Skills Builder

PARTNERSHIP

Skills Builder Expanded Universal Framework

Toolkit for teaching essential skills to learners with additional needs

LISTENING SPEAKING PROBLEM SOLVING CREATIVITY STAYING POSITIVE AIMING HIGH LEADERSHIP TEAMWORK

It has never been more important to build a set of essential skills to succeed in life for our children and young people: the ability to creatively solve problems, to self-manage, to communicate effectively, and to work well with others.

These are skills that are needed to do almost anything well. The need for these skills is clear, but there is still a gap – too many children and young people do not build these skills to the level they need, and so miss out on opportunities to thrive in other parts of their lives.

Too often this is an area where terminology is confused and confusing. The work of all the schools, colleges and organisations in the Skills Builder Partnership is to cut through this: to refine a consistent, universal approach to these essential skills.

We define the essential skills as: Listening, Speaking, Problem Solving, Creativity, Staying Positive, Aiming High, Leadership and Teamwork.

The Skills Builder Universal Framework

This Universal Framework builds off the original Skills Builder Framework, launched in 2017, which has already proved its worth with children and young people, used in more than 750 organisations in the last year. Through a 9-month process of refinement and testing, it has been extended and improved to be truly universal – helping to join up how these skills are built in school or college to how they are recruited for and then supported by employers.

For educators, the Framework can be used to support children and young people to:

- **Understand their existing skills:** Reflecting on where their essential skills currently are, and being able to identify any gaps they might have

- **See what progress looks like:** Being able to see what the next steps are to improve their essential skills further

- **Join the dots:** Using a consistent language and understanding of essential skills to understand how they are used and practiced in lots of different settings

- **Capturing success:** Seeing progress and being able to better articulate their skills

Working together

The Universal Framework is freely available to all educators, and you can find a complete approach to building these skills through the Skills Builder Hub, including assessment tools and a full set of teaching and training materials. We hope you will consider joining the Skills Builder Partnership, to work and learn from other schools and colleges, as well as employers and other skills-building organisations. We are working together to ensure that one day, everyone builds the essential skills to succeed. To find out more, just get in touch.

Tom Ravenscroft
CEO, The Skills Builder Partnership
www.skillsbuilder.org

The development of this Universal Framework has been enabled by the Essential Skills Taskforce: CIPD, CBI, Gatsby Foundation, EY Foundation, Careers & Enterprise Company, Business in the Community, and the Skills Builder Partnership
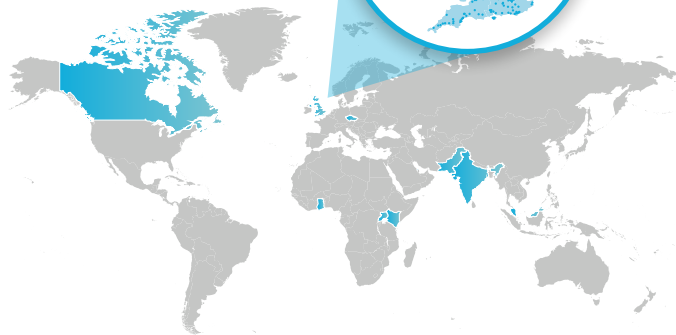
Who's using the Skills Builder approach?

We're building a global coalition of educators, employers and skills-building organisations, all using a shared approach.
As these skills are widely transferable, our partner organisations cover a whole range of different industries and outcomes.

Educators

75% of UK secondary schools and colleges use the Skills Builder approach*

432 Schools and colleges in the partnership globally*

Employers

98 Employer Partners in 2021-22*

Boots
Birmingham Airport
bp
UBS

KPMG
IBM
JLL
HSBC

ALLEN & OVERY
AON
BANK OF AMERICA

Thames Water
Hilton
SOCIETE GENERALE
NetworkRail

City & Guilds
THE CROWN ESTATE
urbansplash
CLIFFORD CHANCE

Organisations

151 Impact Organisations in 2021-22*

LSO
RSA
BRITISH COUNCIL

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY
The Economist EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION
LifeSkills Created with BARCLAYS
MOVEMENT TO WORK

founders4schools
Grofar
National Literacy Trust

On—Purpose
SPIRAL
NATIONAL JUSTICE MUSEUM
Ark

YMCA
envision
pencilbricks
Harlequins FOUNDATION

*Data from Skills Builder Impact Report 2021

The Skills Builder Principles

We have learned a lot over the years about how best to build essential skills. We know that to have a real impact, the skills must be developed with consistency and focus. These principles hold true whatever the setting.
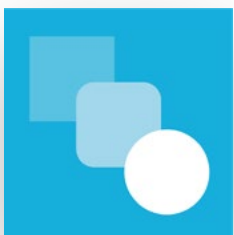
1. Keep it simple

A consistent focus on the same skills helps ensure everyone's shared understanding and makes building these skills as tangible as possible. Using the same language all the time makes a big difference.

Things to consider:

Does everyone know which essential skills you focus on in your school or college?

Do all staff and students use a consistent language when referring to the skills?

Do all staff receive training and support on these skills?
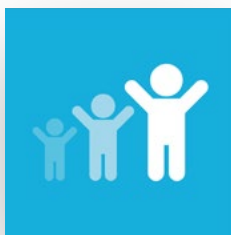
2. Start early, keep going

Mastering these essential skills isn't simple and takes time and sustained effort. The skills are not just about employability, but about thriving in all aspects of life.

Things to consider:

Do you think about these skills for all the students you work with?

Could you introduce these skills earlier on?

Are there opportunities for students to build the skills further as they grow up?

3. Measure it

Take time to reflect on the skills of individuals – by observing or by self-assessment. This gives a balanced understanding of strengths and weaknesses, highlights progress and shows next steps.

Things to consider:

Are you using a consistent skills framework and assessment tool like Skills Builder?

Does your framework reflect quantifiable progress over time?

Do you check in on progress regularly?
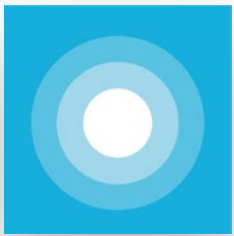
4. Focus tightly

Building essential skills should build upon a student's previous learning and skill attainment. It should allow dedicated time just to explicitly build skills.

Things to consider:

Do you have different goals for what different students should be aiming to do when building their skills?

Do you make time just to focus on explicitly developing skills?
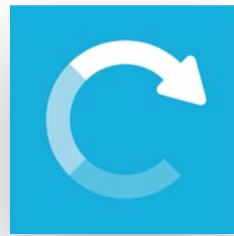
5. Keep practising

To accelerate progress in the essential skills, they should be used and reinforced as often as possible – including opportunites for reflection.

Things to consider:

Are there regular opportunities for students to use their essential skills?

When they do, are these opportunities highlighted clearly to them?

Is there regular opportunity to actively reflect on the skills and how they have been developed?
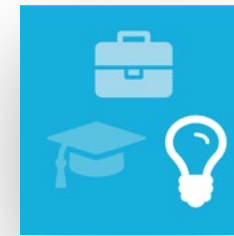
6. Bring it to life

Ensure students see the relevance of these skills by linking them with the real world and by bringing real-life problems and challenges to work on.

Things to consider:

Are the skills framed in terms of their usefulness for education, employment and wider life?

Are there opportunities for students to use their skills in different settings?

Do you use links to employers to support building these skills?

The Skills Builder Universal Framework

LISTENING · SPEAKING · PROBLEM SOLVING · CREATIVITY · STAYING POSITIVE · AIMING HIGH · LEADERSHIP · TEAMWORK

Skills Builder
UNIVERSAL FRAMEWORK

Our starting point is eight essential skills. Known by many different names, these eight skills map across to the four domains that come up time and again as the core, transferable skills for employment.

In pairs they cover communication, creative problem-solving, self-management, and collaboration skills. These eight skills are laid out in the **Skills Builder Universal Framework**.

The Framework breaks down each of the eight essential skills into tangible steps which can be developed in turn. We can use it to clarify what success looks like in each skill and to map out the trajectory for growth. The full Framework can be found from page 7.

The Framework is the culmination of four years of learning and builds on the expertise of over 120 leading organisations and individuals across the sector. It has been used with over 750 schools and colleges. It has also been independently reviewed twice. The background to the development of this version of the Framework can be found at **skillsbuilder.org/universal**.

LISTENING

Listening

The receiving, retaining and processing of information or ideas

This skill is all about being able to effectively receive information - whether it comes from a peer, a teacher, or someone else entirely.

Initially, the skill steps concentrate on being able to listen effectively to others - including remembering short instructions, understanding why others are communicating and recording important information.

Individuals then focus on how they demonstrate that they are listening effectively, thinking about body language, open questioning and summarising and rephrasing.

Beyond that, the focus is on being aware of how they might be being influenced by a speaker, through tone and language.

The final steps are about critical listening - comparing perspectives, identifying biases, evaluating ideas and being objective.

Step	Learner Descriptor
•	I know what it means to listen
••	I know what interrupting is, and why to avoid it
•••	I know some ways to avoid interrupting
0	I listen to others without interrupting
•	I know why recalling instructions matters
••	I concentrate when listening to instructions
•••	I store and recall simple instructions
1	I listen to others and can remember short instructions
•	I know why it is important to understand what I have heard
••	I think about whether I understand what I have heard
•••	I ask questions of what I have not understood
2	I listen to others and can ask questions if I don't understand

Step	Learner Descriptor
•	I listen effectively and stay focused
••	I retain and process information I have heard
•••	I recall and explain information to others
3	I listen to others and can tell someone else what it was about
•	I know the key reasons why people communicate
••	I know why it is important to know why someone is communicating
•••	I can identify why someone is communicating with me
4	I listen to others and can tell why they are communicating with me
•	I can sustain concentration when listening over a longer period
••	I identify key words and information from extended talks
•••	I record information in a way that makes it accessible again in the future
5	I listen to others and record important information as I do

1 Skill definition

2 The thematic progression in skill development

3 The steps show progression from the foundations of each skill to the most developed stages.

4 This descriptor can be shared with learners to understand their own skill development.

Step
•
• •
• • •
1

The Expanded Framework breaks progression down, placing three simple **Stepping Stones** between Steps give more extensive scaffolding.

The Stepping Stones can be recorded on our assessment tool, too.

For free tools to assess and build essential skills for your learners, use the Skills Builder Hub at **skillsbuilder.org/hub**

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Listening

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I actively listen for a sustained period
● ●	I maintain an appropriate level of eye contact with a speaker
● ● ●	I show that I am listening through my body language
6	**I show I am listening by how I use eye contact and body language**
●	I follow the thread of a discussion to make appropriate contributions
● ●	I understand the difference between closed and open questions
● ● ●	I identify how I can expand my understanding of what is said
7	**I show I am listening by using open questions to deepen my understanding**
●	I understand what it means to summarise information
● ●	I understand what it means to rephrase information
● ● ●	I find appropriate points in conversation to summarise or rephrase
8	**I show I am listening by summarising or rephrasing what I have heard**
●	I understand what tone means and can identify the key elements
● ●	I explain how a speaker's tone can change
● ● ●	I understand how different tones can influence my understanding of what I hear
9	**I am aware of how a speaker is influencing me through their tone**
●	I understand how language can influence emotions
● ●	I identify language features that create different emotional responses
● ● ●	I identify how language tools can influence the listener
10	**I am aware of how a speaker is influencing me through their language**

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I explain and can define what perspective means
● ●	I understand the value of different people's perspectives
● ● ●	I use core points made in a discussion to identify different perspectives
11	**I listen critically and compare different perspectives**
●	I am aware of the factors which can influence a person's perspective
● ●	I link information I have heard to a person's perspective
● ● ●	I build knowledge of people and events to better understand different perspectives
12	**I listen critically and think about where differences in perspectives come from**
●	I explain what bias and prejudice are and where they come from
● ●	I identify how bias is seen through the language a speaker uses
● ● ●	I link the information I have heard to a speaker's bias
13	**I listen critically and identify potential bias in different perspectives**
●	I evaluate different perspectives using the information I have heard
● ●	I identify what information is needed for further evaluation of perspectives
● ● ●	I use questioning to evaluate perspectives
14	**I listen critically and use questioning to evaluate different perspectives**
●	I understand the importance of being aware of my own biases
● ●	I identify evidence used in objective evaluation
● ● ●	I evaluate different perspectives using the information I can check to be true
15	**I listen critically and look beyond the way speakers speak or act to objectively evaluate different perspectives**

Speaking

The oral transmission of information or ideas

This skill is all about how to communicate effectively with others, being mindful of whether they are talking to customers, colleagues or other stakeholders and in different settings.

Initially, this skill focuses on being able to speak clearly - first with well known individuals and small groups and then with those who are not known.

The next stage is about being an effective speaker by making points logically, by thinking about what listeners already know and using appropriate language, tone and gesture.

Beyond that, individuals focus on speaking engagingly through use of facts and examples, visual aids, and their expression and gesture.

Beyond that stage, speakers will be adaptive to the response of their listeners and ready for different scenarios. The final steps focus on speaking influentially - using structure, examples, facts and vision to persuade listeners.

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I understand what speaking is
● ●	I respond to simple questions and prompts
● ● ●	I speak clearly so another person understands me
0	**I speak clearly to someone I know**
●	I understand how to engage more than one person
● ●	I speak in front of others
● ● ●	I speak clearly so more than one person understands me
1	**I speak clearly to small groups of people I know**
●	I understand what is different about talking to people I don't know
● ●	I speak clearly to individuals I do not know
● ● ●	I speak clearly to small groups I do not know
2	**I speak clearly to individuals and small groups I do not know**

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I understand what it means to say things in a logical order
● ●	I understand why putting things in a logical order is important when speaking
● ● ●	I use different approaches to putting things in a logical order
3	**I speak effectively by making points in a logical order**
●	I understand why it is important to know what my listeners already know
● ●	I know how to build on what my listeners already know
● ● ●	I explain new concepts that listeners are able to follow
4	**I speak effectively by thinking about what my listeners already know**
●	I understand why language changes in different settings
● ●	I explain the difference between formal, informal and technical language
● ● ●	I judge what language is appropriate in different settings
5	**I speak effectively by using appropriate language**

Speaking

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I know what tone is and what is appropriate in different settings
● ●	I know what expression is and what is appropriate in different settings
● ● ●	I know what gesture is and what is appropriate in different settings
6	**I speak effectively by using appropriate tone, expression and gesture**
●	I understand the value of using facts and statistics when speaking
● ●	I support the ideas I share with appropriate facts and examples
● ● ●	I know how to structure an opinion or argument
7	**I speak engagingly by using facts and examples to support my points**
●	I understand what visual aids are and how they can help
● ●	I know how to use visual aids effectively
● ● ●	I create simple visuals and props to support what I am saying
8	**I speak engagingly by using visual aids to support my points**
●	I know how tone, expression and gesture can make speaking more engaging
● ●	I speak in front of others and manage my tone to be more engaging
● ● ●	I use appropriate gesture and expression to make my speaking more engaging
9	**I speak engagingly by using tone, expression and gesture to engage listeners**
●	I know how to prepare for different audiences
● ●	I identify how my listeners are feeling about what I am saying
● ● ●	I know how to adjust language, tone and expression in response to an audience
10	**I speak adaptively by changing my language, tone and expression depending on the response of listeners**

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I define what a negotiation is and explain why they happen
● ●	I anticipate the other party's position before a negotiation
● ● ●	I plan changes to my points in response to the other party's position
11	**I speak adaptively by planning for different possible responses of listeners**
●	I identify the structure of a negotiation
● ●	I recognise the importance of listening in negotiations
● ● ●	I use strategies to adapt the content of what I say
12	**I speak adaptively by changing my content depending on the response of listeners**
●	I define what influence means and explain how it is used
● ●	I understand how we can change the structure of our points to be influential
● ● ●	I read the response of my audience and change my structure accordingly
13	**I speak influentially by changing the structure of my points to best persuade the listeners**
●	I recognise how using examples and facts can be influential
● ●	I evaluate the persuasiveness of different examples and facts
● ● ●	I select examples and facts that are appropriate for my audience
14	**I speak influentially by changing the examples and facts I use to best persuade the listeners**
●	I explain and define what a vision is using examples
● ●	I identify the characteristics of a compelling vision
● ● ●	I structure and deliver a vision that is compelling for my audience
15	**I speak influentially by articulating a compelling vision that persuades the listeners**

Problem Solving

The ability to find a solution to a situation or challenge

This skill focuses on how to solve problems, recognising that while part of Problem Solving is technical know-how and experience, there are also transferable tools that individuals can develop and use.

The first steps focus on being able to follow instructions to complete tasks, seeking help and extra information if needed. The next stage focuses on being able to explore problems by creating and assessing different potential solutions. This includes more complex problems, without a simple technical solution.

Beyond this, the focus is on exploring complex solutions - thinking about causes and effects, generating options, and evaluating those options. This extends into analysis using logical reasoning and hypotheses.

Finally, individuals implement strategic plans to solve complex problems, assess their success, and draw out learning for the future.

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I know what instructions are
● ●	I understand and follow simple verbal instructions
● ● ●	I understand and follow simple visual instructions
0	I complete tasks by following instructions
●	I know when I need help
● ●	I explore where I might find help
● ● ●	I know who I can ask for help
1	I complete tasks by finding someone to help if I need them
●	I identify a problem I am having
● ●	I explain a problem to someone else
● ● ●	I act on advice to solve problems
2	I complete tasks by explaining problems to someone for advice if I need

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I identify what I already know and what I need to know about a problem
● ●	I know where to go for extra information
● ● ●	I use extra information to help me solve a problem
3	I complete tasks by finding information I need myself
●	I identify complicated problems that do not have a simple solution
● ●	I understand why creating lots of possible solutions can help solve complicated problems
● ● ●	I develop multiple potential solutions for complicated problems
4	I explore problems by creating different possible solutions
●	I explain and define what pros and cons are
● ●	I identify the pros and cons of different solutions
● ● ●	I apply pros and cons when evaluating solutions to make the best choice
5	I explore problems by thinking about the pros and cons of possible solutions

Problem Solving

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I explain and define what complex problems are
● ●	I identify the characteristics of complex problems
● ● ●	I know how to work with complex problems
6	I explore complex problems by identifying when there are no simple technical solutions
●	I identify what I know and what I need to know to understand a complex problem
● ●	I identify the research that would be useful in exploring complex problems
● ● ●	I know how to carry out primary and secondary research
7	I explore complex problems by building my understanding through research
●	I explain and define what causes and effects are
● ●	I know why causes and effects are important in understanding complex problems
● ● ●	I identify causes and effects and how they might join up into chains or circles
8	I explore complex problems by analysing the causes and effects
●	I generate a range of solutions for complex problems
● ●	I understand what feasibility is and why it is important
● ● ●	I know how to assess if solutions are feasible
9	I create solutions for complex problems by generating a range of options
●	I know how to evaluate possible solutions to a complex problem
● ●	I understand that implementing solutions will have secondary effects
● ● ●	I evaluate potential solutions by considering secondary effects
10	I create solutions for complex problems by evaluating the positive and negative effects of a range of options

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I explain and define what logical reasoning is
● ●	I understand the differences between inductive and deductive logic
● ● ●	I use logic trees as a tool for logical reasoning to arrive at a conclusion
11	I analyse complex problems by using logical reasoning
●	I explain and define what a testable hypothesis is
● ●	I create testable hypotheses to be used to solve complex problems
● ● ●	I test hypotheses using sample data
12	I analyse complex problems by creating and testing hypotheses
●	I explain and define what strategic plans are
● ●	I define the strategic purpose to develop strategic plans
● ● ●	I use research and analysis to plan my approach to a strategic plan
13	I implement strategic plans to solve complex problems
●	I know how to assess the success of strategic plans
● ●	I set SMART targets as the focus of my strategic plans
● ● ●	I set milestones to measure if strategic plans are on track to achieving goals
14	I implement strategic plans to solve complex problems and assess their success
●	I list reflective questions to evaluate the success of a strategic plan
● ●	I adapt strategic plans to adress challenges and manage impact challenges
● ● ●	I test hypotheses and adapt my approach to increase the success of a solution
15	I implement strategic plans to solve complex problems and draw out learning to refine those plans over time

Creativity

The use of imagination and the generation of new ideas

Creativity is the complement to Problem Solving, and is about generating innovations or ideas which can then be honed through the problem-solving process.

The first few steps focus on the individual's confidence in imagining different situations and sharing their ideas.

The focus is then on generating ideas - using a clear brief, making improvements to something that already exists and combining concepts. Individuals then apply creativity in the context of their work and their wider life. They can build off this to develop ideas using tools like mind mapping, questioning, and considering different perspectives.

The most advanced steps focus on building effective innovation in group settings and by seeking out varied experiences and stimuli. Finally, individuals support others to innovate, by sharing tools, identifying the right tools for the situation and through coaching.

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I understand the difference between imaginary and real
● ●	I give examples of where imagination has been used
● ● ●	I show how I have used my imagination
0	I imagine different situations
●	I know why it is helpful to explain what I imagine
● ●	I know how to talk about what I have imagined
● ● ●	I describe what I have imagined
1	I imagine different situations and can say what I imagine
●	I know different ways to share what I have imagined
● ●	I draw or record what I have imagined
● ● ●	I act out or model what I have imagined
2	I imagine different situations and can bring them to life in different ways

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I explain and define what a creative brief is
● ●	I know how to generate ideas for a simple brief
● ● ●	I explain and define what success criteria are
3	I generate ideas when I've been given a clear brief
●	I explain why success criteria are important
● ●	I use success criteria to identify what something is supposed to be able to do
● ● ●	I use success criteria to generate ideas for improving something
4	I generate ideas to improve something
●	I explain and define what a concept is
● ●	I identify the different components of an idea or concept
● ● ●	I know how two or more ideas can be combined
5	I generate ideas by combining different concepts

Creativity

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I define and describe what creativity is
● ●	I see the value of creativity for supporting work
● ● ●	I know how creativity can be used across different types of work
6	I use creativity in the context of work
●	I identify the aspects of creativity
● ●	I explain when I have used creativity in my wider life
● ● ●	I recognise the benefits of using creativity in my wider life
7	I use creativity in the context of my wider life
●	I explain and define mind mapping
● ●	I create mind map to explore ideas
● ● ●	I share mind maps to explain how ideas are linked and related
8	I develop ideas by using mind mapping
●	I recognise the role of questioning in developing ideas
● ●	I identify what sort of questions to ask
● ● ●	I use answers to questions to develop my ideas
9	I develop ideas by asking myself questions
●	I define and describe what perspectives are
● ●	I outline factors that might cause a different perspective
● ● ●	I recognise how different perspectives can be used to improve ideas
10	I develop ideas by considering different perspectives

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I identify the advantages and risks of innovating as a group
● ●	I know how to avoid a group reaching consensus too quickly
● ● ●	I know how to broaden a group's perspective
11	I innovate effectively when working in a group
●	I define experiences and explain their role in the creative process
● ●	I reflect on my own experiences and use these to create new ideas
● ● ●	I define creative stimuli and explain their role in the creative process
12	I innovate effectively by seeking out varied experiences and stimuli
●	I understand why it is important to support others to be creative
● ●	I identify different creative tools that can be used to explore ideas further
● ● ●	I recognise how creative tools can be used by others to boost their creativity
13	I support others to innovate by sharing a range of tools
●	I know why it is important to be able to evaluate creative tools
● ●	I identify the most effective creative tool for different tasks
● ● ●	I make recommendations for the best creative tool and explain my reasoning
14	I support others to innovate by evaluating the right creative tools for different situations
●	I know what coaching is and how it supports creativity
● ●	I evaluate others' innovative capabilities
● ● ●	I identify others' working styles and skill sets
15	I support others to innovate by coaching them to be more creative

Staying Positive

The ability to use tactics and strategies to overcome setbacks and achieve goals

This skill is all about individuals being equipped to manage their emotions effectively and being able to remain motivated, and ultimately to motivate others, even when facing setbacks.

The early steps focus on identifying emotions - particularly feeling positive or negative. Building off that is the ability to keep trying - and then staying calm, thinking about what went wrong, and trying to cheer up and encourage others.

The focus then turns to identifying new opportunities in difficult situations, sharing those, and adapting or creating plans accordingly. At more advanced steps, individuals identify and manage risks and gains in opportunities.

Finally, individuals support others to stay positive by managing their own response, helping others to see opportunities and creating plans to achieve them.

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I understand what emotions are
● ●	I know that emotions might be positive or negative
● ● ●	I know why understanding emotions is important
0	I can tell when I feel positive or negative
●	I explain what positive and negative emotions look like
● ●	I know what events might lead to positive and negative emotions
● ● ●	I recognise and name emotions in others
1	I can tell when others feel positive or negative
●	I know typical emotional responses to something going wrong
● ●	I explain the downsides of giving up
● ● ●	I know different strategies to motivate myself to keep trying
2	I keep trying when something goes wrong

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I know typical actions people make to emotional responses
● ●	I know different strategies to help me stay calm
● ● ●	I know how staying calm can help me to keep trying
3	I keep trying and stay calm when something goes wrong
●	I manage my emotional response to something going wrong
● ●	I take a positive approach to learning from something going wrong
● ● ●	I analyse when something goes wrong and learn lessons
4	I keep trying when something goes wrong, and think about what happened
●	I identify clues to recognise others' emotional responses
● ●	I understand why cheering others up is helpful
● ● ●	I use appropriate strategies to cheer up others when something goes wrong
5	I keep trying when something goes wrong and help cheer others up

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I define and describe what motivation is
● ●	I recognise how motivation can change when something goes wrong
● ● ●	I encourage others to remain motivated and keep trying
6	I keep trying when something goes wrong and encourage others to keep trying too
●	I identify the challenges or risks in a situation
● ●	I recognise that opportunities exist even in difficult situations
● ● ●	I know how to start identifying opportunities in difficult situations
7	I look for opportunities in difficult situations
●	I identify appropriate language to express the positive side of a difficult situation
● ●	I effectively share the positive side of a difficult situation
● ● ●	I involve others in identifying a positive side for themselves
8	I look for opportunities in difficult situations, and share these with others
●	I analyse a difficult situation to review strengths and weaknesses
● ●	I analyse a difficult situation to identify opportunities and threats
● ● ●	I adapt plans to make the most of opportunities
9	I look for opportunities in difficult situations, and adapt plans to use these opportunities
●	I review a difficult situation and identify viable opportunities
● ●	I identify the goals for what we want to achieve
● ● ●	I work through set stages to create a viable plan
10	I look for opportunities in difficult situations, and create new plans to use these opportunities

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I identify potential risks in opportunities
● ●	I identify potential gains in opportunities
● ● ●	I know how to compare risks and potential gains
11	I identify risks and gains in opportunities
●	I define and explain how to mitigate risks
● ●	I define and explain how to manage risk aversion
● ● ●	I make plans to realise gains
12	I identify risks and gains in opportunities, and make plans to manage them
●	I know why you might have to support others to stay positive
● ●	I recognise how emotions and responses impact on others
● ● ●	I identify appropriate responses to positively influence others in a range of situations
13	I support others to stay positive, by managing my own responses
●	I know how coaching helps others identify opportunities
● ●	I identify how to support someone into the right mindset to be coached
● ● ●	I know how to coach to support someone to spot new opportunities
14	I support others to stay positive, by helping others to see opportunities
●	I know how to coach someone to identify strengths and weaknesses
● ●	I know how to coach someone to spot opportunities and threats
● ● ●	I know how to coach others to set goals and create plans
15	I support others to stay positive, by helping others to see opportunities and creating plans to achieve them

Aiming High

The ability to set clear, tangible goals and devise a robust route to achieving them

This skill is about being able to plan effectively - both to achieve organisational goals, and also to set their own personal development targets. Initially, this is about knowing when something is too difficult, and having a sense of what doing well looks like for an individual.

The focus is then about working with care and attention, taking pride in success and having a positive approach to new challenges. Building on this, individuals set goals for themselves, informed by an understanding of what is needed, and then be able to order and prioritise tasks, secure resources and involve others effectively.

At the higher steps, the focus is creating plans informed by an individual's skill set, with clear targets, and building on external views. At the most advanced level, individuals develop long-term strategies. These are informed by an assessment of internal and external factors, structured through regular milestones and feedback loops.

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I understand that some activities can be more difficult than others
● ●	I know when something is too difficult or dangerous
● ● ●	I know when to keep going and when to seek help
0	I know when I am finding something too difficult
●	I understand what doing well means
● ●	I recognise when I have done good work
● ● ●	I know when I am making a good contribution
1	I know what doing well looks like for me
●	I understand what working carefully means
● ●	I take my time when working
● ● ●	I pay attention to detail
2	I work with care and attention to detail

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I recognise when I have been successful
● ●	I take satisfaction in being successful
● ● ●	I share what I feel when I have done well
3	I work with pride when I am being successful
●	I understand why new challenges are a good opportunity
● ●	I look for opportunities in my stretch zone
● ● ●	I identify the positives of approaching a new challenge
4	I work with a positive approach to new challenges
●	I define and explain what goals are
● ●	I know how to set goals in my stretch zone
● ● ●	I know how to measure if a goal has been achieved
5	I set goals for myself

Aiming High

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I identify the needs of myself and others
● ●	I build needs into the development of my own goals
● ● ●	I build needs into the development of others' goals
6	I set goals informed by an understanding of what is needed
●	I define and explain what tasks are
● ●	I identify tasks that need to be done to achieve a goal
● ● ●	I put tasks into a logical order
7	I set goals, ordering and prioritising tasks to achieve them
●	I define and explain different resources types
● ●	I identify what resources are needed in order to complete a task
● ● ●	I know how to secure the resources needed
8	I set goals and secure the right resources to achieve them
●	I recognise people are different to other types of resources
● ●	I identify how I can involve others in my plans
● ● ●	I know how to engage people in my plans
9	I set goals and plan to involve others in the best way
●	I identify my own skill set
● ●	I identify others' skill sets
● ● ●	I build skills into plans I create
10	I create plans that are informed by my skill set and that of others

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I identify what elements are important in creating a plan
● ●	I define and explain how goals and targets differ
● ● ●	I know how to turn goals into tangible targets
11	I create plans that include clear targets to make progress tangible
●	I understand and recognise the role of constructive criticism
● ●	I identify appropriate people and how to ask for constructive criticism
● ● ●	I identify how to build external views into plans I create
12	I create plans that are informed by external views, including constructive criticism
●	I define and explain what a long-term strategy is
● ●	I take an internal view to evaluate strengths and weaknesses
● ● ●	I take an external view to evaluate opportunities and threats
13	I develop long-term strategies taking into account strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
●	I identify the parts of a strategic plan
● ●	I define and explain what milestones are
● ● ●	I know how to set milestones that create clear goals to work towards
14	I develop long-term strategies that use regular milestones to keep everything on track
●	I define and explain what feedback loops are and how they are important
● ●	I define what strategic flexibility is and explain why it is valuable
● ● ●	I know how to adapt plans using positive and negative feedback
15	I develop long-term strategies that include feedback loops to support flexibility and adaptability

Leadership

Supporting, encouraging and developing others to achieve a shared goal

This skill is relevant not only for individuals in a leadership position, but also for individuals working with peers in teams. At the earliest stages, the focus is on basic empathy - understanding their own feelings, being able to share them, and recognising the feelings of others. The focus is on managing - dividing up tasks, managing time and sharing resources, managing group discussions and dealing with disagreements.

Beyond that, individuals build their awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, and those of their teams. This allows them to allocate tasks effectively. They then build techniques to mentor, coach and motivate others. At the highest steps, individuals will be able to reflect on their own leadership style and understand its effect on others.

Ultimately, they should be able to build on their strengths and mitigate their weaknesses, and adapt their leadership style to the situation.

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I know what different emotions might look and feel like
● ●	I recognise positive emotions and what might cause them
● ● ●	I recognise negative emotions and what might cause them
0	I know how I am feeling about something
●	I recognise why it is helpful to explain how I am feeling
● ●	I know there are good ways to express how I am feeling
● ● ●	I know there are bad ways to express how I am feeling
1	I know how to explain my feelings about something to my team
●	I know how to recognise how people might be feeling
● ●	I link how people might be feeling to what has happened
● ● ●	I explore others' feelings to understand why they feel that way
2	I know how to recognise others' feelings about something

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I know how to divide up tasks
● ●	I know how to share tasks out in a fair way
● ● ●	I spot if there are problems
3	I manage dividing up tasks between others in a fair way
●	I manage the team's time effectively
● ●	I ensure my team has the right resources
● ● ●	I know how to support my team to complete tasks
4	I manage time and share resources to support completing tasks
●	I identify the different roles that exist in a meeting
● ●	I chair meetings so everyone has a chance to contribute their ideas
● ● ●	I support the team to reach a decision
5	I manage group discussions to reach shared decisions

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I recognise that disagreements can be helpful
● ●	I know how disagreements can be unhelpful
● ● ●	I know how to turn disagreements into shared solutions
6	**I manage disagreements to reach shared solutions**
●	I know the elements of being an effective leader
● ●	I identify my own strengths as a leader
● ● ●	I identify my own weaknesses as a leader
7	**I recognise my own strengths and weaknesses as a leader**
●	I identify areas of strength for others in my team
● ●	I identify areas of weakness for others in my team
● ● ●	I recognise the different types of skills people have
8	**I recognise the strengths and weaknesses of others in my team**
●	I define what roles are with examples
● ●	I identify the needs in different roles
● ● ●	I know how to allocate roles by matching others' strengths with role requirements
9	**I recognise the strengths and weaknesses of others in my team, and use this to allocate roles accordingly**
●	I define and explain what mentorship is
● ●	I identify what makes mentoring work for the mentee
● ● ●	I support my mentee to identify goals
10	**I support others through mentorship**

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I define what coaching is and explain how it differs from mentoring
● ●	I understand what a coach does
● ● ●	I identify how coaching can be used effectively to improve performance
11	**I support others through coaching**
●	I define what motivation is and what factors can influence motivation
● ●	I know how understanding my team can boost motivation
● ● ●	I know the critical things a leader can do to maintain motivation in their team
12	**I support others through motivating them**
●	I recognise different leadership styles and their characteristics
● ●	I identify which leadership styles I use most and why
● ● ●	I evaluate how others respond to different leadership styles
13	**I reflect on my own leadership style and its effect on others**
●	I recognise when my leadership style is effective and reflect on why
● ●	I use feedback to identify strengths and weaknesses in my leadership
● ● ●	I make changes to my leadership style based on my reflections
14	**I reflect on my own leadership style, and build on my strengths and mitigate my weaknesses**
●	I understand different leadership styles are better suited to different situations
● ●	I reflect on which leadership styles have been most effective in different situations
● ● ●	I understand when and why major leadership styles are effective
15	**I reflect on my own leadership style, and adapt my approach according to the situation**

Teamwork

Working cooperatively with others towards achieving a shared goal

This skill applies to working within both formal and informal teams, and also with customers, clients or other stakeholders. Initially, this is about individuals fulfilling expectations around being positive, behaving appropriately, being timely and reliable and taking responsibility. This extends to understanding and respecting diversity of others' cultures, beliefs and backgrounds.

The next steps focus on making a contribution to a team through group decision making recognising the value of others' ideas and encourage others to contribute too. Beyond that, individuals improve their teams through managing conflict and building relationships beyond the immediate team. At the top steps, individuals focus on how they influence their team through suggesting improvements and learning lessons from setbacks.

Ultimately, individuals support the team by evaluating others strengths and weaknesses and bringing in external expertise and relationships.

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I understand why working with others can be helpful
● ●	I know what working positively looks like
● ● ●	I recognise when it is difficult to work positively
0	I work with others in a positive way
●	I define what behaviour is with examples
● ●	I know how behaviour might vary
● ● ●	I identify the appropriate behaviour for different situations
1	I work well with others by behaving appropriately
●	I understand why being on time matters
● ●	I can define reliability and why it matters
● ● ●	I identify how to get better at being reliable
2	I work well with others by being on time and reliable

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I can define what responsibility means
● ●	I identify ways to take responsibility
● ● ●	I understand when taking responsibility works well
3	I work well with others by taking responsibility for completing my tasks
●	I understand what it means to support others
● ●	I explain why supporting others is important and helpful
● ● ●	I know how to identify if I can support others
4	I work well with others by supporting them if I can do so
●	I define and explain what diversity means
● ●	I define and explain what equality means
● ● ●	I define and explain what inclusivity means
5	I work well with others by understanding and respecting diversity of others' cultures, beliefs and backgrounds

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I define and explain what group decision making is
● ●	I recognise the benefits of contributing to group decision making
● ● ●	I know how to contribute positively to group discussions
6	**I contribute to group decision making**
●	I understand that sharing my ideas is just one part of group decision making blllaa blalll alll
● ●	I identify why group decision making can go wrong and take steps to avoid this
● ● ●	I recognise the value of others' ideas
7	**I contribute to group decision making, whilst recognising the value of others' ideas**
●	I recognise why everyone in a group should contribute
● ●	I understand why sometimes people don't want to contribute
● ● ●	I encourage others to contribute effectively
8	**I contribute to group decision making, encouraging others to contribute**
●	I define what unhelpful conflicts are and what effect they can have
● ●	I recognise common causes of unhelpful conflicts
● ● ●	I know strategies to help avoid conflicts starting
9	**I improve the team by not creating unhelpful conflicts**
●	I prepare to resolve my own conflicts
● ●	I use conversation to resolve my conflicts with others
● ● ●	I know how to help resolve the conflicts of others
10	**I improve the team by resolving unhelpful conflicts**

Step	Learner Descriptor
●	I recognise why relationships beyond the team are important
● ●	I understand what external relationships might be based around
● ● ●	I know how new relationships can be started, maintained and developed
11	**I improve the team by building relationships beyond my immediate team**
●	I use evaluative questions to reflect on a team's progress
● ●	I make suggestions for improving team performance
● ● ●	I know how to work with the leader to positively influence my team
12	**I influence the team by reflecting on progress and suggesting improvements**
●	I understand how objective targets help a team to see if it has been successful
● ●	I use team objectives to evaluate successes and failures
● ● ●	I know how to use constructive feedback to encourage positive outcomes
13	**I influence the team by evaluating successes and failures and sharing lessons**
●	I evaluate team members' strengths and provide positive feedback
● ●	I evaluate team members' weaknesses to identify where support may be needed
● ● ●	I use my understanding of team attributes effectively support a team
14	**I support the team by evaluating others' strengths and weaknesses, and supporting them accordingly**
●	I recognise what benefits external stakeholders can bring to a team
● ●	I identify external stakeholders to bring expertise to a team
● ● ●	I know how to nourish external relationships
15	**I support the team by bringing in external expertise and relationships**

Cleeve Meadow School

Cleeve Meadow School in Sidcup, Kent supports learners aged 11 to 19 with moderate learning difficulties and associated social communication needs. They are part of The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT) and are co-located with Cleeve Park School, an inclusive mainstream secondary school. The school has a vision to provide all learners with the skills needed to allow them to live as independent adults as far as possible, both in their home and work life.

How do they use the Skills Builder Expanded Universal Framework?

Cleeve Meadow provide an engaging and highly aspirational curriculum and embedding the eight essential skills across all subjects – making these skills visual around the school building supports consistency of skill development in all aspects of learning and life. Teachers use the resources and videos to plan lessons, and the teacher guides are used to help embed the skills into everyday lessons.

Why do they use the Skills Builder Expanded Universal Framework?

The school joined the Skills Builder Partnership to provide learners with the tools needed to allow them to co-operate and collaborate with their peers, as well as preparing them fully for the world of work. To highlight the transferability of skills, the use of a common language and framework keeps things simple.

What's been the impact of using the Skills Builder Expanded Universal Framework?

Using the Universal Framework to highlight strengths and demonstrate skill development has been key to motivating learners and understanding what the essential skills look like in practice. As part of developing Listening skills, the school also liaises with outside agencies, including a drama group who have been coming in to take sessions and have planned their sessions to cover the Listening skills being worked on.

" We use step posters around school to remind students of the skills we're working on, and used the passports in class so students can record their progress. "

Helen Nobbs, Class Teacher and Key Stage 3 Lead

" After students started at the school, we found that there was a lot of work to be done on teamwork skills, so it was decided that we would focus for the first term just on Teamwork. Students were also all given Teamwork targets in their personalised learning profiles. "

Helen Nobbs, Class Teacher and Key Stage 3 Lead

" It has been evident that some of the quieter students have really enjoyed the opportunity to develop their confidence, with several of them giving ideas and opinions in teamwork tasks, a lot of them for the first time. They are able to talk proudly about the steps and skills they have achieved, and know where they would like to improve. "

Helen Nobbs, Class Teacher and Key Stage 3 Lead

We are very grateful to MFS for their continued support
of our work to support learners with additional needs.

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