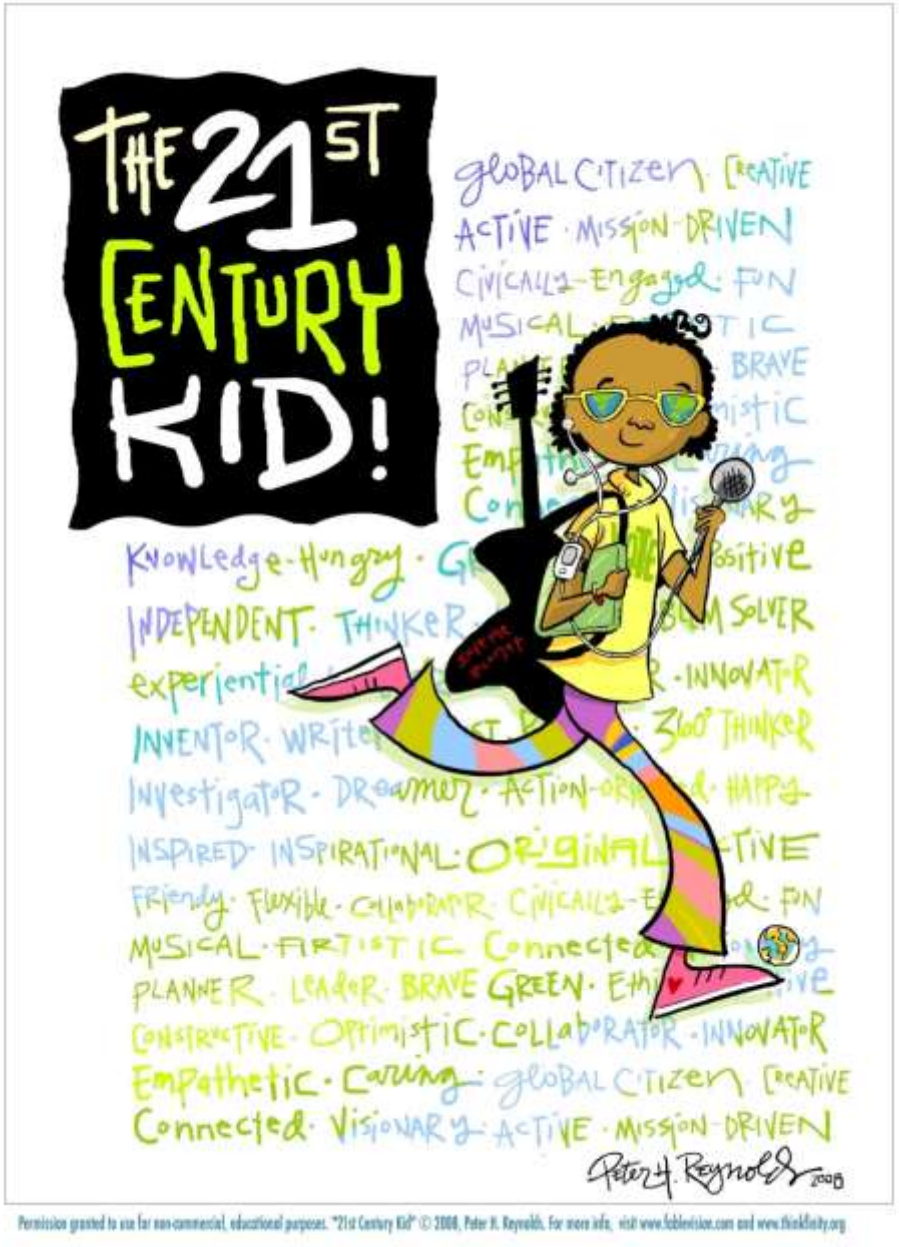

Building the Independent Learner

Deakin University
June 9, 2014

Dr Adrian Bertolini

Intuyu Consulting | Empowering 21st Century Learning

Introduction

Intentions of Today's session

- To **explore what it means** to be an Independent Learner
- To inquire into what are some of the **habits and structures we could put in place** to develop an environment that encourages independent learners
- To realise that **it will require a shift** in how we think about our roles and how schools operate

What **YOUR** job is today

Be **open**, **honest** and **participate**

As the range of
viewpoints and ideas
are presented

Try them on,
Think about them,
Discuss them &
Learn what you Learn!

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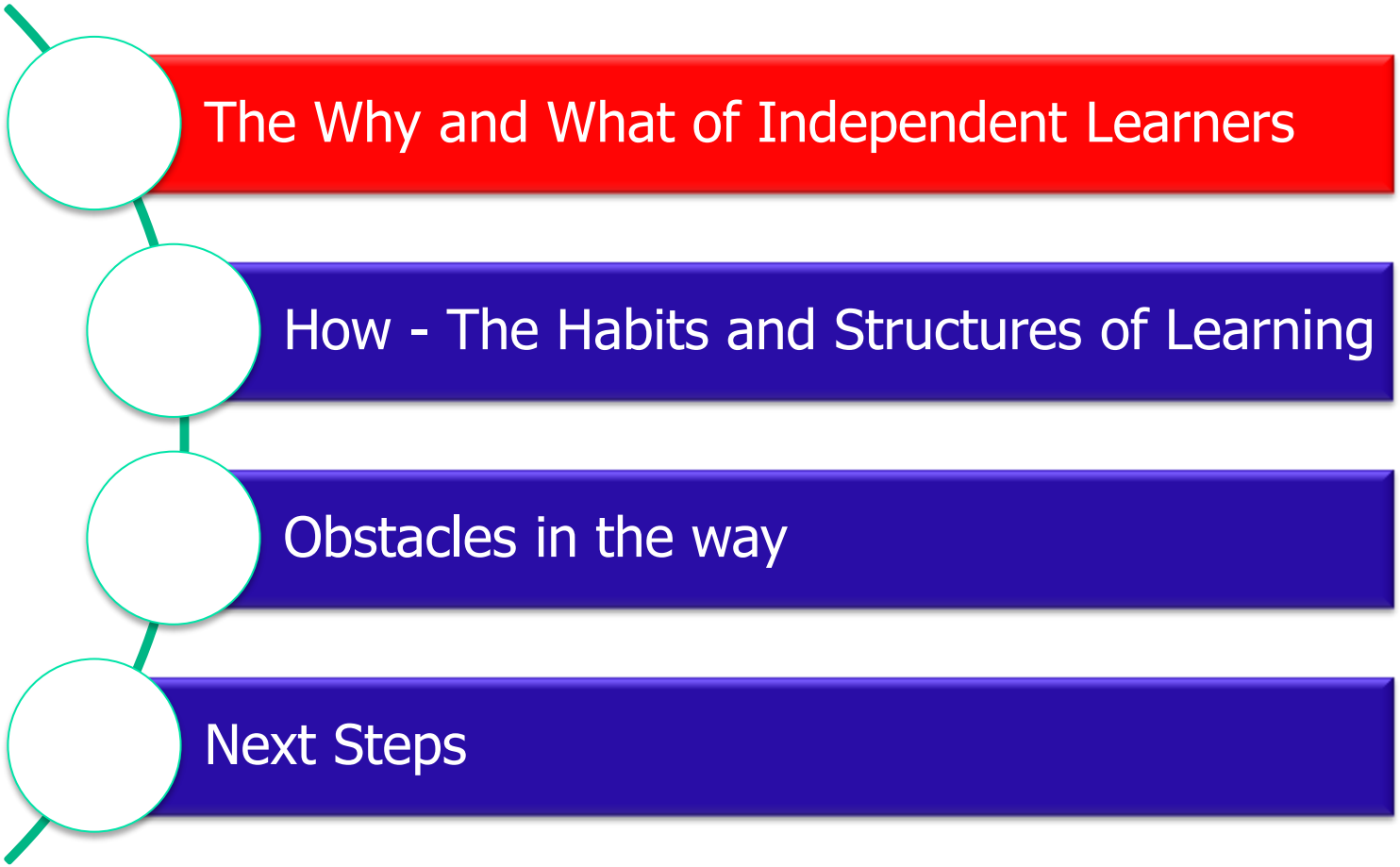
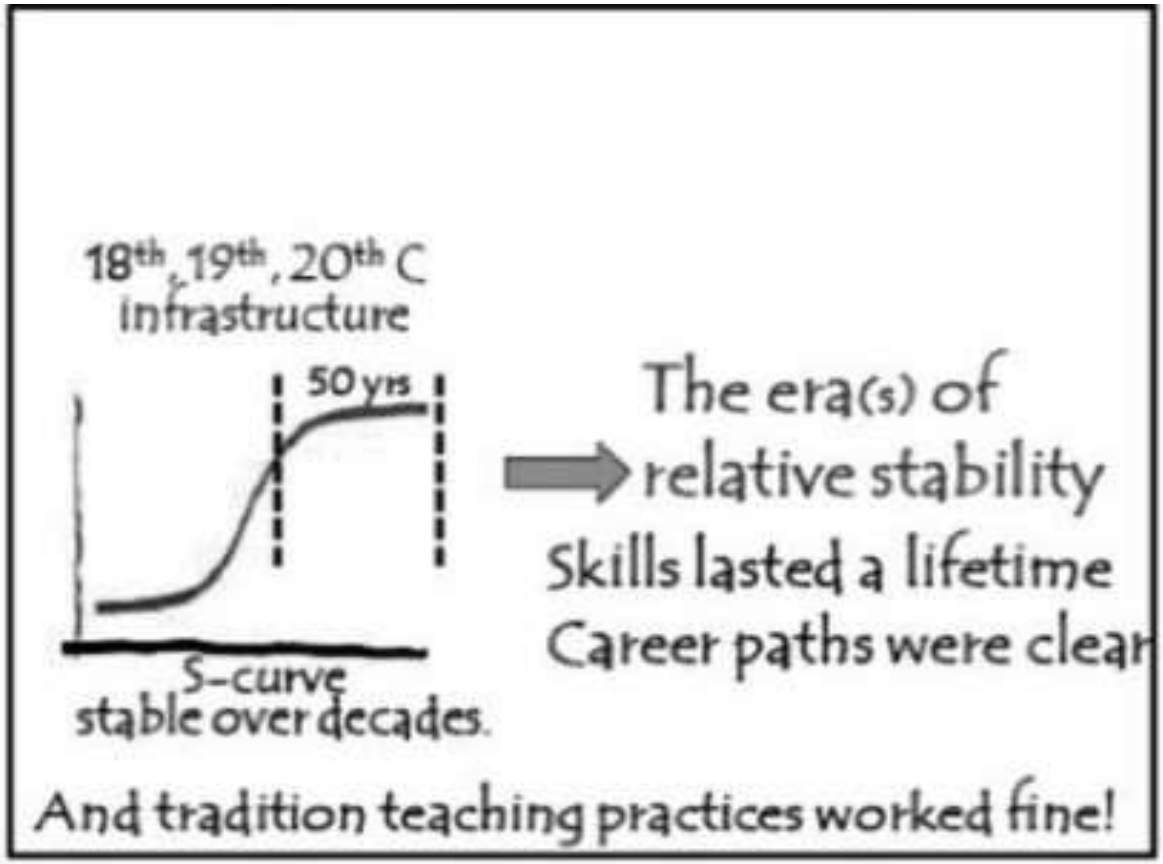
Today's workshop



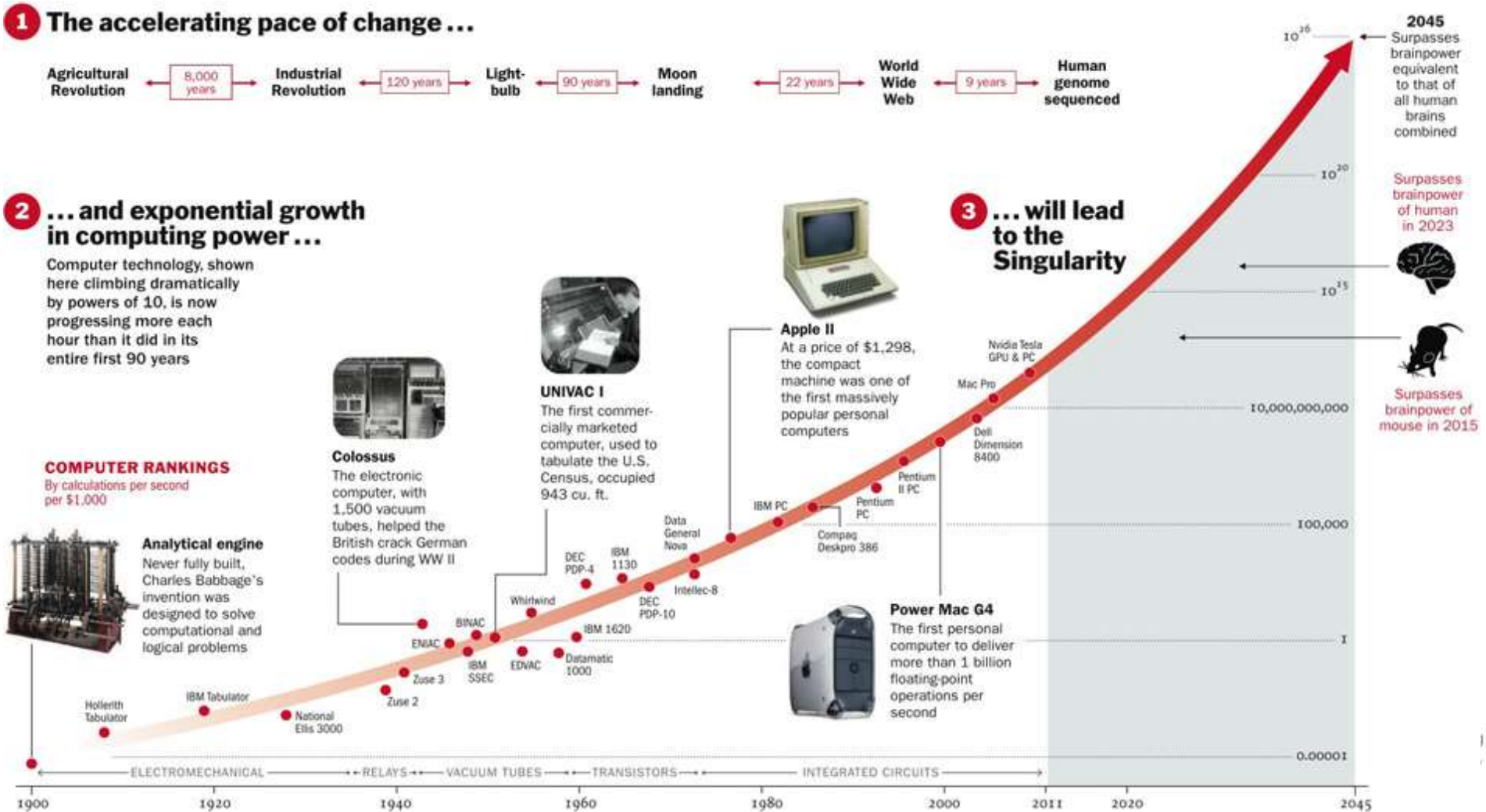
Why?

Why is it important for us as educators to support the development of independent learners?

Why? We have gone from this future …



Why? A world of rapid change



What is an Independent Learner?

What does it mean to be an independent learner?

What are the skills, attitudes, and habits that make **you** an independent learner?

Independent Learner – one view

Social Skills: A socially skilled person can work, learn and recreate collaboratively with others

Thinking Skills: An effective thinker has a wide range of skills that help them to create meaning, gain understanding, make judgments, make good decisions, self analyse and reflect

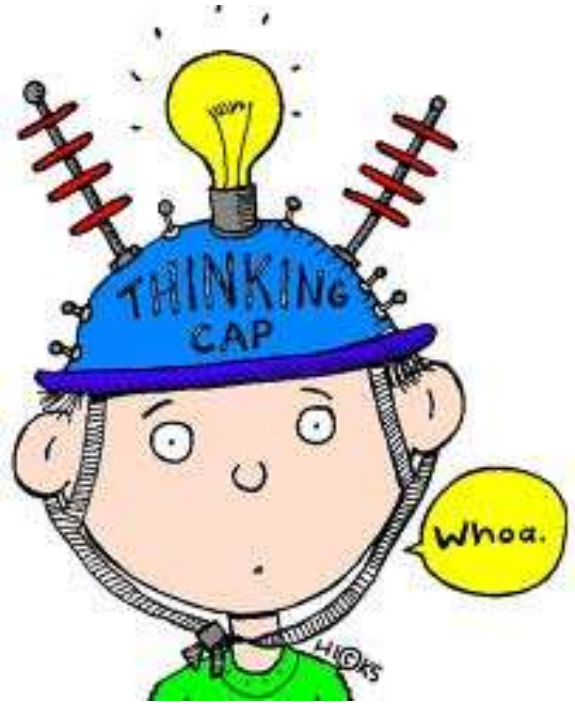
Self Management Skills: A person who is an independent learner can manage themselves as an individual or in group situations

Information Skills: A person who is an independent learner has a range of information skills that empower them as learners

What is an Independent Learner?

Work together to come up with a list of behaviours that an independent learner would demonstrate in each of these areas:

1. Learning to Learn and Mindset Skills
2. Communication and Collaboration Skills
3. Thinking and Problem Solving Skills
4. Self-Management Skills
5. Information Skills



What is an Independent Learner?

What behaviours did you identify in each area?

- Learning to Learn and Mindset Skills
- Communication and Collaboration Skills
- Thinking and Problem Solving Skills
- Self-Management Skills
- Information Skills

Independent Learner – another view

WAYS OF THINKING

1. Creativity and innovation
2. Critical thinking, problem solving, decision making
3. Learning to learn, Metacognition

WAYS OF WORKING

4. Communication
5. Collaboration (teamwork)

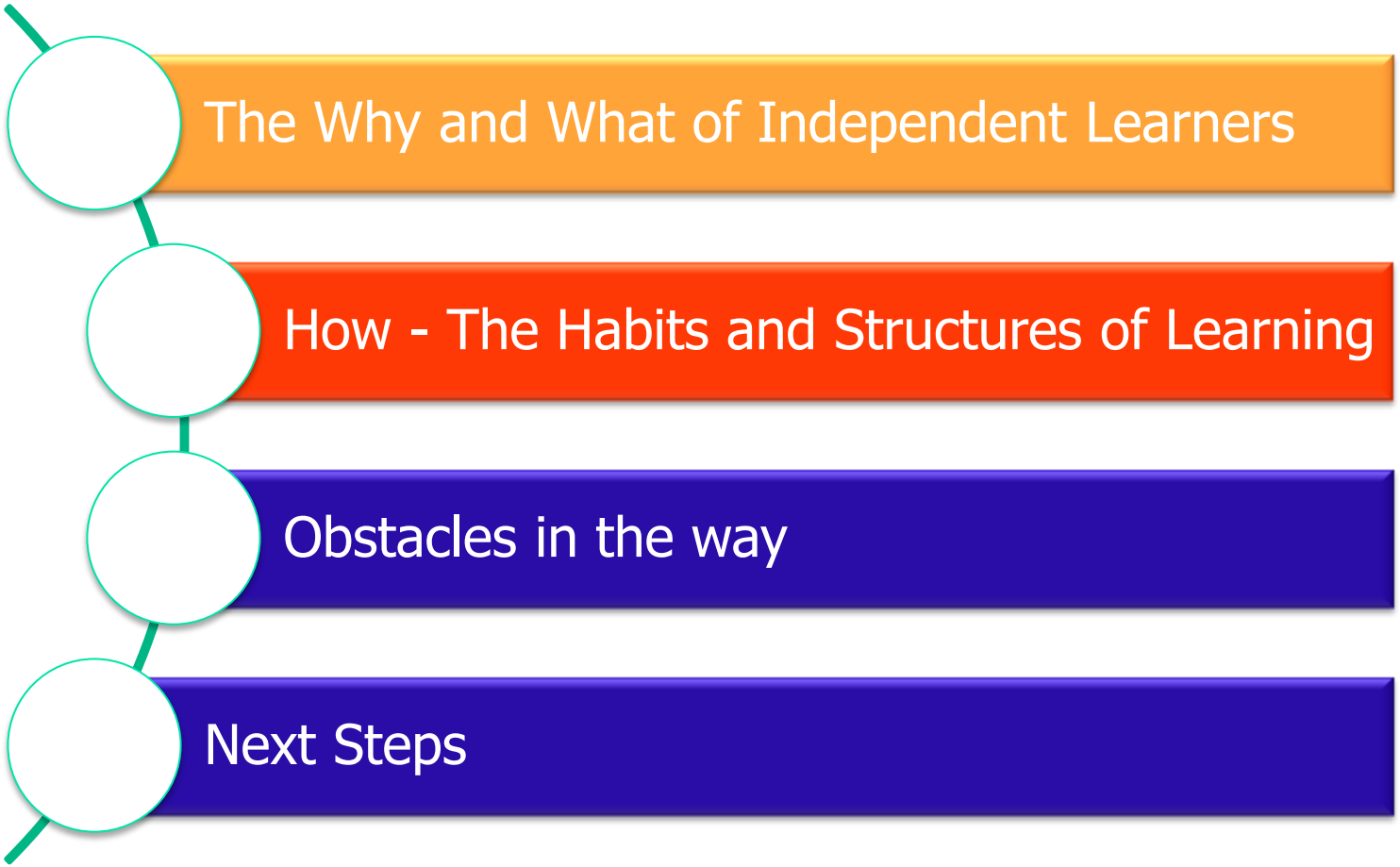
TOOLS FOR WORKING

6. Information literacy
7. ICT literacy

LIVING IN THE WORLD

8. Citizenship – local and global
9. Life and career
10. Personal and social responsibility – including cultural awareness and competence.

Today's workshop

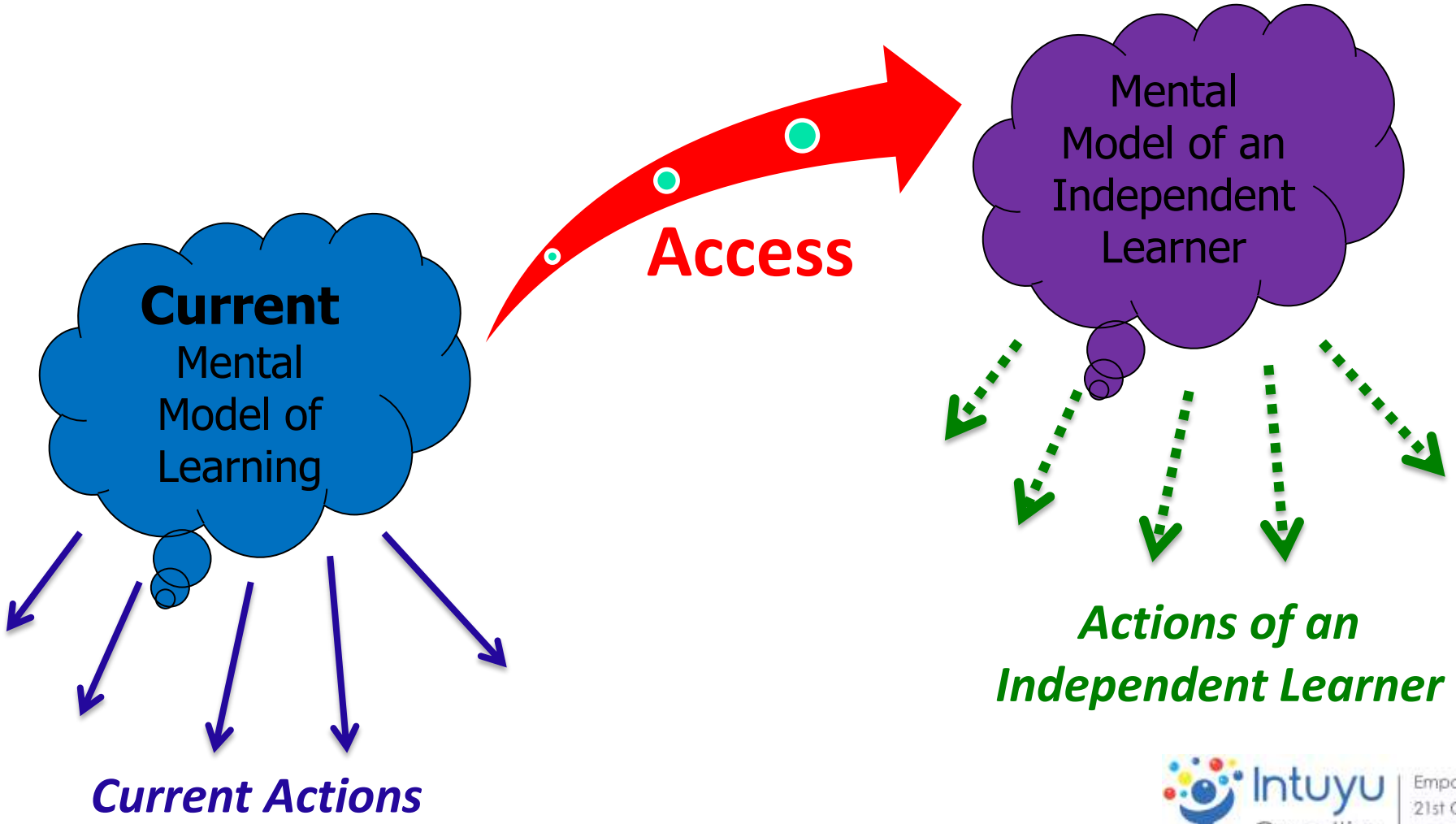


How do we know someone has learnt something?

WE DON'T!

The best we can do is infer that they have learnt something from particular behaviour being demonstrated over a period of time.

What we are doing



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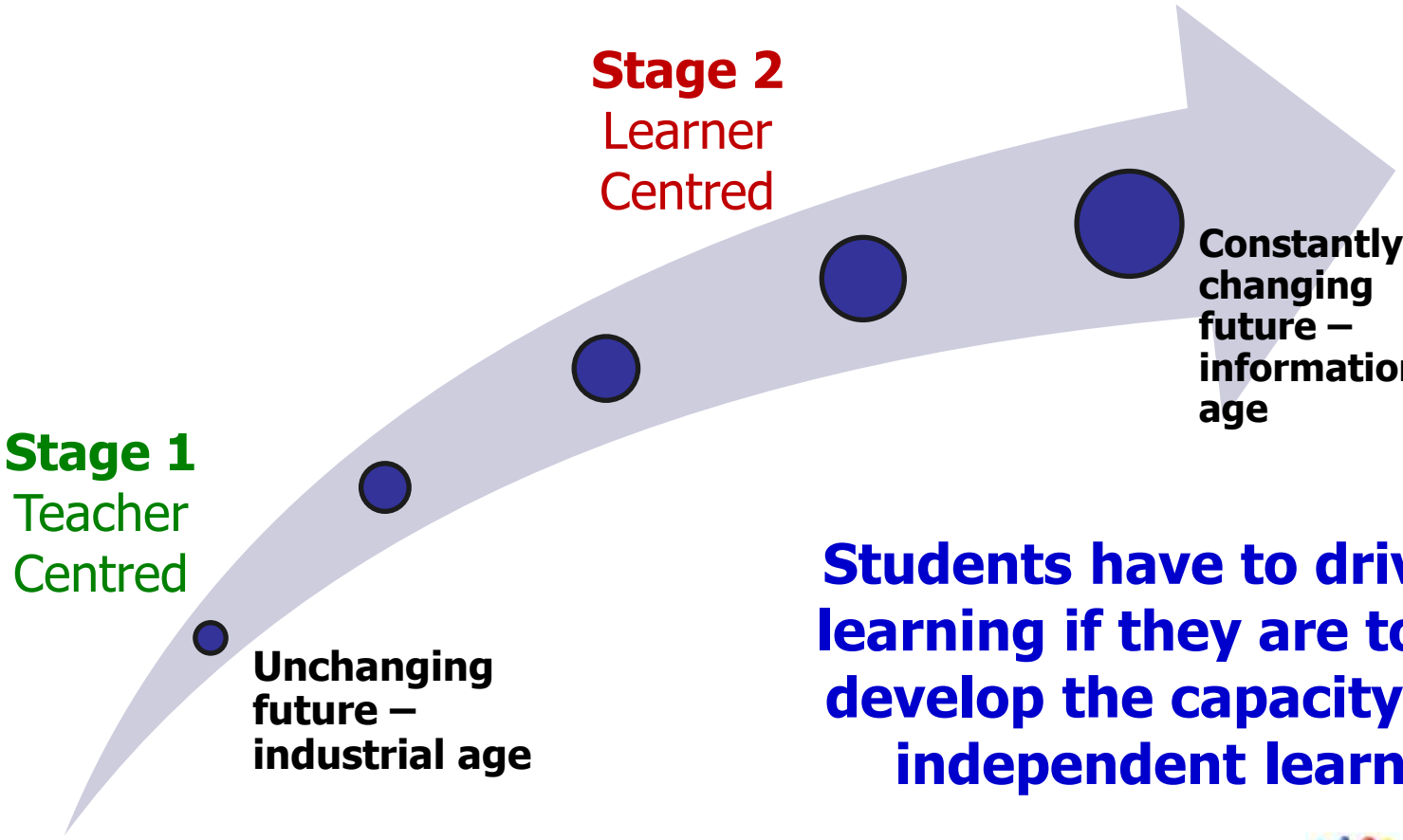
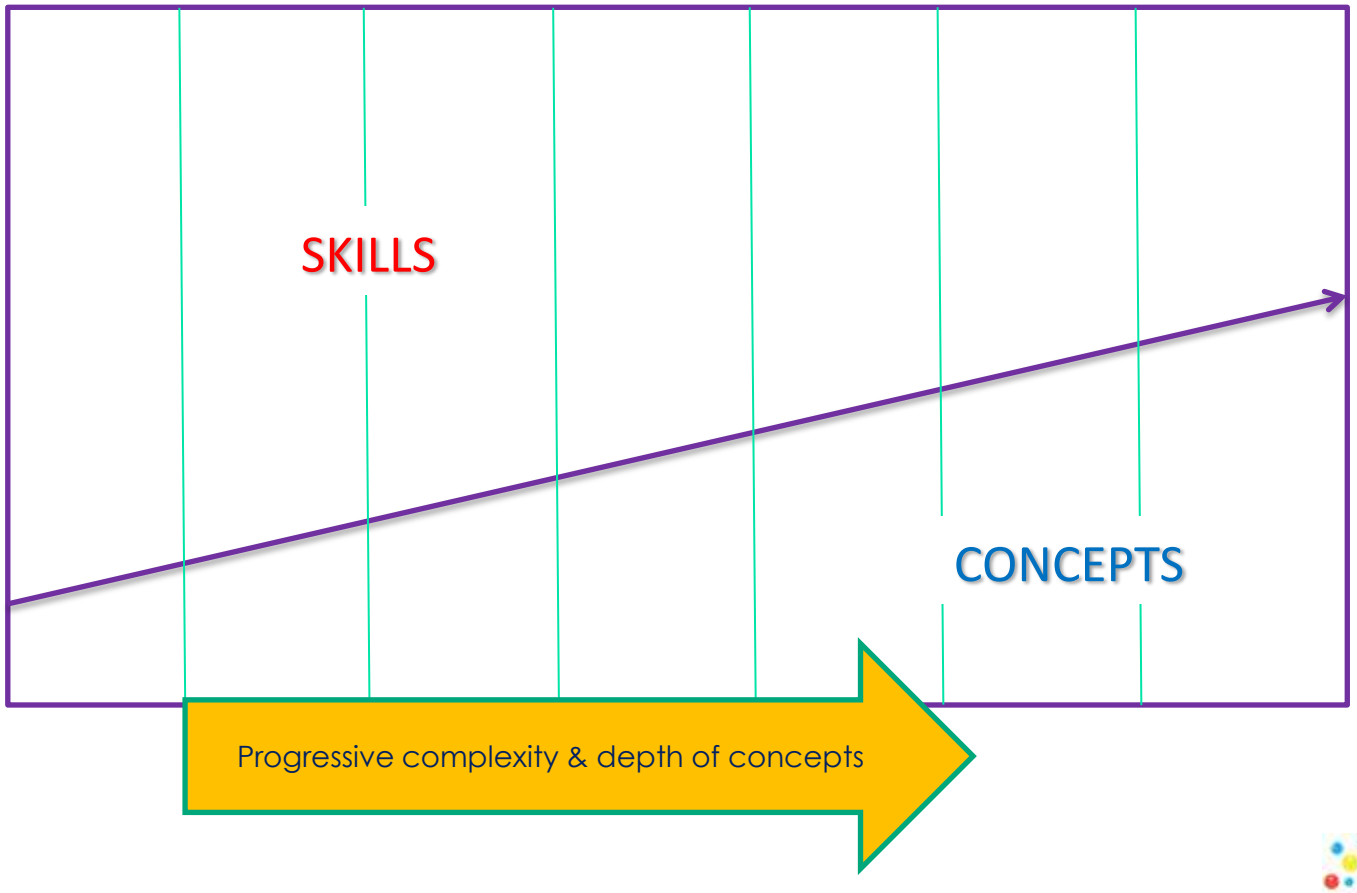
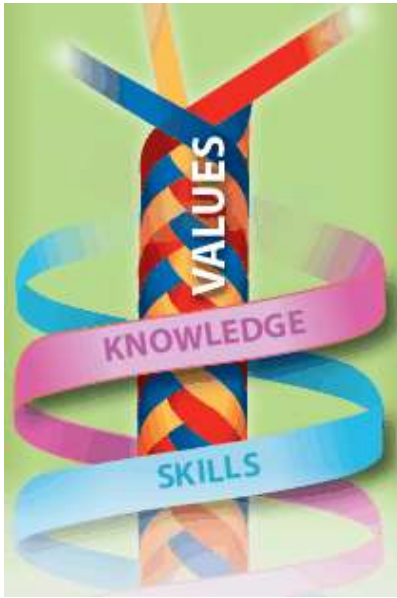
Path to an independent learning environment



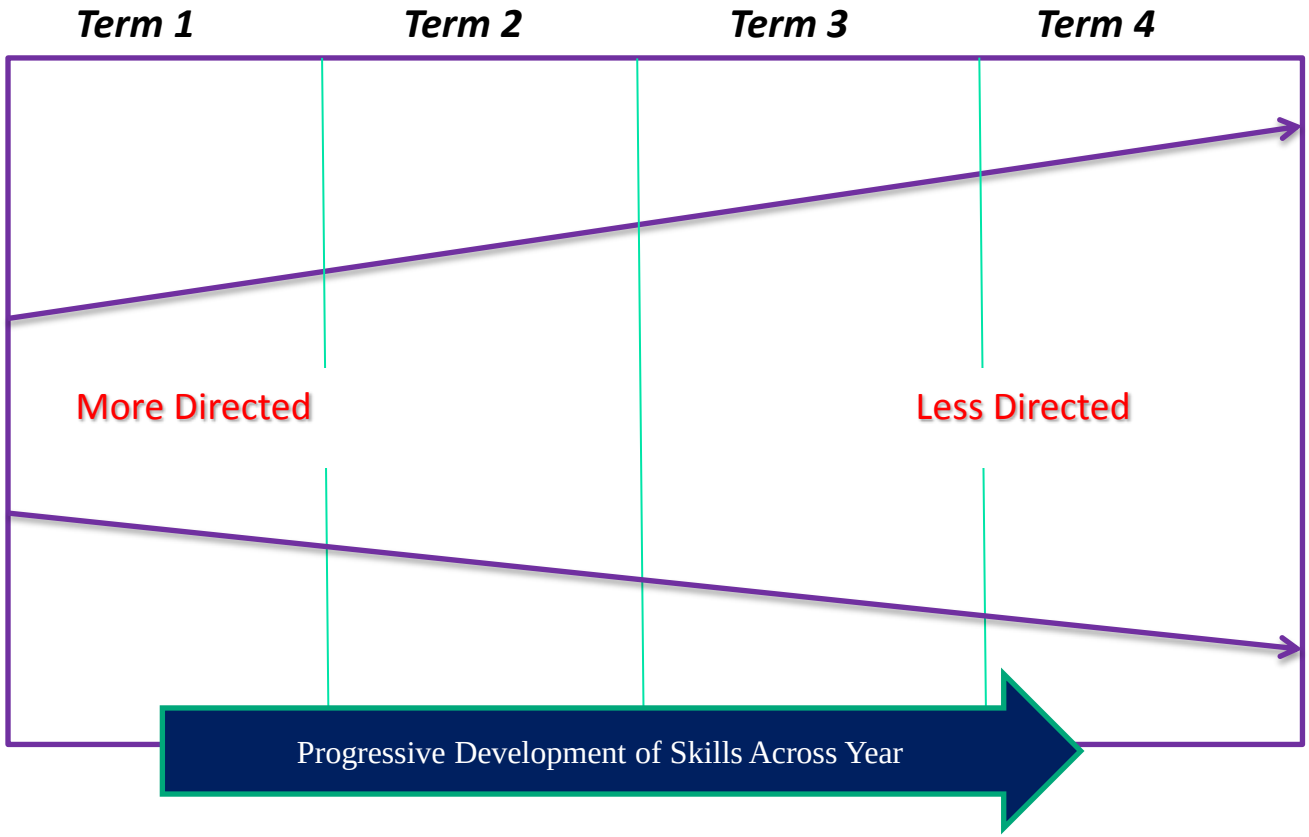
Students have to drive the learning if they are to truly develop the capacity to be independent learners

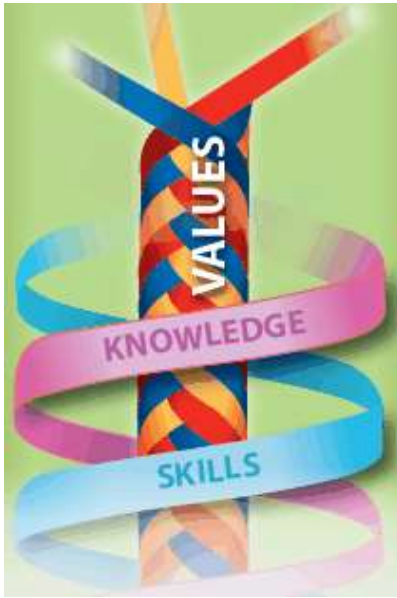
Building the Independent Learner





Building the Independent Learner





Some things to think about

You are ALWAYS building learning

- Some times it is **intentional,** mostly it is **unconscious**

- It is in the language you use,
  - the structures you have in place,
    - the habitual practices,
      - the way you relate to each other,
        - the type of complaints you have,
          - the way you organise yourself (or not),
            - the things you love doing and the things you avoid.

None of this is bad or wrong.

Discuss in Groups

If your students are to develop the skills and habits you identified on the board, then looking across the years of learning

1. What habits and practices do you need to put in place to have the students develop the habits, practices and mindset you identified?

2. What structures would the school need to put in place to have this happen?

Example – Lynbrook Primary

Nov 2012 Skills v3		F	1	2	3
Organise	Learning How	O.F.1 I can ask my teacher to show me how to do this O.F.2 I can respond to my teacher's prompts	O.1.1 I can ask people I know how to do this	O.2.1 I can try a strategy my teacher has shown me O.2.2 I can ask a range of people how to do this	O.3.1 I can try a str in the past help O.3.2 I can make in choices tha learning
	Time	O.F.3 I can finish a task in a set time	O.1.2 I can get the things I need before I start	O.2.3 I can say what I am going to do before I do it O.2.4 I can estimate how long a task will take	O.3.3 I can plan a t complete r O.3.4 I can work on project ove period of ti
	Information	O.F.4 I can use my senses to get information O.F.5 I can spot things that are similar and things that are different O.F.6 I can record information on a template	O.1.3 I can sort the information that I find O.1.4 I can make and record observations O.1.5 I can find information in more than one place	O.2.5 I can try different ways of sorting the information O.2.6 I can find the information that matters O.2.7 I can respond to teacher questions about what I have found out (conclusions) O.2.8 I can record my observations in a way that suits the information I have O.2.9 I can state the main idea from information I have collected	O.3.5 I can organis information words O.3.6 I can use a ra to organise O.3.7 I can use sev information O.3.8 I can check t of informat help me
Create	Questions	Cr.F.1 I can ask 'why' questions	Cr.1.1 I can create 'I wonder' questions to explore Cr.1.2 I can use class questions to decide what I want to explore	Cr.2.1 I can make a list of questions about the thing I want to explore	Cr.3.1 I can turn 'I w questions t exploration Cr.3.2 I can link my questions question
	Answers	Cr.F.2 I can answer questions by explaining my own ideas	Cr.1.3 I can put what I have discovered into words and pictures	Cr.2.2 I can work with others to find a solution to a problem Cr.2.3 I can check whether my solution makes sense	Cr.3.3 I can use info to solve pr
		Cr.F.3 I can have a go Cr.F.4 I can try again when	Cr.1.4 I can try again when something doesn't work first	Cr.2.4 I can try out different ideas when something doesn't	Cr.3.4 I can try out people's ic

Some things to think about

Mindsets: focused mindset themes for each year level (e.g. Prep – Have a Go and Take Care, Grade 1 – Speak up and Making Mistakes is How We Learn, etc)

Habits: 3b4Me, Traffic Lights, Habits of the Mind, Six Hats

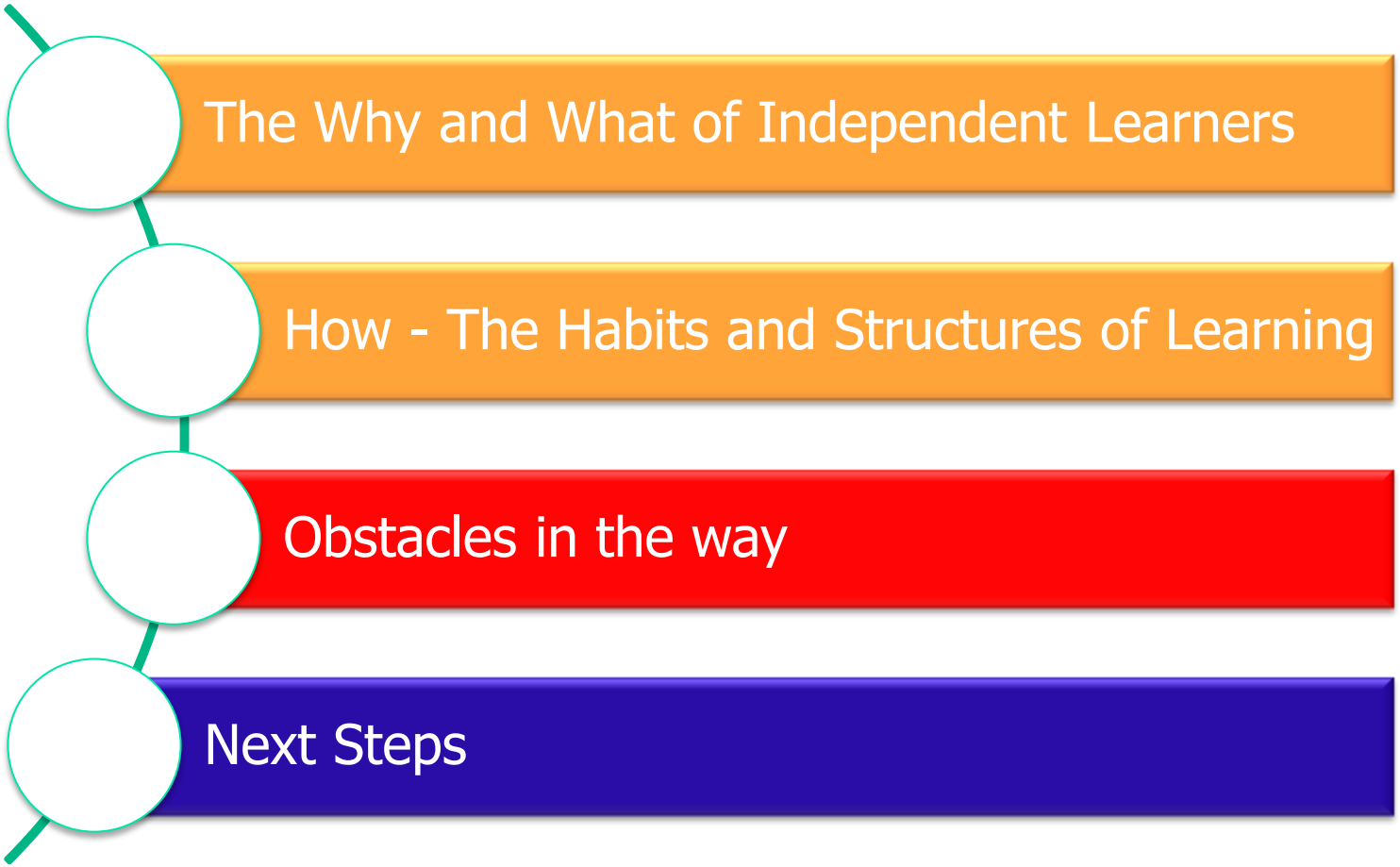
Language: Change from "Student" to "Learner"

Practices: Students co-design goals and assessment, competency-based school structure, peer tutoring

Planning: Rich Task Culminating Events, Backward Planning

Teaching: Teaching students about how they learn, meta-cognition, brain science, mindset, teaching learning strategies, students lead classes?

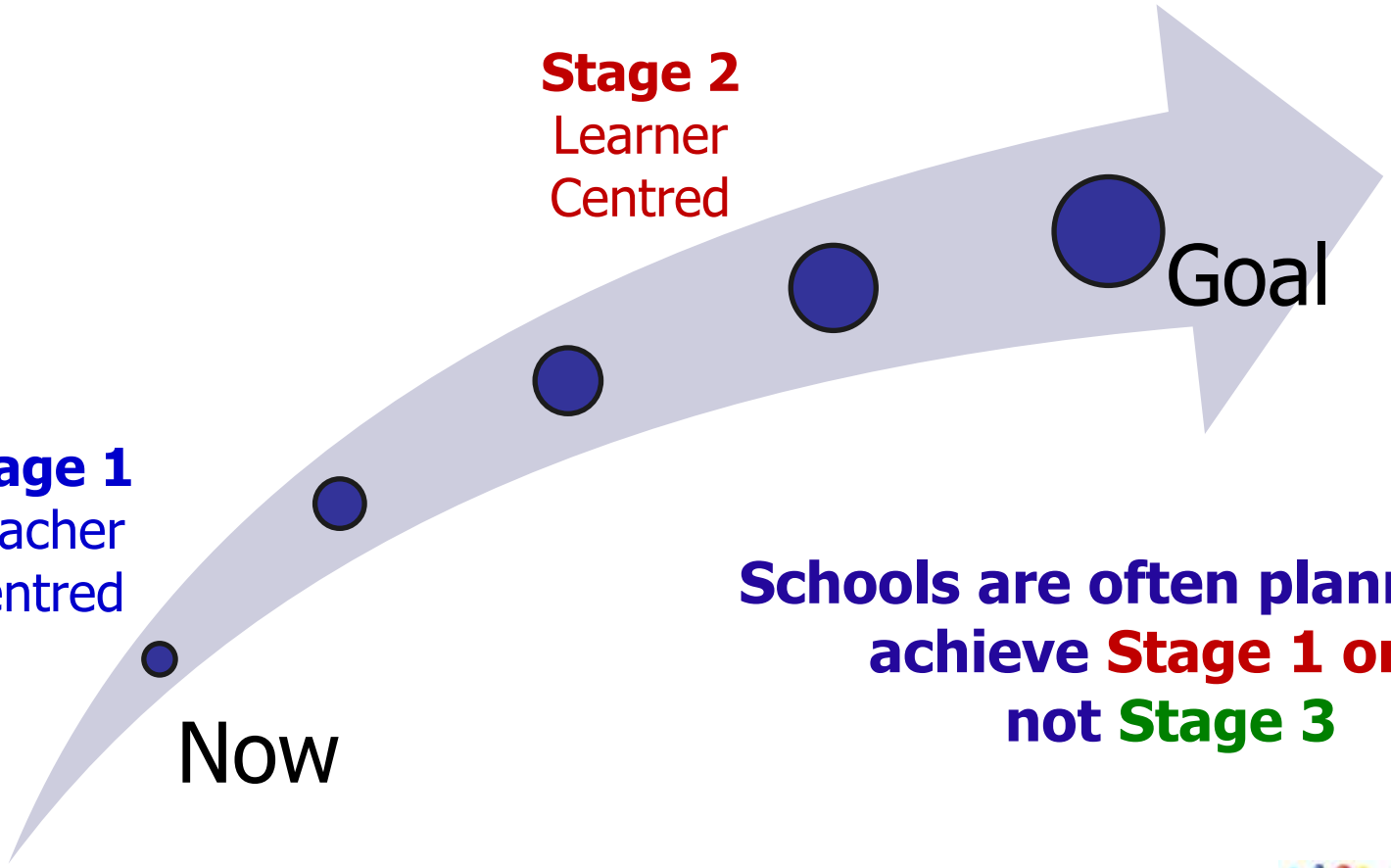
Today's workshop



What could be some of the Obstacles?

If we are to actually have a school learning environment the builds independent learners what could be some of the **obstacles or challenges** to implementing everything we have been discussing?

Possible Obstacle #1



Schools are often planning to achieve Stage 1 or 2 not Stage 3

Learning looks different at each stage

Teacher Centred with learner voice and choice		
• This is what I have to cover, what I must make sure they know, what I must teach. • Differentiation • Teacher drives the "learning"		

Learning looks different at each stage

Teacher Centred with learner voice and choice	Learner-Centred with Teacher and Learner as co-designers	
• This is what I have to cover, what I must make sure they know, what I must teach. • Differentiation • Teacher drives the "learning"	• Teachers partner with students to set destination and students drive • Scaffolded learning to develop student learning strategies • UbD – Backward Planning • Focus on skills and meta-cognition	

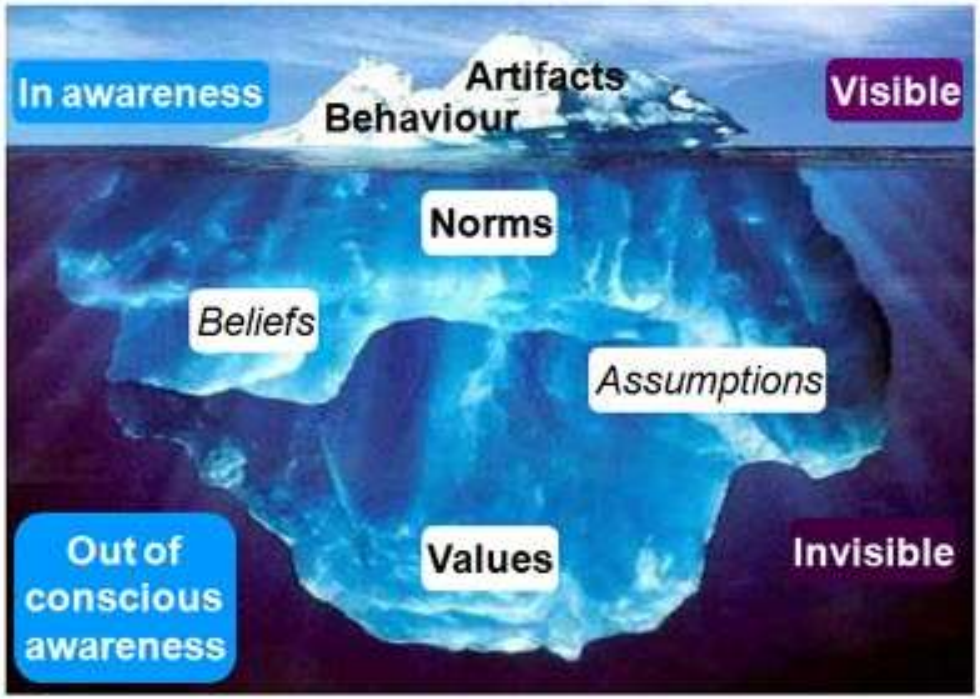
Learning looks different at each stage

Teacher Centred with learner voice and choice	Learner-Centred with Teacher and Learner as co-designers	Learner Driven with Teacher as Partner in Learning
• This is what I have to cover, what I must make sure they know, what I must teach. • Differentiation • Teacher drives the "learning"	• Teachers partner with students to set destination and students drive • Scaffolded learning to develop student learning strategies • UbD – Backward Planning • Focus on skills and meta-cognition	• Students are skilled learners and higher order thinkers, fully responsible for their learning • Not about students doing what they want but about students being organised to independently drive their learning

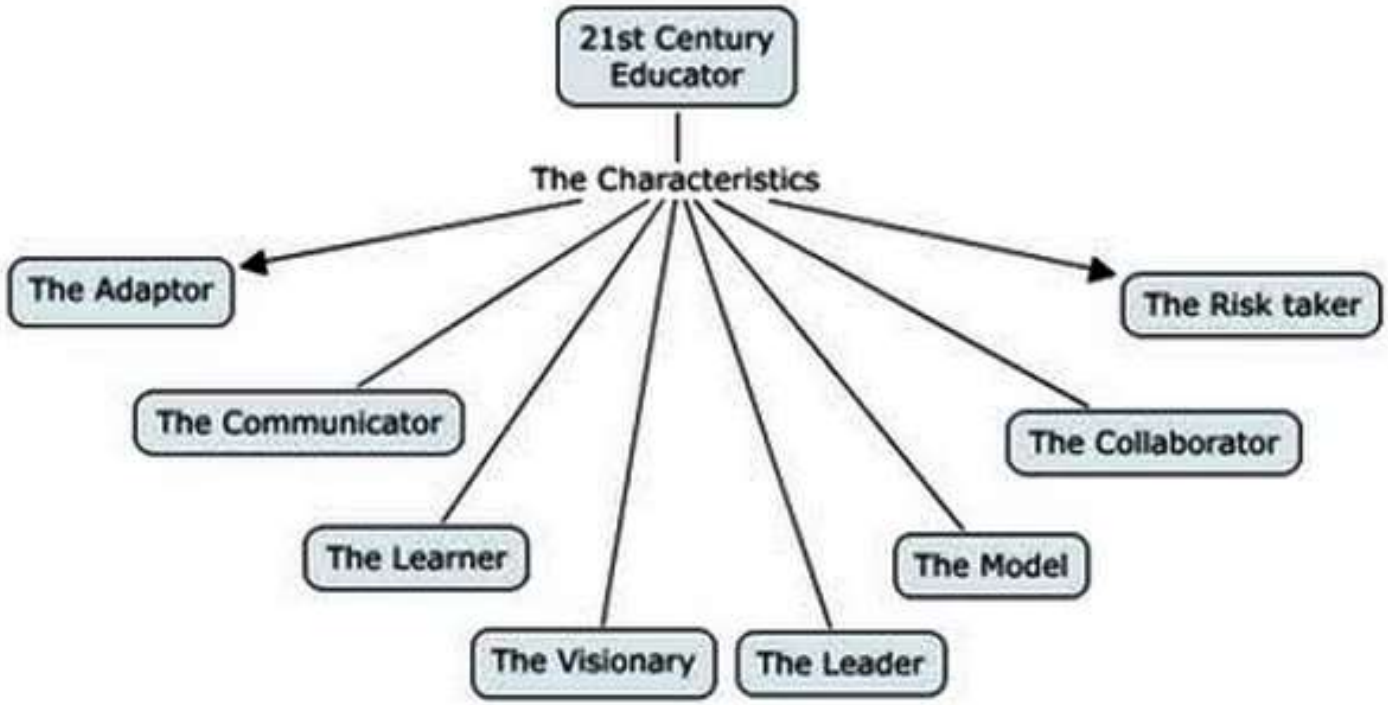
Possible Obstacle #2

The embedded norms, beliefs, assumptions and structures implicit in the conception of what is a school and who a teacher is

Iceberg Model: Surface and Deep Culture



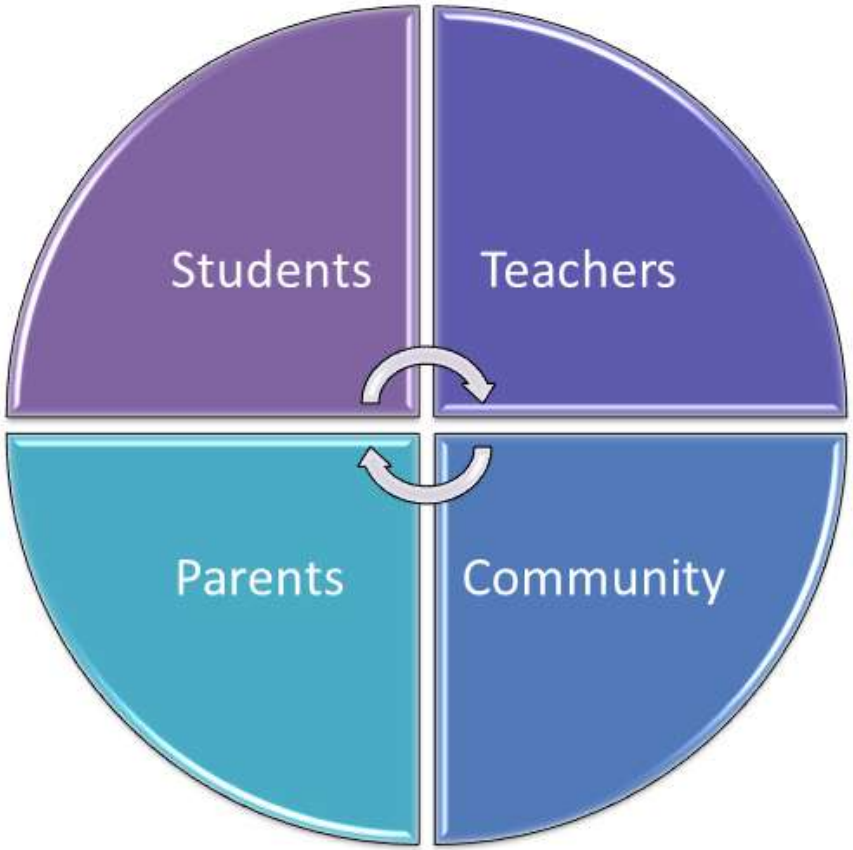
Possible Obstacle #2



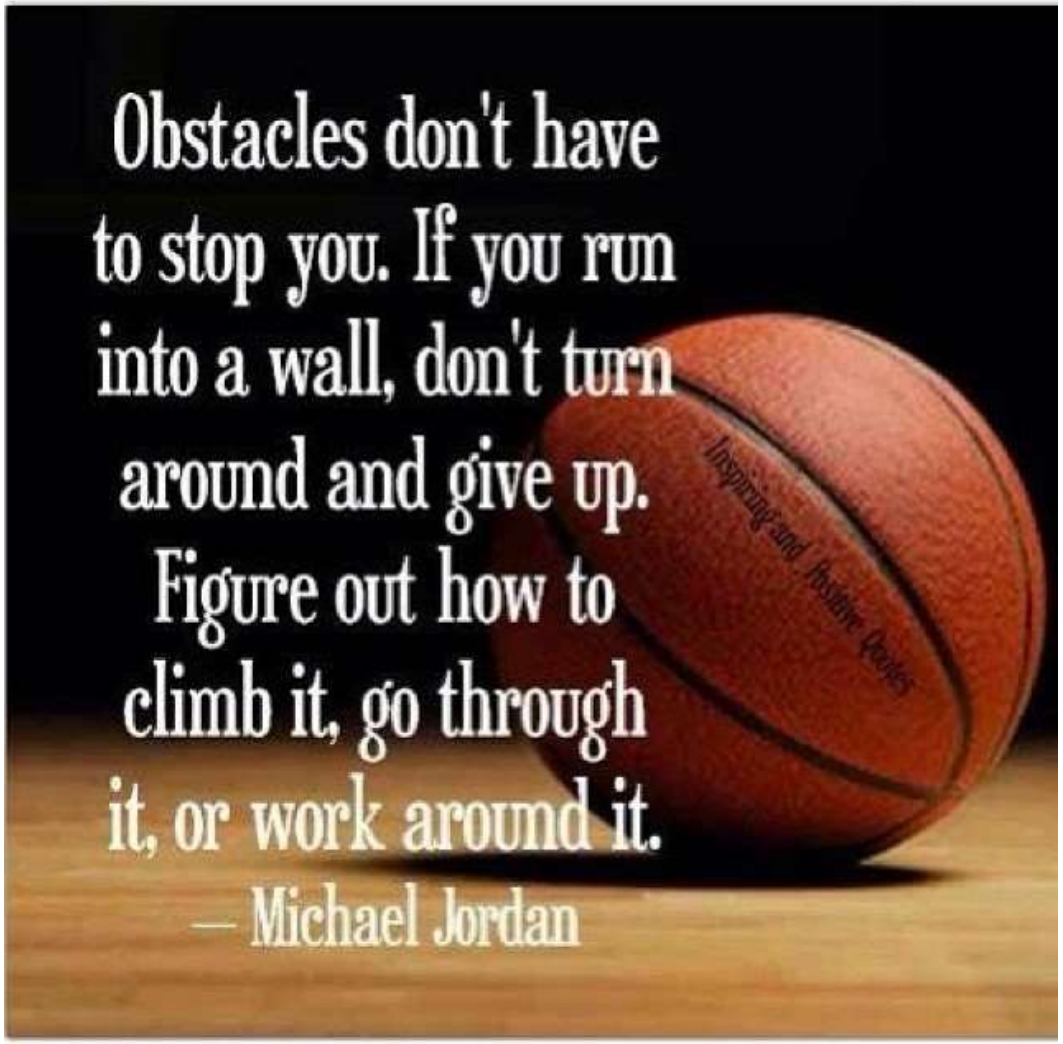
By Andrew Churches

Possible Obstacle #3

The past experiences of parents and the community (including politicians) about who schools and teachers are.



The Thing about Obstacles



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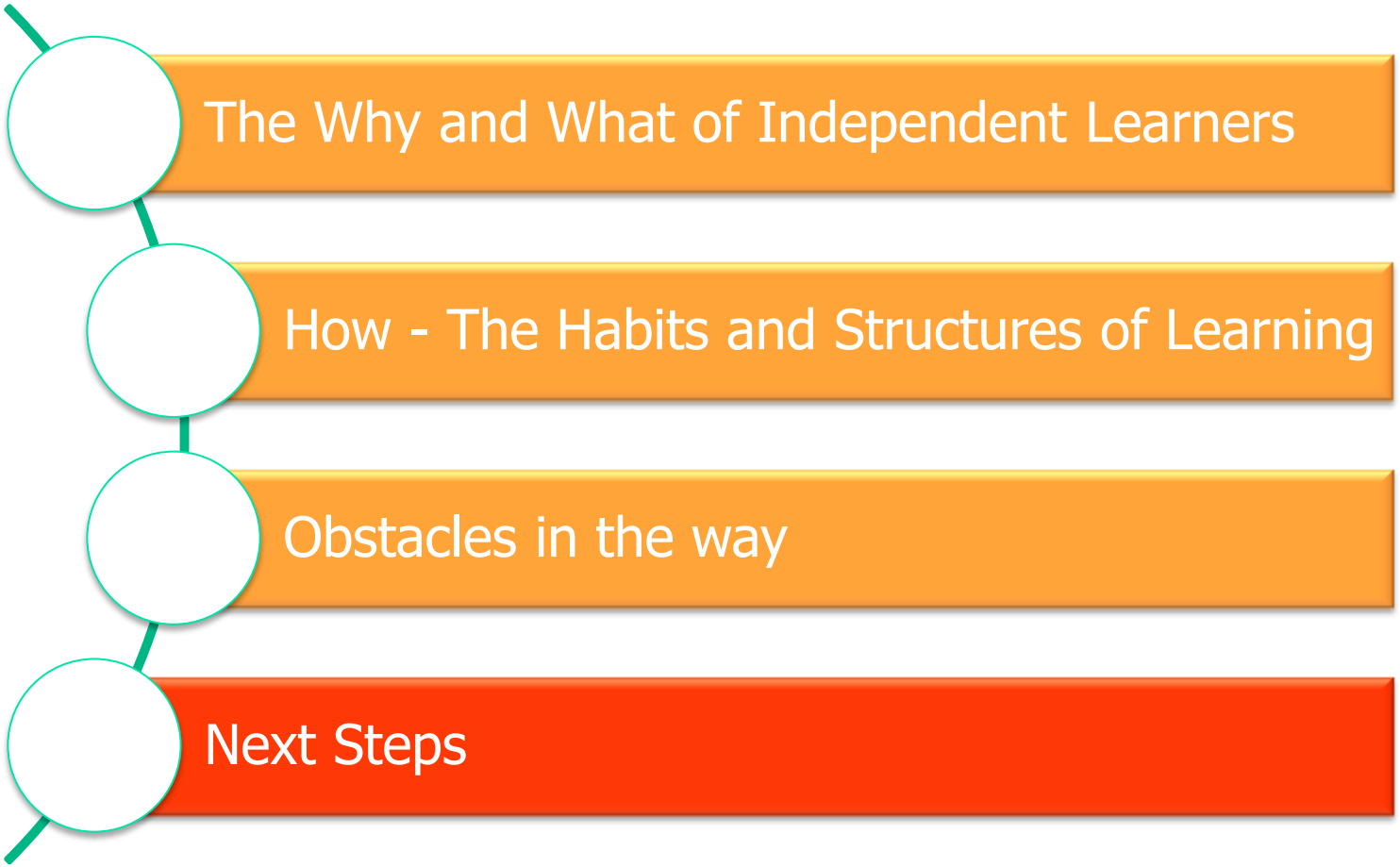

As you go to work in schools

- Schools and teachers are at different stages
- Some schools will be fabulous and have in place the learning environment and processes to have this happen – others won't
- What there is for you to do
  - Have a clear idea of what skills you want to build across the lessons and units you are creating
  - Have a plan with explicit practices, strategies and processes you will use to develop the skills you identified
  - Have a go and keep learning
  - Share what you are doing and what you are learning with others

Take Action with what you have learnt today

The only difference between
stumbling blocks and stepping stones
is the way in which we use them!

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Learning Resources Page

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