

# Learning to Learn

## Preparing Students for a Rapidly Changing World

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### The Challenge

We are living in a rapidly changing world where we face plenty of unexpected happenings. The knowledge and skills that we have learned today may not be able to help us handle the future tasks, problems and crises. Therefore, we need to keep learning. However, not all students are motivated to learn. And, not all students know how to learn. What can we do to help increase their learning motivation and help them learn better and more effectively?

### Our Strategic Priority

In our Strategic Plan 2019/20 – 2024/25, we put down 'learning to learn' (L2L) as our strategy to tackle this challenge. Our goal is to strengthen the L2L element in the programme and subject curriculum. Through the L2L development, we hope our students will become motivated and effective learners who are able to manage their learning and adopt appropriate and effective methods to acquire knowledge and skills that can eventually help them cope with the problems in the rapidly changing world.



### Our Plans

We develop a L2L model (see Figure 1) for our context based on the outputs of a comprehensive study of 523 L2L components by Cristina Stringher in 2014. In our L2L model, we focus on six dimensions: Intentional, Dispositional, Metacognitive, Affective-motivational, Cognitive and Social, with two components under each dimension. We believe this model can guide our programmes to define strategies suitable for their disciplinary context to develop our students to become better and more effective learners.



Under this model, all undergraduate programmes are expected to address the twelve L2L components in the programme and subject curriculum and create opportunities at different levels for students to develop, practice and enhance their learning ability during the entire period of their study in the university. At the same time, students are encouraged to keep a learning portfolio to document their journey of pursuing something they aspire to.

By the end of the 2024/25 academic year, all undergraduate programmes should have devised strategies for the L2L development in the curriculum, with clear information of the teaching and learning activities at the programme and subject levels to develop students' L2L ability.

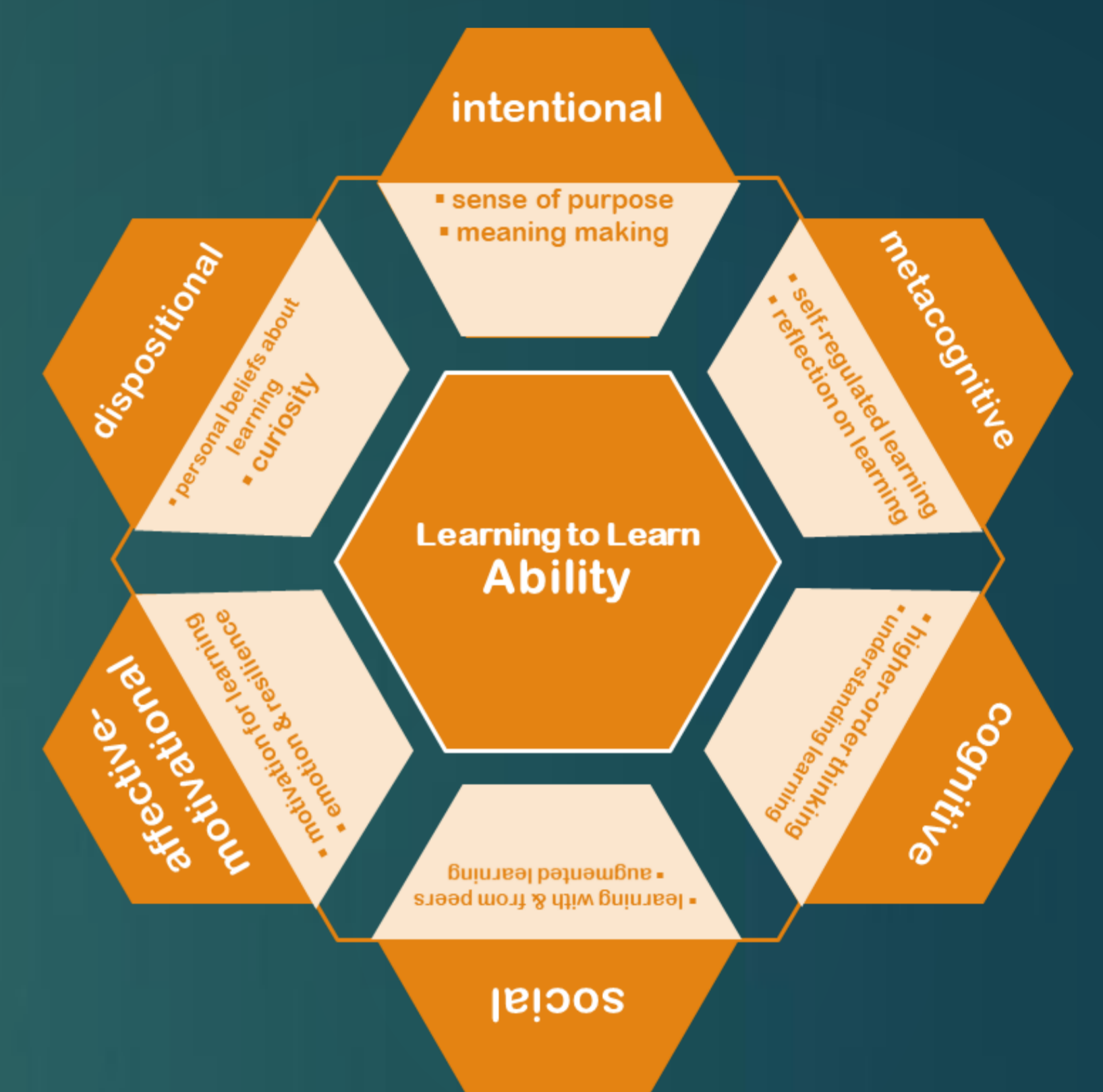


Figure 1 PolyU's L2L Model

Week	Activity/Task	Purpose/ Intended Outcome	Learning resources
1-2	Briefing	Explain to students what L2L is and why it is important to them, and go through the activities and resources to support their L2L development	L2L online module
	L2L Self-assessment	For students to rate their performance of the twelve L2L components/ attributes – it helps students understand more about themselves as a learner and it helps us collect student data before the implementation of the L2L activities	Online L2L self-assessment form
	Picture My Aspirations & My Personal Development Plan Assignments	For students to learn to set their learning goals and make plans for achieving them	Templates and L2L online module
3 & 5	Debriefing	Go through the L2L Self-assessment results and relay to students what they can do to improve their learning ability and become the master of their learning	L2L online module
		Go through their Picture My Aspirations and My Personal Development Plan submissions and point out the areas that they made mistakes or misunderstood	Templates and L2L online module
12-13	Progress Review Assignment	For students to review their progress and identify gaps	Template and L2L online module
14	My Experience Reflection Assignment	For students to reflect on their own learning experience with reference to their Personal Development Plan, and identify their strengths and weaknesses	Template and L2L online module
	L2L Self-assessment	For students to rate their performance of the twelve L2L components/ attributes again – it helps students check their performance over the semester and it helps us collect student data after the implementation of the L2L activities	Online L2L self-assessment form
	Wrap-up	Recap the L2L activities, emphasise the concepts behind, acknowledge students' achievements, and encourage students to continue the process	

Table 1 L2L Implementation Plan of the Pilot

### The Pilot Study

In 2018, we launched an institutional project to pilot some activities and materials focusing on the intentional, dispositional and metacognitive dimensions with over 900 Freshman Seminar students of three Faculties: Faculty of Construction & Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Humanities.

We developed an implementation plan and designed some face-to-face and online activities (see Table 1) to engage students in the L2L development during the first semester of their university study.

### The Pilot Study – key findings

When comparing the two sets of data of L2L self-assessment the students completed at the beginning and at the end of the semester, we find statistically significance in 8 out of the 12 L2L components, and they are: Meaning Making, Personal Beliefs about Learning, Self-Regulated Learning, Reflection on Learning, Emotion & Resilience, Higher-Order Thinking, Understanding Learning and Learning from and with Others.

Student feedback collected via our online survey shows a positive view on the usefulness of the L2L ability in students' study, life planning and future study and career. Most students find our activities and resources able to help them become a better and reflective learner.

### What's Next?

The implementation of L2L development will spread from students' first year of study to other years. Funding will be allocated to support faculty members to review the curriculum and (re)design suitable teaching and learning activities or finetune the existing activities with support of the Educational Development Centre and other units to help students become effective lifelong learners.

In order to expand and increase faculty members' engagement in L2L development, we have recently set up a community of practice to get faculty members and students together to create more dialogues on teaching and learning, and engage them in action research to experiment ideas and strategies to promote and enhance the L2L development inside and outside the class. We are planning to build a virtual library of literature, ready-to-use resources, good practice cases related to L2L for documentation and sharing purposes. We are also going to organise social activities for members to exchange ideas with other participants and showcase the outcomes of their action research experience.

