Young people need to learn more than just subject matter
to flourish in the world.

They need one key capability – and it’s one that schools could be developing right now.

Across the world there is a great shift taking place. Where once it was enough to know and do things, our uncertain world calls for some additional learning, a world in which young people need more than subject knowledge in order to thrive – they need capabilities.

Some call them ‘dispositions’, ‘habits of mind’, ‘attributes’ or ‘competencies’, others refer to them as ‘non-cognitive skills’, ‘soft skills’ or ‘traits’, none of which are truly appropriate given their negative connotations, tendency to belittle what is involved and association with genetic inheritance.

If young people are to flourish both in education and in the wider world, a key capability is zest: the curiosity and desire to experience new things.

According to Professor Bill Lucas and Dr Ellen Spencer, zestful learners can find their passions, develop independence and challenge themselves to become more expansive learners. Sadly, in many schools there is an absence of zest and an abundance of both blandness and examined predictability.

For many young people, their learning stops just when it is getting really challenging and engaging – the bell goes and out they file. Where their learning interests might ideally take them is beyond the scope of a particular subject or syllabus. And in these form-filling, litigious times it is ever more tricky to organise educational forays out into the real world.

“We like the word ‘zest’ because it suggests the kind of engaged curiosity we see as being at the heart of all good learning. We have looked hard at the evidence to understand more about zest. Research suggests that it is a valuable capability, central to human flourishing and eminently learnable.”

In their new book *Zest for Learning*, Bill and Ellen offer a framework for zest: a practical guide for teachers, underpinned by theory. They draw on a number of areas of knowledge and practice, bringing together ideas in concrete and actionable ways.

*Zest for Learning* connects the co-curriculum with the formal curriculum, building both theoretical and practical confidence in the kinds of pedagogies which work well. It draws together a far-reaching literature exploring zest and zest-like attributes, offering schools and organisations working with schools a model of how it could be at the heart of children’s educational experiences.

*Zest for Learning* is a call to action for school leaders to broaden their horizons of what school can be and to take heart from the ideas which others are already using.

It is the third book in the Pedagogy for a Changing World series, which details which capabilities matter and how schools can develop them.

**Articles and interviews available**

Bill and Ellen are available for interview, expert comment or by-lined articles on a range of topics, such as:

* Rethinking the curriculum – expanding the formal curriculum and valuing co-curricular and extra curricular learning
* Developing capable young people
* Developing a zest for learning

**Professor Bill Lucas** is Director of the Centre for Real-World Learning. A global thought-leader, Bill is co-chair of the PISA 2021 test of creative thinking and an education adviser to the state of Victoria in Australia, to the LEGO foundation, to the Royal Yachting Association and to the Church of England.

**Dr Ellen Spencer** is a senior researcher at the Centre for Real-World Learning. Ellen is an expert on the assessment of creativity and pedagogy for practical learning and, together with Bill Lucas and Guy Claxton, is co-author of E*xpansive Education: Teaching learners for the real world*.

**For a review copy, a by-lined article or an interview with the authors, please contact Amy Heighton**

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