



Building and Sustaining Our Learning Culture

At Brownell Talbot Preparatory School (BT), we are building an enduring learning culture that shapes how we approach all aspects of learning, teaching, leading, parenting and professional learning. All our Learning Stakeholders are active participants in co-creating and sustaining this culture. Successful Learning Cultures share a Learning Language, Learning Principles, and a common commitment to building and sustaining our Learning Culture, through Professional Learning. So, the three key elements in our BT Learning Culture are:

1. Our shared learning language, shaped by our **Definition of Learning** as Conceptual, Competency, Character, the '3 cs'.
2. Our shared **Learning Principles**, translated into **Practices** for Learners, Teachers, Leaders and Parents.
3. Our collaborative **Professional Learning System**, through which we continuously improve at the **Practices** suggested by our **Learning Principles**, as mapped out in this document.

These three cultural influencers come together in the document below, which sets out our Principles, then translates them into Practices, expressed as Conceptual Understandings, Competencies, and Character traits.. As we clarify and document our commitments to shared approaches to learning, we are, effectively, designing our own 'job descriptions'. These are a far cry from the usual functional job descriptions which document a task-based, *transactional* relationship between the organization and its stakeholders. At BT, our job descriptions are *transformative*, since the practices they describe drive the third element in the Learning Culture, an innovative **Professional Learning System**, through which all BT stakeholders plan and direct their own growth in systemic, collaborative ways, thus transforming our practice.

OUR PRINCIPLES <i>We believe that:</i>	OUR PRACTICES	
	So, as LEARNERS , we...	So, as TEACHERS , we...
<p>The PURPOSE Principle <i>Learning is a process of making meaning and must be driven by a clear, intentional sense of purpose with which learners can connect. Learners are more engaged when they are convinced by 'the why'.</i></p> <p><i>At BT, we are committed to purposeful learning that helps learners make meaning that is relevant to them.</i></p>	<p>Understand that... (concept)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a 'why' behind everything we are learning • There is a deliberate intent behind all course content • Needs of myself and others drive the learning in each classroom differently • Actively participating in classroom activities builds a positive learning culture that encourages engagement • Learning is more meaningful when it is directly linked to real life and the present world around us. <p>Are able to... (competence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify why any given content <i>matters</i> • Demonstrate acquisition of knowledge in a variety of ways • Find meaningful ways to engage with peers, teachers, families and community using course content <p>Become more...(character)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reflective</i> and thoughtful about our own and others' learning and its meaning for us • Purposeful or intentional in our approach to learning 	<p>Understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of learning goals is critical to helping students understand the why behind the concepts • Differentiation is critical to the engagement of students • Connecting real world content and experiences to subject areas increases engagement and meaningful learning <p>Are able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create clear goals and communicate the purpose of a lesson • Create opportunities for students to collaborate and experience a variety of perspectives • Provide students with choice and voice to apply learning to real world experiences beyond the classroom <p>Become more...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional in our planning and preparation • Responsive during teachable moments
<p>The PEOPLE Principle <i>We are a social species. For us, learning is not only cognitive, it is also a deeply personal, social, and emotional process. Human relationships are a key influencer of learner success and our interpersonal communications and actions matter in the lives of our students.</i></p> <p><i>At BT, we work hard to truly know our learners, to hear them, understand them and advocate for them. We create social environments in which learners feel safe to take risks and to be themselves.</i></p>	<p>Learners Understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The classroom is a community of learners in which we all play a role. • Our social and emotional needs are attended to and supported in the classroom and we support one another as learners • Learning has many styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.- Learning looks different for different people in different settings <p>Are able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a positive and contributing member of the learning environment to help everyone be successful in learning • Value different perspectives • Recognize the strengths and challenges we all bring with us to the classroom • Advocate for our needs and wants as well as for the needs and wants of others <p>Become more...</p>	<p>Teachers Understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to build a stronger classroom community, it is vital to 'know' every student's identity as a person and as a learner. • Students' emotional needs should be prioritized over cognitive needs <p>Are able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build positive 'learning relationships' with and among learners. • Model empathy in order to create a safe classroom environment <p>Become more...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional in building positive, supportive relationships. • Empathetic toward students • Authentic in our interactions with students

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Confident</i> in expressing our opinions and feelings. • Capable of caring for self, peers, and others. • Inclusive to all peers socially, emotionally and academically 	
<p>The OWNERSHIP Principle <i>Everyone can learn and has the right and responsibility to do so. Everyone learns differently and we all, students and adults, own our learning.</i></p> <p><i>At BT, we are committed to the intentional teaching of ‘learning how to learn’ and to leading and managing our own professional learning.</i></p>	<p>Understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are responsible for and must actively engage in our own learning • We approach learning in a variety of ways • Assessments serve a role, but they do not define me as a learner • Teachers push students to be their absolute best <p>Are able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to learn, using a systematic approach that includes identifying where we are, setting goals, • Utilize getting and giving feedback, modifying strategies and reflecting to improve our learning. • Identify less preferred learning styles to challenge ourselves <p>Become more...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent, in directing our own learning • Adept in advocating for our own needs. Identify personal/favored learning styles and advocate for our own usage of them 	<p>Understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and learners share responsibility for learning • Students have diverse needs (CLP’s) including those which need to be valued on an individualized basis <p>Are able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students effective feedback to allow for modifying of and reflecting on concepts • Provide opportunities for learners to demonstrate their knowledge through various learning styles and peer grouping • Provide learners with the opportunity and challenges to learn from experts in a content area • Encourage learners to understand and value their own ability to solve problems <p>Become more...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident and intentional in gradually releasing learning responsibility to learners. • Responsive to students’ needs for various learning styles and challenges • Encouraging toward students to help them overcome any challenge they are given
<p>The CONNECTION Principle <i>We know that we learn by making connections and that learning transfer happens best in rich, relevant contexts.</i></p> <p><i>At BT, our learners engage with authentic content that really matters and we intentionally support learners in the process of transferring learning across contexts.</i></p>	<p>Understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous learning experiences impact new learning • It’s important to make connections to self, others and the world through various disciplines <p>Are able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions to help find connections to self and others. • Apply our learning across different contexts and disciplines. • See connections and transfer learning and language across different contexts and disciplines • Actively seek out diverse perspectives in order to make connections and challenge own beliefs • Access and transfer learning with a global lens <p>Become more...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected in our thinking • Reflective on past learning experiences • Globally cognisant 	<p>Understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to provide opportunities for students to build upon their previous learning across content areas and global perspectives • We learn by making connections. The more connections and the stronger the connections, the deeper and more enduring the learning. <p>Are able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create relevant, connected, cross-curricular learning experiences to facilitate transfer. • Provide inquiry-based experiences to learn from diverse perspectives. <p>Become more...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative and resourceful to provide opportunities for global connections. • Willing to reevaluate curriculum to develop opportunities for students to grapple with current issues, cultures and diverse voices • Aware of our curriculum and how it connects globally • Receptive to student voices and cultures are represented within the curriculum
<p>The INQUIRY Principle <i>We are a species that is naturally curious. We learn through a lifelong process of playfulness, wondering, questioning, exploring, and reflecting. Our learning is an ongoing ‘spiral’ of connecting ideas, constructing concepts, and contributing to our learning.</i></p> <p><i>At BT, inquiry-based learning approaches are at the heart of our agreed pedagogy.</i></p>	<p>Understand that... (concept)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our own and others’ questions and curiosity are valid and deserve exploration • Thoughts and opinions may change as they experience the world • Responding to failure is a vital part of the learning process. • Thought processes and learning processes are worth investigation <p>Are able to... (competency)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect new learning to prior knowledge • Think flexibly and assimilate new ideas into what they already believe. • View failure as something to be celebrated • Investigate their process and reflect on next steps • Persevere through challenges <p>Become more... (character)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curious to learn more...always • Open-minded. • Resilient and confident. • Introspective and reflective 	<p>Understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry learning involves critical thinking, problem solving and deeper conceptual understanding • As a facilitator in the classroom, I provide engaging activities for positive connections • Students are most successful when given a framework within which to question and investigate. • My students’ curiosity and questions are valuable parts of the learning process that need to inform my teaching. <p>Are able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use different inquiry models that are more open, more guided, and based on learning purposes. • Guide students in the research process. • Provide students with guidelines and feedback to scaffold their inquiry. • Investigate the students’ process and reflect on adaptations to curriculum <p>Become more...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptable to changing classroom realities in teaching and learning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perseverant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adept at providing feedback for various learning styles and needs.• Open to taking instructional risks• Receptive to feedback and growth opportunities
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