

Contents

The Key Players.....	Page 4
Preface	Page 5
Course Overview.....	Page 6
Section 1	
Introduction	Page 11
Short and Long Term Memory	Page 14
Your Brain	Page 26
Practice with Mind Maps	Page 34
Section 2	
Mnemonics	Page 57
Studying 1	Page 65
Set and Belief	Page 76
Section 3	
Multiple Intelligences	Page 93
Brainstorming	Page 105
Confidence	Page 114
Section 4	
Speed Reading	Page 127
Thinking Skills	Page 144
Studying 2	Page 168

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Preface

The Learning File is about effective learning. Its purpose is to help young people to think about how they think, how they remember, how they structure and reproduce what they have studied and how they can use what they have been taught. It is when young people are on their own, doing their homework or study, that these learning skills are most useful. Without them, learning is often tedious, time-consuming and inefficient. Armed with these skills, learning becomes enjoyable, efficient and fun.

Schools are for learning and yet hundreds of years after schools were first invented our knowledge of what learning is and how it works is still in its infancy. Major scientific breakthroughs are occurring every year. The following are just some of these:

- the different functions of the right and left hemispheres of the brain
- the relationship of self-esteem to the ability to learn
- individual differences in learning styles
- emotional and social intelligence
- the effects of music on concentration and brain wave activity
- theory of multiple intelligences
- how memory works and how its powers can be dramatically improved.

There is a rich seam of research literature on learning which Matthew Boyle has mined to create a practical classroom resource for teachers and a unique course for students of all ages and abilities. *The Learning File* is also easily accessible to parents looking for ways to motivate and support their children's learning. Unless there is a bridge between how children learn at home and how they learn in the classroom, pupils will fall back on time-consuming practices which are not just inefficient but actually inhibit learning. They inhibit learning because they lower motivation and interest and thereby remove the driving motor of the intellect. There needs to be constant reinforcement and practice of learning skills – in all subjects. Teachers need to be convinced of the value of techniques and use them for themselves. They need to provide examples in their own subject teaching and help young people to develop expertise progressively and consistently over time.

This is a rich resource, which can be put to good effect both in mainstream education and in study support. Many teachers, viewing the materials for the first time, have recognised that they meet an urgent need for disenfranchised young people struggling to come to terms with their homework and with independent study.

Introduction

So Why Learning Skills?

Your brain is the most powerful computer in the known universe. It contains 1,000,000,000,000 brain cells. This makes the brain capable of **1 with 800 zeroes after it** ways of connecting itself. The most powerful super-computer is billions of times less powerful.

And yet! People still say things like this:

- I'm not very clever!
- I don't know how to take notes!
- I can't do my homework!
- I don't like studying!
- I don't like schools!
- I don't have a good memory!
- I don't remember the notes I'm given!
- It's too hard for someone like me!
- Why bother learning?
- Reading's too much like bother!

**If any of these are like you,
then you need this course!**