that helps people think creatively, solve problems, and explore new possibilities. By using it regularly, individuals can approach challenges with fresh ideas and discover new solutions.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is imagination?
- Why do we all need to use our imagination?
- How can you use your imagination?
- When have you used your imagination and what did you imagine?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to show they are using their imagination - for example, to create new ideas, develop stories, or imagine what might happen next?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, pieces of work that demonstrate imagination, and observations from others.

Sharing imagination

I share what I imagine with someone



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to share imagination
- B) I know why it is helpful to share imagination
- C) I know how to share what is imagined



Core ideas

A

What it means to share imagination

Imagination is when you create pictures, ideas, or stories in your mind. *Sharing what you imagine* means *describing* these thoughts to others so they can understand what you see in your head.

People imagine many different things, such as:

- A new way to organise things to make a task easier.
- A design for an invention.
- A different way to solve a problem that no one has thought of before.
- A future situation and how things might work differently.
- A creative story.

When you share what you imagine, you help others see what is in your mind. For example, if someone imagines a faster way for people to move around a busy area, they might describe seeing wide pathways, signs pointing in helpful directions, and special places for people to stop and rest. If another person imagines a new way to use less energy, they might describe a picture in their mind of buildings with solar panels, cars using clean fuel, and lights that turn off when not needed.

By clearly describing what you see in your mind, you allow others to understand and build on your ideas.

B

Why it is helpful to share imagination

Sharing your imagination allows others to see new possibilities, contribute their ideas, and work together to create something even better. When you express what you imagine, you can:

- *Inspire others:* Your ideas may encourage others to think differently or come up with their own creative ideas.
- *Get feedback:* Others can help improve your ideas by offering different points of view and suggestions.
- *Turn ideas into reality:* Many ideas require teamwork, and sharing your imagination helps bring it to life.
- *Combine imagination:* When people share ideas, they can combine their strengths to find better ideas.

For example, if someone imagines a new way to organise a community event, sharing that idea allows others to add more ideas and help make it happen.



C

How to share what is imagined

When you share what you imagine, your goal is to help others see the same picture in their minds as you do. If you do not describe everything clearly, people may fill in the gaps with their own ideas, which might be very different from what you meant. To make sure your idea is understood, include all the details that are important.

Here are some ways to share what you imagine effectively:

- *Use clear descriptions:* Explain what you see in your mind step by step. Think about the colours, shapes, sizes, and movements of what you imagine. If you are describing an idea, explain how it works and what makes it special.
- *Add important details:* Think about what someone else might not know. If they have never seen what you are imagining before, what do they need to understand? If there are gaps in what you describe, people might guess and imagine something different from what you meant. Be sure to include all the details that matter.
- *Give examples:* If your idea is complicated, give an example to help others understand. For instance, if you imagine a new way for people to find information quickly, you could compare it to something familiar, like searching for a book in a library.

By being clear, detailed, and giving examples, you help others see your idea the way you do.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to share what you imagine?
- Why is it helpful to share what is in your imagination?
- How can you share what you are imagining?
- When have you had to share what you imagined and how did you do it?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to describe something they are imagining to someone else in a way that can be understood?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, recordings of learners sharing something they have imagined, or observations from others.

Expressing imagination

I share what I imagine in different ways



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to share imagination in different ways
- B) I know why and when it is helpful to share imagination in different ways
- C) I know how to share imagination in different ways



Core ideas

A

What it means to share imagination in different ways

Sometimes, just describing what you see in your mind with words is not enough for others to fully understand. Sharing what you imagine in different ways can make your ideas clearer and more engaging. Two powerful ways to do this are:

- *Acting or role play:* This involves acting out a situation or pretending to be in a certain role. It helps show how something might work or how people might react in a situation.
- *Art and drawing:* Creating pictures, sketches, or models can turn an idea into something people can see. Drawings can show details, movement, or relationships between things that are hard to explain with words alone.

By using these methods, you can help others see what you mean, making your ideas easier to understand and remember.

B

Why and when it is helpful to share imagination in different ways

Using different ways to share your ideas can:

- *Make ideas clearer:* Some things are hard to explain with words alone. A drawing or a short role play can help people understand better.
- *Help people feel more involved:* When people can see, watch, or interact with an idea, they are more likely to understand and remember it.
- *Show emotions and actions:* Role play helps show feelings, reactions, and movements that are difficult to explain with words. A drawing can also show expressions or the mood of an idea.
- *Help solve problems:* Acting out a situation can help test if an idea will work in real life. A drawing can help spot missing details or things that need to be changed.

Different people understand things in different ways, so having more than one way to share your ideas can help everyone follow along.



C

How to share imagination in different ways

Acting and role play:

- *Act out a scene:* If you imagine a situation, try acting it out with others to show what happens. This works well for testing how people might react to a new idea.
- *Use simple props or gestures:* You don't need costumes or a stage. Small movements, changes in voice, or using objects around you can help bring your idea to life.
- *Invite others to join:* Ask people to take on roles in your imagined scene. This can help them see things from a different point of view.

Art and drawing:

- *Sketch your idea:* Even a quick, simple drawing can help others see what you mean.
- *Use diagrams:* If your idea involves steps or parts working together, a labelled drawing can help explain it.
- *Show movement or change:* If something develops over time, draw a series of images to show how it works.
- *Consider models:* For more complex ideas focused on design, a model might help bring it to life.

By using role play and visuals, you can bring your imagination to life and help others understand your ideas more easily.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to share your imagination in different ways?
- Why is it helpful to share your imagination in different ways?
- How can you share your imagination in different ways?
- When have you used acting or role play, and visuals or art to share imagination?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to show what is in their imagination by acting it out?
- Is the learner able to show what is in their imagination through drawing or art?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, recordings of learners acting out what is in their imagination or drawings from their imagination, as well as observations from others.



Generating ideas

I create ideas to solve a problem



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to generate ideas
- B) I know why it is helpful to generate ideas
- C) I know how to generate ideas to solve a problem



Core ideas

A

What it means to generate ideas

Generating ideas means coming up with new thoughts, solutions, or possibilities. It is the process of thinking creatively and exploring different options. Ideas can be about solving a problem, improving something, or creating something new.

People generate ideas in different ways. Some might think quietly by themselves, while others prefer talking with others to get inspiration. Ideas can start as simple thoughts and grow into something detailed and useful.

For example, if someone is trying to find a way to make a daily task easier, they might think of different ways to do it. Some ideas might not work, but others might be useful. The key to generating ideas is to let thoughts flow freely without worrying too much about whether they are good or bad at first.

B

Why it is helpful to generate ideas

Coming up with many ideas can be useful because:

- *It increases the chances of finding a good solution:* The first idea is rarely the best. More ideas mean more options to choose from.
- *It encourages creativity:* Exploring different ideas helps people think in new ways and discover unexpected solutions.
- *It allows improvement:* Sometimes, combining different ideas leads to a better final result.
- *It helps solve difficult problems:* Complex problems often need fresh and creative thinking. Having many ideas makes it easier to find an effective approach.
- *It gives flexibility:* If one idea does not work, there are other options to try.

The more ideas people generate, the better their chances of finding the right solution.



C

How to generate ideas to solve a problem

Before coming up with ideas, it is important to understand the problem or challenge. This means identifying what needs to be achieved and what will make a solution successful. Think about:

- Do you know what the problem is that you are trying to solve?
- What do your ideas need to do in order to solve the problem?

Once the problem is understood, the next step is to come up with possible solutions. The aim is to generate a good range of different ideas. To do this:

- *Allow yourself to think freely:* Don't decide too quickly if an idea is good or not. Even ideas that seem unusual at first might lead to better ideas.
- *Use different ways of thinking:* Try looking at the problem from different perspectives, such as imagining how someone else might solve it.
- *Try to keep going:* Often we start by creating obvious ideas. By forcing yourself to come up with ten, twenty or even fifty ideas you start coming up with something new or different.
- *Take breaks:* Stepping away from the problem for a while or doing something active for a while can help new ideas emerge.

By first understanding the problem and then giving yourself the right environment and space to be creative, you should be able to generate lots of ideas.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to generate ideas?
- Why is it helpful to generate lots of ideas?
- How can you help yourself to generate lots of ideas?
- When have you shown that you are able to create lots of new ideas?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to ask the right questions to understand the problem?
- Is the learner able to generate lots of potential ideas in response to a problem?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of generating ideas in response to a problem brief, and observations from others.

Suggesting improvements

I create ideas to make something better



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to suggest improvements
- B) I know why and when it is helpful to suggest improvements
- C) I know how to create ideas to improve something



Core ideas

A

What it means to suggest improvements

Suggesting improvements means coming up with ideas to make something better. This could be improving an object, a process, or an experience. The goal is to make it more useful, enjoyable, or effective.

When suggesting improvements, two key things to think about are:

- *Purpose:* What is the goal of the thing you want to improve? Does it do what it is meant to do?
- *User experience:* How easy, enjoyable, or helpful is it for the person using it?

For example, if someone designs a game, they might suggest making the rules clearer so that players understand how to play. Or if a person creates a sign, they might suggest using bigger letters so that it is easier to read.

Suggesting improvements is an important creative skill because it helps turn good ideas into great ones.

B

Why and when it is helpful to suggest improvements

Coming up with ways to improve things can be useful in many situations, such as:

- *Fixing problems:* If something is not working well, improvements can make it better.
- *Making things easier to use:* Small changes can help people understand or use something more easily.
- *Creating new ideas:* Thinking about improvements can lead to completely new and creative solutions.
- *Keeping things fresh:* Even things that work well can sometimes be made better.
- *Helping others:* Improvements can make life easier or more enjoyable for other people.

It is helpful to suggest improvements when something is confusing, difficult to use, or could be more effective. The best time to suggest changes is after testing or using something and noticing what could be better.



C

How to create ideas to improve something

Here are some ways to come up with ideas for improvements:

- *Observe carefully:* Pay attention to how something works and how people interact with it. What seems difficult or unclear?
- *Ask questions:* Think about what could be changed. For example:
 - What is the purpose, and is it being met?
 - What could make this easier to use?
 - How could this be more enjoyable or effective?
- *Think from different perspectives:* Imagine how different people might experience it. What might be difficult for someone who is new to it? Try to think beyond the most obvious user group to you to think inclusively about a wide range of users.
- *Try small changes first:* Even small improvements, like changing the size, shape, or colour of something, can make a big difference.
- *Get feedback:* Asking others for their thoughts can help bring new ideas.
- *Experiment and test:* Trying out different versions can show what works best.

By using these methods, people can improve their creativity and find better ways to make things work.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to suggest improvements for something?
- Why and when is it helpful to suggest improvements?
- How can you generate ideas that will be real improvements?
- When have you shown you can create ideas to improve something?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Are learners able to identify the purpose of a variety of products or programmes?
- Are learners able to analyse the user experience?
- Are learners able to create a range of feasible ideas that would genuinely improve something and explain why?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of learners creating a range of feasible improvements to something based on thoughtful analysis, and observations.

Combining concepts

I can combine ideas to make new ones



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by ideas and concepts
- B) I know why and when it is helpful to combine concepts or ideas
- C) I know how to combine concepts or ideas to create new ones



Core ideas

A

What is meant by ideas and concepts

An *idea* is a thought or suggestion about something new or different. It can be small, like thinking of a new way to organise a room, or big, like imagining a new kind of technology.

A *concept* is a bigger idea that connects different thoughts together. It helps to explain how something works or why it is important. Concepts are often used to solve problems, create new things, or understand the world better.

For example:

- The *idea* of using a wheel to move things led to many inventions like bicycles and cars.
- The *concept* of recycling brings together different ideas about how to reduce waste and protect the environment.

Ideas and concepts are important in creativity because they help people imagine new possibilities and do things better.

B

Why and when it is helpful to combine concepts or ideas

Sometimes, the best creative ideas come from *mixing different ideas together*. This is called *combining ideas*, and it is useful because:

- *It leads to innovation:* Many new inventions and creative works come from combining existing ideas in new ways.
- *It helps solve problems:* If one idea alone does not work, mixing it with another can lead to a better solution.
- *It encourages creativity:* Combining ideas helps people think in new and unexpected ways.
- *It makes things more interesting:* Whether in design, writing, or technology, new combinations can create exciting results.
- *It might combine the best elements from two ideas:* Making the ideas even stronger.

It is helpful to combine ideas when:

- A problem needs a *fresh approach*.
- Something *new* or *unique* is needed.
- Different *viewpoints* can be used to improve a solution.

For example, someone designing a new type of backpack might combine ideas from camping gear, fashion, and sports equipment to create something more useful and stylish.



C

How to combine concepts or ideas to create new ones

Here are some ways to mix ideas and concepts creatively:

- *Look for connections:* Think about how two different ideas could work together. For example, could a chair design be inspired by the shape of a tree?
- *Try the “What if?” question:* Ask:
 - What if I mixed this idea with another?
 - What if I used this idea in a different way?
- *Combine opposites:* Mixing ideas that seem very different can create something surprising and original.
- *Use analogy thinking:* Compare an idea to something else and see how they relate.
- *Mix ideas from different fields:* Many great inventions happen when ideas from one area are used in another, such as using nature to inspire design.
- *Test and improve:* Not every combination will work, so experimenting and adjusting ideas can lead to better results.

By using these methods, people can improve their creativity and discover new, exciting ideas.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are ideas and concepts?
- Why and when can it be useful to combine different ideas or concepts together?
- How can you combine ideas or concepts to create new ones?
- When have you shown that you can combine ideas or concepts to make new ones?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to combine aspects from different concepts or ideas to create new ones?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections, evidence of having combined components from different concepts to create new ideas, and observations from others.

Identifying opportunities

I identify opportunities for innovation



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by innovation
- B) I know why and when to identify opportunities for innovation
- C) I know how to identify opportunities for innovation



Core ideas

A

What is meant by innovation

Innovation is the process of creating new ideas, methods, or products that improve how things are done. It is not just about inventing something completely new but also about making existing things better, easier, or more efficient. Innovation can be big or small, and it happens in all areas of life.

For example, the introduction of video calling was an innovation that improved how people communicate across distances. Before video calls, people could only rely on voice calls or letters. By adding a visual element, communication became more personal and effective.

Innovation can be technological, like developing new apps, or practical, like finding a better way to organise a daily routine. What matters is that it brings positive change.

B

Why and when to identify opportunities for innovation

Looking for opportunities to innovate is important because it helps people solve problems, improve experiences, and create new possibilities.

Innovation is useful when:

- *A problem needs solving:* If something is not working well, innovation can find a better way.
- *Things could be improved:* Even if something works, it might be possible to make it faster, cheaper, or more enjoyable.
- *There is a need for something new:* People's needs and interests change, so new ideas can help meet them.
- *There is competition:* When different people are offering similar things, innovation helps to stand out by doing something differently.

By looking for opportunities for innovation, individuals can develop creativity and bring fresh ideas to different areas of life.



C

How to identify opportunities for innovation

Here are some ways to spot chances for innovation:

- *Observe problems:* Pay attention to things that cause frustration or take too long. A better solution could be created.
- *Listen to others:* People often mention what they find difficult or what they wish existed. These comments can inspire new ideas.
- *Stay curious:* Think about new possibilities, such as:
 - What if this product or service worked differently?
 - What if there was an easier way to do this task?
- *Combine ideas:* Bringing together ideas from different areas can create something new and valuable.
- *Think about the future:* Consider how changes in technology, the environment, or society might create new needs and opportunities.
- *Experiment:* Trying new methods, materials, or approaches can lead to unexpected innovations.

By staying curious, asking questions, and being open to new possibilities, people can find many ways to innovate and use their creative skills. Not every idea will work, but each attempt brings new insights.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by innovation?
- Why and when is it helpful to spot opportunities for innovation?
- How can you identify opportunities for innovation?
- When have you identified opportunities for innovation and how did you do that?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify a realistic and justifiable opportunity for innovation?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of having identified and explained opportunities for innovation, and observations from others.

Defining success

I set out success criteria for creating new ideas



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to define success criteria for new ideas
- B) I know why and when defining success criteria supports creativity
- C) I know how to set out success criteria for creating new ideas



Core ideas

A

What it means to define success criteria for new ideas

Success criteria are the measures that show whether an idea has worked well. They are used to check if an idea meets a goal.

When developing a new idea, success criteria help to:

- *Decide what a good result looks like:* This could mean solving a problem, making something easier, or improving an experience.
- *Measure progress:* Success criteria show if an idea is improving over time.
- *Compare different ideas:* They help decide which idea works best.

Success criteria for an idea might include:

- How easy is the idea to use?
- Whether it solves the problem?
- How much time or effort does it save?
- If people find it useful or enjoyable?

B

Why and when defining success criteria supports creativity

Setting success criteria can help creativity by giving a clear direction. It encourages people to think about what matters most when developing ideas.

Success criteria support creativity when:

- *Exploring new ideas:* Knowing what success looks like helps focus creative thinking.
- *Choosing between ideas:* Comparing different ideas based on success criteria makes it easier to pick the best one.
- *Improving an idea:* If an idea does not meet the success criteria, it can be changed to make it better.
- *Testing ideas:* Checking if an idea meets the criteria shows whether it is ready to be used.

Without success criteria, it can be hard to know if an idea is worth pursuing. Defining them early makes the creative process more effective.



C

How to set out success criteria for creating new ideas

Setting clear goals and success criteria ensures that creativity leads to meaningful results.

- *Be specific:* Instead of a vague goal like “make something better,” define success clearly, such as “reduce waiting time by 20%.”
- *Make it measurable:* Success should be something you can check or test.
- *Stay flexible:* Goals should guide creativity without limiting new ideas.

While defining success helps creativity, being too rigid can limit possibilities. To ensure success criteria support creativity rather than hinder it:

- *Keep goals broad enough to allow different approaches:* Instead of setting one fixed solution, focus on the outcome.
- *Allow room for experimentation:* If an idea doesn’t work, see if there is further scope to develop the idea rather than writing it off entirely.
- *Encourage fresh thinking:* Be open to unexpected solutions that still meet the goals.
- *Loop back to the goals and success criteria:* In your thinking, you might realise that the goal or success criteria might need to be changed - and that might be fine.

For example, if someone is designing an eco-friendly packaging solution, setting a goal of “reduce waste” is more supportive of creativity than saying, “use only cardboard.” The first allows for multiple creative approaches, while the second restricts innovation.

By defining success carefully, setting clear but flexible goals, and allowing space for creativity, you can use success criteria to enhance rather than limit creative thinking.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by defining success criteria for new ideas?
- Why and when does defining success help support creativity?
- How should you balance success criteria with space for creativity?
- When have you set success criteria to support idea creation?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify and define appropriate success criteria?
- Is the learner able to be creative and generate ideas that fit with the success criteria outlined?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections, evidence of creating success criteria, and accompanying ideas, and observations from others.

Flexible thinking

I challenge my assumptions about ideas



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by flexible thinking
- B) I know why it is important to identify assumptions
- C) I know how to question assumptions to support creativity



Core ideas

A

What is meant by flexible thinking

Flexible thinking is the ability to see things from different perspectives, adapt to new ideas, and change your approach when needed. It helps with creativity because it allows you to explore multiple possibilities rather than getting stuck on one way of thinking.

Examples of flexible thinking include:

- *Finding different uses for the same object:* A glass jar can store food, hold flowers, or become a candle holder.
- *Adjusting plans when something unexpected happens:* If a recipe is missing an ingredient, a flexible thinker will find a good substitute rather than giving up.
- *Exploring new ways to solve a problem:* Instead of always using the same route, a flexible thinker might try different paths to find the fastest way.

By thinking flexibly, you can discover new ideas. A lot of this comes down to challenging our underlying assumptions of what something is, what should happen, or how it should work.

B

Why it is important to identify assumptions

Assumptions are beliefs we take for granted without questioning. While some assumptions are useful, others can limit creative thinking by making us ignore new possibilities.

For example a *limiting* assumption might be if someone believes that only professional artists can create beautiful paintings, they might never try painting themselves. This assumption stops them from exploring their own creativity.

Alternatively, *assumptions* might be focused on how something should be used or the process that always needs to be followed in a particular situation.

By recognising assumptions, you can challenge them and open up new possibilities. Some questions to help identify assumptions include:

- Why do I believe this?
- Is there evidence to support this, or is it just something I have always thought?
- What if this assumption is wrong? What new options would that create?

This is much easier to say than to do, because so many of our assumptions are implicit - that is, we don't even realise that we are making that assumption!



C

How to question assumptions to support creativity

Once you identify your assumptions, you can challenge them to think in new ways. For example:

- *Flip the assumption:* If you assume a task must be done a certain way, ask, “What if I did the opposite?”
- *Imagine a world where the assumption isn’t true:* If you assume people won’t like a new idea, ask, “What if they loved it? What would make that possible?”
- *Look for real-world examples that prove the assumption wrong:* If you assume something can’t be changed, find examples of people who have done it differently.

For example, a person planning a community event assumes it must take place indoors because of unpredictable weather. By questioning this assumption, they might explore creative solutions like providing covered outdoor spaces or making the event adaptable to different conditions.

By staying aware of assumptions and challenging them, you can develop flexible thinking that leads to more creative ideas and solutions.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is flexible thinking?
- Why can understanding assumptions be important to support creativity?
- How can you challenge your assumptions to support flexible thinking and creativity?
- When have you identified and challenged your assumptions to support your own flexible thinking and creativity, and what was the result?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify their own assumptions when given a creative challenge?
- Is the learner able to explore the impact of challenging their own assumptions?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections, written evidence of identifying and analysing their assumptions in response to a creative challenge, and observations from others.

Reflecting critically

I question my own ideas to improve them



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to reflect critically on ideas
- B) I know why and when critical reflection on ideas is helpful
- C) I know how to use critical reflection to improve ideas



Core ideas

A

What it means to reflect critically on ideas

Critical reflection means thinking carefully about your ideas to understand their strengths and weaknesses. It helps to improve ideas by considering whether they work well and how they could be better.

No idea is ever created fully formed and ready to go. All ideas evolve and are developed, refined, and improved.

When reflecting on an idea, you might ask:

- Does this idea solve the problem it was meant to?
- Is there a better way to do this?
- What are the possible difficulties with this idea?

Critical reflection does not mean being negative about your ideas. Instead, it is about being honest, open-minded, and constructive so you can improve and develop them further.

B

Why and when critical reflection on ideas is helpful

Critical reflection is helpful in many situations because it leads to stronger, more creative ideas. It allows individuals to:

- *Make ideas better:* By thinking about what works and what does not, ideas can be refined and improved.
- *Avoid mistakes:* Reflection helps to spot problems early so that they can be fixed before moving forward.
- *Think in new ways:* Questioning an idea can lead to fresh and creative solutions.
- *Build confidence:* Understanding an idea's strengths can make it easier to explain and develop.
- *Decide if an idea is worth using:* Not every idea will be useful, and reflection helps to decide whether to keep working on it or try something new.

It is helpful to reflect:

- *Before developing an idea further:* To check if it is strong enough.
- *During the creative process:* To make improvements along the way.
- *After testing an idea:* To learn what worked well and what could be better next time.

Without reflection, it is easy to overlook weaknesses or miss opportunities for improvement.



C

How to use critical reflection to improve ideas

Critical questions help you challenge your own thinking and make your ideas stronger. Asking the right questions can uncover weaknesses, reveal improvements, and push creativity further.

If you have defined *success criteria* (Step 8) then you might ask yourself *closed questions* about whether those success criteria have been achieved.

More widely, *open questions* can be powerful for thinking broadly about your idea. Some useful questions to ask might include:

- *What problem does this idea solve?* Revisiting your idea's purpose helps you focus on making it more effective.
- *Who would benefit from this idea, and how?* Thinking about the people involved and the user experience helps ensure the idea is useful and meaningful.
- *What could go wrong?* Identifying potential challenges early can help you find solutions before problems arise.
- *What other ways could I approach this?* Exploring different angles can lead to more creative and unexpected improvements.
- *What have I assumed here?* Thinking about your underlying assumptions (Step 9) can uncover new alternatives and support flexible thinking.

Once you have asked yourself critical questions, the next step is to act on the insights they provide. This might mean adjusting, simplifying, expanding, or rethinking your idea.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by critical reflection on ideas?
- Why and when is critical reflection useful?
- How can you use critical reflection on your own ideas?
- When have you used critical reflection to improve your ideas?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to ask themselves appropriate challenging questions and use insights they generate to improve their ideas?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, and observations from others.

Seeking perspectives

I seek different perspectives to develop my ideas



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by different perspectives
- B) I know why it is important to seek different perspectives
- C) I know how to use different perspectives to develop ideas



Core ideas

A

What is meant by different perspectives

A *perspective* is the way someone sees and understands something based on their experiences, knowledge, and values. People often have different perspectives on the same idea because they have different backgrounds, priorities, and ways of thinking.

For example, imagine an idea for a public art installation in a park.

- An artist might see it as a way to inspire creativity.
- A local resident might worry about how it will be maintained over time.
- A parent might wonder if it will be safe for children to interact with.
- A nature enthusiast might be concerned about its impact on wildlife.

Each perspective highlights different considerations, helping to build a more complete understanding of the idea and its potential impact.

B

Why it is important to seek different perspectives

Seeking out different perspectives when developing ideas is important because it leads to more creative and inclusive solutions. When people from different backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints contribute, ideas become stronger and more relevant to a wider range of people.

Diversity ensures that all voices are heard, helping to avoid bias and uncover challenges that might be overlooked. Without diverse perspectives, ideas may unintentionally exclude or disadvantage certain groups.

By actively seeking different viewpoints, individuals can develop more innovative, thoughtful, and effective ideas that benefit a broader audience.



C

How to use different perspectives to develop ideas

There are a variety of ways to encourage different perspectives:

- *Ask open-ended questions:* Instead of asking if people like an idea, ask, “What do you think could be improved?” or “How would this affect you?”
- *Talk to people with different experiences:* A wider variety of voices leads to a richer discussion and makes ideas more inclusive.
- *Be open to feedback:* Make it as clear as possible that all viewpoints are welcome, even if they challenge your idea. This is important, otherwise others might just tell you what they think you want to hear.
- *Use different ways to gather input:* Some people may prefer sharing their thoughts in a discussion, while others might prefer writing them down or showing ideas visually. Think about how you can make others feel as comfortable as possible so that they feel confident in sharing their perspectives.

Once you have gathered different perspectives, the next step is to use them to make your idea stronger.

1. *Identify common themes:* Are multiple people raising the same concerns or suggestions? These could be important areas to improve.
2. *Look for new possibilities:* A fresh perspective might suggest a feature or approach you hadn’t considered.
3. *Balance different needs:* Not every perspective will lead to a change, but considering different viewpoints can help find the best overall solution. You might learn that one feature that works for one audience might alienate another - think about how to manage these tensions carefully.
4. *Test and refine:* If different perspectives suggest conflicting ideas, try small experiments to see what works best.

By actively seeking out different perspectives you will be able to widen your thinking and improve your ideas.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by different perspectives?
- Why is it important to seek out different perspectives when developing ideas?
- How can you use different perspectives to improve ideas?
- When have you sought out different perspectives to improve ideas and what happened as a result?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify relevant different perspectives and then seek those perspectives in a positive and helpful way?
- Is the learner able to learn from other perspectives and apply these insights to improve their ideas?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections, written work or other evidence of having sought out different perspectives in a thoughtful and effective way and then using those to refine ideas, as well as observations from others.

Prototyping

I create quick tests of an idea



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by prototyping
- B) I know why and when prototyping is useful
- C) I know how to use prototyping to test creative ideas



Core ideas

A

What is meant by prototyping

Prototyping is the process of creating a basic version of an idea to test how it works before making a final version. It helps turn creative ideas into something practical by allowing you to explore possibilities, experiment with different approaches, and learn from mistakes in a low-risk way.

Prototyping might be applied to the design of a *product*. For example, if someone is designing a new type of chair, they might start with a small cardboard model rather than making a full-size chair straight away.

However, prototyping can also be used for the design of a *service or experience*. For example, running a pop-up food stall before investing in opening a restaurant.

B

Why and when prototyping is useful

Prototyping is useful because:

- *It helps to test ideas quickly:* Instead of spending a lot of time developing an idea that might not work, a simple prototype can reveal strengths and weaknesses early on.
- *It encourages experimentation:* By trying out different versions, you can explore a wider range of creative possibilities.
- *It reduces risk:* Making small adjustments to a prototype is much easier than fixing a completed project.
- *It invites feedback:* A prototype allows others to give input, helping to refine the idea before committing to a final version.

Prototyping isn't just about testing one idea—it can also be used to explore different creative directions. By making multiple versions of an idea (whether a product, service or other approach), you can compare approaches and find the best solution.



C

How to use prototyping to test creative ideas

There are lots of ways that you can apply prototyping:

- *Try different materials:* If designing a new product, experimenting with different materials can lead to new possibilities.
- *Try different methods:* If creating a service you can try different methods of delivering that service.
- *Create quick sketches or models:* Simple drawings or rough physical models can bring ideas to life and make them easier to compare.
- *Test different versions side by side:* By comparing multiple prototypes, you can see which aspects work best.
- *Explore extreme variations:* Trying out exaggerated versions of an idea can sometimes lead to unexpected and useful discoveries.

The purpose of prototyping is not just to test an idea but to learn from the process and make improvements. To draw useful insights from prototyping:

1. *Observe how the prototype performs:* Does it work as expected? What works well about it? What are the weaknesses or where is there scope for improvement?
2. *Ask for feedback:* Showing a prototype to others can reveal issues or ideas you may not have considered.
3. *Reflect on what works and what does not:* Identify the strongest features of different prototypes and combine them into a better version.
4. *Keep refining the idea:* Use what you learn from each prototype to make improvements and develop a stronger final version.

By using prototyping to test ideas, explore different possibilities, and refine creative concepts, it becomes easier to develop innovative and effective solutions.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is prototyping, with examples?
- Why and when is prototyping useful?
- How can you use prototyping to improve your ideas?
- When have you used prototyping to test your ideas and what was the result?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to create appropriate prototypes of an idea, and draw out learning to improve their idea further?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of their prototype and how it improved their idea, and observations from others.

Incubating ideas

I give ideas time and attention to evolve



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to incubate an idea
- B) I know why and when to incubate an idea
- C) I know how to incubate an idea effectively



Core ideas

A

What it means to incubate an idea

Incubation is the process of stepping away from an idea for a while to let it develop in the background of your mind. Instead of actively thinking about a problem or solution, you allow your subconscious to process it. This can lead to fresh insights and creative breakthroughs.

Incubation is important because:

- It prevents *mental blocks* by giving your brain time to rest.
- It allows *new connections* to form between different thoughts and experiences.
- It can lead to *unexpected inspiration* when revisiting the idea later.
- It reduces *frustration* by shifting focus away from something that feels stuck.

For example, if you are struggling to design a new way to organise information, stepping away and engaging in a different activity—such as going for a walk or reading about unrelated topics—can help fresh ideas surface when you return to the problem.

You can use incubation on a small scale for an individual idea, but it can also be used to give space for much bigger ideas which might only emerge over time and repeated revisiting.

B

Why and when to incubate an idea

Taking time to incubate an idea can lead to better creativity because:

- It *prevents rushed decisions* by allowing time for deeper thinking.
- It *reduces stress* when struggling with a complex idea.
- It encourages *fresh perspectives*, helping to see things in a new way.
- It improves ideas by allowing the mind to *sort useful and less useful details*.

Incubation is most helpful when:

- You feel stuck and cannot find a good solution.
- An idea feels *unfinished or unclear*.
- You have *several possible* ideas and need to decide which works best.
- You are working on something *complex* that requires creative thinking.



C

How to incubate an idea effectively

To make the most of incubation, it helps to have a structured approach:

- *Step away intentionally:* Once you have worked on an idea for a while, set it aside instead of forcing a solution.
- *Engage in different activities:* Doing something unrelated, like a hobby or a physical task, can free up your mind to process ideas in the background.
- *Expose yourself to different influences:* Reading, observing, or talking to others about unrelated topics can lead to unexpected connections.
- *Keep a way to capture ideas:* Since insights can appear at random moments, carrying a notebook or using a notes app can help record new thoughts quickly.
- *Return with fresh eyes:* When you revisit your idea, reflect on how your thoughts have changed and see if new directions emerge.

While incubation is useful, there comes a point when you need to decide whether to continue developing the idea or move on. Signs that it is time to stop include:

- *A clear solution emerges:* If the time away has led to a strong direction, it's time to refine and test the idea.
- *No new insights appear:* If after multiple incubation periods the idea remains unclear or uninspiring, it may not be worth pursuing further.
- *The idea no longer feels relevant:* If priorities have changed or better alternatives have emerged, it might be best to let go.
- *Feedback suggests a different path:* If discussing the idea with others reveals serious limitations, refining or abandoning it may be the best option.

By balancing incubation with action, you can ensure that creative ideas are given the right amount of time to develop without getting stuck in endless waiting.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to incubate an idea and why can that be helpful?
- Why and when should you incubate an idea?
- How can you incubate an idea and when should you decide to stop?
- Have you incubated an idea and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to incubate an idea effectively and also decide when an idea should no longer be incubated?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, a write-up of where they have incubated and evolved an idea, and observations from others.

Using curiosity

I seek new concepts and ideas to innovate from



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to use curiosity
- B) I know why continued curiosity is important
- C) I know how to seek concepts and ideas to innovate from



Core ideas

A

What it means to use curiosity

Curiosity is the desire to explore, ask questions, and seek new knowledge or experiences. It drives people to wonder “what if” and “why,” which are essential for creativity. Instead of accepting things as they are, curiosity encourages deeper thinking, leading to fresh ideas and new solutions.

- It means being *open-minded* and looking at things from different angles.
- It involves asking “*why*,” “*what if*,” and “*how*” to understand ideas deeply.
- It requires *exploring beyond familiar areas*, seeking inspiration from different fields, cultures, and experiences.
- It encourages people to *experiment and take risks*, even when ideas are uncertain.

For example, if someone wants to improve how people communicate, curiosity might lead them to explore new technology, different cultural approaches, or historical methods of communication.

B

Why continued curiosity is important

Curiosity is important for creativity because:

- It *opens the mind to new possibilities*, helping to generate original ideas.
- It *encourages problem-solving*, as asking questions can reveal new ways of thinking.
- It *helps overcome fear of failure*, making it easier to experiment and take creative risks.
- It *connects different ideas*, using insights in one area to inspire solutions in another.

For example, someone curious about nature might notice how plants grow in patterns, leading them to apply similar structures when designing something new.

As we build up experience, it is easy to fall into the trap of becoming less curious because we assume we know how to do things. That is when we have to be *deliberate* about seeking out new concepts and ideas.



C

How to seek concepts and ideas to innovate from

Curiosity can be developed and strengthened through intentional habits. Some ways to cultivate and use curiosity include:

- *Ask “why” and “what if” questions:* Challenge assumptions and explore different perspectives.
- *Seek out new experiences:* Exposure to different ideas, cultures, and ways of thinking can inspire creativity.
- *Read widely and explore different fields:* Inspiration often comes from unexpected sources.
- *Observe the world closely:* Pay attention to patterns, details, and unusual connections.
- *Experiment with ideas:* Try new approaches, even if they seem uncertain at first.
- *Stay open to learning:* Being willing to change opinions and accept new information fuels creativity.
- *Go out of your comfort zone:* Do things that stretch beyond your existing experience and which might seem uncomfortable.

For example, if you're trying to come up with a new way to organise information, looking at how nature, architecture, or digital interfaces are structured could lead to creative insights.

By embracing curiosity, asking the right questions, and applying discoveries in meaningful ways, creativity can flourish and lead to exciting new innovations.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is curiosity and how is it linked to creativity?
- Why is continued curiosity important?
- How can you use curiosity and new concepts and ideas to support creativity?
- When have you shown curiosity and then be able to put the results of that curiosity to use creatively?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate their curiosity along the dimensions outlined?
- Is the learner able to demonstrate that they have drawn on ideas and concepts found through curiosity and applied those to innovation?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of what learners have discovered through their curiosity, and observations from others.

Facilitating creativity

I share creative tools for collective innovation



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by collective innovation
- B) I know why and when collective innovation can be helpful
- C) I know how to facilitate collective innovation



Core ideas

A

What is meant by collective innovation

Collective innovation is when a group of people work together to generate and develop new ideas. Instead of relying on just one person's creativity, collective innovation brings together different skills, experiences, and perspectives to create better solutions.

- It involves *collaborating*, meaning people contribute different perspectives.
- It allows for *combining and improving ideas* through discussion and feedback.
- It helps create ideas to solve *complex problems* by using the strengths of many people.
- It can involve *generating ideas, sharing insights, and testing ideas together*.

For example, a group might work together to create a new way to make a process faster, combining ideas from different people to find the best solution.

B

Why and when collective innovation can be helpful

Collective innovation is useful when:

- *Problems are complex*: Different viewpoints help in finding well-rounded solutions.
- *A variety of skills are needed*: Groups bring together expertise from different areas.
- *Fresh perspectives are valuable*: People with different backgrounds can see possibilities that others might miss because of their diverse experiences and knowledge.
- *Ideas need to be tested and improved*: Feedback from a group can help refine creative concepts.

For example, if a group wants to design a new way to share information visually, they can combine insights from design, psychology, and technology to create something more effective.

Of course, collective innovation often takes more time and uses more resources than individual creativity so it will not always be the best approach.



C

How to facilitate collective innovation

Generating ideas as a group can be exciting, but it also needs structure to be effective. Different tools and techniques can help encourage creativity, such as:

- *Agreeing the parameters:* It is important to agree the parameters including the purpose, goals and success criteria.
- *Target number of ideas:* Group members share ideas freely, without judgement, to encourage a wide range of possibilities.
- *Mind mapping:* Visualising ideas and their connections on paper or a digital tool helps explore different directions.
- *Role playing:* Acting out different scenarios can uncover new perspectives.
- *SCAMPER technique:* Asking questions like “What if we Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to another use, Eliminate, or Reverse something?” helps generate fresh ideas.
- *Random word or image association:* Using unrelated words or pictures to spark creative connections.

Once a group has created a set of ideas, the next step is to refine them into workable solutions. This can be done through:

- *Filtering and selecting the strongest ideas:* Referring back to goals and success criteria to choose which ideas to develop further.
- *Testing and gathering feedback:* Creating simple versions of an idea (prototypes) to see how they work in practice.
- *Encouraging constructive feedback:* Group members should be open to suggestions and improvements.
- *Iterating and improving:* Based on feedback, adjusting and refining the idea until it is the best it can be.

By working together, using the right tools, and refining ideas through testing and feedback, groups can achieve greater creativity and develop more effective solutions.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by collective innovation?
- Why and when is collective innovation useful, and when is it less so?
- What tools and approaches can support idea creation and refinement in a group?
- When have you used collective innovation approaches and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to facilitate group innovation on an appropriate task? Can they demonstrate a range of tools to support idea generation and then refinement?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of a group innovation process, and observations from others.

Championing creativity

I nurture cultures of creativity and innovation



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to champion creativity
- B) I know why nurturing a culture of creativity is helpful
- C) I know how to nurture cultures of creativity and innovation in groups



Core ideas

A

What it means to champion creativity

Championing creativity is about encouraging individuals to be more creative by giving them space, inspiration, and confidence to explore new ideas. After all, creativity is not just an inborn talent - it can be developed with the right support.

Ways to champion creativity in others include:

- *Encouraging curiosity:* Asking questions, exploring different viewpoints, and learning new things help spark fresh ideas.
- *Providing time for reflection:* Creativity often happens when the mind is free to wander, so encouraging taking breaks and stepping away from tasks can be useful.
- *Reducing fear of failure:* Helping individuals see mistakes as part of learning allows them to take more creative risks. You can support this by sharing your experiences of this and modelling taking risks that might work or not.
- *Offering inspiration:* Exposure to new experiences, such as books, art, nature, or discussions with others, can generate fresh ideas.
- *Creating a space for creative work:* Having an area free from distractions, with materials for sketching, writing, or brainstorming, can encourage creative thinking.

For example, if individuals are struggling to come up with ideas for a new approach to a challenge, encouraging them to step away, look at the problem from a different angle, or gather inspiration from unrelated areas might help spark creativity.

B

Why nurturing a culture of creativity is helpful

Nurturing a culture of creativity is helpful as it:

- Encourages new ideas and problem solving: Creativity helps individuals and groups develop fresh solutions and adapt to change.
- Promotes different ways of thinking: A creative culture inspires people to experiment, take risks, and explore new possibilities.
- Supports collaboration: Sharing ideas and working together leads to stronger, more refined innovations.
- Turns mistakes into learning opportunities: Encouraging creativity allows people to learn from failures and improve ideas over time.
- Makes innovation a continuous process: Creativity ensures that progress keeps happening, rather than being a one-time effort.
- Boosts motivation and confidence: People feel more engaged and empowered to contribute new ideas when creativity is valued.



C

How to create cultures of creativity and innovation in groups

For creativity to thrive in a team over the long term, the environment must encourage innovation. Ways to build a creative culture that values ideas include:

- *Encouraging experimentation:* Giving people the freedom to test out ideas without fear of criticism.
- *Recognising creative contributions:* Acknowledging and rewarding creativity makes people more likely to keep generating ideas.
- *Allowing time for creativity:* Having dedicated time for creative thinking rather than always focusing on immediate tasks. Alternatively, this might mean ensuring a period for discovery and prototyping in projects, rather than rushing to implementation.
- *Encouraging collaboration:* Making it easy for people to share ideas and work together.
- *Providing access to resources:* Offering tools, materials, and learning opportunities to support creative development.

By supporting individuals, fostering creativity in groups, and building a culture of innovation, it is possible to create an environment where creativity can flourish.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to champion creativity and innovation?
- Why is it helpful to nurture a culture of creativity and innovation?
- How can you build a culture of creativity in a group?
- When have you been able to champion a culture of creativity and innovation - what did you do, and what were the results?

Observation cues for educators can include:

Is the learner able to support individuals and groups to be more creative?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

ADAPTING





Overview: Adapting

Overcoming challenges and setbacks to achieve goals

This skill is about how individuals adapt to challenges and setbacks effectively whether in education, the workplace or in their wider lives.

Getting started

(potential target for ages 5-9)

Initially, individuals identify their own emotional responses and those of others, showing persistence and managing their immediate reactions to setbacks.

Intermediate

(potential target for ages 9-13)

Next, individuals demonstrate a positive approach to challenges, reflecting and learning from them, supporting and encouraging others, and proactively managing their own wellbeing.

Advanced

(potential target for ages 13-17)

Then, individuals build their resilience by balancing their workload, proactively improving their performance, and practising and supporting others to spot opportunities in challenges.

Mastery

(potential target for ages 17+)

Finally, individuals apply their adaptability by adapting plans, identifying and managing risks, and seizing the opportunities in challenges and setbacks.

Inclusive practice: The order of skill steps is based on data and the best training approach but individuals may not always secure those steps in sequence.



Universal Framework 2.0: Adapting

Overcoming challenges and setbacks to achieve goals

Getting started	Step 1	Identifying emotions I can tell how I am feeling
	Step 2	Recognising emotions I can tell how others are feeling
	Step 3	Persisting I keep going when faced with challenges
Intermediate	Step 4	Managing reactions I respond calmly when faced with challenges
	Step 5	Reflective learning I reflect and learn from challenges
	Step 6	Supporting others I help others face challenges
	Step 7	Encouraging others I encourage others to keep going
	Step 8	Managing wellbeing I have routines to manage my wellbeing
Advanced	Step 9	Balancing workload I manage my workload effectively
	Step 10	Improving performance I seek opportunities to grow my experience and expertise
	Step 11	Practising resilience I look for opportunities when faced with challenges
	Step 12	Supporting resilience I help others see opportunities when faced with challenges
Mastery	Step 13	Adapting plans I change plans to work through setbacks
	Step 14	Identifying risks I identify potential risks and gains
	Step 15	Managing risk I actively manage risks
	Step 16	Being enterprising I capitalise on opportunities

Identifying emotions

I can tell how I am feeling



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by emotions
- B) I know why identifying emotions is helpful
- C) I know how to identify and name emotions



Core ideas

A

What is meant by emotions

Emotions are the feelings we experience in response to different situations, thoughts, or events. They can be positive, like happiness and excitement, or negative, like sadness and frustration. Emotions influence how we think, behave, and interact with others.

Some key aspects of emotions include:

- *Physical sensations:* A racing heartbeat when nervous, a warm feeling when happy.
- *Thoughts and reactions:* Feeling frustrated when something doesn't go as planned or feeling proud after achieving something.
- *Short-term and long-term effects:* Some emotions last only moments, while others, like grief or contentment, can last much longer.

For example, if you receive a compliment, you may feel happy, leading to increased confidence and motivation. On the other hand, if something unexpected happens, you might feel uncertain or anxious.

B

Why identifying emotions is helpful

Being able to identify your emotions can be helpful for lots of reasons, including that it:

- *Helps you understand yourself:* Knowing what you feel makes it easier to understand why you feel that way.
- *Makes it easier to talk to others:* When you can name your emotions, you can explain them better to people and get help if you need to.
- *Helps you manage your feelings:* Recognising emotions allows you to calm down, find solutions, or ask for help.
- *Stops emotions from becoming overwhelming:* Naming feelings can make them feel easier to handle.
- *Helps with decision-making:* Understanding emotions can guide you to make better choices.



C

How to identify and name emotions

Lots of different things cause our emotions, and here are some examples of emotions that we might feel (of course, there are many more):

Positive emotions	Negative emotions
<i>Happy:</i> Joy; Grateful; Optimistic	<i>Sad:</i> Disappointed; Tired; Fed up
<i>Excited:</i> Amused; Energetic; Inspired	<i>Angry:</i> Irritated; Angry; Upset
<i>Calm:</i> Kind; Loving; Relaxed	<i>Scared:</i> Nervous; Anxious; Frightened

Recognising emotions takes practice. By paying attention to physical sensations, thoughts, and behaviours, you can learn to identify what you are feeling.

Ways to recognise and name emotions include:

- *Noticing physical signs:* A tense body might indicate stress, while feeling light and energetic could mean excitement.
- *Identifying thoughts:* If you keep thinking about a mistake, you might be feeling regret. If you are focusing on possibilities, you may feel hopeful.
- *Observing behaviours:* Avoiding a situation could indicate fear, while smiling and speaking enthusiastically might mean happiness.
- *Using emotion words:* Expanding your emotional vocabulary beyond just 'happy' or 'sad' helps with better understanding yourself (for example, 'frustrated,' 'grateful,' 'overwhelmed').

Understanding emotions is a key step in managing them, making thoughtful decisions, and improving overall wellbeing.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are emotions and can you give some examples?
- Why is it helpful to be able to identify your own emotions?
- How can you identify and name your own emotions?
- When have you felt different emotions and how did you know?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to show they are able to name their own emotions at different times and in different settings?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, emotion journals, and observations from others.

Recognising emotions

I can tell how others are feeling



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to tell how others are feeling
- B) I know why it is helpful to tell how others are feeling
- C) I know how to tell how others are feeling



Core ideas

A

What it means to tell how others are feeling

Being able to tell how others are feeling means being able to identify the emotions that another person might be feeling.

It might mean noticing clues like facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and the words they use. It also involves understanding the situation they are in and imagining how you would feel in their place.

For example, if someone speaks quietly and looks down, they might be feeling sad or nervous. If they smile and talk excitedly, they are likely happy.

Being aware of these signs helps you respond in a kind and thoughtful way. This skill is important for building good relationships and supporting others when they need help or encouragement.

B

Why it is helpful to tell how others are feeling

Recognising how others feel helps to build strong relationships, improve communication, and respond in thoughtful ways. When you understand someone's emotions, you can support them, avoid misunderstandings, and create a more positive environment.

Benefits of knowing how others are feeling include:

- *Communicating better:* Understanding emotions helps you choose the right words and tone.
- *Stronger relationships:* When people feel understood, they are more likely to trust and connect with you.
- *Preventing arguments:* Recognising frustration or discomfort early can help resolve issues before they escalate.
- *Helping others:* If someone is struggling, noticing their emotions allows you to offer help or encouragement.

For example, if someone seems disappointed after an event, showing you understand their feelings and asking if they want to talk about it can help them feel heard.



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How to tell how others are feeling

People express emotions in different ways. Ways to spot emotions include:

- *Facial expressions:* Smiles, frowns, raised eyebrows, or tight lips can reveal emotions like happiness, confusion, or frustration.
- *Body language:* Crossed arms might indicate discomfort, while leaning forward could suggest interest.
- *Tone of voice:* A flat or quiet voice may suggest sadness, while a loud or sharp tone might signal anger.
- *Changes in behaviour:* If someone who normally talks a lot becomes quiet, they may be feeling upset or distracted.

Remember, that some people find it easier than others to spot emotions and you need to find approaches that work for you. Also, signs which mean something in one culture might mean something quite different in another culture so be careful about this.

Ways to check on others' emotions include:

- *Asking open questions:* Instead of asking "Are you upset?" try "You seem a bit quiet today - would you like to talk about anything?"
- *Observing their response:* If they respond openly, they may feel comfortable discussing their emotions. If they seem hesitant, they may not be ready to share.
- *Reflecting their feelings back:* Saying, "It sounds like you're feeling frustrated about that situation" can allow them to agree or correct your understanding.

Recognising and checking emotions takes practice, but it helps to build understanding and improve interactions with others.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to tell how someone is feeling?
- Why is it helpful to understand how someone is feeling?
- How can you spot signs of how someone is feeling?
- When have you spotted how others are feeling and how did you know?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to recognise the emotions of others?
- Is the learner able to use tactful questioning to understand how others are feeling?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections or observations from others.

Persisting

I keep going when faced with challenges



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to persist
- B) I know why and when it is important to persist
- C) I know how to keep going when faced with challenges



Core ideas

A

What it means to persist

Persisting means continuing to try even when something is difficult or takes a long time. It means not giving up when faced with challenges or setbacks.

Challenges and *setbacks* are difficulties or problems that make it harder to reach a goal or complete a task.

Challenges and setbacks can trigger a range of emotions, which may depend on the situation and your past experiences. Some common feelings include:

- *Frustration*: If things do not go as expected, you might feel annoyed or impatient.
- *Disappointment*: You may feel let down if you do not achieve what you had hoped for.
- *Self-doubt*: A setback might make you question your abilities or decisions.
- *Anxiety*: Facing a challenge can feel overwhelming or uncertain.
- *Loss of motivation*: A setback might make you feel like giving up.

For example, if you try a new approach to completing a task and it does not work, you might feel frustrated and question whether you should continue. These feelings are natural, but how you respond to them can make a big difference.

B

Why and when it is important to persist

Persisting helps build skills and confidence. It is an important part of success in many areas of life, as it allows people to overcome obstacles and achieve things they might not have thought possible at first.

Negative emotions can feel strong in the moment, but managing them effectively can help you stay focused and think clearly. Strategies to handle these feelings include:

- *Taking deep breaths*: A few slow, deep breaths can help to calm your mind and body.
- *Pausing before reacting*: Taking a moment to step back from the situation can stop emotions from taking control.
- *Rethink the situation*: Instead of thinking, "I failed," try, "This is a chance to learn and improve."
- *Focusing on what you can control*: Some things may be out of your hands, but you can decide how to respond.
- *Talking to someone*: Expressing your feelings to a trusted person can help you process them.

For example, if you receive feedback that your idea needs improvement, instead of feeling discouraged, you could remind yourself that feedback is a chance to grow.



C

How to keep going when faced with challenges

There are a few things which might help you to keep going:

- *Recognise your emotions and why you feel like that:* It can be valuable to see your feelings and explore them. Naming your feelings can be very helpful in understanding and eventually managing them.
- *Focus on what has been going well:* While there might be a setback, there are probably also lots of things that have been going well. It's important not to lose sight of the positive things that might also have been happening.
- *Put the setback in perspective:* For smaller setbacks, there are probably alternative ways to achieve something. A late train probably just means being a bit late to something, a lost letter can be re-sent. Even more significant setbacks will not be as overwhelming as they might first appear, even if they are rightly things that will cause great sadness.
- *Think about taking positive action:* When you feel ready to, think about what you could do next, which would be a positive way forward.

These ideas are all explored further in the following steps. The focus, for now, is on not immediately giving up on what you are doing. Instead, it is about recognising those emotions and that the emotional desire to stop is not necessarily the right call.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to persist when facing challenges or setbacks?
- Why and when is it important to persist even if you feel like giving up?
- How can you help yourself to keep going when faced with a challenge or setback?
- When have you persisted to overcome setbacks or challenges?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to show that they can manage their responses to setbacks or challenges?
- Is the learner able to show that they can persist in the face of setbacks or challenges?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Managing reactions

I respond calmly when faced with challenges



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to manage reactions
- B)** I know why staying calm is helpful when faced with challenges
- C)** I know how to stay calm when faced with challenges



Core ideas

A

What it means to manage reactions

When an unexpected challenge happens, it is natural to feel *stressed* or *frustrated*. This is because challenges and setbacks can:

- *Trigger strong emotions:* You might feel disappointment, anger, or anxiety, which can stop you thinking clearly.
- *Create uncertainty:* Not knowing what will happen next can make it difficult to feel in control.
- *Make things feel overwhelming:* If a problem is unexpected, you may not have a ready solution, making it seem larger than it really is.
- *Activate a 'fight or flight' response:* Your body might react as if the challenge is a threat, making you feel tense or panicked.
- *Lower confidence:* If something does not go as planned, you might start to doubt your abilities.

Managing reactions is about avoiding being overwhelmed by your emotional response so that you can still think through the problem and respond helpfully.

B

Why staying calm is helpful when faced with challenges

Staying *calm* allows you to think clearly and respond in a constructive way. It means not letting fear, anger, or frustration take over, so you can think clearly and respond in a balanced way. It helps because:

- *You can make better decisions:* If you panic, you may rush into a choice that does not help solve the problem.
- *You stay in control:* Keeping a level head stops emotions from taking over and allows you to focus on solutions.
- *You can communicate more effectively:* Staying calm helps when working with others to solve the issue.
- *You can manage stress better:* If you let stress build up, it can affect your wellbeing and make the situation feel worse than it really is.
- *It helps with learning and growth:* Every challenge is an opportunity to build resilience and problem-solving skills.



C

How to stay calm when faced with challenges

There are several techniques you can use to stay calm when something unexpected happens:

- *Pause and take deep breaths:* Slow, deep breathing helps reduce stress and clear your mind. You might choose to count to ten or focus on deep, long breaths.
- *Step back and assess the situation:* Ask yourself, *What exactly is the problem?* and *What are my options?* This might include giving yourself space away from other people.
- *Challenge negative thoughts:* Instead of thinking, *I can't handle this*, try telling yourself, *I can work through this one step at a time.*
- *Use positive self-talk:* Remind yourself that setbacks are normal and can often lead to learning and growth.
- *Seek perspective:* Ask yourself, *Will this matter in a week or a year?* This can help reduce immediate stress.
- *Talk to someone you trust:* Discussing the challenge with a friend, colleague, or mentor can help you see solutions more clearly.
- *Focus on what you can control:* Even if you cannot change the situation, you can choose how to respond.

By practising these strategies, you can stay calmer when facing challenges and setbacks, allowing you to handle them in the best way possible.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to manage your reactions to challenges?
- Why is it important to try to remain calm?
- How can you help yourself to stay calm when facing challenges?
- When have you shown you can manage your emotional reactions to challenges?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to maintain their calm when facing challenges?
- Is the learner conscious of the strategies they are using to remain calm?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Reflective learning

I reflect and learn from challenges



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by reflective learning
- B) I know why it is important to reflect and learn from challenges
- C) I know how to reflect and learn from challenges



Core ideas

A

What is meant by reflective learning

Reflective learning means thinking carefully about experiences, especially challenges, to understand what went well and what could be improved. It involves looking back at actions, decisions, and outcomes to learn from them. This helps people recognise patterns, gain new insights, and develop better ways to approach similar situations in the future.

Reflective learning is not just about identifying mistakes - it also helps to build on strengths and successes. It encourages asking questions like: *What did I learn? What could I do differently next time?*

By making reflection a habit, people can turn experience into valuable learning and new skills which will be helpful in the future.

B

Why it is important to reflect and learn from challenges

Challenges and setbacks can feel frustrating, but they provide valuable learning opportunities. They help you grow and improve by:

- *Building resilience:* Overcoming difficulties makes you stronger and better prepared for future challenges.
- *Improving problem solving skills:* Each setback teaches you new ways to approach problems.
- *Encouraging adaptability:* Learning from past experiences helps you adjust to new situations more effectively.
- *Boosting confidence:* When you successfully learn from setbacks, you realise that you are capable of handling difficulties.
- *Providing new ideas:* Setbacks can help you see things differently and discover better ways of doing things.

By reflecting, if an idea does not work as planned, instead of seeing it as a failure, you can analyse what went wrong and adjust your approach for next time. As you can see, this will have benefits for building your full set of essential skills.



C

How to reflect and learn from challenges

Reflection helps you make sense of a setback and find ways to improve. You can do this by:

- *Taking time to pause:* Step back and look at the situation with a clear mind.
- *Asking yourself key questions, such as:*
 - *What happened?*
 - *What was within my control and what wasn't?*
 - *What could I have done differently?*
 - *What did I learn from this?*
- *Writing things down:* Keeping a journal or making notes can help organise your thoughts and spot patterns over time.
- *Considering different viewpoints:* Try to see the situation from another perspective to gain new insights.
- *Focusing on solutions rather than blame:* Instead of dwelling on mistakes, think about what actions could help in the future.

Once you have reflected, the next step is applying what you have learned to improve future experiences. You can do this by:

- *Keeping a record of lessons learned:* Writing down the lessons that you want to use in the future ensures you can revisit them when facing similar situations.
- *Practising what you have learned:* Use new ideas and approaches in real situations to see how they work.
- *Being open to adjusting your approach:* If something does not work, keep experimenting with different solutions.
- *Reminding yourself of past successes:* This helps reinforce confidence in your ability to grow and improve.

Over time, learning from each challenge helps you develop stronger essential skills and a more positive mindset when facing difficulties.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by reflective learning?
- Why is it important to reflect and learn from challenges and successes?
- How can you reflect on challenges and learn from them?
- When have you reflected and learnt from challenges and how did it help?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to reflect on a challenge they have faced along the lines of the questions provided, and also without questions being provided?
- Is the learner able to turn those reflections into actionable learning?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Supporting others

I help others face challenges



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to support others to face challenges
- B) I know why and when it is good to support others
- C) I know how to help others face challenges



Core ideas

A

What it means to support others to face challenges

Supporting others to face challenges means helping them when they are struggling with something difficult. It involves listening, offering encouragement, and helping them find ways to overcome problems.

- Support can be *emotional*, like reassuring someone when they feel uncertain.
- It can also be *practical*, such as offering advice, sharing knowledge, or helping someone develop new skills.
- *Encouragement* helps people feel stronger and more confident when dealing with difficulties.
- Good support does *not* always mean solving problems for others but helping them find their own way forward.

By supporting others, we help them build confidence, develop resilience, and improve their ability to adapt to challenges.

B

Why and when it is good to support others

There are many reasons why helping others face challenges is important:

- *Challenges can feel overwhelming*: Support can help people feel less alone and more capable.
- *New situations can be difficult*: When someone is facing something unfamiliar, guidance can help them adjust.
- *Building resilience*: Learning to handle challenges with support makes people stronger over time.
- *Encouraging adapting and problem solving*: Support helps people think about solutions and learn from experiences.
- *Creating a positive environment*: When people support each other, they create a culture of teamwork and trust.

Support is most needed when someone is struggling, uncertain, or feeling discouraged. Even small actions, like listening or offering kind words, can make a big difference.



C

How to help others face challenges

There are many ways to support someone who is facing difficulties. The best approach depends on the individual and their emotional state. Helpful approaches include:

- *Listening without judgment:* Let them express their feelings without offering immediate solutions.
- *Offering encouragement:* Remind them of their strengths and past successes.
- *Helping them gain perspective:* Encourage them to step back and see the bigger picture.
- *Providing practical support:* Offer help with tasks or suggest small steps they can take if that would be helpful. If you are unsure, simply asking “How can I support you?” can help.
- *Giving them space if needed:* Some people may need time alone before they are ready to talk.
- *Suggesting new ways to look at the challenge:* Help them see it as a learning opportunity rather than a failure.
- *Balancing encouragement with patience:* While it is good to help someone move forward, forcing solutions too soon may not be helpful.
- *Recognising when professional help might be needed:* If someone is struggling a lot, encouraging them to seek expert support could be beneficial.

For example, if someone is frustrated, listening and acknowledging their feelings may be more helpful than offering solutions straight away. If they are feeling stuck, asking gentle questions about what they could try next might encourage problem solving.

Choosing the right way to support someone means paying attention to their emotions and adjusting your approach based on their needs.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to support others to face challenges?
- Why and when is it important to support others?
- How can you support others facing challenges?
- When have you had to support others facing challenges?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify when others are facing challenges?
- Is the learner able to provide some appropriate support or encouragement to others who are facing challenges or setbacks?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Encouraging others

I encourage others to keep going



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to encourage others
- B)** I know why and when it is good to encourage others
- C)** I know how to encourage others to keep going



Core ideas

A

What it means to encourage others

Encouraging others means offering support, motivation, and reassurance to help them stay positive and continue working towards their goals. It can involve words, actions, or simply being there for someone when they need a boost. Encouragement can:

- *Help build confidence* by reminding someone of their strengths and progress.
- *Provide comfort* during difficult times by showing understanding and support.
- *Motivate someone to keep going*, even when they face setbacks.
- *Create a sense of connection and trust*, making challenges feel less overwhelming.

For example, if someone is feeling discouraged about learning a new skill, a simple “*You’re making great progress - keep going!*” can remind them that improvement takes time.

B

Why and when it is good to encourage others

We all need encouragement sometimes. Encouraging others to keep going can help them stay motivated and overcome setbacks, which boosts their confidence and resilience. It shows them that challenges can be faced and conquered with persistence, leading to personal growth and success.

Encouragement is valuable, but it is important to consider the situation before urging someone to continue. Encouraging others is appropriate when:

- *They are still passionate about their goal:* If they care about what they are working on, encouragement can help them push through difficulties.
- *They need a confidence boost:* Sometimes people doubt themselves, and a few kind words can help them believe in their abilities.
- *The challenge is part of the learning process:* Struggles can be normal, and encouragement can remind them that effort leads to growth.
- *They have options for improvement:* If there are ways to adjust their approach, encouragement can help them find new solutions.
- *They want to keep going but feel stuck:* Encouragement can remind them that setbacks do not mean failure.

However, it may not be helpful to encourage someone to continue if they are experiencing serious stress or if their goal is no longer realistic or meaningful to them or is otherwise dangerous or inappropriate. In these cases, it might be better to help them reflect on their options.



C

How to encourage others to keep going

There are many ways to encourage others, and different approaches work for different people. Some helpful ways to provide encouragement include:

- *Offering positive words:* Simple phrases like “*I believe in you*” or “*You’re making progress*” can be powerful.
- *Reminding them of their past successes:* Helping them see how far they have come can boost confidence.
- *Helping them break the challenge into smaller steps:* This can make things feel more manageable.
- *Listening to their concerns:* Sometimes, people just need someone to acknowledge their feelings before they feel ready to continue.
- *Suggesting new approaches:* If something is not working, brainstorming ideas together can give them fresh motivation.
- *Being patient and supportive:* Encouragement should not be forced; giving them space while letting them know you are there can be just as helpful.

For example, if a friend is struggling with a creative project, you might encourage them by pointing out the parts that are already working well and suggesting small changes rather than focusing on what is difficult. This kind of support can make a big difference in helping someone keep going.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by encouragement, and can you give some examples?
- Why and when is it appropriate to offer someone encouragement, and when is it not?
- How can you encourage someone to stick at something?
- When have you encouraged others to keep going when facing challenges?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to recognise when they should encourage someone, and are they able to do so effectively?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections and observations from others.

Managing wellbeing

I have routines to manage my wellbeing



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by wellbeing
- B) I know why it is helpful to have routines to manage wellbeing
- C) I know how to create routines to support wellbeing



Core ideas

A

What is meant by wellbeing

Personal wellbeing refers to a person's overall sense of health, happiness, and satisfaction with life. It includes physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, and it can be influenced by different factors, such as relationships, daily activities, and how people manage stress. Wellbeing does not mean feeling happy all the time, but rather having a sense of balance, resilience, and the ability to cope with challenges.

Some key aspects of personal wellbeing include:

- *Emotional wellbeing:* Feeling able to express and manage emotions in a healthy way.
- *Mental wellbeing:* Having a clear and positive mindset, feeling able to solve problems and make decisions.
- *Physical wellbeing:* Taking care of the body through rest, nutrition, and movement.
- *Social wellbeing:* Feeling connected to others and having supportive relationships.
- *Purpose and fulfilment:* Engaging in activities that bring meaning and satisfaction.

Many people think that wellbeing is about having a balance in all these different areas.

B

Why it is helpful to have routines to manage wellbeing

Different things support wellbeing for different people, but some common factors can help maintain balance and a positive mindset. These include:

- *Taking care of physical health:* Eating nutritious foods, staying hydrated, getting enough sleep, and engaging in movement or exercise.
- *Managing stress:* Finding healthy ways to cope with stress, such as deep breathing, meditation, or engaging in enjoyable activities.
- *Having supportive relationships:* Spending time with friends, family, or others who provide encouragement and understanding.
- *Engaging in hobbies and interests:* Doing things that bring joy, such as reading, music, drawing, or spending time in nature.
- *Setting realistic goals:* Having a sense of progress and achievement, even in small ways, can improve motivation and confidence.
- *Allowing time to rest and reflect:* Taking breaks and having quiet moments to relax can prevent feeling overwhelmed.
- *Practising gratitude:* Focusing on positive aspects of life can help create a more optimistic mindset.

Building routines around these make them a habit to sustain wellbeing over the long-term.



C

How to create routines to support wellbeing

Having routines can help build habits that support long-term wellbeing. A good routine should be simple, flexible, and fit around you and your life. Some ways to create helpful routines include:

- *Start with small, achievable steps:* For example, setting aside ten minutes a day for relaxation or going for a short walk.
- *Plan time for rest and enjoyment:* Making space in the day for hobbies or relaxation can reduce stress.
- *Set regular sleep patterns:* Going to bed and waking up at similar times each day can improve energy and focus.
- *Make time for connection:* Scheduling time to talk to friends or family can strengthen relationships and emotional wellbeing.
- *Use reminders and cues:* Placing notes, setting alarms, or linking habits together (such as stretching after brushing teeth) can help build consistency.
- *Reflect and adjust:* Checking in on routines regularly and making changes as needed can keep them effective and enjoyable.

For example, if someone wants to improve their wellbeing by practising gratitude, they might add a simple routine of writing down three things they appreciate at the end of each day. Over time, this can help build a more positive outlook and sense of wellbeing.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is wellbeing and what does it consist of?
- Why can routines support individual wellbeing?
- How can you create routines for wellbeing that work for you?
- When have you been able to create and follow routines to sustain wellbeing?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify approaches that support their wellbeing?
- Is the learner able to create and follow routines to support their wellbeing?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of creating and reflecting on routines to support wellbeing, and observations from others.

Balancing workload

I manage my workload effectively



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by balancing workload
- B) I know why it is important to balance workload
- C) I know how to balance workload effectively



Core ideas

A

What is meant by balancing workload

Balancing workload means managing tasks and responsibilities in a way that prevents stress and burnout while maintaining productivity. It involves organising time effectively, prioritising tasks, and ensuring that work is spread out over time rather than piling up all at once. A balanced workload allows individuals to complete their tasks feeling satisfied rather than overwhelmed or exhausted.

Key aspects of balancing workload include:

- *Prioritising tasks:* Identifying which tasks are most important and need attention first.
- *Managing time effectively:* Allocating enough time for different tasks while leaving space for breaks and rest.
- *Avoiding overload:* Not taking on too many tasks at once to prevent exhaustion.
- *Allowing for flexibility:* Making room for unexpected tasks or changes without disrupting the overall balance.

For example, if someone has multiple creative projects to complete, balancing workload might mean setting aside time for each project over a week rather than trying to finish everything in one day.

B

Why it is important to balance workload

Balancing workload is important because it helps maintain focus, energy, and overall wellbeing. When tasks are spread out and managed well, it becomes easier to stay motivated and complete work to a high standard.

Some key benefits of balancing workload include:

- *Reducing stress:* Taking on too much at once can lead to anxiety and exhaustion, while a balanced workload helps keep stress levels manageable.
- *Improving quality of work:* Rushing through tasks due to lack of time can lead to mistakes, whereas spreading tasks out allows for better attention to detail.
- *Boosting personal motivation:* Feeling in control of workload makes it easier to stay engaged and focused.
- *Maintaining wellbeing:* Having time for rest, hobbies, and relaxation alongside work prevents burnout and keeps energy levels high.
- *Enhancing flexibility:* A well-balanced workload makes it easier to adapt when unexpected tasks or challenges arise.

For example, if someone consistently works late to meet deadlines, they may start feeling exhausted and unmotivated. Balancing workload by planning tasks in advance and taking breaks can help them feel more refreshed and focused.



C

How to balance workload effectively

Balancing workload requires planning, self-awareness, and good time management. Some ways to achieve balance include:

- *Setting realistic goals:* Breaking larger tasks into smaller, manageable steps can make them feel less overwhelming.
- *Creating a schedule:* Organising tasks over days or weeks helps prevent last-minute pressure.
- *Recognising limits:* Understanding how much work can be done in a given time and not overcommitting. That might mean being transparent about your capacity and existing workload with individuals who might set you tasks.
- *Taking breaks:* Short pauses between tasks can improve focus and prevent burnout.
- *Reviewing workload regularly:* Checking progress and adjusting plans as needed helps maintain balance - this is when you oversee your work, not just do that work.
- *Asking for support when needed:* Seeking help or advice can make challenging tasks more manageable. Always ask early if you know you will need help or advice.

For instance, if someone realises they have too many commitments in one week, they might reschedule lower priority tasks to the following week to maintain a more balanced approach.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to balance your workload?
- Why is it important to balance your workload?
- How can you balance your workload effectively over time?
- When have you shown you can balance your workload effectively over time?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify the different parts of their own workload?
- Is the learner able to balance their workload effectively over time?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of workload analysis and planning, and observations from others.

Improving performance

I seek opportunities to grow my experience and expertise



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to improve performance
- B) I know why it is good to seek opportunities to grow experience
- C) I know how to secure opportunities to build experience and expertise



Core ideas

A

What it means to improve performance

Improving performance means getting better at something by building experience and expertise.

However, that is very broad. Choosing the right opportunities to improve your performance depends on what you want to learn and achieve. Here are some ways to identify them:

- *Consider your interests and goals:* Think about what excites you or what you want to improve. Enjoying something makes it easier to stay motivated. Lots of people who have achieved hugely started by exploring what they were enthusiastic about.
- *Use development frameworks:* Models like the Universal Framework or qualifications or technical standards can help you to understand where you currently are, and to identify areas for development.
- *Assess your strengths and weaknesses:* Identify areas where you already excel and areas that need improvement. Look for opportunities that challenge you.
- *Look at role models:* Consider the experiences of people you admire. What skills did they develop? What experience or expertise helped them?
- *Seek feedback:* Ask others where they think you could grow. They may see strengths or gaps you haven't noticed.
- *Think about boosting your own adaptability:* Even if you're unsure of your long-term plans, building a variety of skills can keep your options open.

B

Why it is good to seek opportunities to grow experience

Gaining experience and expertise is valuable for improving your performance by:

- *Skill development:* Practising skills regularly helps improve them. The more you do something, the better you become.
- *Confidence building:* Trying new things and overcoming challenges makes you feel more capable and prepared for the future.
- *Broadening possibilities:* Experience can introduce you to people, ideas, and paths you might not have considered before.
- *Increased adaptability:* Learning different skills and gaining experience in various situations helps you adjust to changes more easily.
- *Stronger decision-making:* When you have experience in different areas, you can make more informed choices about your future.
- *Personal enjoyment:* Developing expertise in an area of interest can be rewarding and give you a sense of purpose.



C

How to secure opportunities to build experience and expertise

Once you know what you're looking for, there are many ways to find opportunities to gain experience:

- *Join groups or communities:* Whether online or in person, communities related to your interests often have events, projects, or discussions that can help you learn.
- *Take part in challenges or competitions:* These provide hands-on experience and motivation to develop skills.
- *Volunteer:* Helping others is a great way to gain experience while making a positive impact. This is a good way to build skills and show your commitment.
- *Look for online resources:* Many platforms offer free or low-cost courses, mentorship, or project opportunities - including Skills Builder!
- *Start a personal project:* Working on something independently—such as writing, coding, designing, or creating—builds expertise and demonstrates initiative.
- *Talk to others:* Conversations can lead to unexpected opportunities. Ask people about their experiences and any opportunities they know about. More experienced people will often be glad to share their experiences and offer advice if asked.

By taking the initiative to build experience and expertise, you set yourself up for growth, success, and new possibilities.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to improve performance, and how can you choose a focus?
- Why is it valuable to build your own expertise and experience?
- How can you identify and secure the sort of experiences that will be valuable to you?
- When have you secured new experiences to improve your performance?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to recognise where they would like to improve their performance and what sort of new experiences or expertise would be valuable to them?
- Is the learner able to seek out and demonstrate a commitment to building those experiences or expertise?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of having sought out relevant new experiences and expertise, and observations from others.

Practising resilience

I look for opportunities when faced with challenges



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by resilience
- B) I know why challenges often lead to new opportunities
- C) I know how to use resilience to identify opportunities in challenges



Core ideas

A

What is meant by resilience

Resilience is the ability to cope with difficulties, adapt to change, and keep going even when things are tough. It helps people manage stress, overcome setbacks, and grow from challenges. Resilience matters because:

- *It helps with emotional well-being:* Facing difficulties is a part of life. Being resilient means you can handle stress and emotions more effectively.
- *It improves problem-solving skills:* When you learn to work through problems, you become better at finding solutions in the future.
- *It builds confidence:* Overcoming difficulties makes you believe in your ability to handle future challenges.
- *It encourages persistence:* Resilience helps you stay motivated and keep working towards your goals, even when progress is slow.
- *It strengthens relationships:* Being resilient allows you to communicate better and support others during difficult times.

B

Why challenges often lead to new opportunities

Although challenges can be difficult, they often bring unexpected benefits. Here's why:

- *They encourage learning and growth:* When faced with a problem, you may need to develop new skills or knowledge to solve it.
- *They push you out of your comfort zone:* Challenges can lead you to try new things, meet new people, or explore different approaches.
- *They help you discover strengths:* You may realise you are more capable than you thought when working through a tough situation.
- *They create new paths:* A difficulty in one area might open doors to new interests or experiences.
- *They build adaptability:* Learning to navigate challenges prepares you to handle future uncertainty more effectively.



C

How to use resilience to identify opportunities in challenges

Recognising opportunities within challenges takes a positive mindset and reflection. Here are ways to do it:

- *Look for lessons:* Ask yourself, “What can I learn from this?” Every challenge has something to teach you.
- *Identify new skills:* Consider whether the situation is helping you develop skills that could be useful in the future.
- *Seek advice from others:* Talking to people who have faced similar difficulties may help you see potential opportunities.
- *Stay open to change:* Sometimes challenges push you in a new direction that turns out to be better than your original plan.
- *Turn setbacks into action:* If something did not go as planned, think about how you can use the experience to improve or try a new approach.

Developing this ability to find opportunities within difficulties strengthens resilience. It shifts your focus from obstacles to possibilities, making it easier to recover from setbacks and keep moving forward.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by resilience and how can it be helpful?
- Why do challenges often lead to new opportunities?
- How can you use resilience to spot opportunities in challenges?
- When have you shown resilience in spotting opportunities in challenges?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify opportunities in challenges?
- Is the learner able to demonstrate resilience in how they respond to challenges or setbacks?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections and observations from others.

Supporting resilience

I help others see opportunities when faced with challenges



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to support others' resilience
- B) I know why and when to support others to see opportunities
- C) I know how to support others' resilience to see opportunities in challenges



Core ideas

A

What it means to support others' resilience

Understanding the challenges others face requires intentional effort, known as *deliberate empathy*. This means actively trying to see the world from another person's perspective. It is a vital starting point to support others' *resilience*. Here's how you can do it, including drawing on your *listening* skills:

- *Listen attentively*: Give the person your full attention without interrupting or making assumptions.
- *Ask open-ended questions*: Encourage others to share their thoughts by asking, "How are you feeling about this?" or "What has been the hardest part?"
- *Be observant*: Notice changes in behaviour, mood, or communication that may indicate someone is struggling.
- *Avoid judgment*: Recognise that everyone experiences difficulties differently and avoid making comparisons - particularly if you have experienced something that feels similar but which you reacted to differently.
- *Read and learn*: Explore stories, books, or articles about different experiences and challenges to develop a broader perspective.
- *Show patience*: Some people take time to open up about their struggles, so create a safe and trusting space. They may also want to revisit topics repeatedly so give them the space to do so.

B

Why and when to support others to see opportunities

When someone is struggling, gently guiding them to see new opportunities can be helpful, but timing and sensitivity are key. Here's how to do it effectively:

- *Acknowledge their feelings first*: Before discussing solutions, show you understand their emotions. For example, "I can see this has been really tough for you."
- *Offer encouragement, not pressure*: Suggest new perspectives in a way that feels supportive rather than demanding. They won't want you to add anything else to their list of things that they need to do.
- *Help them identify strengths*: Remind them of past successes or qualities that could help them move forward.
- *Introduce ideas when they seem ready*: If someone is overwhelmed, they may not be ready to discuss opportunities. Wait until they show signs of being open to solutions.
- *Use gentle questions*: Ask things like, "Have you thought about trying...?" rather than giving direct instructions.



- *Share relevant experiences:* If appropriate, talk about how challenges have led to growth in your own or others' lives.
- *Respect their choices:* Everyone moves at their own pace, and forcing change can be counterproductive. Ultimately, it has to feel like their decision to take action or they will not be motivated to do it.

C

How to support others' resilience to see opportunities in challenges

Helping others build resilience means providing encouragement, guidance, and a sense of support. Here are some effective ways to do this:

- *Model resilience yourself:* Show how you manage difficulties with a positive, adaptable mindset.
- *Help them focus on what they can control:* Encourage small, manageable steps rather than dwelling on what cannot be changed.
- *Encourage problem solving skills:* Guide them to think about solutions rather than just the challenges.
- *Celebrate progress:* Recognise even small achievements to build confidence.
- *Be a steady presence:* Let them know they have someone to turn to when things get tough.
- *Remind them that setbacks are normal:* Help reframe difficulties as part of learning and growth.

Supporting others in this way helps them build confidence and develop the skills they need to face challenges with resilience.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to support others' resilience?
- Why and when is it good to support others to see opportunities in challenges?
- How can you support others to build their resilience?
- When have you supported others to see opportunities in challenges?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate deliberate empathy with the challenges that another person might be facing? Can they appropriately open up a conversation about opportunities?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Adapting plans

I change plans to work through setbacks



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to adapt plans
- B)** I know why and when to adapt plans to work through setbacks
- C)** I know how to adapt plans to work through setbacks



Core ideas

A

What it means to adapt plans

Adapting plans in the face of setbacks means changing or adjusting your original ideas, goals, or methods when something goes wrong or when challenges arise. Setbacks can happen when things don't go as expected, and instead of giving up, you find new ways to continue working towards your goal.

Setbacks can be discouraging, but staying focused on the bigger objective helps maintain motivation and progress. Adapting plans requires that you:

- *Focus on the goal:* Keep the main objective clear in your mind and revisit it regularly. Accept that challenges are part of any plan and be willing to adjust while keeping your destination in mind.
- *Think about what changes and what stays the same:* It might be that only small elements of the plan actually need to change - for example, timings, method, who is involved, or some part of the output.
- *Draw out learning:* View setbacks as learning experiences rather than failures.

Maintaining the focus on the bigger objective can help put setbacks in perspective and frame them in the context of what you are trying to achieve.

B

Why and when to adapt plans to work through setbacks

Adapting plans may be essential if something is no longer possible. Adapting plans can help reduce frustration and keep motivation high. It also helps avoid unnecessary delays and can even lead to better results.

Understanding the impact of a setback helps in making informed decisions on when to adapt plans. Consider the following steps:

- *Assess the situation objectively:* Look at what has happened without letting emotions cloud judgment. To do this, try to step back from the situation - including some physical distance which can be helpful.
- *Identify the cause:* Determine whether the setback was due to external factors, miscalculations, or unexpected challenges.
- *Measure the impact:* Consider how the setback affects time, resources, and overall progress.
- *Recognise what remains unchanged:* Identify parts of the plan that are still viable to avoid unnecessary overhauls.
- *Consider alternative paths:* Think about different approaches that can help you move forward.
- *Reflect on lessons learned:* Each challenge provides insight that can improve future planning.



C

How to adapt plans to work through setbacks

Adapting plans ensures continued progress towards the main goal. Here's how to adjust effectively:

- *Re-evaluate priorities:* Determine what is essential and what can be modified without losing sight of the objective.
- *Adjust the timeline if needed:* Some setbacks may require more time to overcome, so be realistic in revising deadlines.
- *Find alternative methods:* If one approach isn't working, consider other ways to achieve the same outcome.
- *Use available resources wisely:* Reallocate time, effort, or materials to maintain progress.
- *Stay committed to the goal:* Keep reminding yourself why the objective is important and maintain motivation.
- *Monitor and review changes:* Regularly check if the adaptations are working and make further adjustments if necessary.

By keeping a clear focus on the objective, understanding setbacks, and adjusting plans thoughtfully, you can continue making progress even in difficult situations.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to adapt plans when faced with a setback?
- Why and when is it good to adapt plans?
- How can you adapt plans to work through a setback?
- When have you had to adapt plans to work through a setback and what happened?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to analyse the implications of a setback objectively, and then revise their plans to work through a setback while maintaining a focus on the objective?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of how they have changed a plan when facing a setback, and observations from others.

Identifying risks

I identify potential risks and gains



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by risks and gains
- B) I know why it is important to identify potential risks and gains
- C) I know how to identify potential risks and gains in a situation



Core ideas

A

What is meant by risks and gains

Risks and gains refer to the potential negative and positive outcomes of a decision or action. Understanding both helps in making informed choices.

- *Risks*: These are possible problems or losses that may occur. They could involve time, effort, financial cost, or unexpected difficulties.
- *Gains*: These are the benefits or rewards that could result from an action, such as learning new skills, achieving a goal, or increasing confidence.

Balancing risks and gains: Every decision has an element of uncertainty. Evaluating both sides helps determine whether something is worth pursuing.

B

Why it is important to identify potential risks and gains

Identifying potential risks and gains when evaluating an opportunity is important because it helps you make informed decisions.

By understanding the *risks*, you can prepare for any challenges that might arise and create strategies to manage them. This can prevent surprises and reduce the likelihood of failure.

On the other hand, recognising the potential *gains* allows you to weigh the rewards against the risks, helping you decide whether the opportunity is worth pursuing. It also helps to set realistic expectations and motivates you to take action.

When *both* risks and gains are considered, you can make a balanced decision that takes into account both the positive outcomes and possible setbacks. This thoughtful approach increases your chances of success while reducing the possibility of making decisions that could lead to disappointment or loss.



C

How to identify potential risks and gains in a situation

Recognising risks allows for better preparation and decision-making. Here are ways to identify them:

- *Consider past experiences:* Think about similar situations and what challenges arose.
- *Assess uncertainties:* Identify aspects of the situation that are unpredictable or outside your control.
- *Analyse possible negative outcomes:* Ask yourself, “What could go wrong?” and list the possible consequences.
- *Seek different perspectives:* Talking to others may help uncover risks you had not considered.
- *Evaluate available resources:* Understanding limitations in time, knowledge, or support can highlight risks.
- *Look at worst-case scenarios:* While not dwelling on negativity, considering the most difficult possible outcome can help with planning.

A complete analysis of any situation should balance gains as well as risks. Finding possible benefits helps determine whether an action is worthwhile. Here’s how to do it:

- *Define the goal:* Understand what you hope to achieve from the situation.
- *Consider long-term benefits:* Some gains may not be immediate but can be valuable later - try to think beyond immediate effects.
- *Look at best-case scenarios:* Imagine the most positive outcome and what it could bring. This sort of deliberate optimism can help see things differently.
- *Ask for input:* Others may see potential benefits that you had not thought of.

By weighing risks and gains carefully, you can make more confident and informed decisions while preparing for both challenges and opportunities.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are risks and gains?
- Why is it important to identify the potential risks and gains in a situation?
- How can you identify possible risks and gains from a situation?
- When have you identified risks and gains in a situation and how did you do this?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to analyse a situation to effectively identify the potential risks and gains in that opportunity?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections, evidence of learners evaluating the risks and gains in an opportunity (which may be set by the educator), and observations from others.

Managing risks

I actively manage risks



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to actively manage risks
- B) I know why and when to actively manage risks
- C) I know how to actively manage risks



Core ideas

A

What it means to actively manage risks

Actively managing risks means being aware of potential problems and taking steps to prevent them or reduce their impact. It involves thinking ahead and planning for what could go wrong, so you are ready to deal with it if it happens.

- It is about *identifying risks early*, such as a change in circumstances, resources, or timing.
- It means *making decisions based on potential risks* to avoid surprises or setbacks.
- It includes *monitoring risks over time and adjusting plans* as needed to keep things on track.

Actively managing risks requires staying alert and adjusting your plans when necessary to prevent failure or damage.

B

Why and when to actively manage risks

It is important to actively manage risks because risks can lead to problems, delays, or failures if they are not addressed. By managing risks, you can avoid some negative consequences and make sure your plans are more likely to succeed.

Why it is important: Managing risks helps to protect your goals, resources, and time. By preventing issues before they arise, you can keep your progress steady and reduce surprises that might cause stress.

When it is important: Actively managing risks is crucial when you are facing uncertainty, working on a new project, or making a significant change. In any situation where the outcome is uncertain, it is important to be prepared for potential challenges.

Without managing risks, you could find yourself unprepared for problems, which might lead to setbacks or mistakes that could have been avoided.



C

How to actively manage risks

To actively manage risks, you need to take some simple steps to understand and control the risks you may face:

- *Identify the risks:* The first step is to think about what could go wrong. This might include things like delays, lack of resources, or external factors that you cannot control. For example, if you are planning an event, a risk might be bad weather, or if you are managing a project, a risk might be missing a deadline.
- *Assess the risks' impact and likelihood:* After identifying risks, consider how big the problem could be and how likely it is to happen. This helps you decide which risks need more attention. For example, if you have scored risks on a scale of 1-5 for likelihood and impact, then you can multiply these scores together to get a combined score of 1-25. The higher the number, the higher priority the risk is likely to be.
- *Create a plan:* Once you know the risks, think about how you can avoid them or reduce their impact. This might involve finding solutions in advance, like having a backup supplier or rescheduling activities if weather conditions change.
- *Monitor and adjust:* Risks may change as time passes, so it's important to check in on your plans regularly. If a risk starts to look more likely, you can take action to manage it before it becomes a problem. It is worth identifying what warning signs you might expect.
- *Learn from experience:* Every time you deal with a risk, think about what went well and what could be improved. This will help you better manage future risks and be even more prepared.

By staying aware of risks and actively managing them, you can make better decisions, adapt to changes, and reduce the impact of any problems that arise.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by actively managing risks?
- Why and when is it important to actively manage risks?
- How can you actively manage risks?
- When have you actively managed risks and how did you do it?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to create a risk analysis which balances likelihood and impact to make good decisions about the risks to focus on?
- Is this learner able to take or plan action to mitigate and manage risks?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of a risk analysis and mitigation plan, and observations from others.

Being enterprising

I capitalise on opportunities



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to be enterprising
- B) I know why and when to capitalise on opportunities
- C) I know how to capitalise on opportunities by being enterprising



Core ideas

A

What it means to be enterprising

Being *enterprising* means being willing to see opportunities where others might see problems. It's about being proactive, taking initiative, thinking creatively, and acting to make the most of situations, even if they seem difficult or uncertain. An enterprising person looks for ways to improve or change things, rather than waiting for things to happen.

This includes:

- *Observing trends and changes:* Paying attention to shifts in society, technology, or daily life that might create new possibilities.
- *Asking 'what if?' questions:* Challenging assumptions and considering alternative ways of doing things.
- *Identifying gaps:* Looking for areas where things could be improved or made easier.
- *Listening to others' challenges:* Problems people face can often be turned into opportunities for new ideas or solutions.
- *Being open to different perspectives:* Learning from a range of people and experiences can help uncover new ways of thinking.
- *Thinking creatively:* Sometimes opportunities are hidden in everyday situations, waiting for a fresh approach.

As you can see, being enterprising draws on adapting, but also other essential skills.

B

Why and when to capitalise on opportunities

Being enterprising is important because it helps you stay ahead of challenges and make the best of any situation. Instead of letting difficulties stop progress, you can find ways to move forward and reach your goals. You can find new solutions, innovate, and lead change, which can make a big difference in personal success or in overcoming challenges.

It's especially important when facing challenges or new situations where there may be no clear or easy path forward. For example, during times of change, economic shifts, or when traditional ways of doing things aren't working. It's in these moments that being enterprising can open up opportunities others may not see.

For instance, if resources are limited, instead of being discouraged, an enterprising person might look for alternative ways to use what is available effectively, thus turning a problem into an opportunity.



C

How to capitalise on opportunities by being enterprising

Many people shy away from challenges, but an enterprising person sees them as chances for growth and success. You might actively seek out new opportunities by building wide networks and relationships, by keeping an open mind, going out of your comfort zone, and staying informed and interested.

To make the most of challenges as opportunities:

- *Reframe challenges as opportunities:* Instead of seeing obstacles, look for what can be learned or gained from them.
- *Find creative solutions:* Thinking differently about a problem can lead to innovative ways of turning it into an advantage.
- *Take calculated risks:* Some opportunities involve stepping into the unknown, but careful planning and preparation can help manage risks.
- *Act decisively:* When you spot an opportunity, taking action quickly can make a difference.
- *Use setbacks as learning experiences:* Even if an attempt does not succeed, it can provide valuable insights for future opportunities.
- *Stay resilient and adaptable:* Challenges are a natural part of progress, and persistence often leads to success.

By developing the ability to see and act on opportunities, you can create new paths for personal growth and success where others might only see difficulties.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to be enterprising?
- Why and when is it good to be enterprising?
- How can you capitalise on opportunities where others only see challenges?
- When have you shown yourself to be enterprising by capitalising on opportunities when others only see challenges?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate an enterprising mindset where they are proactively seeking out opportunities and adapting to make the most of them?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of where learners have created new opportunities, and observations from others.





Overview: Planning

Setting goals and designing routes to achieve them

This skill is about how individuals develop clear, tangible goals and robust routes to achieving them – whether in education, the workplace or their wider lives.

Getting started

(potential target for ages 5-9)

Initially, individuals assess the difficulty of tasks, knowing what doing well looks like for them, working with care, and recognising their strengths.

Intermediate

(potential target for ages 9-13)

Next, individuals take a positive approach to new challenges, setting achievable goals, developing simple plans, and prioritising tasks.

Advanced

(potential target for ages 13-17)

Then, individuals implement more complex plans by securing resources, engaging others behind the goal, developing the skills required, and setting targets to measure success.

Mastery

(potential target for ages 17+)

Finally, individuals develop sophisticated plans by seeking feedback, using project planning tools, adapting plans using data, and planning in an agile way.

Inclusive practice: The order of skill steps is based on data and the best training approach but individuals may not always secure those steps in sequence.



Universal Framework 2.0: Planning

Setting goals and designing routes to achieve them

Getting started	Step 1	Sensing difficulty I know when something is too difficult
	Step 2	Identifying successes I know what doing well looks like for me
	Step 3	Working carefully I work with care and attention
Intermediate	Step 4	Recognising strengths I recognise what I am good at
	Step 5	Facing challenges I take a positive approach to new challenges
	Step 6	Setting goals I set achievable goals for myself
	Step 7	Thinking ahead I think about routes to achieve a goal
Advanced	Step 8	Prioritising I order and prioritise tasks to achieve goals
	Step 9	Resourcing I secure the resources I need to achieve goals
	Step 10	Involving others I engage others to achieve goals
	Step 11	Using skills I plan how to use and build my skills to achieve goals
Mastery	Step 12	Target setting I create plans with clear targets to measure success
	Step 13	Seeking feedback I seek out a range of views to improve plans
	Step 14	Project planning I use planning tools to organise complex projects
	Step 15	Adaptive planning I use data to evaluate progress and make adaptations
	Step 16	Agile planning I work flexibly and responsively to improve my plans

Sensing difficulty

I know when something is too difficult



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means when something is too difficult
- B) I know why it is important to recognise difficulty
- C) I know how to manage if something is too difficult



Core ideas

A

What it means when something is too difficult

Knowing when something is too difficult can help you make better decisions about how to approach it. Signs that something may be too challenging include:

- *Struggling to understand:* If you find it hard to grasp the basic idea or instructions, it may be a sign that the task is too difficult.
- *Repeated failures:* If you keep trying but make little or no progress, the difficulty level may be too high.
- *Feeling overwhelmed:* If the task causes significant stress, frustration, or anxiety, it might be beyond your current ability.
- *Taking a long time:* If it takes far longer than expected, even with effort and focus, the challenge may be too great.

You might also decide that something is too difficult if you:

- *Lack tools or resources:* If you do not have the tools or resources that you would expect to complete the task
- *It feels too dangerous:* If it feels too dangerous to do something then you should stop.

B

Why it is important to recognise difficulty

When we first do things, we might find them difficult. This is a normal part of learning to do something and over time it will often get easier as we get better and practice more.

It is important to think about the danger that is present. If something is *not dangerous* then it might be worth trying again and persisting in case we can make progress.

However, if it is *dangerous* then we should stop and find an expert who can help.

C

How to manage if something is too difficult

If a task is too difficult, there are steps you can take to make it more manageable:

- *Seek help:* Ask someone with more experience or knowledge for advice or support.
- *Break it down:* Divide the task into smaller, more manageable steps and focus on one part at a time.
- *Give yourself more time:* Some tasks require patience and gradual learning - progress may come if you stick at it.
- *Try another approach:* If one method is not working, try a different way of tackling the challenge.

By recognising when something is too difficult, you can find other ways to do it or get the help you need.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean for something to be too difficult?
- Why is it important to recognise if something is too difficult?
- What can you do if something is too difficult?
- When have you found something too difficult and what did you do?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to accurately identify tasks which are too difficult?
- Is the learner able to identify tasks which are potentially dangerous, and take the right approach in these cases?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of identifying difficulty and danger, and observations from others.



Identifying successes

I know what doing well looks like for me



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to be doing well
- B) I know why it is good to know when I am doing well
- C) I know how to tell when I am doing well



Core ideas

A

What it means to be doing well

Doing well means that you are making progress, feeling good about what you are doing, and seeing positive results from your efforts. It does not mean being perfect or the best - it means improving, learning, and moving forward.

For example, it might mean:

- You are reaching your goals, whether big or small.
- You feel happy or satisfied with what you are doing.
- You are learning new things and growing as a person.
- You feel motivated to keep going, even when things are challenging.
- You get positive feedback from others or notice improvements in yourself.

Some people describe this as *being successful* or *succeeding*.

B

Why it is good to know when you are doing well

Knowing when you are doing well helps you stay motivated and confident. It reminds you that your efforts are making a difference and encourages you to keep trying. It also helps you understand what is working so you can do more of it.

For example, doing well might:

- Boost your confidence and make you feel proud of yourself.
- Encourage you to keep working towards your goals.
- Help you learn what actions bring success, so you can repeat them.
- Remind you that challenges can be overcome with effort.
- Allow you to celebrate progress, not just final results.



C

How to tell when you are doing well

There are many ways to tell if you are doing well. Sometimes, it is about how you *feel*, and other times, it is about what you can see or *measure*.

When you are doing good work, you often experience positive emotions and a sense of accomplishment. Some feelings you may notice include:

- *Satisfaction*: Feeling proud of progress or achieving a goal.
- *Confidence*: Feeling sure of your abilities and decisions as you complete tasks successfully.
- *Motivation*: A desire to continue working and improving because you see the value in what you are doing.
- *Engagement*: Being fully focused and interested in the task, making time pass quickly.
- *Achievement*: A sense of being pleased with producing high quality work or solving a difficult problem.

These are all pleasant feelings to experience and should make you want to do more.

Beyond how you feel, there are other signs that show you are performing well:

- *Positive feedback*: Others recognise and appreciate your effort and results.
- *Consistent progress*: You are moving forward steadily and meeting milestones.
- *Improved skills*: Your ability to complete similar tasks is getting better over time.
- *Achieving goals*: Your work contributes to a larger goal, making a meaningful impact.
- *Increased responsibility*: Others trust you with more complex or important tasks.

Remember, that the way that you get this sort of feedback might change depending on the country or culture. For example, in some cultures you are more likely to be praised than others. In some settings, such as in the workplace, you are more likely to be given greater responsibility than in others like school or your wider life.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to be doing well?
- Why is it good to know when you are doing well?
- How can you tell if you are doing well?
- When have you known that you are doing well and how did you know it?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to recognise when they are doing well?
- Is the learner able to check that they have done good work?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections or observations from others.



Working carefully

I work with care and attention



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to work with care and attention
- B)** I know why working carefully matters
- C)** I know how to work with care and attention



Core ideas

A

What it means to work with care and attention

Working carefully and with *attention to detail* means completing tasks with accuracy and focus. It involves:

- *Following instructions:* Understanding and sticking to the given guidelines to achieve the best outcome.
- *Not leaving anything out:* Ensuring every part of a task is completed properly without skipping steps.
- *Maintaining focus:* Avoiding distractions and staying engaged with the task at hand.
- *Taking time to do things properly:* Rushing can lead to errors, so working at a steady pace helps improve accuracy.
- *Checking for mistakes:* Reviewing work to spot and correct any errors before finalising it.

B

Why working carefully matters

Paying attention to detail and working carefully can have many benefits, including:

- *Avoiding mistakes:* Small errors can have big effects, so careful work helps prevent them.
- *Producing high-quality work:* Accuracy and care improve the standard of what you create.
- *Building trust and reliability:* Others will see you as dependable when you consistently deliver accurate work.
- *Saving time in the long run:* Fixing mistakes later can take more time than getting it right the first time.



C

How to work with care and attention

To develop careful and work habits, you can:

- *Ensure you understand why you are doing something:* Knowing what you are trying to do helps you to check that you are on track.
- *Plan before starting:* Understanding what needs to be done helps prevent mistakes.
- *Break tasks into smaller steps:* Tackling one step at a time makes the process easier to manage.
- *Use checklists:* Keeping track of important details ensures nothing is overlooked.
- *Eliminate distractions:* A quiet and organised environment helps maintain focus.
- *Review your work:* Going over your work before finishing can help catch any mistakes.
- *Take short breaks:* Resting helps maintain concentration and stops you getting tired.
- *Ask for feedback:* A second opinion can highlight details you might have missed.

By working carefully and paying attention to detail, you can improve the quality of your work, avoid unnecessary errors, and become more efficient over time.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to work with care and attention to detail?
- Why does working with care and paying attention to detail matter?
- How can you ensure that you work carefully and with attention?
- When have you shown that you can work carefully and with attention to detail?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to show that they are able to work with care and attention to detail by applying some of the strategies outlined?
- Is the learner able to demonstrate this consistently?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of written or project work showing care and attention to detail, and observations from others.

Recognising strengths

I recognise what I am good at



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by strengths
- B) I know why recognising my strengths is important
- C) I know how to recognise my strengths



Core ideas

A

What is meant by strengths

Individual *strengths* are the qualities, skills, and attributes that help a person succeed in different situations. These can include:

- *Skills*: Abilities developed through practice, such as speaking and listening or problem solving.
- *Knowledge*: Understanding gained through learning and experience.
- *Experiences*: Past situations that have built expertise or resilience.
- *Relationships*: Support from others that helps personal and professional growth.
- *Positive behaviours*: Characteristics and habits like patience, determination, and kindness.
- *Positive attitudes*: Ways of thinking about the world and your skills which support you to have a positive effect.

Recognising these strengths can help individuals understand what they have to offer and how they can contribute effectively.

B

Why recognising your strengths is important

Knowing your strengths can help you make better decisions and feel more confident. Some key benefits include:

- *Making the most of what you do well*: Using your strengths allows you to be more effective and enjoy your tasks.
- *Boosting confidence*: Recognising what you are good at can improve self-belief.
- *Helping others*: Your strengths can contribute to group success and teamwork.
- *Guiding development*: Understanding strengths highlights areas where you can improve or build new skills.
- *Encouraging growth*: While strengths are valuable, a positive mindset means that you can use these as a starting point to develop your strengths even further.



C

How to recognise your strengths

Recognising and using your strengths effectively can lead to greater success and satisfaction. Ways to do this include:

- *Reflect on past experiences:* Think about times when you have succeeded or felt confident.
- *Ask for feedback:* Others can often recognise strengths that you may not notice in yourself.
- *Try different activities:* Exploring new challenges can help you discover hidden abilities.
- *Keep track of progress:* Noting achievements over time can reveal patterns in what you do well.
- *Use strengths to overcome challenges:* Applying what you are good at can help tackle difficult situations more effectively.
- *Continue learning and improving:* Even strong skills can be developed further to become even more valuable.

By recognising your strengths and making the most of them, you can build confidence, contribute effectively, and continue to grow in new areas.

However, it is also important to remember that *strengths are not fixed* - you can build new ones if you work hard at it, as well as using your existing strengths in new ways.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What sort of strengths might someone have?
- Why is it helpful to understand your strengths?
- How can you make the most of your strengths?
- When have you explored your strengths and put them to use?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to thoughtfully and accurately reflect on their own strengths?
- Is the learner able to demonstrate an understanding of the need to balance making the most of their existing strengths, while still being open to personal growth?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of having analysed their own strengths, and observations from others.

Facing challenges

I take a positive approach to new challenges



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to take a positive approach to new challenges
- B)** I know why it is helpful to take a positive approach to new challenges
- C)** I know how to take a positive approach to new challenges



Core ideas

A

What it means to take a positive approach to new challenges

Taking a *positive approach to new challenges* means facing them with confidence, curiosity, and a willingness to learn. Instead of feeling overwhelmed or afraid of failure, you focus on opportunities for growth and improvement.

- *Seeing challenges as opportunities:* Viewing difficulties as a chance to learn new skills and gain experience.
- *Believing in yourself:* Trusting that you can work through problems and find solutions.
- *Staying open-minded:* Being willing to try different approaches and then adapt.
- *Keeping a problem solving mindset:* Looking for ways to overcome obstacles rather than focusing on what is difficult.
- *Learning from mistakes:* Understanding that setbacks are part of progress and can help you improve.

By taking a positive approach, you build confidence, stay motivated, and make it easier to tackle future challenges.

B

Why it is helpful to take a positive approach to new challenges

Being open to new challenges is an important part of personal growth and development. It allows you to build new skills, gain confidence, and experience different perspectives. Some key reasons why it is beneficial to embrace challenges include:

- *Discovering and building new strengths:* Taking on challenges helps you learn more about yourself and develop new strengths and abilities that you may not have known you had.
- *Increased confidence:* Overcoming difficulties can boost your self-belief and make you more willing to face future obstacles.
- *Opportunities for success:* Many opportunities arise from stepping outside of your comfort zone, whether in learning, social settings, or personal projects.
- *Adaptability:* Life is constantly changing, and being open to challenges helps you become more flexible and prepared for unexpected situations.
- *Building resilience:* Facing difficulties and learning how to manage them makes you stronger and better equipped to handle setbacks in the future.

When you are open to new experiences and challenges, you give yourself the chance to grow in ways that may positively impact your life in ways you never expected.



C

How to take a positive approach to new challenges

Taking on a new challenge can bring a mix of emotions. Some of these feelings can be positive like excitement, satisfaction and motivation. However, it is also very normal to feel some emotions that feel more negative like fear, frustration or doubt.

It is usual to experience both positive and negative emotions when facing something unfamiliar. The key is to avoid them putting you off and to manage them in a way that allows you to keep moving forward.

Taking on a challenge with a *positive mindset* can make a big difference in how you experience it. Here are some ways to help you maintain a positive approach:

- *Break it down:* Large challenges can feel overwhelming, so divide them into smaller, more manageable steps.
- *Focus on learning:* Instead of fearing failure, view challenges as opportunities to learn and improve.
- *Stay patient:* Progress takes time, and setbacks are a normal part of growth.
- *Seek support:* Talking to others who have faced similar challenges can provide reassurance and helpful advice.
- *Remind yourself of past successes:* Think about times when you have successfully faced challenges before to boost your confidence.
- *Remember that efforts pay off in the end:* Encourage yourself with positive thoughts and remind yourself that effort and persistence lead to improvement.

By staying open-minded and focusing on the benefits of taking on challenges, you can develop a stronger, more confident approach to facing new experiences and challenges.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to take a positive approach to new challenges?
- Why is it important to be open to new challenges?
- How can it feel to face new challenges and how can you stay positive?
- When have you taken a positive approach to a new challenge and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Are learners able to demonstrate a positive approach to new challenges?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Setting goals

I set achievable goals for myself



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by goal setting
- B) I know why and when setting achievable goals is helpful
- C) I know how to set myself goals effectively



Core ideas

A

What is meant by goal setting

Goals are the things we aim to achieve in different areas of life. They give us direction, motivation, and a sense of purpose. Goals can vary in size and timescale, and they may be personal or shared with a team.

- *Short-term goals:* These are goals that can be achieved in a relatively short period, such as a few days, weeks, or months. Examples include reading a book, learning a new skill, or improving a daily habit.
- *Medium-term goals:* These require more time and effort, often taking months or a few years to accomplish. Examples include completing a training programme, saving for a special purchase, or improving a particular skill.
- *Long-term goals:* These are larger goals that take several years to achieve, such as reaching a high level of expertise in a subject, maintaining a healthy lifestyle over time, achieving a qualification, or progressing in a career.

Goals can vary between personal goals or team goals. *Personal goals* focus on individual growth, such as developing a new ability or improving well-being. *Team goals* involve working with others towards a shared achievement, such as completing a group project or improving team performance. In this section, we are focused on personal goals.

B

Why and when setting achievable goals is helpful

Setting goals is helpful because it gives you direction, motivation, and a clear way to measure progress. When you set goals, you know what you are working towards, which helps you stay focused and organised. It also makes challenges feel more manageable by breaking them into smaller steps.

Goals are most helpful when they follow the SMART approach:

- *Specific:* Goals should be clear and well-defined. Instead of saying, "I want to get better at something", specify what exactly you want to improve.
- *Measurable:* There should be a way to track progress. For example, "I want to read 10 books this year" is measurable because you can count the books.
- *Achievable:* Goals should be realistic and within reach. Setting goals that are too difficult can lead to frustration, while overly simple goals may not be motivating.
- *Relevant:* Goals should be meaningful and connected to your priorities. They should contribute to your personal growth or a larger objective.
- *Time-bound:* Setting a deadline helps to maintain focus and motivation. A goal like "I will complete my training in six months" gives a clear timeframe for achievement.

Using this structure can help ensure that goals are helpful and motivating.



C

How to set yourself goals effectively

The *stretch zone* is the area between comfort and extreme difficulty. Goals in this zone challenge you while still being achievable with effort and persistence. Here's how to set goals in this zone:

- *Push beyond your comfort zone:* Choose goals that require new skills or extra effort but are not so difficult that they feel impossible.
- *Increase difficulty gradually:* If a goal feels overwhelming, break it into steps that gradually become more challenging.
- *Balance challenge with ability:* Goals should be tough but within your ability to develop the required skills or knowledge over time.
- *Seek feedback and support:* Discussing your goals with others can help you adjust them to be both ambitious and achievable.
- *Embrace learning and setbacks:* Being in the stretch zone means facing difficulties. See these as opportunities to grow and adapt rather than reasons to give up.

By setting goals that challenge you in a positive way, you can grow, build confidence, and continue to develop new skills and strengths over time.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are goals and how do they vary?
- Why and when is setting goals helpful?
- How can you set effective goals with the right level of challenge?
- When have you set yourself goals and what was the result?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to create different types of personal goals which reflect short, medium and long term opportunities and which apply the SMART approach?
- Is the learner able to create goals which are appropriate to their stretch zone?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of setting and tracking goals, and observations from others.



Thinking ahead

I think about routes to achieve a goal



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to find routes to achieve a goal
- B) I know why it is important to think about different routes to a goal
- C) I know how to map out routes to achieve a goal



Core ideas

A

What it means to find routes to achieve a goal

Finding routes to achieve a goal means identifying different ways to reach an objective. There is often more than one way to achieve something, and exploring different paths helps to find the most effective or suitable approach. The route you take depends on factors such as available resources, time, and personal strengths.

For example:

- If your goal is to learn a new language, one route might be self-study using books and apps, while another could be joining a class or finding a language partner.
- If you want to improve your health, one approach could be adjusting your diet, while another might focus on increasing physical activity.

By considering different routes, you can find the best approach that suits your situation and increases your chances of success.

B

Why it is important to think about different routes to a goal

Taking time to consider different routes to a goal has several benefits:

- *Flexibility:* If one approach does not work, having other options can keep you moving forward.
- *Better decision-making:* Evaluating different paths allows you to choose the most efficient or enjoyable way to reach your goal.
- *Overcoming obstacles:* Challenges can arise, and having alternative routes helps you adapt rather than give up.
- *Efficient use of resources:* Some routes may require less time, effort, or cost, making it easier to stay committed.
- *Increased motivation:* Knowing there are multiple ways to succeed can reduce pressure and make the process feel more achievable.

Thinking through different routes also helps to avoid frustration if the first attempt does not go as planned, keeping you on track towards your goal.



C

How to map out routes to achieve a goal

Mapping out a route to a goal helps you stay organised and focused. Here are steps to create a clear plan:

1. *Define your goal clearly:* Be specific about what you want to achieve and set a realistic timeline.
2. *Identify possible routes:* List different ways you could reach your goal and consider their advantages and challenges.
3. *Break it into tasks:* Divide the journey into smaller, manageable tasks to make progress easier.
4. *Consider potential obstacles:* Think about what could go wrong and plan ways to handle difficulties.
5. *Choose the best route for you:* Decide which approach fits your resources, strengths, and circumstances.

By mapping out a route, you create a structured approach that helps you stay focused, motivated, and prepared to overcome challenges on the way to achieving your goal. Remember, that you can draw in skill steps from Creativity and Problem Solving to help you generate and sort through ideas too.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to find different routes to achieve a goal?
- Why is it important to think about different routes to achieving a goal?
- How can you map out different routes to achieve a goal?
- When have you shown you can map out different routes to achieve a goal?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify different routes to achieve a goal, and outline what they look like?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of planning multiple potential routes to achieve a personal goal, and observations from others.

Prioritising

I order and prioritise tasks to achieve goals



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by ordering and prioritising tasks
- B) I know why and when ordering and prioritising tasks is important
- C) I know how to order and prioritise tasks to achieve a goal



Core ideas

A

What is meant by ordering and prioritising tasks

Tasks are the smaller actions or steps needed to complete a goal. Breaking a route to a goal into tasks makes the process more manageable and increases the chances of success.

There are several reasons why breaking goals into tasks is important:

- *Clarity:* Tasks help to define exactly what needs to be done and in what order. For example, if your goal is to run a marathon, tasks could include buying proper running shoes, setting up a training schedule, and gradually increasing running distance.
- *Motivation:* Completing smaller tasks provides a sense of achievement and keeps you motivated. If your goal is to write a book, breaking it into tasks such as outlining chapters, writing sections daily, and editing drafts makes it easier to stay on track.
- *Efficiency:* Focusing on one step at a time prevents feeling overwhelmed and makes progress more structured. For instance, if you are learning to play a musical instrument, you might start with basic chords before moving on to full songs.
- *Problem-solving:* Identifying tasks allows for better planning and anticipation of challenges. If your goal is to start a garden, breaking it down into tasks such as researching plant types, preparing soil, and setting a watering schedule can help avoid issues later on.

Prioritising means deciding which tasks are the most important to complete first. It ensures that you focus on what matters most and use your time effectively.

B

Why and when ordering and prioritising tasks is important

As plans become more complicated, there will be lots of tasks that need to be completed. This can be overwhelming without approaches to work through the tasks in a *logical order* - and prioritising is an important part of that.

Thoughtful prioritising can support with:

- *Better time management:* Prioritising prevents wasting time on less important tasks. We all only have limited time - so we have to choose where to spend it.
- *Improved focus:* It helps you concentrate on high-impact activities that bring you closer to your goal. Not all tasks or activities are equally important.
- *Reduces stress:* Knowing what to focus on first can prevent feeling overwhelmed. In some cases, there are tasks which are more urgent or time sensitive.
- *Enhances productivity:* Working on the right tasks at the right time leads to faster and better results.
- Without prioritisation, there is a risk of spending too much effort on tasks that do not significantly contribute to achieving the goal or doing tasks in an inefficient order.



C

How to order and prioritise tasks to achieve a goal

Sequencing tasks correctly is essential for effective goal achievement. Here's how to do it:

1. *Identify key steps:* Break the goal into major steps that mark significant progress. For example, if writing a report, milestones could include research, drafting, editing, and final submission.
2. *Determine dependencies:* Some tasks must be completed before others can begin. This is called a dependency. If you aim to cook a new recipe, you need to gather ingredients before starting preparation.
3. *Order tasks logically:* Arrange tasks in a sequence that makes sense. If training for a long-distance run, starting with short distances before gradually increasing is more effective than jumping into long runs immediately.

By carefully sequencing tasks, you ensure that each task builds upon the previous one, making it easier to stay organised and motivated while working towards your goal.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are tasks and why do we need to think about them when planning?
- Why and when is prioritising and ordering of tasks important?
- How can you prioritise tasks to achieve a goal?
- When have you shown you can prioritise and order tasks to achieve a goal?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify the tasks that will be required to achieve a goal?
- Is the learner able to sensibly prioritise those tasks, bearing in mind the key steps, dependencies and logical ordering?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of identifying and prioritising tasks to achieve a goal, and observations from others.

Resourcing

I secure the resources I need to achieve goals



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by resources
- B) I know why securing resources is important to achieve goals
- C) I know how to identify the resources needed to achieve goals



Core ideas

A

What is meant by resources

Resources are the things you need to help you achieve a goal. They can come in different forms, depending on the goal and the tasks involved. The four main types of resources are:

- *Human resources:* The people who can provide support, knowledge, or skills. For example, if you are learning a new language, a tutor or conversation partner could be a valuable resource.
- *Physical resources:* Tangible items that help complete tasks. If your goal is to start painting, you will need brushes, paint, and canvases.
- *Financial resources:* Money or funding needed to support the goal. For instance, if you aim to attend a training course, you may need to pay for enrolment fees or materials.
- *Natural resources:* Elements from the environment that may be required. If you plan to grow your own food, you will need sunlight, soil, and water.

Understanding the different types of resources helps in making sure you have what you need to succeed.

B

Why securing resources is important to achieve goals

Careful resource planning increases the chances of reaching a goal by ensuring everything required is available when needed. Key reasons why planning resources is important include:

- *Avoiding delays:* Knowing what is needed in advance prevents unexpected shortages. For example, if preparing for a public event, securing a venue early avoids last-minute problems.
- *Making efficient use of time and effort:* With the right resources in place, tasks can be completed smoothly. If writing a book, having access to a laptop and research materials speeds up the process.
- *Reducing unnecessary costs:* Planning can help avoid wasting money on unneeded resources. If learning a new skill, borrowing books or using free online courses can save costs.
- *Ensuring quality results:* Having the right resources improves the chances of achieving a goal successfully. If aiming to improve physical fitness, using appropriate equipment and guidance increases effectiveness.

Planning resources in advance helps maintain focus and makes it easier to handle challenges along the way.



C

How to identify the resources needed to achieve goals

To identify the resources needed for a goal, follow these steps:

1. *Define the goal clearly:* Be specific about what you want to achieve and the tasks involved.
2. *List essential tasks:* Break the goal into steps and determine what resources are required for each.
3. *Categorise resources:* Identify which resources are human, physical, financial, or natural.
4. *Assess availability:* Check what resources you already have and what needs to be acquired.
5. *Explore alternatives:* Look for ways to access resources affordably, such as borrowing equipment or seeking advice from experienced individuals.
6. *Plan how to obtain missing resources:* Determine how to secure the resources you need, whether by saving money, seeking funding, or finding alternative options.

By carefully identifying resources, you can create a practical plan that ensures steady progress towards achieving your goal.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are resources and what different types are there?
- Why is it important to think about the resources you require to achieve a goal?
- How can you plan the resources you need to achieve a goal?
- When have you had to plan and secure resources to achieve a goal?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify the different resources that they might need in order to achieve a goal and complete a set of tasks?
- Is the learner able to think about alternative resources or how to access and use them efficiently?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of resource planning to complete tasks, and observations from others.

Involving others

I engage others to achieve goals



Building blocks

- A)** I know what it means to engage others to achieve goals
- B)** I know why and when to engage others with goals
- C)** I know how to engage and involve others to achieve goals



Core ideas

A

What it means to engage others to achieve goals

Engaging other people to support you in achieving your goals means involving and encouraging others to help you succeed. This could be through advice, encouragement, or practical help or because you need permissions. It means communicating your goals clearly, listening to feedback, and being open to different perspectives.

By working with others, you can gain new ideas, stay motivated, and overcome challenges more easily. People can offer expertise, share experiences, or simply provide encouragement when things get difficult. Asking for support is not a weakness - it is often essential to get things done. Collaboration can make achieving your goals easier and more rewarding.

B

Why and when to engage others with goals

Engaging others with your goals can provide valuable support, motivation, and resources that help you succeed. Key reasons why involving others can be beneficial include:

- *Encouragement and motivation:* Sharing your goals with others can help you stay accountable and motivated. For example, if you aim to develop a new skill, having a mentor or a friend checking in can encourage consistency.
- *Access to knowledge and expertise:* Others may have experience or advice that can guide you. If you are starting a creative project, connecting with someone who has done something similar can help avoid common mistakes.
- *Practical support:* Some goals require resources or assistance from others. If you are organising an event, engaging people with different skills such as planning, logistics, or promotion can make the process smoother.
- *Building confidence:* Supportive individuals can boost self-belief and help you overcome setbacks.
- *Opportunities for collaboration:* Working with others can lead to new ideas and approaches, increasing the chances of success.



C

How to engage and involve others to achieve goals

To determine who can best support your goals, consider the following steps:

1. *Define the type of support needed:* Identify whether you require advice, motivation, resources, permissions, or hands-on assistance.
2. *Look within your existing network:* Friends, family members, colleagues, or acquaintances might have relevant experience or be willing to help.
3. *Seek out experts or mentors:* If specialised knowledge is required, finding someone with expertise in the area can be valuable.
4. *Identify those with shared interests:* People who share similar goals may provide mutual support and encouragement.
5. *Consider professional or community groups:* Joining relevant organisations or online communities can connect you with people who have useful insights.

Once you have identified the right people, the next step is to involve them effectively:

- *Clearly communicate your goal:* Explain what you are trying to achieve and why it is important to you.
- *Be specific about the help you need:* Whether it is guidance, feedback, or practical assistance, outlining clear ways they can contribute makes it easier for others to offer support.
- *Show appreciation:* Acknowledge the time and effort people put into helping you. Gratitude strengthens relationships and encourages continued support.
- *Offer mutual benefit:* If possible, find ways to support their goals as well.
- *Keep them updated:* Regularly sharing progress keeps people engaged and reinforces their involvement.
- *Stay open to advice and feedback:* Encouraging constructive input can lead to valuable improvements and fresh ideas.

By engaging the right people in the right way, you can increase your chances of successfully achieving your goals while building strong and supportive connections.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to involve other people in achieving your goals?
- Why might it be helpful to involve other people in your goals?
- How can you identify and engage individuals in achieving your goals?
- When have you shown you can engage and involve others to achieve a goal?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to recognise who might support them to achieve their goals?
- Is the learner able to engage others to help them to achieve their goals?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of having successfully sought out other individuals to help them to achieve their goals, and observations from others.

Using skills

I plan how to use and build my skills to achieve goals



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by skills
- B) I know why to plan to use and build skills to achieve goals
- C) I know how to use and build skills to achieve goals



Core ideas

A

What is meant by skills

Skills are abilities that allow a person to do something. They can be learned and improved over time. Skills can be grouped into different categories:

- *Basic skills:* These are foundational skills needed for everyday education, work and wider life. They include literacy (reading and writing), numeracy (being able to work with numbers) and basic digital skills.
- *Essential skills:* These are highly transferable skills that cover communication, collaboration, creative problem solving, and self-management and are covered in the Skills Builder Universal Framework. They allow us to make the most of technical skills and knowledge.
- *Technical skills:* These are specialised skills required for specific tasks or fields. Examples include coding, graphic design, and data analysis.

B

Why to plan to use and build skills to achieve goals

Understanding and developing skills is important for setting and achieving your goals because skills define what you can routinely *do*. You can set your goals based on your existing skills and capabilities.

Equally, you might choose goals that require you to build new skills. We all have the capacity to build new skills, but it might take time and continued effort - so that needs to be built into your plan too.

Developing a range of skills can make it easier to achieve different goals and take advantage of new opportunities.

C

How to use and build skills to achieve goals

Recognising the skills you already have is an important step in setting and achieving goals. Here are some ways to do this:

1. *List your experiences:* Think about past activities and challenges you have successfully completed including hobbies and voluntary or paid work.
2. *Reflect on your strengths:* Identify tasks that you do well or that others frequently praise you for. You might also use the Universal Framework to reflect on your essential skills and where your strengths lie.
3. *Seek feedback:* Ask friends, family, educators or colleagues about your skills.
4. *Compare against your goals:* Consider how your skills might support your goals and how they can be applied to achieve success.
5. *Keep track of your skills:* Create a skills journal or use an online tool to document and update your skills over time.



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You might also need to identify skill gaps as developing new skills can help you reach your goals more efficiently. Here's how you can do it:

1. *Compare your current skills with your goal requirements:* Identify what skills are needed to achieve your goal and check which ones you already have.
2. *Research what is required:* Look at guides, courses, or role models who have achieved similar goals to understand the skills they used.
3. *Ask for feedback:* Speak with experienced individuals who can provide insight into which skills you may need to develop.
4. *Prioritise skill development as a task:* Think about building skills as one of the tasks that is in your plan and then prioritise it appropriately.
5. *Find learning opportunities:* Consider online courses, workshops, books, or hands-on practice to build new skills.
6. *Practice regularly:* Applying new skills in real-life situations helps improve proficiency and confidence.
7. *Monitor progress:* Keep track of your learning and make adjustments as needed.

By actively identifying and developing the skills needed, you can create a clear and practical path toward achieving your goals.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are skills, and what different types of skills are there?
- Why is it important to understand your skills to choose and achieve goals?
- How can you identify and further build your skills to achieve your goals?
- When have you built your skills in order to achieve a goal?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify relevant skills for their goal?
- Is the learner able to evaluate their own skills for achieving a goal, and identify where they may need to improve skills or acquire new ones?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of analysing their own skills and the skills required to achieve goals, and observations from others.

Target setting

I create plans with clear targets to measure success



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by targets and milestones
- B) I know why setting targets and milestones can be helpful
- C) I know how to set targets and milestones effectively



Core ideas

A

What is meant by targets and milestones

Targets and *milestones* are important tools that help break down goals into manageable steps:

- *Targets*: These are specific achievements that move you closer to your goal, without being the whole goal itself. For example, if your goal is to learn a new language, a target could be memorising 50 new words in a month.
- *Milestones*: These are key points that mark progress toward a goal. They act as checkpoints to help you measure how far you have come. For instance, in learning a language, a milestone could be holding a five-minute conversation.

Remember that *goals* are the broad outcomes you aim to achieve, while *tasks* are the individual actions needed to complete them. Targets and milestones sit in between, providing structure and helping to track progress.

B

Why setting targets and milestones can be helpful

Targets and milestones can be very helpful when they:

- *Provide clarity*: Breaking a goal into smaller parts makes it easier to understand what needs to be done.
- *Increase motivation*: Reaching a milestone gives a sense of achievement and encourages continued effort.
- *Help measure progress*: Targets allow you to track improvement and adjust plans if needed.
- *Improve time management*: Setting deadlines for milestones ensures steady progress without last-minute rushes.
- *Build confidence*: Achieving small targets reinforces belief in your ability to reach the overall goal.

However, it is important not to fall into the trap of having unhelpful targets or milestones:

- *If they are unrealistic*: Setting targets that are too difficult or too easy can lead to frustration or lack of challenge.
- *If they are too rigid*: Being overly strict with milestones may create stress and discourage flexibility.
- *If they lack relevance*: Targets should be meaningful and directly related to the goal; otherwise, they can be distracting.



C

How to set milestones and targets effectively

To use milestones and targets effectively, you should be sure to:

1. *Define the overall goal clearly:* Ensure you know what you are working towards.
2. *Break the goal into smaller steps:* Identify key phases that need to be completed along the way.
3. *Use SMART criteria:* Make sure targets are:
 - *Specific:* Clearly defined.
 - *Measurable:* Progress should be trackable.
 - *Achievable:* Realistic given your time and resources.
 - *Relevant:* Connected to your overall goal.
 - *Time-bound:* Have a deadline to keep you on track.
4. *Set checkpoints:* Establish milestones at regular intervals to review progress.
5. *Be flexible:* Adjust targets as needed to stay aligned with the goal while allowing for unexpected changes.
6. *Celebrate progress:* Acknowledge achievements to maintain motivation.

By setting realistic and meaningful targets and milestones, you can create a clear path to achieving your goals while staying motivated along the way.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are targets and milestones and how do they relate to goals and tasks?
- Why and when are targets and milestones helpful, and when are they not?
- How can you set milestones and targets effectively?
- When have you used milestones and targets to help plan effectively?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to create thoughtful, appropriate targets and milestones as part of a medium- or long-term plan?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of planning that includes appropriate targets and milestones, and observations from others.

Seeking feedback

I seek out a range of views to improve plans



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to seek views to improve plans
- B) I know why it is helpful to use a range of views to improve plans
- C) I know how to seek a range of views to improve plans



Core ideas

A

What it means to seek views to improve plans

Seeking out the views of *stakeholders* when developing plans means involving the people who will be affected by or have an interest in the plan. *Stakeholders* could include individuals, groups, or organisations with different perspectives and needs. By listening to their views, you can create a plan that is more effective, realistic, and widely supported.

Receiving *constructive feedback* from stakeholders helps you identify strengths and weaknesses in your ideas. *Constructive feedback* is honest, specific, and focused on improvement. It allows you to refine your plans, address potential challenges, and make better decisions.

To seek views effectively when improving plans:

- *Ask for input early:* Engage stakeholders before finalising decisions.
- *Encourage open discussions:* Create a space where people feel comfortable sharing honest feedback.
- *Be open to challenge:* Focus on understanding different perspectives rather than just defending your ideas.
- *Use feedback to improve:* Look for patterns and make adjustments where needed.

B

Why it is helpful to use a range of views to improve plans

Seeking constructive feedback when developing your plans can provide valuable insights and improve the chances of success. Key benefits include:

- *Identifying strengths and weaknesses:* Others may notice aspects of your plan that you have overlooked.
- *Gaining new perspectives:* Different viewpoints can help refine your ideas and offer alternative solutions as well as helping you to learn from others' experiences. It can ensure that you create plans which are informed by diverse perspectives and can support creating more inclusive solutions.
- *Avoiding mistakes:* Early feedback can highlight potential problems before they become major setbacks.
- *Boosting confidence:* Positive feedback can reinforce that you are on the right track and give you the encouragement to keep going.
- *Enhancing motivation:* Knowing others are interested and invested in your plans can encourage you to stay committed.



C

How to seek a range of views to improve plans

To get the most useful constructive feedback:

1. *Choose the right people:* Seek input from those with relevant experience or a balanced perspective. *Stakeholders* are individuals or groups who have an interest in or are affected by your plans.
2. *Ask for detailed feedback:* Encourage people to explain their points clearly and suggest improvements. Rather than general opinions, request input on particular aspects of your plan. Face-to-face discussions, surveys, or online forums can help gather diverse perspectives.
3. *Avoid being defensive:* Accept criticism with an open mind and do not see it as an attack on you personally. Make it clear that constructive feedback is welcomed and valued.
4. *Request examples:* Ask for specific instances where changes could be made rather than vague comments. If you do not understand, do ask for examples.
5. *Use feedback to refine your plan:* Apply constructive suggestions to make meaningful improvements. Show stakeholders that their input has influenced your plans. This will make them more likely to help again in the future.
6. *Follow up when necessary:* If unclear, ask for clarification or further explanation.

By actively seeking and applying constructive feedback, you can create a stronger, more effective plan. There is also an important effect that it is likely to increase the level of investment people have in your plan's success which might be helpful later on.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to seek out a range of views when developing a plan?
- Why is it helpful to seek out a range of stakeholders when creating a plan?
- How can you get the most useful constructive feedback on a plan?
- When have you sought and received constructive feedback on a plan?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to identify who the stakeholders are for their plan and get feedback from them to improve their ideas?
- Is the learner open to constructive criticism and able to adapt their plans accordingly?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of how they have sought out and received feedback and adapted their plans, and observations from others.

Project planning

I use planning tools to organise complex projects



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by planning tools
- B) I know why and when different planning tools are useful
- C) I know how to use different planning tools



Core ideas

A

What is meant by planning tools

Planning tools are models or processes which can be used to organise projects. There are a variety of tools which are used, and professional project managers will have other more complex processes too. There are two which can be helpful to everyone who is planning:

- A *Gantt chart* is a visual tool that helps plan and track tasks over time. It displays tasks as horizontal bars along a timeline, showing when each task starts and ends.
- A *Kanban board* is a tool that helps visualise work and track progress. It uses columns (such as “To Do,” “In Progress,” and “Done”) with task cards that move through these stages as work is completed.

B

Why and when different planning tools are helpful

Gantt charts are a popular and widely used tool and are particularly helpful when:

- *Managing complex projects with multiple tasks:* They help break a large project into smaller tasks and show how they fit together.
- *Tracking task dependencies:* Some tasks cannot start until others are completed, and Gantt charts help identify these dependencies.
- *Setting realistic timelines:* By visualising task durations, you can set achievable deadlines.
- *Monitoring progress:* Updating the chart as tasks are completed makes it easier to see if the project is on schedule.
- *Coordinating team efforts:* Gantt charts clarify who is responsible for each task and when their work is needed.

Kanban boards are a useful tool when:

- *Managing ongoing or evolving tasks:* They are useful for projects where tasks need to be continuously added or updated.
- *Improving workflow efficiency:* Teams can easily see which tasks are being worked on and identify bottlenecks.
- *Enhancing flexibility:* Tasks can be reprioritised and moved around without disrupting the overall project plan.
- *Encouraging collaboration:* Everyone involved can see how far tasks have progressed and contribute where needed.
- *Reducing complexity:* By focusing on individual tasks rather than the whole project, Kanban boards make it easier to manage work.



C

How to use different planning tools

To use a Gantt chart:

- *List all tasks* needed to complete a project.
- *Decide the order* tasks should be done and how long each will take.
- *Allocate the tasks* to individuals showing ownership on the chart.
- *Create a timeline* and add each task as a bar on the chart.
- *Update the chart* as tasks are completed or delayed to keep everything on track.

To use a Kanban board:

- *Create columns* for different stages of work (“To Do”, “In Progress”, “Done”).
- *Write each task* on a card and place it in the correct column.
- *Team members pick up cards* and complete the work on the task.
- *Move tasks* to the next column as progress is made.
- *Review the board regularly* to check what is completed and what still needs to be done.

Both tools help break down work into clear steps, making it easier to stay organised, meet deadlines, and adjust plans when needed.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is a Gantt chart and what is a Kanban board?
- Why and when can a Gantt chart and a Kanban board be helpful?
- How can you create a Gantt chart, and how can you create a Kanban board?
- When have you shown you can use a Gantt chart and a Kanban board?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to create a Gantt chart and a Kanban board to support the planning of a project?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of applying each of these tools to a complex project, and observations from others.

Adaptive planning

I use data to evaluate progress and make adaptations



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by adaptive planning
- B) I know why and when adaptive planning is useful
- C) I know how to use data to evaluate progress and make adaptations



Core ideas

A

What is meant by adaptive planning

Adaptive planning is a way of making plans that allows for changes as new information becomes available. Instead of following a fixed plan from start to finish, adaptive planning helps people adjust their actions based on what is working and what is not.

Key ideas in adaptive planning:

- *Flexibility:* Plans can change to fit new situations or insights.
- *Ongoing learning:* Feedback and data help improve decisions.
- *Adapting:* If something is not working, the plan can be adjusted instead of failing.

For example, if someone is working on a big project and unexpected challenges appear or data suggests something is not working as expected, adaptive planning allows them to change their approach rather than sticking to a plan that no longer works.

B

Why and when adaptive planning is useful

Planning provides direction, but unexpected changes can arise, making it necessary to adjust plans. Adaptive planning allows flexibility and responsiveness to challenges, ensuring continued progress toward goals.

There are a few reasons why having an adaptive planning approach can be helpful:

- *Unforeseen challenges:* Unexpected delays, resource shortages, or external factors can impact progress.
- *New opportunities:* Adaptability allows for seizing better approaches or resources that become available.
- *Changing priorities:* Sometimes, circumstances shift, requiring a reassessment of what is most important.
- *Continuous learning:* Evaluating progress can reveal areas where improvements are needed, leading to plan adjustments.



C

How to use data to evaluate progress and make adaptations

Using data helps measure progress objectively and provides insights into whether milestones and targets are being met. You can then use data to:

- *Compare actual progress to planned milestones:* Tracking key checkpoints helps assess whether the project is on schedule.
- *Analyse performance indicators:* Measurable data, such as time spent on tasks or resource usage, helps identify efficiency.
- *Identify trends and patterns:* Looking at progress over time can highlight strengths and areas needing improvement.
- *Assess feedback:* Qualitative and quantitative data from stakeholders can show how effective the plan is.
- *Progress towards the overall goal:* Looking at whether progress is being made towards the overall goal can also help you see if you need to change your plans.

Once data is gathered, it should be used to refine and improve plans where necessary. In order to adapt plans effectively based on insights:

1. *Identify areas needing change:* Use data to spot delays, inefficiencies, or problems.
2. *Adjust milestones and deadlines:* If progress is slower or faster than expected, realigning milestones can help maintain realistic pacing.
3. *Reallocate resources if needed:* If certain areas require more support, shifting focus or resources can improve efficiency.
4. *Improve strategies:* If a current approach is not delivering expected results, trying new methods may enhance progress.
5. *Monitor and refine continuously:* Regular check-ins ensure that adaptations lead to improvements rather than setbacks.

By staying flexible and using data effectively, individuals can ensure their plans remain relevant and achievable, even in changing circumstances.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by adaptive planning?
- When and why is adaptive planning a useful approach?
- How can you use data and insights on progress to adapt plans?
- When have you used data to evaluate progress and make adaptations to a plan?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to use data to understand whether a plan needs changes?
- Is the learner able to adapt plans based on data and insights?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of analysing progress against a plan using data and making appropriate adaptations to the plan, as well as observations from others

Agile planning

I work flexibly and responsively to improve my plans



Building blocks

- A)** I know what is meant by agile planning
- B)** I know why and when agile planning is helpful
- C)** I know how to use agile planning effectively



Core ideas

A

What is meant by agile planning

Agile planning is a flexible and adaptive approach to organising work. Instead of creating a fixed, long-term plan, agile planning focuses on short-term goals, continuous feedback, and adjusting plans as needed. It is based on working in small steps, learning from each stage, and improving along the way.

In comparison, traditional planning follows a structured and predictive approach, setting out a detailed plan at the beginning with fixed steps and timelines.

Some of the key differences are:

Feature	Traditional Planning	Agile planning
Approach	Fixed and structured	Flexible and evolving
Changes	Difficult to adapt	Easily adjusted
Timeline	Defined from the start	Adjusted as needed
Feedback	Gathered at the end	Continuous throughout

Overall, the traditional planning approach might work best when projects are predictable but the agile approach is best suited to uncertain or evolving projects.

B

Why and when agile planning is helpful

Agile planning is helpful because it allows for flexibility, continuous improvement, and quick adjustments based on feedback, making it ideal for situations where needs or conditions may change.

The agile approach can particularly help:

- *When requirements may change:* If a project is complex or uncertain, agile planning allows adjustments without major disruptions.
- *For ongoing improvement:* Agile approaches work well when frequent refinements are needed.
- *When quick feedback is valuable:* Involving stakeholders regularly helps keep work aligned with goals.
- *For managing risk:* Making small changes along the way reduces the risk of failure at the end.



C

How to use agile planning effectively

To apply agile planning approaches effectively:

1. *Break work into smaller steps:* Focus on completing one part at a time instead of planning everything at once.
2. *Set short-term goals:* Work towards small, achievable milestones to stay on track.
3. *Review progress frequently:* Regularly assess what is working and what needs improvement.
4. *Be open to change:* Adapt based on feedback and new circumstances rather than sticking to an initial plan.
5. *Collaborate with others:* Discuss progress, share insights, and adjust strategies as needed.
6. *Prioritise tasks:* Focus on the most important activities first to make steady progress.

By using agile planning effectively, individuals can stay adaptable, improve efficiency, and achieve better results in dynamic situations.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is agile planning and how does it compare to traditional planning approaches?
- Why and when is the agile planning approach particularly helpful?
- How can you apply agile planning approaches effectively?
- When have you applied the agile planning approach to a project?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate using an agile planning approach effectively when it is appropriate to do so?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of where learners have used agile planning approaches in a project, and observations from others.





Overview: Leadership

Supporting, encouraging and motivating others to achieve a shared goal

This skill is about how individuals make things happen, whether or not they have a formal leadership position.

Getting started

(potential target for ages 5-9)

Initially, individuals understand their own responses to ideas, sharing those effectively, recognising others' reactions, and allocating tasks reasonably.

Intermediate

(potential target for ages 9-13)

Next, individuals start leading others by managing time and resources to complete tasks, recognising strengths and weaknesses of themselves and others, and using this insight to allocate roles.

Advanced

(potential target for ages 13-17)

Then, individuals use a collaborative leadership approach by facilitating discussions, managing disagreements, and using mentoring and coaching techniques.

Mastery

(potential target for ages 17+)

Finally, individuals demonstrate strong leadership by effectively motivating others, applying emotional intelligence, and thinking about and adapting their leadership style.

Inclusive practice: The order of skill steps is based on data and the best training approach but individuals may not always secure those steps in sequence.



Universal Framework 2.0: Leadership

Supporting, encouraging and motivating others to achieve a shared goal

Getting started	Step 1	Understanding reactions I know how an idea makes me feel
	Step 2	Sharing reactions I explain how an idea makes me feel when appropriate
	Step 3	Recognising reactions I know when others have strong feelings about something
Intermediate	Step 4	Organising tasks I divide up tasks in a fair way
	Step 5	Managing resources I manage team time and resources to complete tasks
	Step 6	Mentoring I use my experience to support others
	Step 7	Self-awareness I recognise how others see my strengths and weaknesses
Advanced	Step 8	Evaluating others I identify others' strengths and weaknesses
	Step 9	Allocating roles I allocate roles based on strengths and weaknesses
	Step 10	Facilitating discussions I structure group discussions
	Step 11	Managing disagreements I support shared decision making
Mastery	Step 12	Coaching I use structured questioning to help others
	Step 13	Motivating others I use a range of approaches to motivate others
	Step 14	Emotional intelligence I respond to others' emotions to lead effectively
	Step 15	Leading thoughtfully I recognise my leadership style and its impact on others
	Step 16	Leading adaptively I adapt my leadership style to the situation

Understanding reactions

I know how an idea makes me feel



Building blocks

- A) I know what emotional reactions are
- B) I know why it is helpful to understand emotional reactions
- C) I know how to understand what emotional reactions mean



Core ideas

A

What emotional reactions are

An *emotional reaction* is the way you feel and respond to something. That might be something that happens, or it might be an idea about something that might happen in the future.

It can be strong or mild, and it can happen quickly, sometimes before you even realise it.

For example, emotional reactions might include:

- Feeling excited when you hear good news.
- Feeling nervous before trying something new.
- Feeling frustrated when something does not go as planned.
- Feeling happy when someone is kind to you.

Emotions often lead to physical changes, such as a fast heartbeat when you are scared or a smile when you are happy. You might also notice thoughts that match your feelings, like worrying when you feel anxious or thinking positively when you feel confident.

B

Why it is helpful to understand emotional reactions

Your emotional reaction can give you useful information about how you truly feel about a situation, person, or idea. By paying attention to your emotions, you can learn more about yourself and what matters to you.

- *Emotions can reveal your values and priorities:*
 - If you feel strongly about something, it might mean it is important to you.
 - If you feel uncomfortable, it could suggest that something goes against your values or past experiences.
- *Emotions can show you hidden thoughts and beliefs:*
 - A feeling of doubt may mean you need more information before making a decision.
 - A sense of excitement could indicate that an idea aligns with your interests and goals.
- *Emotions can act as a warning or a guide:*
 - Feeling uneasy about something might be a sign to slow down and think carefully.
 - Feeling positive and motivated could suggest that something is worth pursuing.



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How to understand what emotional reactions mean

When you react emotionally to an idea, it can give you useful information about what you think and feel deep down. To understand your reaction, try asking yourself a few simple questions:

- *What exactly am I feeling?* (for example, excited, worried, annoyed, hopeful)
- *Why do I feel this way?* (Does it remind me of something? Does it go against my beliefs?)
- *What does this feeling tell me?* (Do I need to take action, or is this just a passing emotion?)

For example:

- If you hear about a new activity and feel nervous, it might mean you are unsure about trying something unfamiliar. This might mean you need help to try it out.
- If you feel excited about an idea, it may mean it matches your interests and values.
- If you feel frustrated, it could mean something does not fit with your personal beliefs or past experiences.

By paying attention to your emotional reactions, you can get a sense of how you feel about ideas. However, sometimes you need to challenge your emotions - which we look at later.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are emotional reactions?
- Why is understanding emotional reactions important?
- How can you understand what emotional reactions might be telling you?
- When have you had different feelings when hearing or seeing different ideas?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to talk about how different ideas make them feel?
- Is the learner able to explain what those feelings mean in respect to the ideas that generate them?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Sharing reactions

I explain how an idea makes me feel when appropriate



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to share reactions to an idea
- B) I know why and when it can be helpful to explain how an idea makes you feel
- C) I know how to explain how an idea makes you feel



Core ideas

A

What it means to share reactions to an idea

Sharing your reactions to an idea means expressing how you feel or what you think about it. This can include whether you find the idea exciting, useful, or confusing, as well as any concerns or suggestions you might have. For example:

- Excitement: “I really like this idea because it’s creative and could solve a big problem in a new way!”
- Concern: “I’m not sure if this idea would work well because it might take too much time or resources.”
- Suggestion: “This idea is interesting - maybe we could make it even better by making it easier for people to use.”

B

Why and when it can be helpful to explain how an idea makes you feel

Sharing your feelings about an idea can help you and others understand things more clearly. It can lead to better discussions, stronger relationships, and improved decision-making.

- It helps others understand your point of view: When you explain how you feel about an idea, people can see why it matters to you. This can help avoid misunderstandings.
- It can lead to better conversations: People are more likely to listen if they understand your emotions, not just your opinions. It can encourage open and respectful discussions.
- It helps you understand your own thoughts and feelings: Putting your emotions into words can make things clearer for you. It may help you see whether your reaction is based on facts, past experiences, or personal values.

Situations where it is helpful to explain how you feel about an idea include:

- When discussing important decisions that affect you.
- When you want to build understanding with others.
- When you feel strongly about something and want to express your point of view.
- When emotions are influencing your response, and sharing them can add meaning to the discussion.

However, there are also situations where slowing down might be helpful:

- When emotions are too strong, and you need time to think before speaking.
- When the conversation is focused on facts and emotions may not be relevant.
- When the other person is not ready to listen or discuss feelings constructively.

For example, if someone suggests an idea that frustrates you, it might be better to take a moment before responding so you can express yourself calmly.



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How to explain how an idea makes you feel

The way you express your feelings about an idea can make a big difference. A thoughtful and respectful approach can lead to better conversations and more positive outcomes.

- *Be clear and honest:* Say what you feel in a simple way (for example, “This idea makes me feel unsure because...”). Avoid exaggerating or hiding your true emotions.
- *Explain why you feel this way:* Give a reason to help others understand (for example, “I feel uncertain because I don’t have enough information yet”).
- *Stay calm and respectful:* Express your feelings without blaming or criticising others. Focus on your experience rather than making assumptions about others’ intentions.
- *Suggest a way forward if possible:* If you have concerns, explain what might help (e.g., “I would feel more comfortable if we discussed possible risks”). If you feel positive, encourage further discussion (e.g., “I feel excited about this idea because... Maybe we could explore it more?”).

By explaining your emotions in a clear and respectful way, you can help create better discussions, build understanding, and find positive solutions.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to share your reactions to an idea?
- Why and when can it be helpful to explain how an idea makes you feel and when might it not be?
- How can you explain how an idea makes you feel in a helpful way?
- When have you shared your reactions to ideas in different ways and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to explain how they feel about an idea in a way that is helpful and constructive, even when they do not feel positively about it?
- Is the learner able to manage their emotional reactions like this day-to-day?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections or observations from others.

Recognising reactions

I know when others have strong feelings about something



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to recognise others' reactions
- B) I know why it is helpful to recognise others' feelings about something
- C) I know how to recognise when others have strong feelings about something



Core ideas

A

What it means to recognise others' reactions

Recognising others' reactions means noticing how people respond to something, whether through their words, facial expressions, body language, or tone of voice. It involves paying attention to clues like excitement, hesitation, confusion, or enthusiasm.

For example:

- A person looking puzzled after hearing an idea might need more explanation.
- Someone giving a thumbs-up and smiling likely agrees with a suggestion.
- A person staying quiet and avoiding eye contact might feel unsure or uncomfortable.

B

Why it is helpful to recognise others' feelings about something

Recognising how others feel can improve communication, strengthen relationships, and help avoid misunderstandings. It allows you to respond in a thoughtful way and work better with others.

- *It helps build positive relationships:* When people feel understood, they are more likely to trust and respect you. It can make conversations and teamwork smoother.
- *It helps prevent bigger arguments:* If you notice that someone is upset or frustrated, you can avoid making the situation worse. Understanding emotions can help you find solutions that work for everyone.
- *It can improve decision-making:* Considering how others feel can help you make fairer and wiser choices.

For example, if someone feels uncertain about a change, recognising this could help you explain things more clearly or offer reassurance. If someone is excited about an idea, understanding their enthusiasm might encourage you to support it.



C

How to recognise when others have strong feelings about something

People do not always say exactly how they feel, but there are signs that can help you notice when someone has strong emotions about something.

- *Listen to their words:* If someone repeats a point or speaks with a lot of energy, it may mean they feel strongly about it. If they hesitate or struggle to find the right words, they might be feeling uncertain or emotional.
- *Pay attention to tone of voice:* A louder or faster voice can suggest excitement, frustration, or urgency. A quieter voice may indicate nervousness, sadness, or hesitation.
- *Observe facial expressions and body language:* Frowning, crossed arms, or looking away might mean someone is unhappy or uncomfortable. Smiling, leaning in, or nodding could show interest and agreement.
- *Notice changes in behaviour:* If someone becomes unusually quiet, they may be upset or deep in thought. If they suddenly speak more than usual, they may have a strong opinion they want to share.

If you are unsure how someone feels, there are ways to find out without making them uncomfortable.

- *Ask gently:* A simple question like “How do you feel about this?” or “Would you like to share your thoughts?” can invite them to express themselves. If they do not want to talk, respect their space.
- *Listen carefully:* Let them speak without interrupting. Show you are listening by nodding or making small responses like “I see” or “That makes sense.”
- *Check for clues in what they say:* If they use words like “I’m not sure” or “I don’t know,” they may be feeling uncertain or worried. If they say, “I really think we should...” with confidence, they probably feel strongly about it.
- *Be patient:* Some people take time to share their feelings, especially if they are unsure or uncomfortable. Giving them time and showing understanding can help them open up.

By paying attention and asking thoughtful questions, you can better understand how others feel and respond in a helpful way.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to recognise others’ feelings about something?
- Why is it helpful to understand how other people feel about something?
- How can you understand how someone is feeling about something?
- When have you understood how someone is feeling about something?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to recognise the feelings of others about an idea?
- Is the learner able to sensitively explore someone’s feelings if they are unsure?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections and observations from others.

Organising tasks

I divide up tasks in a fair way



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to divide up tasks
- B) I know why it is important to divide up tasks fairly
- C) I know how to divide up tasks in a fair way



Core ideas

A

What it means to divide up tasks

Dividing up tasks means sharing work among people rather than one person trying to do everything alone.

Dividing up tasks fairly is an important part of leadership because it helps things get done efficiently and ensures that everyone plays a role. Particularly:

- It helps make the most of everyone's strengths and skills.
- It ensures tasks are completed on time without overwhelming one person.
- It allows leaders to focus on guiding and supporting rather than doing everything themselves.
- It encourages teamwork and shared responsibility.

For example, if a group is planning an event, one person might organise the schedule, another might arrange supplies, and someone else might organise entertainment. This way, no single person is overburdened, and the event is more likely to be a success.

B

Why it is important to divide up tasks fairly

Even if you think you are dividing tasks fairly, others may not see it that way. How people *feel* about the fairness of how tasks are shared can affect motivation, teamwork, and trust.

When people believe tasks are shared fairly:

- They are more likely to stay engaged and committed.
- They feel respected and valued for their contributions.
- They are more willing to cooperate and support each other.

However, when people feel tasks are unfairly divided:

- They may become frustrated or feel unappreciated.
- They might do less work or put in less effort.
- They could lose trust in the person responsible for dividing tasks.

For example, if one person is always given the easiest tasks while another is given the hardest, people may feel the system is unfair. If there is a good reason for this then explaining the decision can help others understand.



C

How to divide up tasks in a fair way

To keep things fair, it helps to be clear about how tasks are shared and to involve others in the process when possible.

- *Consider people's strengths and experience:* Give tasks to those who are best suited to them, but also offer chances for learning new skills.
- *Balance the workload:* Make sure no one person is given too much or too little to do. If some tasks are harder than others, try to share them out fairly over time.
- *Be open about how decisions are made:* Explain why tasks are divided in a certain way so people understand the reasoning. If possible, ask for input from others before finalising who does what.
- *Check in and be flexible:* If someone is struggling with a task, see if adjustments can be made. If someone is consistently given lighter or heavier work, consider whether changes are needed.

For example, if a group is working on a creative project, some may naturally take on planning, while others focus on design or technical tasks. Checking in with everyone and making adjustments if needed can help maintain fairness and motivation.

By dividing tasks in a way that is both *fair and seen to be fair*, you can build stronger teamwork and trust, making it easier for everyone to contribute effectively.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by dividing up tasks when you are a leader?
- Why is it important to think about the fairness of dividing up tasks?
- How can you divide up tasks fairly between your team?
- When have you had to divide up tasks between your team, and how did you do this fairly?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to explain how they would divide up tasks between a group, demonstrating a logical, reasonable approach?
- Is the learner able to allocate tasks between group members which are justified and which group members accept and see as broadly fair?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of having thought through task allocation in groups, and observations from others.

Managing resources

I manage team time and resources to complete tasks



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by team time and resources
- B) I know why team time and resources need managing
- C) I know how to manage team time and resources to complete tasks



Core ideas

A

What is meant by team time and resources

Team time refers to the amount of time a group has to complete a task or project. Since time is limited, it needs to be used wisely to make sure everything is done well and on schedule.

For example, if a team is planning an event, careful time management means setting clear steps, such as deciding on a location first before moving on to invitations. Without this structure, time could be wasted on unnecessary discussions or last minute rushes.

Besides time, a team needs other resources to complete tasks effectively. These can include:

- *Information and knowledge:* Understanding what needs to be done and having access to useful details.
- *Materials and equipment:* The physical or digital tools required for the task.
- *Skills and expertise:* People with the right abilities to carry out different parts of the task.

B

Why team time and resources need managing

Careful management of team time is important because it:

- *Avoids wasted time* by keeping tasks focused and organised.
- *Helps ensure deadlines are met* without last-minute stress.
- *Prevents some people from being overloaded* while others have little to do.
- *Reduces frustration and confusion*, supporting a better working environment.

Careful management of other resources (like information and knowledge, materials and equipment, skills and expertise) to complete tasks is also an important, as it:

- Ensures the team is *skilled and experienced enough* to complete tasks.
- *Prevents delays* caused by missing materials or lack of information.
- Helps *balance workloads* so no one person has too much to handle.
- Ensures resources are used *efficiently and not wasted*.

For example, if a team is creating a presentation, they need access to research materials, someone skilled at designing slides, and enough time to practise. Poor management could mean last-minute scrambling to find information or someone feeling pressured to complete everything alone.



C

How to manage team time and resources to complete tasks

A good leader plans ahead (see *Planning* steps for more) while also staying flexible when things change:

- *Prioritise tasks:* Focus on the most important or urgent tasks first, and set clear goals for the team.
- *Set clear roles and deadlines:* Ensure each team member knows what they are responsible for and when tasks need to be completed.
- *Allocate time effectively:* Avoid overloading team members by giving each task sufficient time and managing workloads.
- *Hold regular check-ins:* Monitor progress, adjust plans if necessary, and ensure the team stays on track.
- *Ensure access to resources:* Make sure tools, equipment, and information are readily available, removing any obstacles.
- *Encourage collaboration and communication:* Model teamwork, allowing members to share ideas and solve problems quickly.
- *Recognise and manage challenges:* Watch for signs if people are struggling and ensure the team works at a sustainable pace.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to manage time and resources as a leader?
- Why do leaders need to be thoughtful about how they manage time and resources?
- How can leaders manage team time and resources to complete tasks?
- When have you had to manage team time and resources to complete tasks?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to manage team time and resources effectively to complete group tasks?
- Is the learner able to demonstrate a good balance of planning and adapting?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of planning for using team time and resources, and observations from others.

Mentoring

I use my experience to support others



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by mentoring
- B) I know why and when mentoring can be helpful
- C) I know how to mentor others effectively



Core ideas

A

What is meant by mentoring

Mentoring is when one person helps another by sharing knowledge, experience, and guidance. It can be:

- *Formal or informal:* Formal mentoring may be part of a structured programme with clear goals. Informal mentoring happens naturally, such as when someone offers advice or support in a casual setting.
- *Based on hierarchy or experience:* Sometimes, a mentor is in a more senior position and supports someone less experienced. Other times, mentoring is simply about one person guiding another based on having done something before.

For example, a person who has organised an event before might mentor someone doing it for the first time, giving tips on planning and problem-solving.

B

Why and when mentoring can be helpful

Mentoring can be very useful in helping people grow, learn new skills, and build confidence. However, it is not always the right approach.

Mentoring can be helpful:

- When someone is new to a task or situation and needs guidance.
- When someone wants to develop skills and learn from someone more experienced.
- When a person is struggling with a challenge and needs support or advice.
- When that person is open to mentoring support and the mentor is willing to offer it.

However, mentoring might not be helpful:

- If the person being mentored does not want or need guidance.
- If the mentor does not have the time, knowledge, or willingness to offer proper support.
- If the mentoring relationship becomes too controlling rather than supportive.

For example, mentoring could help someone learning a new skill by offering tips and encouragement. However, if the mentor tries to take over instead of guiding, it may become unhelpful.



C

How to mentor others effectively

Being a good mentor means offering useful support without taking over or making assumptions. To be an effective mentor:

- *Listen first:* Understand what the person needs rather than assuming you know.
- *Share experience, not just instructions:* Give examples of what worked for you and why. Do not presume that things will be exactly the same for them.
- *Encourage, do not control:* Let the person make their own decisions while offering guidance. Remember, they will have more insight about the context than you.
- *Be patient and supportive:* Growth takes time, and mistakes are part of learning.
- *Offer feedback constructively:* Give advice in a way that builds confidence rather than discourages or makes the individual feel attacked or defensive.

Things to avoid to be an effective mentor:

- *Avoid being too critical:* Focus on helping rather than pointing out faults.
- *Avoid taking over:* Let the person learn by doing, rather than just watching you do it.
- *Avoid imposing your own way:* Different people may succeed with different approaches.
- *Giving too much or too little help:* Find the right balance between guiding and stepping back.

For example, if mentoring someone on public speaking, a good mentor might share tips on preparation and confidence while letting them develop their own style. A less effective mentor might insist they copy their exact method, limiting their ability to own their approach.

By providing the right level of support and encouragement, a mentor can help someone build skills, confidence, and independence in a meaningful way.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is mentoring and who can be a mentor?
- Why and when is mentoring helpful?
- How can you mentor effectively, and what should you avoid doing?
- When have you mentored someone else and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to mentor others on appropriate topics?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Self awareness

I recognise how others see my strengths and weaknesses



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by self awareness
- B) I know why self awareness and reflection are important
- C) I know how to build self awareness of strengths and weaknesses



Core ideas

A

What is meant by self awareness

Self awareness is an individual's ability to accurately recognise things about themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses.

All of these five areas are relevant to a leader in considering their strengths and weaknesses:

- *Knowledge:* A leader's knowledge refers to their understanding of a subject, process, or situation. Having strong knowledge in an area can help with confidence and decision-making, while a lack of knowledge may lead to mistakes or hesitation.
- *Relationships* are also important, as leadership involves working with others. A leader who builds trust and communicates well can create strong teamwork, whereas struggling with relationships can lead to misunderstandings or conflict.
- *Character strengths* shape the way a leader approaches challenges. Qualities like patience, resilience, honesty, and decisiveness can inspire confidence in others. On the other hand, impatience, self-doubt, or being too controlling may create difficulties.
- *Essential skills* also play a role in leadership. Being good at the other essential skills can make tasks easier, while struggling with these skills can slow progress.
- *Finally, experience* helps shape leadership abilities. Learning from past situations can provide valuable insight and help avoid mistakes. However, limited experience in certain areas may make some situations feel unfamiliar or challenging.

B

Why self awareness and reflection are important

Self awareness is key to personal growth. Leaders can take simple steps to understand what they do well and where they need to improve.

- *Reflect on past experiences:* Think about what has gone well in different situations and what has been difficult. Consider which tasks feel easy and enjoyable versus those that feel challenging.
- *Ask yourself key questions:* What do people often praise you for? What tasks do you avoid or struggle with? When have you felt most confident or most unsure?
- *Try new challenges:* Stepping outside of your comfort zone can highlight strengths and weaknesses. You may discover hidden talents or areas that need more focus.

Developing a mindset of seeking growth and self-development is critical. Too many leaders feel they need to avoid showing weakness and therefore stop developing as leaders.



C

How to build self awareness of strengths and weaknesses

Understanding how others see you can provide useful insights that self-reflection alone might miss.

- *Ask for feedback:* Request honest opinions from people who have seen you in different situations. Ask specific questions, such as “What do you think I do well?” and “What could I improve?”
- *Give different feedback opportunities:* Some people will be too nervous to give you direct feedback, especially if you are senior to them. Think about whether you could use anonymised tools or other structures like 360 feedback to encourage feedback.
- *Observe how people react to you:* Notice how people respond when you speak, make decisions, or work in a team. When do they often turn to you for advice, and when do they hesitate?
- *Look for patterns in feedback:* If multiple people mention the same strength or weakness, it's worth paying attention to. One person's opinion may not be accurate, but repeated feedback can highlight real areas for improvement.
- *Demonstrate being open to learning:* Avoid being defensive about weaknesses - see them as opportunities to grow. Recognising strengths can also build confidence and encourage further development. Giving examples to your team of things that you are wanting to improve on will give them confidence that you really are open to feedback.

By developing self-awareness and seeking feedback, leaders can better understand their strengths and weaknesses, leading to more effective and balanced leadership.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does self awareness mean?
- Why is self awareness important for leadership and in what areas?
- How can you build up an understanding of how others see you?
- When have you reviewed your strengths and weaknesses as a leader?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses as a leader at an appropriate level and with honesty and accuracy?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of written analysis of their leadership strengths and weaknesses, and observations from others.

Evaluating others

I identify others' strengths and weaknesses



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to evaluate others
- B) I know why understanding others' strengths and weaknesses is helpful
- C) I know how to identify others' strengths and weaknesses



Core ideas

A

What it means to evaluate others

Evaluating others is about building up a sense of their relative strengths and weaknesses. When assessing a team, leaders should consider different areas where strengths and weaknesses may exist.

- A team's *knowledge* refers to the information and expertise members have in different areas. Some people may have deep knowledge about specific topics, while others may lack certain information needed for tasks.
- *Relationships* within and beyond a team affect how well members work together. Some people naturally build strong connections, communicate clearly, and work well with others. Others may struggle with teamwork, misunderstand instructions, or find it difficult to express their ideas.
- *Character strengths* influence how individuals approach challenges. Some people show resilience, patience, or creativity, while others may struggle with self-doubt, impatience, or resistance to change.
- *Essential skills* are also important. Some team members may already be strong in areas such as creativity, problem solving, or communication, while others may not.
- Finally, *experience* plays a key role in how confident and capable team members feel. Some may have handled similar tasks before and know how to manage challenges, while others may be new to certain situations and require guidance.

B

Why understanding others' strengths and weaknesses is helpful

Understanding team members' strengths and weaknesses allows leaders to make better decisions, create balanced teams, and provide the right support through:

- *Better task allocation:* Assigning tasks based on strengths ensures that work is completed efficiently and to a high standard.
- *Opportunities for growth:* Recognising weaknesses allows leaders to provide learning and development opportunities.
- *Improved teamwork:* Understanding how people interact helps in building strong relationships and avoiding conflicts.
- *Increased confidence and motivation:* Encouraging people to use their strengths can boost morale and job satisfaction.
- *Better problem-solving:* A team with a good mix of strengths can tackle challenges more effectively than one where skills and knowledge gaps are ignored.

For example, if a leader knows that one person is highly organised but struggles with creativity, and another is full of ideas but finds planning difficult, pairing them together can create a more balanced and productive approach.



C

How to identify others' strengths and weaknesses

It is important to assess strengths and weaknesses fairly and accurately, without making assumptions or being influenced by biases.

- *Observe actions, not just words:* Sometimes, people may say they are strong in an area but struggle in practice, or they may underestimate their own abilities.
- *Gather feedback from different sources:* Ask team members about their own strengths and weaknesses, but also seek feedback from others who have worked with them.
- *Look at results over time:* Instead of judging based on one situation, consider patterns in performance and behaviour.
- *Avoid favouritism or assumptions:* Ensure that assessments are based on actual work and results rather than personal preferences.
- *Support a mindset of growth:* Strengths and weaknesses are not fixed - people can improve with experience and training.

By assessing team members fairly and thoughtfully, leaders can create stronger, more effective teams where everyone has the opportunity to contribute and grow.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are the main dimensions along which a leader should consider their team's strengths and weaknesses?
- Why is it helpful to understand your team's strengths and weaknesses?
- How can you assess a team's strengths and weaknesses while avoiding biases?
- When have you assessed the strengths and weaknesses of a team?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to reflect effectively on the relevant strengths and weaknesses of a team that they are leading?
- Is the learner able to reflect while avoiding biases or assumptions?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of analysing others' strengths and weaknesses, and observations from others.

Allocating roles

I allocate roles based on strengths and weaknesses



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by a role
- B) I know why strengths and weaknesses matter when allocating roles
- C) I know how to allocate roles based on strengths and weaknesses



Core ideas

A

What is meant by a role

A *role* is a set of responsibilities assigned to a person. It defines what they are expected to do and how they contribute to a team. A well-defined role helps individuals understand their duties and ensures that work is completed efficiently.

For larger roles, important details should be clearly outlined:

- *Title:* A simple description that reflects the main focus of the role.
- *Job description:* A summary of key responsibilities and goals.
- *Required and desirable skills:* Essential abilities needed for the role, as well as additional skills that would be helpful.
- *Qualifications and knowledge:* Any formal training, education, or technical knowledge or experience required to perform well in the role.
- *Behaviours:* The way the person in the role is expected to behave.

Shorter-term roles (for example on a short project) may not need a full job description, but it is still important for the individual to understand what they are responsible for. Even in informal situations, being clear on expectations helps prevent confusion and ensures tasks are completed and goals achieved.

For example, if a group is organising an event, each person should know whether they are responsible for planning, communication, or logistics, even if there is no formal role description.

B

Why strengths and weaknesses matter when allocating roles

Allocating roles without considering people's strengths and weaknesses can lead to inefficiency and frustration. Matching individuals to roles based on their abilities ensures tasks are completed more effectively and with greater confidence.

- *Increases efficiency:* Assigning tasks to people with the right skills and knowledge saves time and reduces errors.
- *Builds confidence and motivation:* People are more likely to enjoy and excel in roles that match their strengths.
- *Encourages growth:* Identifying weaknesses can highlight areas where training or support is needed.
- *Strengthens teamwork:* Ensuring a balance of skills within a team helps create a more effective and cooperative working environment.

For example, if someone is highly organised but struggles with creative tasks, giving them a planning role rather than a design role makes better use of their strengths. At the same time, offering them opportunities to develop creative skills could help them grow in the future.



C

How to allocate roles based on strengths and weaknesses

To allocate roles effectively, leaders should consider both what a person is already good at and where they have the potential to improve.

- *Assess skills and experience:* Look at what individuals have done before and what they have shown they can do well.
- *Ask for input:* People often have insights into their own strengths and may also have preferences for certain roles.
- *Balance strengths within a team:* Ensure a mix of skills so that different people can support each other.
- *Consider future development:* Sometimes, giving someone a role slightly outside their comfort zone can help them grow.
- *Review and adjust if needed:* Roles should not be fixed permanently - if something is not working or someone needs a new challenge then changes can be made.

By carefully matching roles to strengths and providing opportunities for development, leaders can create a more productive and engaged team. It is important at all times to minimise risks of bias, so using data can be helpful. In formal recruitment, it is particularly important to avoid bias and to ensure transparency and fairness in processes to get the best people.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is a role and what information is it important to be clear on?
- Why is it important to analyse individuals' strengths and weaknesses when allocating roles?
- How can you allocate roles based on evaluating individuals?
- When have you allocated roles in a team, and how did you do so?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to define and allocate roles appropriately in a team, making justifiable decisions?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of role planning and allocation for a team, and observations from others.

Facilitating discussions

I structure group discussions



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to structure and facilitate group discussions
- B) I know why and when group discussions are useful
- C) I know how to facilitate a group discussion effectively



Core ideas

A

What it means to structure and facilitate group discussions

Facilitating and structuring group discussions as a leader means guiding conversations by setting clear objectives, ensuring everyone has a chance to contribute, keeping discussions focused, and organising ideas to reach productive outcomes.

Different roles can help with this:

- *Chair*: Leads the meeting, keeps people focused on the agenda, and ensures everyone has a chance to contribute.
- *Note-taker*: Records key points, decisions, and action items so that nothing is forgotten after the meeting.
- *Timekeeper*: Helps manage time by reminding the group when they need to move on to the next topic.
- *Presenter(s)*: Shares information, updates, or key points on specific topics.

In smaller meetings, one person may take on multiple roles. In larger discussions, having different people in these roles can help the meeting run more smoothly.

B

Why and when group discussions are useful

A well-organised meeting helps people share ideas, make decisions, and complete tasks efficiently. To ensure the discussion is useful, follow these key steps:

- *Decide if a meeting is required*: Meetings take time, so consider whether the discussion could happen in a different way (for example, email or shared document). If input from multiple people is needed in real-time, a meeting is likely the best option.
- *Invite the right people*: Only include those who need to be involved to avoid unnecessary delays or distractions.
- *Choose a suitable venue or format*: Whether in person or online, the space should be comfortable, quiet, and allow everyone to participate.
- *Pick the correct time and duration*: Schedule the meeting at a time that works for most people and keep it as short as possible while still covering key points.
- *Share an agenda in advance*: A clear list of discussion points helps people prepare and keeps the meeting focused.
- *Provide pre-reading or background information*: If people need to review details before the meeting, send these in advance to save time and improve discussion quality.



C

How to facilitate a group discussion effectively

Good facilitation ensures that discussions are productive and that everyone has a chance to contribute.

- *Start with a clear purpose:* Remind the group why they are meeting and what needs to be achieved.
- *Follow the agenda:* Keep discussions on track and avoid going off-topic.
- *Encourage everyone to participate:* Some people may speak more than others, so invite quieter individuals to share their views.
- *Manage disagreements calmly:* If people have different opinions, explore these ideas openly and constructively. This is explored more in the next step.
- *Do not let people talk over each other:* Ensure that there is one conversation going on, and that everyone feels their opinion is heard respectfully.
- *Keep to time:* Balance the need for wide input with keeping the conversation moving towards decisions and actions.
- *Summarise key points:* Remind everyone of important decisions and next steps before ending the meeting.
- *Follow up afterwards:* Share meeting notes and action items so that everyone knows what to do next.

By planning carefully, assigning clear roles, and managing discussions effectively, discussions can be productive and useful.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to structure and facilitate a group discussion?
- Why and when are group discussions helpful?
- How can you facilitate a meeting or discussion effectively?
- When have you structured and facilitated a group discussion effectively?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to set up a meeting or discussion effectively, following the guidelines set out?
- Is the learner able to facilitate the meeting or discussion, including others and completing the meeting in good time?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of having prepared and facilitated a meeting (for example, from an agenda and notes afterwards), and observations from others.

Managing disagreements

I support shared decision making



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to manage disagreements
- B) I know why and when disagreements can be helpful or unhelpful
- C) I know how to manage disagreements to reach shared decisions



Core ideas

A

What it means to manage disagreements

Managing disagreements as a leader means guiding discussions so that different views contribute to better solutions.

Disagreements are valuable because they bring new ideas and perspectives, but they must stay respectful and focused. A good leader encourages open discussion, listens actively, and helps the team find common ground.

By keeping disagreements productive, addressing concerns fairly, and steering the group towards shared solutions, a leader turns disagreement into a positive force for stronger decisions and better outcomes.

B

Why and when disagreements can be helpful or unhelpful

Disagreements can be a positive part of decision-making when they encourage better thinking and lead to stronger outcomes. Some key benefits include:

- *Avoiding groupthink:* Groupthink is when a group of people move too quickly to a consensus decision. If everyone agrees too quickly, important risks or alternative ideas might be ignored. A healthy disagreement helps challenge assumptions and leads to better decisions.
- *Encouraging deeper thinking:* When people explain and defend their views, they often think more carefully about their reasoning, leading to stronger arguments and better solutions.
- *Bringing in different perspectives:* People have different experiences, knowledge, and ways of thinking. A discussion that includes diverse viewpoints is more likely to consider all important factors.
- *Improving final decisions:* When different ideas are tested and discussed, the group is more likely to choose the best solution rather than just the first one suggested.

However, not all disagreements are productive. Some can damage relationships, slow progress, or create a negative atmosphere. Disagreements can become unhelpful when:

- *They are personal or emotional:* If people focus on attacking each other rather than discussing ideas, trust and respect can break down.
- *They block progress:* If a group spends too long arguing without moving towards a solution, decisions may be delayed or never made.
- *They create divisions:* When disagreements turn into ongoing conflicts, people may stop working together effectively, making teamwork difficult.
- *They cause stress or frustration:* If disagreements become aggressive or repetitive, they can make people feel uncomfortable or stressed.



C

How to manage disagreements to reach shared decisions

To make disagreements useful rather than harmful, they should be managed carefully. Some ways to do this include:

- *Encourage respectful discussions:* Make sure people listen to each other and focus on the issue rather than attacking individuals.
- *Ensure clarity about shared goals:* Disagreements often occur because individuals are trying to solve different problems or have different success criteria in mind - being clear and consistent in these can help.
- *Find common ground:* Even when people disagree, there are often areas where they share the same goals or concerns. Focusing on these can help move towards a solution.
- *Set clear decision-making processes:* Agree in advance how decisions will be made so that disagreements do not cause delays.
- *Know when to move on:* If a discussion is not leading to progress, suggest taking a break or agreeing to disagree on minor points while focusing on the bigger picture.
- *Use a neutral person if needed:* If disagreements are becoming difficult, having someone act as a mediator can help keep discussions productive.

By managing disagreements well, groups can make better decisions while maintaining positive relationships.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to manage disagreements?
- Why and when can disagreements be helpful or unhelpful?
- How can you manage disagreements towards better solutions?
- When have you shown you can manage disagreements towards reaching solutions?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to explore disagreements?
- Is the learner able to manage disagreements in a group constructively to reach a good decision?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Coaching

I use structured questioning to help others



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by coaching
- B) I know why and when coaching is useful
- C) I know how to coach someone effectively



Core ideas

A

What is meant by coaching

Coaching is a process that helps individuals improve their skills, confidence, or performance by the coach guiding them towards finding their own solutions. A coach asks open questions, listens carefully, and helps an individual to find their own answers and create their own actions rather than simply giving advice.

Coaching is different from mentoring:

- *Coaching focuses on development:* The coach helps the person think through challenges and improve their abilities, often without needing direct experience in the same area.
- *Mentoring focuses on guidance:* A mentor shares their own experiences and knowledge to support someone's growth, often in a field where they have more expertise. (More on this in Step 6)

For example, a coach might help someone improve their time management by asking questions like, “*What challenges do you face when organising your tasks?*” rather than telling them exactly what to do. A mentor, on the other hand, might share their own methods for managing time effectively.

B

Why and when coaching is useful

Coaching can be highly effective in many situations, but it is not always the right approach. Coaching can be helpful:

- *To develop skills and confidence:* Coaching helps people find their own solutions, which can lead to lasting improvements.
- *When someone is open to learning:* If a person is motivated to grow and improve, coaching can provide valuable support.
- *For problem-solving:* Coaching helps people think through challenges in a structured way rather than relying on others for answers.

When coaching is less helpful:

- *If someone lacks basic knowledge:* If a person needs direct instruction to complete a task, mentoring or training may be more useful.
- *When quick decisions are needed:* Coaching takes time, so it may not be suitable in urgent situations.
- *If a person is not engaged:* Coaching relies on the individual being willing to reflect and take action. If they are not interested in learning, coaching may not be effective.



C

How to coach someone effectively

To coach someone successfully, it is important to create a supportive and structured environment:

- *Listen actively:* Give the person time to explain their thoughts without interruption.
- *Ask open-ended questions:* Questions like “What do you think is stopping you?” encourage reflection and problem-solving. See Listening for more.
- *Encourage self-awareness:* Help the person recognise their strengths and challenges by guiding them to find their own insights.
- *Set clear goals:* Work together to define what success looks like and create a plan to achieve it.
- *Provide encouragement:* Recognise progress and help build confidence by focusing on what is working well.

At the same time, the coach should avoid:

- *Giving too many answers:* Coaching is about helping people think for themselves, not telling them what to do.
- *Judging or criticising:* Coaching should be supportive, not about pointing out faults.
- *Rushing the process:* Change takes time, so patience is important.

By using good coaching techniques and avoiding common mistakes, coaches can help individuals grow in confidence and ability.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is coaching and how does it compare to mentoring?
- Why and when is coaching helpful and when is it not?
- How can you coach someone effectively?
- When have you shown you can coach someone effectively?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to coach someone else effectively, demonstrating good practice?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Motivating others

I use a range of approaches to motivate others



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by motivation
- B) I know why it is important for leaders to motivate others
- C) I know how to motivate others



Core ideas

A

What is meant by motivation

Motivation is the energy and drive that encourages people to take action, stay committed, and do their best. In teamwork, motivation affects how well individuals contribute and how engaged they feel in working towards shared goals.

Different people are motivated by different things. Some common motivators in a team include:

- *A sense of purpose:* Feeling that their work matters and contributes to something important.
- *Clear goals:* Knowing what needs to be achieved and understanding their role in reaching it.
- *Recognition and appreciation:* Feeling valued for their contributions and efforts.
- *Personal growth:* Opportunities to learn new skills, take on challenges, and improve.
- *Supportive relationships:* Working in a positive and respectful environment where people feel included and encouraged.
- *A sense of progress:* Seeing results and knowing that their efforts are making a difference.
- *Ownership and autonomy:* The sense of being responsible for an outcome and feeling empowered to take the best course of action to achieve it.

Of course, individual motivations vary: one team member may feel motivated by learning new skills, while another may be driven by receiving positive feedback and recognition.

B

Why it is important for leaders to motivate others

A leader plays an important role in keeping both individuals and the team as a whole motivated. Without motivation, people may struggle to stay engaged and committed. Thinking about motivation helps because:

- *It keeps people focused and productive:* When team members are motivated, they are more likely to complete tasks efficiently and with care.
- *It improves teamwork:* A motivated team works better together, communicates more effectively, and supports each other.
- *It helps prevent frustration and disengagement:* If people feel unmotivated, they may lose interest, contribute less, or even leave the team.
- *It encourages creativity and problem solving:* Motivated individuals are more likely to share ideas and look for ways to improve.
- *It builds a positive atmosphere:* When people enjoy what they are doing, they are more likely to stay committed and bring energy to the group.



C

How to motivate others

Different people respond to different motivators, so it is helpful to use a variety of approaches:

- *Show appreciation:* Recognise and thank people for their contributions, both publicly and privately.
- *Give clear goals:* Help individuals understand what needs to be done and how their work fits into the bigger picture.
- *Encourage personal development:* Offer opportunities to learn new skills and take on challenges.
- *Create a positive environment:* Foster teamwork, respect, and open communication.
- *Support autonomy:* Allow people to have some control over their tasks and how they complete them.
- *Provide constructive feedback:* Help individuals see what they are doing well and where they can improve.
- *Celebrate progress:* Acknowledge milestones and achievements, even small ones.
- *Provide appropriate reward:* Recognise progress with promotions and pay, where appropriate in a workplace setting.

By understanding what motivates individuals and using different approaches, a leader can help create a motivated and engaged team.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is motivation and what motivates people?
- Why should a leader care about the motivation of individuals in their team?
- How can a leader motivate individuals in their team?
- When have you shown that you can motivate others in your team?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to motivate others in their team?
- Is the learner able to reflect on how they approached motivating their team, and how they varied their approach by individuals?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Emotional intelligence

I respond to others' emotions to lead effectively



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by emotional intelligence
- B) I know why emotional intelligence is important
- C) I know how to build emotional intelligence



Core ideas

A

What is meant by emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognise, understand, and manage both your own emotions and the emotions of others. It helps people handle relationships, communicate effectively, and respond to challenges in a thoughtful way. As such, it is an important part of effective leadership.

Emotional intelligence is made up of several key parts:

- *Self awareness*: Understanding your own emotions and how they influence your thoughts and actions.
- *Self regulation*: Managing your emotions in a way that helps you stay calm, adaptable, and in control.
- *Motivation*: Using emotions to stay focused and committed to goals.
- *Empathy*: Recognising and considering the feelings of others.
- *Social skills*: Communicating well, resolving conflicts, and working effectively with different people.

For example, a person with strong emotional intelligence might stay calm during a stressful situation, offer support to someone who is struggling, or adjust their tone and approach depending on how others feel.

B

Why emotional intelligence is important

An advanced leader does more than just manage tasks - they also support and guide people. Emotional intelligence helps leaders to:

- *Make better decisions*: Leaders who understand their own emotions can think clearly and avoid making choices based on frustration or stress.
- *Build strong relationships*: Leaders with high emotional intelligence find it easier to communicate well, listen to others, and create positive connections.
- *Motivate and inspire*: Understanding what people need emotionally helps leaders encourage and support their team effectively.
- *Handle conflict calmly*: Leaders with emotional intelligence can resolve disagreements in a fair and thoughtful way.
- *Adapt to challenges*: By managing their own emotions, leaders can stay focused and flexible when faced with difficulties.

For example, if a leader notices that someone in their team is feeling discouraged, they might offer encouragement or adjust their approach to provide support. If a conflict arises, an emotionally intelligent leader listens carefully and works towards a solution rather than reacting with frustration.



C

How to build emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a skill step that can be developed over time with practice and self-awareness. Here are some ways to improve it:

- *Pay attention to your emotions:* Take time to notice how you feel in different situations and how those emotions affect your actions.
- *Learn to pause before reacting:* When faced with a strong emotion, take a moment to think before responding.
- *Practice empathy:* Try to understand other people's feelings by listening carefully and considering their perspective. Try to see things from their perspective.
- *Improve communication:* Think about how to express your thoughts and emotions clearly but respectfully in ways that show empathy.
- *Manage stress:* Find healthy ways to handle pressure, such as taking deep breaths, staying organised, or talking to someone for support to avoid emotional overload.
- *Reflect on interactions:* After conversations or difficult situations, think about what went well and what could be improved.

For example, if you are getting frustrated in a conversation, pausing to take a breath and think before responding can help prevent a negative reaction. If a colleague seems upset, asking, "*Is there anything I can do to help?*" shows empathy and strengthens relationships.

By building emotional intelligence, you can improve your ability to handle challenges, connect with others, and lead effectively.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is emotional intelligence?
- Why is emotional intelligence an important part of advanced leadership?
- How can you build emotional intelligence?
- When and how have you demonstrated emotional intelligence?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate emotional intelligence in leadership interactions?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Leading thoughtfully

I recognise my leadership style and its impact on others



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by leadership styles
- B) I know why it is important to understand leadership styles
- C) I know how to understand my leadership style



Core ideas

A

What is meant by leadership styles

A *leadership style* is the way a leader makes decisions, communicates with others, and guides their team. Different leadership styles suit different situations, and each has strengths and weaknesses. Here are some common styles:

- *Autocratic*: The leader makes decisions alone and expects others to follow instructions.
- *Bureaucratic*: Leadership follows strict rules and procedures.
- *Charismatic*: The leader's personality and energy encourage others to follow by inspiring and motivating them.
- *Coaching*: The leader focuses on developing individuals, helping them improve their skills and reach their potential.
- *Democratic*: Decisions are made with input from the group and might even be voted on before decisions are finalised.
- *Hands-off (Laissez-faire)*: The leader gives people freedom to make their own decisions and take responsibility.
- *Transactional*: The leader sets clear rules and expectations, offering rewards for good performance and consequences for poor performance.
- *Transformational*: The leader motivates and inspires people to achieve a shared vision.

B

Why it is important to understand leadership styles

Being aware of your leadership style helps you understand how your approach affects others. All leadership styles have an upside and a downside - there is no one consistently best leadership style.

It is also the case that sometimes individuals show different leadership styles in different situations, so being aware of that is important. Great understanding of leadership styles allows you to adapt to different situations, build stronger relationships, and make better decisions. A leader who understands their style can balance strengths and weaknesses, creating a more effective and motivated team.



C

How to understand your leadership style

The way a leader interacts with their team can have a big impact on motivation, performance, and relationships. Here are some ways different leadership styles influence a team:

- *Autocratic leadership* can create fast decisions but may make people feel unheard or unvalued.
- *Bureaucratic leadership* ensures consistency but may limit innovation and flexibility.
- *Charismatic leadership* can energise a group but may lead to dependence on the leader rather than building long-term stability.
- *Coaching leadership* helps individuals develop their skills but requires time and patience.
- *Democratic leadership* makes people feel included and valued but can slow down decision-making.
- *Hands-off leadership* gives freedom but may cause confusion if people need guidance.
- *Transactional leadership* sets clear expectations but may not encourage deeper engagement or creativity.
- *Transformational leadership* can inspire and motivate a team but requires strong communication and trust.



By understanding how different leadership styles affect a team, leaders can be thoughtful about what the positive and negative effects of their approach might be.

Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What are some of the main leadership styles?
- Why is it helpful for a leader to understand their default leadership style?
- What might the impact of different leadership styles be on a team?
- When have you reflected on your leadership style and its impact on others?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to accurately reflect on their own leadership style and justify why they believe it is correct for them?
- Is this learner able to accurately reflect on the possible effects of their leadership style on their team?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of analysing their leadership style with corroboration from others, as well as observations from others.

Leading adaptively

I adapt my leadership style to the situation



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by adapting leadership style to the situation
- B) I know why effective leaders adapt their leadership style
- C) I know how to effectively adapt leadership style to the situation



Core ideas

A

What is meant by adapting leadership style to the situation

Different leadership styles are useful in different situations:

Leadership style	When better	When worse
<i>Autocratic:</i> The leader makes decisions alone and expects others to follow instructions.	When quick decisions are needed or in pressured situations.	When team input or creativity is important.
<i>Bureaucratic:</i> Leadership follows strict rules and procedures.	When strict rules must be followed.	When flexibility or innovation is needed.
<i>Charismatic:</i> The leader's personality and energy encourage others to follow by inspiring and motivating them.	When energising the team is important.	When the leader's personality overshadows.
<i>Coaching:</i> The leader focuses on developing individuals, helping them improve their skills and progress.	When personal development is needed.	When immediate results are necessary.
<i>Democratic:</i> Decisions are made with input from the group and might even be voted on before decisions are finalised.	When team collaboration or creativity is needed.	When quick decisions are required.
<i>Hands-off (Laissez-faire):</i> The leader gives people freedom to make their own decisions and take responsibility.	With experienced, self-motivated teams.	When people need more guidance or accountability.
<i>Transactional:</i> The leader sets clear rules and expectations, offering rewards and consequences.	When clear tasks and rewards are needed.	When motivation or creativity is required.
<i>Transformational:</i> The leader motivates and inspires people to achieve a shared vision.	When you need to inspire or drive change.	When the team needs structure and guidance.



B

Why effective leaders adapt their leadership style

Great leaders adjust their style to fit the situation and the team's needs. By doing so, they:

- *Respond to team needs* by offering the right guidance or support based on the task or challenge.
- *Improve decision-making* by selecting the most appropriate style for the situation.
- *Boost motivation* through the right approach—whether it's encouraging, rewarding, or empowering.
- *Build trust* by showing flexibility and consideration for others.

For example, a leader might use a transformational style for team-building and a transactional style when clear direction is needed for a task.

C

How to effectively adapt leadership style to the situation

To adapt effectively, follow these steps:

- *Assess the situation* to decide which style suits the task and timeline.
- *Understand your team* by knowing their strengths, weaknesses, and preferences.
- *Be flexible* and adjust your style based on the team's response or changing circumstances.
- *Communicate clearly* to ensure the team understands expectations and reasoning.
- *Lead by example*, demonstrating the behaviours you want to see in others.
- *Seek feedback* to learn how your leadership is being received and make improvements.

For example, if your team is disengaged, a coaching style can offer support. If there's a need for quick decisions, an autocratic style might be necessary.

By understanding your team's needs and adjusting your style, you can become a more effective and responsive leader.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to adjust your leadership style to the situation?
- Why is it important for advanced leaders to adapt their leadership style?
- How can leaders adjust their leadership style for the setting?
- When have you shown that you can adjust your leadership style to different situations and what was the impact?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to adjust their leadership style to make it as effective as possible for the setting?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.





Overview: Teamwork

Working cooperatively with others to achieve a shared goal

This skill is about how individuals work with others to achieve a shared goal - whether they are in a formal team or collaborating informally.

Getting started

(potential target for ages 5-9)

Initially, individuals show they can work with others, behaving appropriately for the setting, keeping time reliably and taking responsibility for simple tasks.

Intermediate

(potential target for ages 9-13)

Next, individuals contribute to teams by supporting others, being accountable for their goals, contributing to group activities, and valuing others' contributions.

Advanced

(potential target for ages 13-17)

Then, individuals make teams more effective by being inclusive, being diplomatic, resolving conflicts, and building networks.

Mastery

(potential target for ages 17+)

Finally, individuals drive team performance by reflecting and suggesting improvements, supporting collective learning, developing their peers, and improving the team's culture.

Inclusive practice: The order of skill steps is based on data and the best training approach but individuals may not always secure those steps in sequence.



Universal Framework 2.0: Teamwork

Working cooperatively with others to achieve a shared goal

Getting started	Step 1	Working together I work with others when appropriate
	Step 2	Adjusting behaviour I behave in a way that fits the setting
	Step 3	Time keeping I keep to time reliably
Intermediate	Step 4	Taking responsibility I take responsibility for completing tasks
	Step 5	Supporting others I help others as much as I can
	Step 6	Being accountable I am accountable for my goals
	Step 7	Contributing I contribute to group activity
	Step 8	Valuing others I recognise the value of others' ideas
Advanced	Step 9	Being inclusive I support others to thrive in a group
	Step 10	Being diplomatic I avoid creating unhelpful conflicts
	Step 11	Resolving conflicts I work collaboratively to resolve unhelpful conflicts
	Step 12	Networking I build helpful relationships beyond my team
Mastery	Step 13	Reflecting collectively I reflect on progress and suggest improvements
	Step 14	Learning collectively I evaluate successes and failures and share lessons
	Step 15	Developing others I support my peers to develop
	Step 16	Improving culture I improve the team culture



Working together

I work with others when appropriate



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to work with others
- B) I know why and when working with others can be helpful
- C) I know how to work well with others



Core ideas

A

What it means to work with others

Working with others means acting together to achieve a shared goal.

It can take different forms depending on the situation. Sometimes it might be:

- In a team where people are given different jobs they have to stick to.
- Working together in a relaxed way without strict rules like helping a friend solve a problem or talking about ideas together.

Working together might also happen in different areas of life including:

- *Education:* Learning together, group study, or class discussions.
- *Work:* Cooperating with colleagues to complete tasks.
- *Wider life:* Planning community activities, helping family, or working on shared hobbies.

No matter the setting, good teamwork means listening, sharing ideas, and respecting others.

B

Why and when working with others can be helpful

Working with others can bring many benefits, such as:

- *Bringing different talents together:* Everyone has unique skills and knowledge, and working together can combine these strengths.
- *Coming up with new ideas:* Discussing ideas makes them better.
- *Making tasks easier:* Sharing the work helps complete tasks more efficiently.
- *Learning from others:* Working with different people can improve your own skills and understanding.
- *Building strong relationships:* Positive teamwork can lead to friendships and support.
- *Improving motivation:* Being part of a group can help keep you engaged and focused.

While some tasks can be done alone, there are times when working with others is particularly useful:

- *When solving problems:* Different ideas can help find the best solution.
- *When a task requires different skills:* Some jobs need people who are experts in different things, making teamwork essential.
- *When time is limited:* Sharing the work can help get things done on time.
- *When supporting someone:* Helping others can make a big difference in their success.

Seeing when teamwork is helpful can help you work more effectively and achieve better outcomes.



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C**How to work well with others**

Things that you can do to work well with others:

- Be friendly and respectful when talking to others.
- Smile, use kind words, and listen carefully.
- Stay patient, even when things don't go as planned.
- Focus on finding solutions rather than complaining.
- Show appreciation by saying "thank you" and recognising others' efforts.
- Encourage teamwork by being helpful and cooperative.

Things that you should try not to do to work well with others:

- Interrupt or ignore others when they are speaking.
- Be rude or too critical.
- Complain too much without offering solutions.
- Let small disagreements turn into big arguments.
- Exclude or ignore team members.

A positive attitude helps create a supportive and enjoyable environment for everyone.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to work well with people?
- Why and when is it helpful to work with other people?
- How can you work well with other people, and what should you not do?
- When have you shown you can work well with other people?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to interact positively with others?
- Is the learner able to work with others when it is the best approach?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Adjusting behaviour

I behave in a way that fits the setting



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by behaviour
- B) I know why behaving in the right way is helpful
- C) I know how to adjust behaviour



Core ideas

A

What is meant by behaviour

Behaviour is how we act or what we do in different situations, particularly towards other people. When we talk about appropriate behaviour, it means that we are acting well for the situation.

Behaviour includes things like:

- *How we talk to other people:* like being polite, friendly and helpful.
- *What we talk about:* the topics that we cover.
- *How we dress:* whether there is a uniform or dress code.
- *The attitude we have towards what we are doing:* including being on time and working hard.
- *The values we demonstrate:* like honesty, kindness, courageousness and many others.

Remember, that what is seen as 'normal' behaviour can be very different in different cultures or contexts.

B

Why behaving in the right way is helpful

There are some behaviours which are never appropriate but there are some behaviours which might be fine in some settings or cultures which are not acceptable in others. As some examples:

- *We might dress differently* at work or attending school or college to how we might dress with our friends or when taking part in sports activities. Some workplaces have uniforms you are expected to wear, and others might have a broader range of acceptable clothes.
- *What we talk about* might vary in different settings. With friends or family, you might be able to talk about anything and express your opinions freely and strongly. In school or a workplace, you have to be more careful to avoid upsetting or offending people. There might also be humour that you could share with friends you know well that you would not share with other people.
- *How we talk to people* is likely to be different too. With friends, we are probably relaxed in our language but might use slang or other words that we use. In work or school, we might think more carefully about being polite.



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C**How to adjust behaviour**

There are some behaviours which are never acceptable. These might include:

- Bullying someone.
- Harassing or annoying someone.
- Causing other people upset or distress.
- Deliberately offending someone.
- Breaking the law or persuading someone else to.
- Putting ourselves or others in danger.

Whatever the setting, we should be careful to avoid these behaviours. You might find out about appropriate behaviour in the setting from:

- Rules that you are shown or told about.
- Customs or cultural practices that you learn about.
- Seeing what other people do.

Working out what is appropriate in new settings can take a little bit of time, and it is always worth starting carefully and relaxing a little bit more if you see that is acceptable later on.

In the end, the acceptable behaviours are all down to the values of where you are, and what is considered 'normal' there.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by behaviours?
- Why is it helpful to understand the behaviours for a setting?
- How can you adjust your behaviour to the setting?
- When have you had to adjust your behaviour to different settings?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate consistently appropriate choices of behaviour for the setting, avoiding negative or damaging behaviours?
- Is the learner able to adjust their behaviour for different settings?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections or observations from others.

Timekeeping

I keep to time reliably



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by reliable timekeeping
- B) I know why and when is reliable timekeeping important
- C) I know how to be reliable at timekeeping



Core ideas

A

What is meant by reliable timekeeping

Reliable timekeeping means being on time and managing time well. It includes:

- *Arriving when expected:* Whether meeting someone or starting an activity, being there at the right time.
- *Finishing things on time:* Completing tasks by the time agreed.
- *Planning ahead:* Thinking about how long things will take.
- *Not rushing or keeping others waiting:* Managing time well means no one is left waiting.

Good timekeeping helps build trust and keeps things running smoothly.

B

Why and when is reliable timekeeping important

The importance of timekeeping depends on the situation. In some cultures, being exactly on time is very important, while in others, there is more flexibility. However, there are many times when being reliable with time is helpful:

- *When meeting others:* Being on time shows you respect their time.
- *When working on group tasks:* Others may rely on you to finish your part on time.
- *When attending planned activities:* If you are late, you may miss important things.
- *When following schedules:* Some things, like transport or events, follow a set time, so being late can cause problems.
- *When people need your help:* If someone is waiting for you, being late might make things harder for them.

Being aware of how important timekeeping is in different situations helps you decide when to be more careful with time.

**C****How to be reliable at timekeeping**

If you find it hard to be on time, there are ways to improve:

- *Plan ahead:* Think about what time you need to be somewhere and how long it will take to get there.
- *Set reminders:* Use alarms or notes to help you remember important times.
- *Give yourself extra time:* Aim to be early so small delays do not make you late.
- *Be realistic:* Do not try to fit too much into a short time; allow breaks between activities.
- *Think about others:* Imagine how being late affects the people waiting for you.
- *Practise good habits:* The more you work on being on time, the easier it becomes.

Improving timekeeping takes effort, but it helps you be more reliable, organised, and respectful of others.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is meant by reliable timekeeping?
- Why and when does reliable timekeeping matter?
- How can you become more reliable in timekeeping?
- When have you shown reliable timekeeping?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate reliable timekeeping in terms of their own punctuality and predicting how long things will take?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Taking responsibility

I take responsibility for completing tasks



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to take responsibility
- B) I know why and when is taking responsibility for tasks important
- C) I know how to take responsibility for completing tasks



Core ideas

A

What it means to take responsibility

Taking responsibility means making sure that you complete the tasks you have agreed to do, especially when working with others. It involves:

- *Understanding your role:* Knowing exactly what you need to do, when it needs to be done, and why it is important.
- *Keeping your promises:* Finishing what you have agreed to do, even if it takes effort.
- *Trying your best:* Doing the task properly rather than rushing.
- *Asking for help if needed:* If you are struggling, finding a way to solve the problem rather than ignoring it.
- *Being honest about progress:* Letting others know how your task is going and if you need more time.
- *Not blaming others:* If something goes wrong, accepting your part in it and learning from mistakes.

Being responsible helps build trust and makes teamwork smoother and more enjoyable.

B

Why and when is taking responsibility for tasks important

Taking responsibility is important because it ensures that tasks are completed properly and on time. When people follow through on their responsibilities, it:

- *Helps the team succeed:* If everyone does their part, the task gets completed more quickly and easily.
- *Builds trust:* Others know they can rely on you, making working together easier.
- *Reduces stress:* When everyone does their share, no one is left struggling
- *Shows respect:* Taking responsibility shows that you respect others' time and effort.
- *Helps you improve:* The more you take responsibility, the better you become at managing tasks.



However, there are times when you should not take responsibility:

- *When the task is unclear:* If you do not fully understand what is expected, you should ask for more information before agreeing to take it on.
- *When the task is not achievable:* If something is impossible to complete due to lack of time, resources, or skills, it is better to say so upfront.
- *When the task is inappropriate:* If you are asked to do something that is unfair, unethical, or goes against important rules, it is okay to say no.
- *When it is significantly beyond your capabilities:* Taking responsibility for something far beyond your skills without support could lead to mistakes or failure.

Knowing when to take responsibility and when to ask for help is important for working with others.



How to take responsibility for completing tasks

To take responsibility for completing tasks, here are some helpful steps:

- *Be clear on what you need to do:* Make sure you fully understand your task before agreeing to it. If needed, ask questions.
- *Plan your time:* Decide when and how you will complete the task, and break it down into smaller steps if necessary.
- *Write things down:* Keeping a list of tasks and deadlines helps you stay organised and remember what needs to be done.
- *Be honest:* If you realise you cannot complete a task on your own, let others know early so that support can be arranged.
- *Learn from mistakes:* If something goes wrong, think about what could be done differently next time and use that knowledge to improve.
- *Stay committed:* Taking responsibility means finishing what you start, even when it becomes difficult or less enjoyable.

Taking responsibility is a valuable skill step that helps you build trust, work well with others, and feel a sense of achievement. It is about being dependable, managing tasks effectively, and knowing when to ask for help when needed.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to take responsibility for tasks?
- Why and when is it good to take responsibility for tasks?
- How can you take responsibility effectively?
- When have you shown you can take responsibility for completing tasks in a team?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate taking responsibility for completing tasks?
- Is the learner able to identify circumstances when they should not take responsibility?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Supporting others

I help others as much as I can



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to support others
- B) I know why and when it is helpful to support others
- C) I know how to support others effectively



Core ideas

A

What it means to support others

Supporting others in a team means helping them so that everyone can do their best and the team can succeed together. It is about being kind, thoughtful, and working well with others. This can include:

- *Helping when needed:* Offering to assist if someone is struggling or needs extra support.
- *Sharing knowledge:* Explaining things to others if they are unsure what to do.
- *Encouraging others:* Saying positive things to help people feel confident and motivated.
- *Listening carefully:* Paying attention to what others say so you can understand their ideas or concerns.
- *Being patient:* Understanding that people work at different speeds and have different strengths.
- *Making sure everyone is included:* Ensuring that all team members have the chance to take part and share their ideas.

Good support makes the team stronger and helps everyone feel valued.

B

Why and when it is helpful to support others

Supporting others is helpful because it:

- *Makes tasks easier:* Working together can help tasks get done more quickly.
- *Creates a positive atmosphere:* When people help each other, the team feels friendlier and more cooperative.
- *Reduces stress:* If someone is struggling, support can stop them from feeling overwhelmed.
- *Encourages learning:* Helping others understand something new makes the whole team stronger.
- *Builds trust:* When team members support each other, they feel more comfortable and confident.

However, there are times when supporting others might not be helpful:

- *If it stops them from learning:* Sometimes, it is better to let someone try and solve a problem on their own first.
- *If you take over their work:* Helping does not mean doing everything for someone.
- *If it is unwanted:* Some people may prefer to work alone or may not want help.
- *If it takes too much of your time:* It is important to balance helping others with completing your own tasks.

Knowing when to step in and when to step back is an important part of being a good team member.



C

How to support others effectively

To help you support others effectively:

- *Pay attention to your team:* Notice when someone seems to need help or encouragement.
- *Ask before helping:* Say things like, “Would you like some help?” instead of assuming they need it.
- *Offer small ways to help:* Even simple things like sharing ideas or giving a quick explanation can make a big difference.
- *Encourage effort:* Praise people for trying, even if they do not get things right straight away.
- *Listen carefully:* Understand what someone needs before offering advice or help.
- *Know when to step back:* Let people try things for themselves when it is important for their learning or confidence.
- *Accept help from others too:* Teamwork goes both ways, so be open to receiving support as well as giving it.

Supporting others is about finding the right balance between helping, encouraging, and knowing when to step back. When done well, it makes teamwork more enjoyable and helps everyone do their best.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to support others?
- Why and when is it helpful to support others?
- How can you get better at supporting others?
- When have you supported others and what was the result?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to support their peers in an appropriate way?
- Is the learner able to recognise when their support is not helpful?

Evidence can include learners’ self-reflections and observations from others.

Being accountable

I am accountable for my goals



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by being accountable in a team
- B) I know why and when it is important to be accountable for goals in a team
- C) I know how to improve my ability to be accountable for my goals in a team



Core ideas

A

What is meant by being accountable in a team

Being *accountable* for a goal means making sure it gets done and taking ownership of reaching the *outcome*. It means others can trust you to do what you said you would do. If things go well, you recognise your success. If there are problems, you look for ways to fix them or *alternative routes* to achieve the goal.

This is different to *responsibility* (Step 4) because being responsible means you have a *task* to complete. Instead, accountability means that you make sure you achieve the *goal*, which might require having others support with tasks or if you need to adapt your plans in order to achieve that goal.

Accountability is about making sure things are achieved, not just doing your part.

B

Why and when it is important to be accountable for goals in a team

Being accountable is important because:

- *It builds trust:* Others know they can count on you.
- *It keeps the team on track:* If everyone is accountable, the team can reach its goals more smoothly.
- *It helps solve problems:* When something goes wrong, accountable people look for solutions instead of blaming others.
- *It shows commitment:* When you have accountability, it shows you care about the team's success.

It is particularly important to have accountability in a team:

- *When others are relying on your work:* If your part is not done, the team might struggle.
- *When goals are shared:* If one person does not follow through, it affects everyone.
- *When problems arise:* Taking accountability means fixing mistakes instead of making excuses.

However, there are times when it is not appropriate to be accountable for a goal. For example, if the goal is unclear, beyond your ability to deliver, or if you think the goal itself is inappropriate.



C

How to be accountable for your goals in a team

Here are some ways to improve accountability:

- *Be clear on what success looks like:* Ask questions if you are unsure about your goal and about how success will be measured. This might include understanding if there are target numbers to reach, for example.
- *Set deadlines and reminders:* Keeping track of time helps you stay on schedule. There are lots of ideas and approaches here under the Planning skill.
- *Be honest about progress:* If you are struggling, let others know early so they can help.
- *Own up to mistakes:* If something goes wrong, be responsible and find ways to fix it.
- *Support others:* If a teammate is struggling, offer help. A team works best when everyone is accountable.
- *Keep learning:* Reflect on what went well and what could be improved for next time.

Being accountable helps a team succeed. It means being reliable, learning from mistakes, and staying focused on the goal even if you have to change the route to get there.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is accountability and how does it differ from responsibility, with examples?
- Why and when is it important to take accountability for goals - and when should you not?
- How can you improve your ability to be accountable for your goals in a team?
- When have you taken accountability for achieving goals in a team and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to identify goals to work towards beyond just tasks to complete?
- Is the learner able to be accountable for achieving goals in a team?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, plans for achieving their goals as part of a team, and observations from others.

Contributing

I contribute to group activity



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to contribute to group activity
- B) I know why and when it is important to contribute to group decisions
- C) I know how to contribute to group decision making



Core ideas

A

What it means to contribute to group activity

Contributing to a group means not only doing your share of tasks but also taking part in discussions and helping the group make decisions. It is not just about giving your opinion but also listening to others, sharing ideas, and helping the group find the best way forward.

Ways to contribute to group decision making include:

- *Sharing your thoughts:* Giving ideas, opinions, and suggestions.
- *Listening to others:* Understanding different views before making a decision.
- *Asking questions:* Helping the group think carefully about the best choice.
- *Offering solutions:* Thinking of ways to solve problems together.
- *Being open-minded:* Accepting that others may have different ideas that could work well.

A good contribution is not about speaking the most - it is about adding something valuable to the group discussion.

B

Why and when it is important to contribute to group decisions

Being involved in group decisions is important because:

- *Better decisions are made:* Different people have different knowledge and experiences. Sharing ideas helps the group make a smarter choice.
- *Everyone feels included:* When people contribute, they feel valued and respected.
- *Problems are solved more easily:* A group working together can spot problems and find solutions faster.
- *Decisions are fairer:* If everyone has a say, the final decision is more balanced.
- *You learn from others:* Hearing different views helps you see things in new ways.

If people do not contribute, the group might make decisions that do not work well for everyone. Even small contributions can make a big difference.

However, there may be occasions when you decide not to contribute:

- If you do not understand the topic well, it can be better to listen and learn first.
- If the group is repeating ideas, adding more might not be helpful.
- If emotions are running high, waiting until people calm down can make discussions more productive.

Overall though, it is good to ensure that you are contributing to the group's decision making.



C

How to contribute to group decision making

To contribute in a helpful way, try these steps:

- *Be prepared:* Think about the topic before the discussion so you have useful ideas to share.
- *Listen first:* Understanding others' points of view helps you add something meaningful.
- *Speak clearly and respectfully:* Make sure your points are easy to understand and do not interrupt others.
- *Ask good questions:* Help the group think about different options by asking, "What if we tried this?"
- *Be flexible:* Be ready to adjust your opinion if someone has a better idea.

By contributing in a thoughtful and respectful way, you help your group make good decisions and work well together.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to contribute to a group, particularly in decision making?
- Why is it important to contribute to group decision making - and when is it better to step back?
- How can you ensure you are making a good contribution to group decision making?
- When have you contributed to group decision making and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to contribute in a helpful and appropriate way to group decision making?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, evidence of notes from a group decision-making discussion, and observations from others.

Valuing others

I recognise the value of others' ideas



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to value others' ideas
- B) I know why and when it is important to value others' ideas
- C) I know how to demonstrate valuing others' ideas



Core ideas

A

What it means to value others' ideas

When working in a team, everyone has ideas and skills that can help the group succeed. Valuing others' ideas and contributions means showing respect for what they bring to the team. It is about listening, considering their thoughts, and making sure they feel appreciated.

Ways to show that you value others:

- *Listening carefully:* Paying attention when someone speaks instead of interrupting.
- *Showing interest:* Asking questions and encouraging people to explain their ideas.
- *Giving credit:* Recognising when someone has made a good point or helped the team.
- *Being respectful:* Even if you do not agree, showing kindness in your response.
- *Using their ideas:* When someone suggests something useful, showing that you are willing to consider or build on it.

Valuing others makes a team stronger, as everyone feels respected and motivated to contribute.

B

Why and when it is important to value others' ideas

It is important to value others in a team because:

- *It helps people feel included:* When people feel respected, they are more likely to take part and share their best ideas.
- *It encourages teamwork:* If team members support each other, they work better together rather than competing with each other.
- *It leads to better decisions:* Considering different ideas means the team can choose the best approach.
- *It builds trust:* When people know their contributions are valued, they feel more comfortable sharing in the future.
- *It prevents conflict:* If people feel ignored, they may become frustrated.

Valuing others ideas and showing that you did is particularly important when:

- Making group decisions so no one feels left out.
- Someone has worked hard on a task or idea.
- Discussing a difficult topic so everyone feels heard.
- Someone lacks confidence and needs encouragement to share their thoughts.

Occasionally, individuals might share ideas which need to be challenged - approaches to challenging ideas productively are explored in *Leadership* and *Listening*.



C

How to demonstrate valuing others' ideas

There are several things that we can do to be more open to valuing other people's ideas:

- *Make the decision that you are going to listen* and try to learn (this is a critical approach that is discussed a lot more in Listening).
- *Present your ideas as a perspective* so that you do not suggest you are too fixed in your view. You could use language like "My thinking on this was..." or "My perspective coming into this was..." or "It seems to me that..." – all of this language makes clear that you are open to changing your mind.
- *Always explain your perspective* – this will encourage others to explain theirs too and will help you to see the thinking behind their ideas.
- *Actively try to understand why someone has a different view to you.* What is it that is giving them a different view? This is sometimes called cognitive empathy – trying to understand where someone else is coming from.
- *Check that you are not biased* against someone else's perspective because of your biases or other forms of discrimination.
- *Ask questions to expand your understanding* and to make sure you have had a chance to think about what someone else's idea is, and why they came to it.
- *See changing your mind as a strength* if you can explain why you have changed your mind. People will respect you for it if you have shown that you can take on different perspectives and make an intelligent appraisal of different views.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to value others' ideas in teamwork?
- Why is it important to value others' ideas and to show that you do?
- How can you get better at valuing others' ideas and demonstrating this?
- When have you demonstrated that you value others' ideas effectively in a group?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to consistently demonstrate that they value others' ideas when working in a team or in a group discussion?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of team discussions which demonstrate good practice, and observations from others.

Being inclusive

I support others to thrive in a group



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by being inclusive in a group
- B) I know why it is important to be inclusive in a group
- C) I know how to support others to thrive in a group



Core ideas

A

What is meant by being inclusive in a group

Being *inclusive* means making sure that everyone in a group feels welcome, valued, and able to contribute. It is about treating people with fairness and respect, no matter their background, abilities, or experiences. Inclusion helps everyone feel like they belong and can take part in team activities without fear of being ignored or treated unfairly.

Ways to be inclusive in a team:

- *Listening to everyone:* Making sure all voices are heard, not just the loudest or most confident ones.
- *Respecting differences:* Understanding that people may have different opinions, needs, or ways of working.
- *Encouraging participation:* Helping everyone feel comfortable contributing to discussions and tasks.
- *Being open-minded:* Accepting new ideas and different ways of thinking.
- *Avoiding exclusion:* Making sure no one is left out of conversations, decisions, or activities which might mean making adaptations to working approaches.

Inclusion is about making sure every team member feels respected and has the same chance to succeed.

B

Why it is important to be inclusive in a group

Being inclusive helps group members do their best by creating a positive and supportive environment. When people feel included, they are more likely to:

- *Share their ideas:* If people feel safe and valued, they are more willing to speak up.
- *Feel motivated:* Inclusion makes people feel appreciated, which encourages them to contribute.
- *Build confidence:* When people are supported, they believe in their own abilities more.
- *Work better together:* Teams that respect and include everyone tend to be more effective.
- *Stay engaged:* If people feel excluded, they may become quiet, frustrated, or unwilling to take part.

Inclusion is particularly important:

- When a new person joins the group and needs help settling in.
- When making decisions so that all views and perspectives are considered.
- When group members face challenges and need support.
- When someone seems quiet or unsure and may need encouragement.



C

How to support others to thrive in a group

To make a group more inclusive, try these steps:

- *Give everyone a chance to speak:* If someone is being left out of discussions, invite them to share their thoughts and ensure that the environment is one where they can feel safe to share their ideas even if they differ from others'.
- *Show respect for different opinions:* Even if you disagree, respond politely and consider their point of view. Recognise that different team members may have different levels of formal or informal power and look beyond that to think about ideas.
- *Use clear and welcoming language:* Avoid words or jokes that might make someone feel uncomfortable and be thoughtful about cultural differences.
- *Be aware of personal differences:* Some people may need extra support, such as more time to explain ideas or different ways to communicate. If individuals have disabilities or additional needs then make sure these are planned for.
- *Encourage teamwork:* Help people work together by pairing up those with different strengths - building personal relationships can make a big difference.
- *Lead by example:* Show kindness, fairness, and respect so others do the same.

By practising inclusion, you help create a strong, welcoming group where everyone has the chance to succeed.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to be inclusive in a group?
- Why is it important to be inclusive in a group for people to thrive?
- How can you support inclusivity in a group so that everyone thrives?
- When have you shown you can inclusively support others to thrive in a group?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to plan how to make a discussion or group activity inclusive?
- Is the learner able to demonstrate an inclusive approach when in a team?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Being diplomatic

I avoid creating unhelpful conflicts



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to be diplomatic
- B) I know why and when it is helpful to be diplomatic
- C) I know how to be diplomatic and avoid creating unhelpful conflicts



Core ideas

A

What it means to be diplomatic

Being *diplomatic* means communicating with others in a way that is respectful, thoughtful, and careful, especially in difficult situations. It is about expressing opinions and handling disagreements without upsetting or offending others. Diplomacy helps people work together smoothly, even when they have different views.

Being diplomatic includes:

- *Choosing words carefully:* Speaking in a way that is clear but not rude or harsh.
- *Listening to others:* Understanding different perspectives before responding.
- *Staying calm:* Not reacting with anger or frustration.
- *Being respectful:* Valuing others' opinions, even when you disagree.
- *Finding solutions:* Helping people work towards agreement instead of arguing.

Being diplomatic does not mean avoiding problems. Instead, it helps people handle them in a positive and fair way. Remember that disagreements are an important part of making better decisions - but it is important to ensure that disagreements do not become destructive or unhelpful conflicts.

B

Why and when it is helpful to be diplomatic

Diplomacy is useful in many situations because it helps people work together peacefully. It prevents small disagreements from becoming big problems and helps teams stay focused on their goals.

Being diplomatic is particularly helpful when:

- *There is a disagreement:* It helps people find solutions without arguing.
- *When giving feedback:* Being kind and constructive makes advice easier to accept.
- *When someone is upset:* A calm and respectful approach can help ease tensions.
- *When making decisions:* Diplomacy ensures everyone's views are heard and considered.

However, sometimes it is more important to be clear than diplomatic:

- *When something is unfair or wrong:* If someone is being treated badly, it may be necessary to speak firmly rather than just being diplomatic.
- *When honesty is more important:* Sometimes, difficult truths must be told clearly, even if they are uncomfortable.
- *When a decision needs to be made quickly:* Being too careful with words can slow things down in urgent situations.

Diplomacy is valuable, but it is also important to stand up for what is right when needed.



C

How to be diplomatic and avoid creating unhelpful conflicts

To be diplomatic and prevent unnecessary arguments, try these approaches:

- *Think before speaking:* Consider how your words might be received.
- *Stay calm and polite:* Even when you disagree, avoid raising your voice or being rude.
- *Listen to understand:* Make sure you fully understand others' views before responding.
- *Use neutral language:* Avoid blaming or accusing; instead of saying, "You did this wrong," try "Maybe we could try a different approach."
- *Find common ground:* Look for areas of agreement to build on.
- *Know when to step back:* If a discussion is becoming too heated, suggest taking a break and returning to it later.

By being diplomatic, you can help create a positive and respectful team environment where people work well together.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to be diplomatic?
- When and why is it important to be diplomatic, and when should you not be?
- How can you be more diplomatic to avoid unnecessary arguments or conflicts?
- When have you been diplomatic - what happened and what was the result?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate a diplomatic approach to discussions?
- Is the learner able to avoid unnecessary arguments or conflicts, while being able to manage disagreements and different perspectives and views?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Resolving conflicts

I work collaboratively to resolve unhelpful conflicts



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to resolve unhelpful conflicts
- B) I know why and when to work collaboratively to resolve unhelpful conflicts
- C) I know how to work collaboratively to resolve unhelpful conflicts



Core ideas

A

What it means to resolve unhelpful conflicts

Not all disagreements are bad. Healthy disagreements allow people to share different ideas, challenge each other's thinking, and make better decisions. However, some conflicts or arguments can be unhelpful and cause problems.

Unhelpful conflicts often:

- *Become personal:* Instead of focusing on ideas, people attack each other.
- *Create bad feelings:* People feel upset, stressed, or angry instead of working towards a solution.
- *Go in circles:* The same points are repeated without progress.
- *Distract from the real goal:* Instead of solving a problem, the focus shifts to winning the argument.
- *Damage relationships:* People stop trusting or wanting to work with each other.

In contrast, a *healthy disagreement* allows people to listen, learn from each other, and find better solutions together.

Conflicts are a normal part of working with others, but how they are handled makes a big difference. *Resolving conflicts* in a collaborative way means working together to find a fair and positive solution.

B

Why and when to work collaboratively to resolve unhelpful conflicts

Resolving unhelpful conflicts in a collaborative way is particularly important when:

- *The conflict affects a team goal:* It keeps everyone focused on solving the problem rather than arguing.
- *When different opinions need to be considered:* A collaborative approach ensures everyone has a voice.
- *When emotions are high:* Working together calmly helps reduce stress and frustration.
- *When relationships matter:* Resolving conflicts fairly helps people continue to work well together.

If unhelpful conflicts can be resolved in a collaborative way, then it:

- *Encourages fairness:* Everyone gets a chance to be heard and understood.
- *Strengthens teamwork:* People build trust when they solve problems together.
- *Leads to better solutions:* Different ideas and perspectives create stronger results.
- *Prevents future conflicts:* Handling disagreements well reduces misunderstandings in the future.

However, there may be times when a collaborative approach to resolving a conflict is not possible. If someone refuses to listen or act fairly, other steps may be needed to solve the issue.



C

How to work collaboratively to resolve unhelpful conflicts

To resolve conflicts in a positive way, it is important to stay calm, listen, and focus on solutions. Steps to resolving conflicts collaboratively include:

1. *Stay calm and respectful:* Avoid raising your voice or reacting with anger.
2. *Listen to understand:* Let everyone explain their point of view without interruption.
3. *Find common ground:* Look for areas where you agree to build trust.
4. *Focus on solutions, not blame:* Instead of saying “You caused this problem,” try “How can we fix this together?”
5. *Keep emotions in check:* If the discussion becomes too heated, take a break and return when calmer.
6. *Be willing to compromise:* Sometimes, a fair solution means meeting in the middle.
7. *Agree on a way forward:* Make sure everyone understands what will happen next.

By resolving conflicts in a positive and fair way, teams can stay strong and work better together.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What makes a conflict unhelpful, and how does this differ from disagreements?
- When and why can you work collaboratively to resolve unhelpful conflicts, and when can you not?
- How can you work collaboratively to resolve unhelpful conflicts?
- When have you worked collaboratively to resolve unhelpful conflicts?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate that they can resolve an unhelpful conflict by working collaboratively?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Networking

I build helpful relationships beyond my team



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by networking
- B) I know when and why networking is valuable
- C) I know how to network to build helpful relationships beyond the team



Core ideas

A

What is meant by networking

Networking means building relationships with people outside of your usual team or group. It is about making connections with others who can share knowledge, offer support, and provide new opportunities.

Networking can happen in different ways:

- *Talking to new people:* Introducing yourself and getting to know others.
- *Keeping in touch:* Staying connected over time and offering help when needed.
- *Sharing ideas and learning:* Exchanging information that can be useful for both sides.
- *Helping others:* Networking is not just about receiving; it is also about giving support and advice.

Networking is about building trust and creating positive relationships that can be helpful in the future.

B

Why and when networking is valuable

Networking is helpful in many situations because it allows you to learn from others, gain new ideas, and find opportunities you might not have on your own.

Networking can be helpful when:

- *You need advice:* Speaking to someone with experience can give you useful guidance.
- *Working on new projects:* Connecting with others can bring fresh ideas and different skills.
- *Looking for opportunities:* Meeting people outside your usual group can open doors to new possibilities including new projects or new customers.
- *Facing a challenge:* Others may have faced a similar situation and can offer helpful solutions.

The benefits of networking beyond your team include that it:

- *Expands your knowledge:* Learning from different people helps you see new ways of thinking.
- *Builds confidence:* Talking to new people improves communication skills.
- *Creates support systems:* Knowing more people means having more help when needed.
- *Opens up opportunities:* Strong relationships can lead to unexpected chances for growth and development.

However, networking should be genuine. It is not just about asking for help but also about helping others and building real relationships.



C

How to network to build helpful relationships beyond the team

Networking is about connecting with people in a meaningful way. Here are some ways to do it effectively:

1. *Be open and approachable:* Be polite and friendly, and show interest in others. Ask questions and listen carefully to what people say.
2. *Find opportunities to meet new people:* Join events, discussions, or online groups where different people connect. Introduce yourself and show a friendly attitude.
3. *Offer help before asking for help:* Share useful information or ideas with others. Be supportive and show that you are willing to give, not just take.
4. *Keep in touch:* Send a friendly message or check in with people from time to time. Stay connected without only reaching out when you need something.
5. *Be respectful of time and boundaries:* Do not ask for too much too soon. Build relationships naturally over time.

By networking well, you can build strong relationships that are helpful for everyone involved and which bring back benefits to your team too.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is networking?
- When and why is networking helpful for your team?
- How can you build networks effectively to support your team?
- When have you built networks that have supported your team?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to build new relationships effectively?
- Is the learner able to manage and support those networks over time?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Reflecting collectively

I reflect on progress and suggest improvements



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by reflecting collectively
- B) I know why and when it is important to reflect collectively
- C) I know how to effectively reflect on team progress and suggest improvements



Core ideas

A

What is meant by reflecting collectively

Reflecting collectively means looking back at what the team has done, thinking about what went well and what could be better. It helps the team understand their strengths and find ways to improve.

Suggesting improvements means sharing ideas on how things can be done better. This could be about how the team works together, progress towards a goal, how tasks are completed, how challenges are handled, or wider motivation and morale.

Reflection and improvement involve:

- *Checking progress:* Seeing if goals have been met.
- *Identifying strengths:* Noticing what worked well.
- *Spotting difficulties:* Recognising problems or challenges.
- *Finding solutions:* Thinking of ways to make things better.

Reflecting and improving help a team grow, learn, and achieve better results.

B

Why and when it is important to reflect collectively

Reflection is useful at different times during a team's work, such as after finishing a task, halfway through a project, or at regular points in time.

Taking time for reflection can be particularly helpful:

- *After completing a task:* To see what worked well and what could be improved for next time.
- *At milestones in a long project:* To check if changes are needed before continuing.
- *When a problem happens:* To understand what went wrong and how to fix it.
- *If morale or motivation is lower:* To understand the reasons and make changes.

When done well, reflection in a team can:

- *Help the team learn:* Looking back helps everyone understand what works best.
- *Prevents mistakes:* Learning from past errors helps avoid them in the future.
- *Makes the team stronger:* When a team improves together, they become more confident and effective as well as more appreciative of each other.

However, reflection should always be constructive – the goal is to help the team, not criticise individuals unfairly.

As such, pausing for reflection might be hard to do during a crisis when there is urgent work that needs to be done immediately, when emotions are particularly high, or without a clear purpose.



C

How to effectively reflect on team progress and suggest improvements

To reflect well and make helpful suggestions, the team needs to be open, fair, and focused on solutions. Some approaches to do this well can include:

1. *Create time for reflection:* Set aside a moment to talk about progress and improvements. Make sure everyone has a chance to share their thoughts and to prepare themselves in advance.
2. *Be honest but respectful:* Talk about what went well and what was difficult. Use positive language and avoid blaming others.
3. *Listen to different views:* Let team members share their own experiences and ideas. Respect different opinions and work together on solutions.
4. *Focus on solutions, not just problems:* Instead of just pointing out mistakes, suggest ways to fix them. Be clear and specific when giving ideas for improvement.
5. *Learn from past experiences:* Keep track of past reflections and see if changes have helped. Use what the team has learned to do better in the future.

By reflecting well and making useful suggestions, a team can continuously grow and achieve better results together.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to reflect on progress as a team, and to suggest improvements?
- Why and when is this important, and when is it less helpful?
- How can you reflect effectively as a group to make future improvements?
- When have you been part of collective reflections on team progress and possible improvements and how did it go?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to reflect on a team's progress and suggest improvements?
- Is the learner able to provide their ideas and reflections in a positive, constructive way that leads to team improvements?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

Learning collectively

I evaluate successes and failures and share lessons



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by collective learning
- B) I know why and when collective learning is important
- C) I know how to ensure collective learning in a team



Core ideas

A

What is meant by collective learning

Collective learning happens when a team learns together by sharing knowledge, experiences, and skills. Instead of each person learning alone, the team helps each other grow and improve.

Collective learning can happen in different ways:

- *Sharing knowledge:* Team members teach each other new skills or facts.
- *Learning from experience:* The team looks back at what worked well and what did not and learns collective lessons from that evaluation.
- *Solving problems together:* Different ideas help the team find the best solutions.
- *Building on strengths:* Each person's skills and knowledge help the whole team improve.

By learning together, a team can achieve more and work better as a group.

B

Why and when collective learning is important

A high-performing team is one that works well together, solves problems effectively, and constantly improves. Collective learning is important because it helps a team develop, adapt, and succeed.

Collective learning is important:

- *When facing new challenges:* Learning together helps the team find solutions.
- *When skills need improving:* If some team members lack knowledge, others can help them.
- *When mistakes happen:* The team can learn from errors to avoid repeating them.
- *When looking for better ways to work:* Sharing ideas helps make work easier and more effective.

In these situations, collective learning is helpful because:

- *It makes the team stronger:* Everyone gets better by learning from each other.
- *It saves time:* Learning from others is often quicker than figuring things out alone.
- *It improves teamwork:* Sharing knowledge builds trust and respect.
- *It creates new ideas:* Different viewpoints lead to creative solutions.

Without collective learning, teams may repeat mistakes, work less efficiently, or struggle with challenges.



C

How to ensure collective learning in a team

Even if you are not the leader, you can still help your team learn together:

1. *Share what you know:* If you have useful knowledge or skills, offer to help others. Give simple explanations and be patient when teaching.
2. *Ask questions:* Show interest in what others know and ask for advice when needed. Asking questions helps the whole team think and learn.
3. *Learn from mistakes together:* If something goes wrong, talk about it in a positive way. Focus on finding solutions instead of blaming others.
4. *Encourage team discussions:* Suggest talking about what the team has learned after completing a task. Ask others to share their experiences and ideas.
5. *Be open to feedback:* Accept helpful advice from others without feeling defensive. Use feedback to improve and encourage others to do the same.
6. *Suggest structured learning opportunities:* If your team identifies gaps in their knowledge, suggest who might be able to fill those gaps.

By helping your team learn together, you build a stronger, more skilled group that can overcome challenges and achieve success.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is collective learning?
- Why is collective learning important for high-performing teams?
- How can you support collective learning in a team, even if you are not the leader?
- When have you ensured collective learning in a team?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to encourage and contribute towards collective learning in their team, even if they are not in a leadership position?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of training, evaluations, or other needs analysis that enabled collective learning, and observations from others.

Developing others

I support my peers to develop



Building blocks

- A) I know what it means to support your peers to develop
- B) I know why and when to support peers to develop
- C) I know how to support peers to develop



Core ideas

A

What it means to support your peers to develop

Supporting peers to develop means helping others in the team to improve their skills, knowledge, and confidence. It is about working together so that everyone can get better at what they do.

This peer support for development can take different forms, such as:

- *Sharing knowledge:* Teaching others something useful.
- *Encouraging growth:* Helping others to try new things and build confidence.
- *Giving feedback:* Offering kind and helpful advice to help someone improve.
- *Providing emotional support:* Being patient, understanding, and offering encouragement.

When team members support each other's development, everyone benefits, and the team becomes stronger.

B

Why and when to support peers to develop

A high-performing team is one where everyone works well together, learns from each other, and keeps improving. Helping peers to develop is key to achieving this.

Supporting peers to develop is particularly important when:

- *Someone is struggling:* If a teammate finds something difficult, supporting them helps the whole team succeed.
- *The team needs new skills:* Learning from each other saves time and effort.
- *Someone wants to improve:* Encouraging learning helps individuals grow.
- *The team is trying to achieve something new or challenging:* A well-developed team can handle challenges better.

Supporting peers is important because:

- *It makes the team stronger:* Everyone improves, and work is done more efficiently.
- *It builds trust:* Helping others creates a positive and supportive environment.
- *It improves confidence:* People feel valued and motivated to do their best.
- *It encourages learning:* A team that develops together keeps improving over time.

However, it is also important to respect personal boundaries. Some people prefer to develop at their own pace and may not always want direct support.



C

How to support peers to develop

Even if you are not the leader, you can still help your peers grow and improve:

- *Share what you know:* If you have a skill or experience that could help others, offer to share it. Explain things in a simple and clear way.
- *Offer encouragement:* Support others when they are learning something new. Give positive feedback and remind them of their progress.
- *Give helpful feedback:* If you notice something that could be improved, share your thoughts kindly. Be constructive – focus on how to improve, not just what is wrong.
- *Be open to learning from others:* Supporting others is not just about teaching – be ready to learn from them too. Ask for advice when needed and appreciate others' knowledge.
- *Create a culture of teamwork:* Encourage open discussions where team members can learn from each other. Celebrate small successes to keep motivation high.

By supporting peers to develop, you help build a positive, skilled, and high-performing team where everyone can succeed together.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What does it mean to support the development of your peers?
- Why and when is it important to support peers' development in a team?
- What might the impact of different leadership styles be on a team?
- When have you supported your peers' development in a team?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is this learner able to provide appropriate support to their peers to encourage their growth and development?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections, written evidence of analysing the support needs of peers in their team, as well as observations from others.

Improving culture

I improve the team culture



Building blocks

- A) I know what is meant by team culture
- B) I know why improving a team's culture is important
- C) I know how to improve the culture of a team



Core ideas

A

What is meant by team culture

A *team culture* refers to the way people in a team interact, behave, and work together. It is the shared values, beliefs, and attitudes that shape how the team functions and the relationships that team members have with each other. It can be described as 'the way things are done here' and will reflect other cultural influences too.

Some aspects that can influence team culture include:

- *Communication style*: Do team members communicate openly or keep to themselves?
- *Trust and respect*: Do team members trust each other and respect their opinions?
- *Approach to problem-solving*: Do team members work together to solve issues, or do they act independently?
- *Work ethic*: Is the team focused on achieving goals, or do members approach tasks differently?
- *Collaboration*: How are responsibilities split and enforced?
- *Decision-making style*: Are decisions made by one person, or does the team discuss and agree together?

Team culture can be formal or informal, and it can evolve over time based on the experiences of the people in the team.

B

Why improving a team's culture is important

A good team culture can help a group work better together, overcome challenges, and reach its goals. Team culture is important for several reasons:

- *It improves communication*: A positive culture encourages people to share their ideas and listen to each other.
- *It builds trust*: When team members feel valued and respected, they trust each other and are more willing to collaborate.
- *It increases motivation*: A healthy culture makes people feel more committed to the team's success.
- *It creates a supportive environment*: Team members can feel safe to express themselves and take risks without fear of criticism.
- *It improves decision-making*: A team that shares information and values diverse opinions will make better, more informed decisions.

However, when team culture is poor, it can lead to misunderstandings, lack of trust, and low morale, making it harder to succeed.



C

How to improve the culture of a team

Even if you are not the leader of the team, you can still play a role in shaping and improving the team culture. Here are some ways you might do that:

- *Lead by example:* Demonstrate the behaviour you would like to see in others. Show dedication and follow through on your commitments to build trust.
- *Be positive and respectful:* Show kindness, respect, and appreciation for others' ideas and opinions. Encourage a friendly and supportive atmosphere by offering help and support.
- *Communicate openly:* Share your thoughts, ideas, and concerns in a respectful way. Listen to others without interrupting, and encourage everyone to participate.
- *Promote collaboration:* Offer to help others with tasks and encourage teamwork. Recognise the strengths of others and suggest working together to achieve common goals.
- *Celebrate success together:* Take time to celebrate achievements and milestones, no matter how small. Recognising success helps build a positive team culture where everyone feels valued.
- *Address conflicts calmly:* If disagreements arise, try to resolve them with understanding and respect. Encourage open dialogue to address issues without letting them disrupt the team's spirit.

By contributing positively to the team culture, you help build an environment where everyone can succeed, feel valued, and enjoy working together.



Assessment

Reflective questions for learners can include:

- What is a team culture and how can team cultures vary?
- Why is a team culture important?
- How can you improve team culture even if you are not the team's leader?
- When have you demonstrated that you can improve the culture of a team - what did you do, and what was the result?

Observation cues for educators can include:

- Is the learner able to demonstrate positively improving a team culture?

Evidence can include learners' self-reflections and observations from others.

About the author



Tom Ravenscroft

Founder & CEO, Skills Builder Partnership

Tom founded Skills Builder Partnership in 2009, whilst a secondary school teacher in London. Skills Builder Partnership brings together a global group of more than 950 partners around a common language and approach to building essential skills spanning communication, collaboration, creative problem solving, and self-management. The Partnership, which includes educators, employers and impact organisations, reached more than 1.8million individuals in the last year.

The approach that Tom pioneered has now been widely adopted in the UK and is being replicated by partners in twenty further countries. The Partnership won the UK Social Enterprise Award for Impact in 2017 and was a WISE Award Finalist in 2022.

Tom was the 2009 UK Entrepreneurship Teacher of the Year. He has served as a non-executive director of Teach First and Teach For All Network (UK) and has also been recognised as one of the UK's leading social entrepreneurs by being elected an Ashoka Fellow in 2017. He holds a BA in Economics & Management from the University of Oxford.

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Skills Builder's Universal Framework is transforming how essential skills are taught in classrooms and education systems across the world.

Essential skills for communication, collaboration, creative problem solving, and self-management are in demand across the world.

Robust evidence shows links between higher essential skill levels, and stronger learning outcomes, a reduced likelihood of becoming unemployed, and increased earnings, job and life satisfaction. These are the capabilities that make it possible for every learner to apply and realise the potential of their knowledge and technical skills. Building them is a critical part of a good education.

Skills Builder's Universal Framework is a transformational model for how we equip every learner with these essential skills, and provides a rigorous, step-by-step model for doing so. Already used with more than 1.8 million learners across twenty countries, it is the result of cutting-edge research and practice more than 15 years in the making.

This Handbook is designed by and for educators to build and track their learners' essential skills. It includes age- and stage-related expectations for each skill, provides information about the good practices that support skills development, and provides the detail of how to teach, practice, and assess each step of progress.

"Skills Builder Universal Framework is a powerful step-by-step guide to anyone wanting to embed skills in every aspect of a learner's life; its framework is one of the best-researched and most rigorously tested I know anywhere in the world."

**Prof Bill Lucas, Director of the Centre for Real-World Learning,
University of Winchester**



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