Cultures of Powerful Learning: Infusing Schools with the Spirit of Learning to Learn

The fundamental aim of 21st century education is to expand young people's appetite and capacity for learning. Over the last 20 years, this idea has grown enormously in its depth, practicality and precision. First there were simple techniques for remembering and organising information, often over-hyped. Then came 'learning styles' that frequently labelled and confined students rather than challenged and stretched them. Often a veneer of dubious neuroscience was added to make ideas look impressive. Next came stand-alone courses on 'thinking skills' or 'learning to learn' that excited students' interest but usually left little lasting impression. And now we have so-called 'infusion approaches' that aim to pervade the cultural fabric of schools, colleges and institutions with invitations and opportunities to expand the generic capacities and dispositions that underpin real-life learning. This talk focuses in on the infusion approach, and offers a range of practical suggestions about how to create Learning Power cultures.