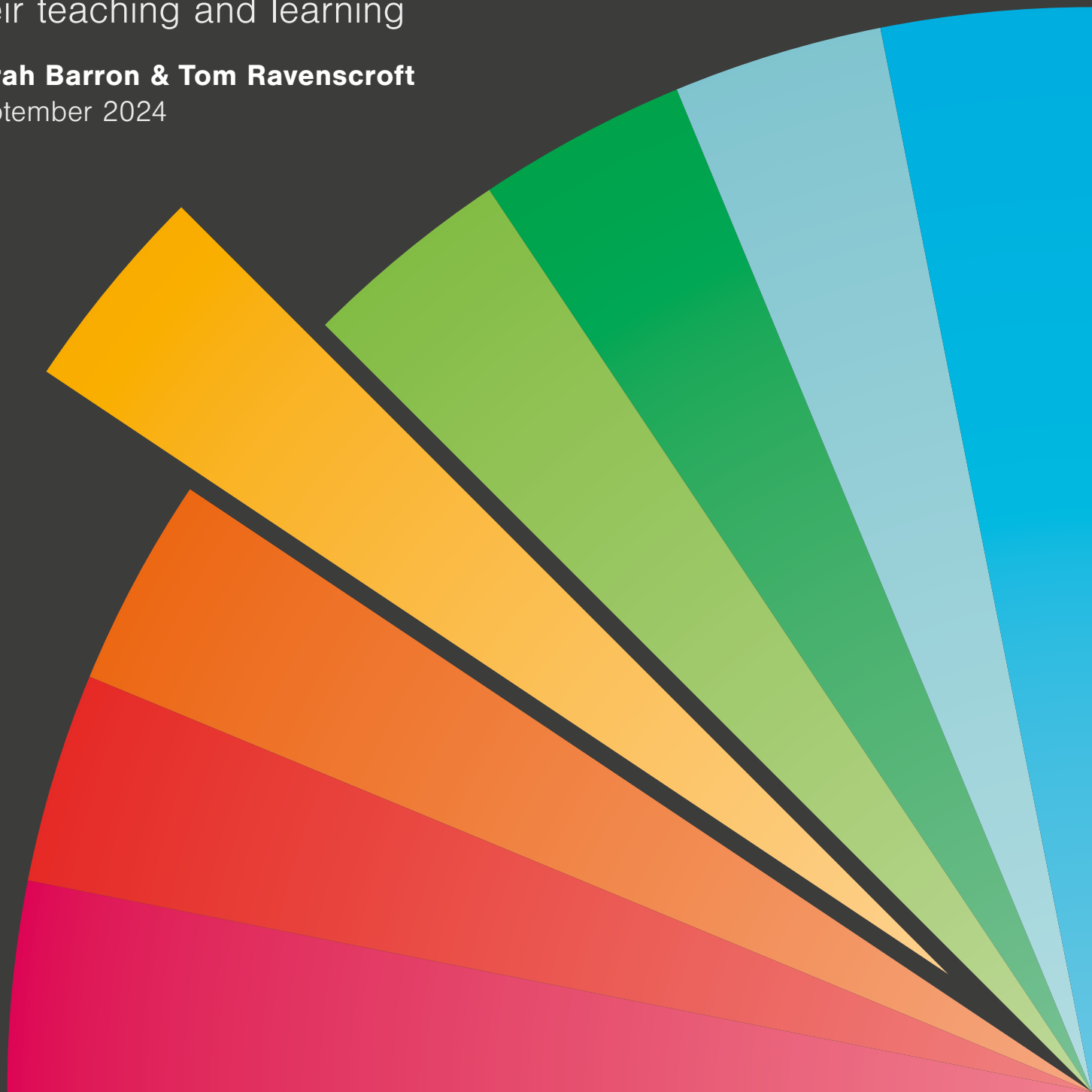# ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOURS AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Exploring the interplay, opportunities and challenges in their teaching and learning

Sarah Barron & Tom Ravenscroft
September 2024

Executive Summary

Skills Builder Partnership is a not-for-profit which exists to ensure that one day, everyone builds the essential skills to succeed. We work with educators, employers and social impact organisations to develop individuals' communication, collaborative, self-management and creative problem solving skills by using a consistent language and model known as the Universal Framework. Established in 2009, the Partnership has fifteen years of experience in the teaching and assessment of essential skills.

The Commercial Education Trust is an independent grant-making charity, originally established by the London Charter of Commerce and Industry. The charity is committed to preparing young people for life and work by developing their commercial ability. Commercial ability is made up of five pillars: essential transferable skills, sector-specific know-how, basics for life, organisational know-how and workplace attitudes and behaviours.

This paper provides a deep-dive into workplace attitudes and behaviours. It seeks to identify the most important attitudes and behaviours for the world of work, and to evaluate different strategies for their teaching and assessment. The paper draws on research and best practice in the teaching and assessment of essential skills, using these to identify opportunities to develop workplace attitudes and behaviours.

The paper is made up of a literature review, which provides an overview of existing research into the most important attitudes, behaviours and essential skills for the workplace. The literature review also evaluates different strategies proposed for their teaching and assessment.

The second part of the paper summarises the findings of an anonymous teacher survey about workplace attitudes and behaviours. Teachers shared their opinions about the importance of the attitudes and behaviours identified in the literature review. They also ranked the effectiveness of different strategies to develop these.

Essential skills

Essential skills are those highly transferable skills that everyone needs to succeed in almost any job. The eight essential skills have been identified as Listening, Speaking, Problem Solving, Creativity, Staying Positive, Aiming High, Leadership and Teamwork (Ravenscroft and Baker, 2019). The Skills Builder Universal Framework provides a consistent definition for each of these skills, and breaks them down into sixteen teachable steps, allowing learners to identify their next steps and to measure their progression.

The Universal Framework defines eight essential skills:

1. LISTENING
receiving, retaining and processing of information or ideas

2. SPEAKING
oral communication of information and ideas

3. PROBLEM SOLVING
the ability to find a solution to a situation or challenge

4. CREATIVITY
use of imagination and generation of new ideas

5. STAYING POSITIVE
ability to use tactics and strategies to overcome setbacks and achieve goals

6. AIMING HIGH
ability to set clear, tangible goals and devise a robust route to achieving them

7. LEADERSHIP
supporting, encouraging and developing others to achieve a shared goal

8. TEAMWORK
working cooperatively with others towards achieving a shared goal

There is widespread agreement on the importance of these eight essential skills: 94% of employers, 97% of teachers and 88% of young people saw these skills as being at least as important as academic grades to students' future success (Skills Builder Partnership, 2022).

Workplace attitudes and behaviours

There is also widespread agreement on the importance of certain attitudes and behaviours in the workplace. In the 2022 CBI Employer Survey, 78% of employers identified attitude and aptitude for work as a top factor when recruiting school and college leavers. However, there is less consensus when it comes to defining these key behaviours.

A review of the literature identified grit, resilience, confidence and an enterprising mindset as key attitudes and behaviours required for the workplace. However, the lack of a consistent language means that these attitudes and behaviours are often confused or referred to by other names.

The results of our teacher survey confirmed the importance of resilience, with all teachers agreeing that this was important for working life, and 73% considering it very important. Teachers also identified a positive or 'can-do' attitude as the most important attribute for the workplace, with 76% considering it very important for the workplace. Confidence and grit were also recognised as important for working life.

Teachers generally recognised the importance of being enterprising, with 88% considering it very important or important. However, the percentage of teachers that considered being enterprising 'very important' for working life was only 29%, which is significantly lower than for other attitudes like resilience (73%).

The behaviours that teachers viewed as least important for working life were deference and the drive to make money. Only 8% of teachers considered the drive to make money to be very important for work, with 25% considering it important. Deference was seen as slightly more important, with 22% considering it very important and 33% considering it important.

How can essential skills be taught and assessed?

Schools and colleges within Skills Builder Partnership are guided by six pedagogical principles, which help them to effectively teach, reinforce and assess essential skills.

The first of these pedagogical principles is '*keep it simple'.* According to this principle, schools should try to build a consistent language around essential skills, to avoid confusing learners.

The second of the Skills Builder principles of good practice is '*start early, keep going'.* This principle is based on the recognition that building essential skills takes time, so learners should be introduced to them as early as possible.

The third principle, '*measure it*', recognises that consistent measurement and formative assessment bring rigour to the teaching and learning of essential skills. The Universal Framework provides a useful progression for self-assessment or teacher-led assessment Ideally, these assessments should be low-stakes, regular, and should be used to inform next steps.

The fourth Skills Builder principle is '*focus tightly*'. This principle acknowledges that, in order for learners to make any progress in the essential skills, there needs to be some focused time available for the regular, explicit teaching of essential skills.

The fifth principle, '*keep practising*', recognises that the explicit teaching of essential skills should be complemented by wider reinforcement and deliberate practice across the curriculum, and beyond.

The final principle for the teaching and learning of essential skills is '*bring it to life*'. This principle encourages educators to use links to the working world and wider life in order to demonstrate the depth and transferability of the essential skills.

By following all six of these pedagogical principles, schools and colleges can effectively develop students' essential skills and provide them with opportunities to apply these in different contexts.

How can workplace attitudes and behaviours be taught and assessed?

The literature review revealed many similarities between the pedagogy of essential skills and workplace attitudes and behaviours.

Broadly, strategies for developing workplace attitudes and behaviours in schools can be divided into three categories: '*character caught*', '*character taught*' and '*character sought*' (Jubilee Centre, 2022).

'*Character taught*' is very similar to the Skills Builder principle '*focus tightly*'[1], as it highlights the importance of explicitly teaching attitudes and behaviours. The literature review pointed to several useful strategies to teach attitudes and behaviours, notably discussion-based learning and independent reflective activities. The teacher survey echoed the importance of explicit teaching of attitudes and behaviours, with 96% of teachers considering this an effective or very effective strategy. Interestingly, 84% of teachers considered independent reflection to be

---

[1] This Skills Builder principle of good practice acknowledges that, in order for learners to make progress in the essential skills, they need to receive focused, explicit teaching.

effective or very effective in developing attitudes and behaviours, but only 57% were using this strategy.

'Character caught' involves teaching learners the importance of certain behaviours through a 'process of osmosis' (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p.11). This means building a consistent language around key behaviours, embedding them into school events, policies, school ethos, praise and rewards and displays. Such strategies are reminiscent of the Skills Builder principle, '*keep it simple*'[2]. The strategies involved in *'character caught'* were some of the most commonly used by teachers: 100% of teachers use praise and rewards, 94% said attitudes and behaviours are mentioned in their school or college values, and 90% use rules and sanctions. However, teachers were less convinced of the effectiveness of these strategies: only 76% considered explicit mention in school or college values to be effective, 69% considered rules and sanctions as effective, and 63% considered displays with role models to be effective.

'Character sought' involves providing learners with the opportunity to independently pursue their own character development. Schools can support students in this process by offering opportunities for pupil leadership, a range of extra-curricular activities and work experience placements. The idea of *'character sought'* is therefore very similar to the Skills Builder principle, '*bring it to life*'[3]. Extracurricular activities were a key focus in the literature on workplace attitudes and behaviours, with the All-Party Parliamentary Group calling for young people to have more opportunity to engage in these (Paterson et al., 2014). However, whilst teachers recognised the importance of these opportunities, they were not seen as the most effective strategy for developing attitudes and behaviours.

The issue of assessment is arguably more complex when it comes to attitudes and behaviours, than for essential skills. Whilst the Universal Framework provides a useful progression for assessing and monitoring skills, the literature review suggested that such a framework might be less appropriate for assessing attitudes and behaviours, and a 'holistic' approach might be more appropriate. The teacher survey revealed that assessment of attitudes and behaviours is an area where teachers would like more support, with 88% of respondents saying that they would benefit from assessment or tracking tools.

---

[2] According to this Skills Builder Principle of good practice, schools should try to build a consistent language around essential skills, to avoid confusing learners.
[3] This Skills Builder principle encourages educators to demonstrate the depth and transferability of the essential skills by making links to the working world and wider life.

Implications and next steps

Implications in the education space

A key finding from this report is the importance of developing resilience and a positive attitude in young people, in order to prepare them for work, and for wider life. Any intervention seeking to develop young people's 'work readiness' should therefore focus on building these attitudes and behaviours. Teachers would also welcome activities and interventions to help develop confidence, grit and a growth mindset.

Whilst being enterprising was not ranked as one of the most important attitudes, teachers did recognise its importance and would be likely to welcome enterprise interventions and teaching resources. However, if these interventions seek to build teacher buy-in, they should avoid an excessive focus on making money, as teachers generally did not consider this to be important for working or wider life.

Another key finding from this report is the lack of consistent language to name and talk about positive attitudes and behaviours. The lack of such a language can create confusion, which hinders attempts to develop these attributes. In order to create more consistency in this space, it would be useful to develop a widely-used framework which identifies and defines key attitudes and behaviours.

It would also be useful to conduct more research into the assessment of attitudes and behaviours. The literature review suggested some holistic approaches to assessment, for example student and teacher surveys, and the monitoring of school-wide behaviour. However, the results of the teacher survey suggested that they might benefit from structured resources or tracking tools to support them in such a holistic assessment.

Implications for Skills Builder Partnership's Universal Framework review

The Skills Builder Partnership's Universal Framework focuses on building essential skills as tools to be used in the workplace and in wider life. However, in order to effectively apply these essential skills, it is important for people to be equipped with a positive attitude and a certain degree of resilience.

The upcoming Universal Framework Review provides the perfect opportunity to consider how the Universal Framework could be more deliberate in supporting users

to develop attitudes and behaviours like resilience and a positive attitude. In particular, Skills Builder Partnership should consider opportunities to build a positive attitude through the Aiming High framework. There may also be opportunity to develop resilience through some of the lower steps of the Staying Positive framework, which focus on keeping trying. The higher steps of Staying Positive may also provide opportunities to build an entrepreneurial mindset. Finally, there may be opportunities to build confidence through the Leadership framework.

By explicitly using words such as 'resilience', 'a positive attitude' or 'being enterprising' within the framework, Skills Builder Partnership could help to create a consistent language around positive attitudes and behaviours.

Implications for Skills Builder Partnership's resources

Skills Builder Partnership should also consider opportunities to develop attitudes and behaviours through its teaching resources, for example the short lessons on Skills Builder Hub and the activities on Skills Builder Launchpad. This would help support the explicit teaching of positive attitudes and behaviours, which 96% of teachers considered to be effective.

In particular, the partnership should look to incorporate the strategies that teachers considered most effective, for example incorporating prompts to encourage the discussion of role models. There may also be scope to encourage the use of praise through the short lessons. The partnership should consider how it can provide structured, scaffolded resources to support teachers to run independent reflection activities, as this strategy was generally considered to be effective but was not widely used. Including more reflection activities could also help to build confidence by encouraging learners to take stock of their progress.

Skills Builder Partnership should also consider opportunities to provide CPD to support its network of teachers develop key attitudes and behaviours.

Literature review

Key definitions

In this report we will consider the interplay between *workplace attitudes and behaviours*, and *essential skills*. Although these terms have different meanings, they are often used interchangeably, which can cause confusion and misunderstanding. In the literature on these topics, a variety of similar terms are used: mindsets, character attributes, virtues, traits… It is therefore important to define these terms before discussing the interplay between them.

Attitudes

An *'attitude'* can be defined as a feeling or opinion about something or somebody. The American Psychological Association (2024) defines an attitude as a 'relatively enduring and general evaluation of an object, person, issue, etc.' Attitudes are often derived from specific beliefs, emotions and past experiences associated with these objects. Attitudes often manifest as observable behaviours.

Behaviours

A *'behaviour'* can be defined as the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others. A person's behaviour is often closely linked to their environment, as behaviour is often a response to a particular stimulus. Whereas an attitude is how one feels, a behaviour is how one acts. A person's behaviour is often a product of their attitude, for example an enthusiastic attitude to work can lead to proactive, productive workplace behaviour. The term 'character attribute' can also be used to describe a person's behaviour. As Ravenscroft and Baker (2019, p.2) put it, a character attribute describes 'the choices individuals make, manifested as attitudes or behaviours.'

Mindsets

'Mindset' is another term which will be used throughout this report. The word 'mindset' describes a person's perception of themselves. Nagaoka and Farrington (2015, p.3) define mindsets as 'beliefs and attitudes about oneself, the external

world, and the interaction between the two. They are the default lenses that individuals use to process everyday experiences.' The term has become ubiquitous in the education space since the publication of Carol Dweck's 'Mindset' in 2006. In this work, Dweck distinguishes between two kinds of mindset: a 'fixed mindset' and a 'growth mindset'. Whilst someone with a fixed mindset would consider their character and abilities to be inherent and unchangeable, a person with a growth mindset believes that 'most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. Brains and talents are just the starting point' (Dweck, 2015).

Character

When used more generally, the term *'character'* refers to the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual and defined by their behaviour. When viewed through the lens of a growth mindset, character is not fixed or inherent, but rather something that one can develop and change. The term 'character education' has been adopted to describe any kind of education programme aimed at developing virtues that are good for both the individual and society. (Lickona, 2004). One of the founding principles of character education is the malleability of character: 'Character is educable: it is not fixed and the virtues can be developed'(Jubilee Centre, 2022, p.7). For this reason, in this report we will avoid the term 'character trait', which seems to imply fixed characteristics.

Skills

The term *'skills'* refers to any process which can be learned and reenacted. Skills fall broadly into three categories: basic skills, essential skills and technical skills:
- *Basic skills* refers to literacy, numeracy and basic digital literacy.
- *Essential skills* refers to 'those highly transferable skills that everyone needs to do almost any job' (Ravenscroft, 2022). Essential skills play an important role in helping people acquire basic and technical skills.
- *Technical skills* are those which are specific to a particular sector or role, and are not easily transferable outside of that context.

Following a lengthy research process by the Essential Skills Taskforce, the eight *essential skills* were identified as Listening, Speaking, Problem Solving, Creativity, Leadership, Teamwork, Staying Positive and Aiming High (Ravenscroft and Baker, 2019). These essential skills are being developed by the schools, colleges, employers and social impact organisations that form part of Skills Builder Partnership, with the mission statement that 'one day everyone will have the essential skills to succeed' (Skills Builder, 2024a).

Skills versus behaviours

The terms *'skills'* and *'behaviour'* are closely related, as people often draw on certain skills when displaying particular behaviours. For example, someone might apply their speaking and listening skills in order to behave confidently at a networking event. However, on another day, the same person might choose *not* to apply these skills, and their behaviour might seem more antisocial or timid. This element of choice is key in helping us to distinguish between a skill and a behaviour: whilst the term 'skill' describes a person's ability to re-enact a process, their 'behaviour' involves an active decision to apply this skill.

Workplace attitudes and behaviours

Over the years there have been various attempts to identify the attitudes and behaviours that young people should develop in preparation for the workplace. However, due to the lack of consistent language in this space, researchers have used a huge range of terms to refer to the same attitudes or behaviours. There has also been some confusion of skills and behaviours, with skills like teamwork listed as workplace attitudes (Pye Tait, 2021, p.25). In this section of the report we will review different ways in which these attitudes and behaviours have been conceptualised.

The Commercial Education Trust (CET) is an independent charity which works to prepare young people for employment and adulthood by helping them to build 'Commercial Ability'. Commercial Ability consists of five interdependent and mutually-reinforcing components:

- Basics for life
- Sector-specific know-how
- Essential transferable skills
- Organisational know-how
- Workplace attitudes and behaviours.

The CET defines these attitudes and behaviours as 'personal qualities and learned behaviours crucial for success', including 'confidence, resilience and professionalism, and entrepreneurialism' (CET, 2024).

Similarly, one of the aims of the employability and financial education charity Young Enterprise is to equip young people with the 'enterprising mindset needed to earn and look after their money and make a positive contribution to their community' (Young Enterprise, 2024a). This enterprising mindset is broken down into eleven components: teamwork, problem solving, financial capability, communication, creativity, organisation, confidence, resilience, working responsibly, aspiration and work readiness' (Young Enterprise, 2023, p.2). Whilst some of these qualities - for example teamwork and creativity - are skills rather than behaviours, the focus seems to be on equipping young people with the entrepreneurial mindset and positive attitude needed to proactively *apply* these skills. In this way, Enterprise Education aims to equip people with the 'skills, competencies and mindset to make the most of everyday opportunities and challenges…identifying and initiating opportunities as well as adapting your response to situations' (Young Enterprise, 2024b).

Ofsted has also recognised the importance of equipping young people with specific attitudes and behaviours by including these in their inspection framework as of 2019. According to the new Personal Development framework, inspectors will evaluate how well schools and colleges equip their students with resilience, confidence and independence so that they can 'reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently. When assessing students' behaviour and attitudes, inspectors will consider how well schools prepare them to be resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements (Ofsted, 2024).

The importance of resilience, grit and determination is a key theme in much of the literature on workplace behaviours and attitudes. In their research, Heckman and Kautz (2019, p.8) refer to character traits as 'non-cognitive skills' as '"skills" suggests that these attributes can be learned'. Amongst the key 'non-cognitive skills', they list perseverance, grit, conscientiousness and resilience to adversity. Similarly, Gutman and Schoon (2013) identify some of the key 'non-cognitive skills' needed for success as motivation, perseverance, resilience and coping. In its 2012 campaign, the Confederation of British Industry identified the key capabilities that young people should acquire at school, including grit, resilience, enthusiasm and zest. This sentiment was echoed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Social Mobility in 2014 (Paterson et al., 2014).

In 2019, the Department for Education published its Character Education Framework Guidance. The document identifies four key aspects of character which schools should aim to develop in students: the ability to remain motivated by long-term goals and persevere through setbacks; the learning of positive moral attributes such as courage and honesty; the acquisition of social confidence; 'an appreciation of the importance of long-term commitments which frame the successful and fulfilled life'. The document also includes six benchmarks which schools and colleges can use to evaluate their own provision. One of these six benchmarks is 'how well do our curriculum and teaching develop resilience and confidence?'

In identifying four different aspects of character, the Department for Education's guidance can be seen to draw on research published by the Jubilee Centre for Character Education. In its Framework for Character Education in Schools, the Jubilee Centre identifies four kinds of character virtue that schools should aim to develop in young people: intellectual virtues such as autonomy, curiosity and reflection; moral virtues such as gratitude, honesty and respect; civic virtues like citizenship, service and neighbourliness; and performance values such as confidence, determination and resilience (Jubilee Centre, 2022). Of these four categories, two appear to be most aligned with the CET's definition of workplace behaviour and abilities: 'intellectual virtues', which focus on critical thinking and resourcefulness, and 'performance values' which centre around resilience and confidence.

The Jubilee Centre's 2023 Framework for Virtue-Based Professional Ethics adds nuance to this framework by identifying the key character virtues required for different professions. This categorisation suggests that there may be no universally positive workplace attitudes and behaviours; indeed, these could be very different depending on the workplace that one finds oneself in.

What are the areas of consensus in the literature on workplace attitudes and behaviours?

(a) Grit and resilience

One of the key areas of consensus in the literature on workplace attitudes and behaviours is the importance of resilience. Masten et al. define resilience as 'positive adaptation in the context of significant challenges, variously referring to the capacity for, process of, or outcomes of successful life-course development during or following exposure to potentially life-altering experiences' (Masten et al., 2009, p.4). Resilience is listed as a key performance value and 'one of the most significant' soft skills in the Jubilee Centre's Framework for Character Education (2017). Its importance in preparing young people for life and work is also highlighted in the 2023 Ofsted inspection framework, the Department for Education's 2019 character education framework, the CBI's 2012 campaign and the APPG's 'Character and Resilience Manifesto' (Paterson et al., 2014).

Closely related to resilience are behaviours such as grit, tenacity and perseverance, which have been identified as critical factors for success in the 21st century (SRI International (2018). These behaviours all involve the exertion of effort to achieve goals and the tendency to keep going in the face of failure, adversity and setbacks. Angela Duckworth's 'grit' involves the persistence of the efforts over years to attain long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007). However, there seems to be some

confusion in the literature regarding whether these attributes are skills, behaviours or 'non-cognitive factors'.

(b) Enterprising or entrepreneurial mindset

Another point of agreement in the literature on workplace attitudes and behaviours is the importance of entrepreneurialism and an 'enterprising mindset'. This is listed by the Commercial Education Trust as one of the key attitudes and behaviours for Commercial Ability, and one of Young Enterprise's main aims is to help students develop an 'enterprising mindset'. However, these terms are somewhat complex and can be difficult to define. Pye Tait (2021, p.25) define 'being enterprising' as 'showing initiative and being resourceful', whilst Lord Young (2014, p.1) defines enterprise using an analogy:

> "Enterprise means more than just the ability to become an entrepreneur. It is that quality that gives an individual a positive outlook, an ability to see the glass as half full rather than half empty, and is a valuable attribute for the whole of life."

Thus, whilst entrepreneurialism is widely regarded as an important behaviour for the workplace, there seem to be varying definitions of what the term means.

(c) Confidence

A final area of consensus within the literature is the importance of qualities such as confidence, self-belief and self-efficacy. Confidence is mentioned alongside resilience in both the Ofsted inspection framework (2024) and the Department for Education's Character Education Framework (2019). Lucas and Hanson (2016) list self-belief as a key employability habit, whilst Heckman and Kautz (2013, p.6) list 'self-esteem and self-efficacy' as one of their key character skills.

What are the ongoing areas of debate in the literature on workplace attitudes and behaviours?

(a) A lack of consistent language

Although there is some agreement on some of the key attitudes and behaviours required for working life, there seems to be some confusion around the language used to describe these. For example, in Pye Tait's research for the Commercial Education Trust, the skills of 'networking ability' and 'employability skills' such as 'team working' and 'problem solving' are listed as behaviours and attitudes rather than skills. Similarly, whilst many researchers agree that 'being enterprising' is an

important attitude for the workplace, definitions of this term are varied and sometimes vague (Pye Tait, 2021, p.25).

There also seems to be some confusion in the language used to distinguish between attitudes, behaviours and skills. Some researchers use terms such as 'non-cognitive skills' to describe behaviours such as confidence, whilst Heckman and Kautz (2013, p.10) call these 'character skills 'because '"skills" suggests that these attributes can be learned'. In this way, one can observe what SRI International (2018, p.3) describe as the 'jingle/jangle' problem, where the same term is used to refer to different concepts, and different terms are used for the same concept. Lucas and Hanson (2016, p.29) summarise the overlap and confusion in defining employability skills, attitudes and behaviours:

> *'The language we use to talk about them quickly goes beyond skills to include attributes, dispositions, habits of mind, characteristics, capabilities and traits (to use just a few of their labels). There are many overlapping lists, frameworks, groupings and taxonomies – some drawing on empirical or theoretical research, others more pragmatically rooted in employer need.'*

This raises an interesting question: could the lack of a universal language around these attitudes and behaviours be a barrier to helping people build them?

(b) Resilience: a skill, an attitude or a behaviour?

One attribute which seems to cause ongoing debate is *resilience*. This is categorised by the Commercial Enterprise Trust (2024), Ofsted (2024) and the APPG (Paterson et al., 2014) as an attitude or a behaviour, whilst the Jubilee Centre (2022, p.9) describes it as a character virtue (specifically a 'performance virtue'). Meanwhile, Gutman and Schoon (2013) describe resilience as a capability, and Lucas and Hanson (2016) define it as an 'employability habit'. Ecclestone and Lewis (2014, p.2) define resilience as 'the process of managing and adapting to sources of stress or adversity.' This definition of resilience as a 'process' links to the definition of a skill as a learnable, reenactable process. Indeed, a quick look at the Skills Builder framework for Staying Positive shows clear links to resilience: the focus of this skill is on keeping trying when things go wrong, looking for opportunities in difficult situations and adapting plans to make use of these opportunities (Skills Builder Partnership, 2024b). Perhaps, then, resilience is not a behaviour, a character virtue or a 'non-cognitive skill', but another name for the essential skill of 'Staying Positive'.

(c) Are certain attitudes and behaviours universally positive?

Finally, one important question which arises from the literature on attitudes and behaviours is whether there are certain attitudes and behaviours which are universally useful, or whether some attitudes and behaviours are only useful in certain contexts.

Although much of the research on Character Education focuses on fostering virtues such as kindness, honesty and respect (Lickona, 1992; Berkowitz and Bier, 2007) these values are not so prominent in the literature on employability. Rather, the research into workplace attitudes and behaviours tends to focus on virtues like resilience, confidence and motivation (Paterson et al., 2014; CBI, 2012; Lucas and Hanson, 2016). In this way, there seems to be a tension between the values that are positive for working life and for wider life.

Some researchers have tried to distinguish between these behaviours by categorising them into different kinds of virtue. For example, the Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education (2022) categorises different behaviours and attitudes as either 'intellectual virtues', 'moral virtues', 'civic virtues' or 'performance virtues'. Of these categories, the performance values seem closest to those identified in the literature as being valuable for the workplace: they include confidence, determination, motivation, perseverance and resilience. These behaviours have been described as 'those qualities needed to realise one's potential for excellence - to develop one's talents, work hard and achieve goals' (Character Education Partnership, cited in Lucas and Hanson, 2016, p.19).

The Jubilee Centre's Framework for Virtue-Based Professional Ethics (2013) adds more nuance to the question of workplace attitudes and behaviours by identifying different attitudes and behaviours that are useful for different job roles. As a part of this research, 510 aspiring and practising professionals were asked to identify their top three qualities, and the top three qualities needed for their job role. The results show the importance of different attitudes and behaviours for different roles: whilst the ideal behaviours for nursing are identified as kindness, honesty and teamwork, the three ideal behaviours for law are judgement, honesty and perseverance. This research therefore suggests that positive workplace behaviours may depend on the kind of workplace in question. The behaviours and attitudes that might be an asset in one workplace might even be detrimental in another workplace with a different culture, different values or different behavioural norms.

To what extent can workplace attitudes and behaviours be taught?

A key area of consensus in the literature on workplace attitudes and behaviours is that character is not fixed, and attitudes and behaviours can be learned. Researchers have put forward different pedagogical approaches to teaching these attitudes and behaviours. When reviewing these, it will be useful to draw on the Jubilee Centre's distinction between *'character caught', 'character taught'* and *'character sought'* in the context of schools (Jubilee Centre, 2022, pp.13-14).

'Character caught'

'Character caught' refers to the 'process of osmosis' whereby students can pick up positive attitudes and behaviours through a school's ethos, its physical environment and the language used by staff and students (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p.11). In an ideal world, these attitudes and behaviours 'should be reinforced everywhere: on the playing fields, in classrooms, corridors, interactions between teachers and pupils, in assemblies, posters, head teacher messages and communications, staff training, and in relations with parents and families' (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p.9). Berkowitz et al. (2017) echo this sentiment by highlighting the importance of a universal language to identify positive behaviours and attitudes. This language should be used widely and incorporated throughout school life, for example in discipline, academic curricula and mission statements. The Jubilee Centre (2022) suggests integrating the language around character education into school policies, strategic plans and staff training, whilst Lovat et al. (cited in Berkowitz et al., 2017) suggest reinforcing this language through displays and awards. The Jubilee Centre (2022) also suggests engaging students' families and local organisations in attempts to reinforce positive attitudes and behaviour.

'Character taught'

'Character taught' refers to strategies and resources used to explicitly teach students to behave in a certain way. This is an important complement to character caught: 'practice what you preach, but don't forget to preach what you practice' (Lickona, cited in Berkowitz et. al, 2007, p.19). The Jubilee Centre (2022) suggests either teaching these behaviours and attitudes as a discrete, timetabled subject (for example in character education lessons, PSHE or religious education) or integrating them into the wider curriculum. Some of the suggested teaching and learning strategies include discussion-based learning, reflective learning and independent learning, reflective journal-keeping and using resources such as stories and moral dilemmas.The Jubilee Centre also provides a set of resources and lesson plans to help educators teach these attitudes and behaviours (Jubilee Centre, 2024).

Nagaoka and Farrington echo the importance of reflection in any kind of explicit teaching, citing John Dewey: 'We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience.' (Dewey, 1938, cited in Nagaoka and Farrington, 2016, p.44). This reflective process is particularly effective when guided by an adult, in the context of a strong, supportive developmental relationship. Berkowitz et al. (2017) also reiterate the importance of reflective activities, as well as moral dilemma discussions and cooperative learning to build positive attitudes and behaviours.

'Character sought'

Whilst *'character caught'* and *'character taught'* involve strategies used by educators to build students' attitudes and behaviours, *'character sought'* involves providing learners with the opportunity to independently pursue their own character development. Schools can support students in this process by offering opportunities for pupil leadership, a range of extra-curricular activities, school events, residential trips, work experience placements, apprenticeships, volunteering, school-led or community-led action and visits from inspirational speakers (Jubilee Centre, 2022). Berkowitz et al. (2017) also discuss the importance of opportunities for students to participate in service opportunities. Interestingly, much of the character education guidance for schools and teachers focuses on providing students with these opportunities. For example, one of the Department for Educations' six character education benchmarks focuses on the co-curriculum and opportunities for students to participate in a range of activities and local, national and international programmes (DfE, 2019). Similarly, the Ofsted Personal Development inspection framework (2024) refers to a curriculum which 'extends beyond the academic, technical or vocational' and 'provides for learners' broader development.' In a bid to increase opportunities for students to develop positive attitudes and behaviours, the 2014 APPG on Social Mobility called on Ofsted to incorporate extra-curricular activities more explicitly into their inspection frameworks, and called for extra-curricular activities to become a formal aspect of teachers' employment contracts (Paterson et al., 2014).

The research therefore suggests that positive attitudes and behaviours *can* be taught, and that there is a multiplicity of strategies for doing so. Whilst current guidance tends to focus on the importance of providing extracurricular opportunities to build these skills, they can also be learnt through explicit teaching and an implicit 'process of osmosis' (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p.11).

How can workplace attitudes and behaviours be assessed?

An overview of the literature on this topic reveals that there is no simple way to measure or assess attitudes and behaviours. Firstly, attitudes are not always directly observable, unless manifested as behaviours. Even then, the difficulties involved in defining certain behaviours make it difficult to measure or assess them. However, the Jubilee Centre (2022, p.16) posits that these attitudes and behaviours can be assessed 'holistically,' through a combination of pre- and post-intervention surveys, observations and interviews with teachers, and self-reflection. Some other assessment methods are put forward in the literature on this topic: Heckman and Kautz (2013) emphasise the accuracy of teachers' ratings of elementary schoolchildren's behaviour, whilst Lickona suggests monitoring data on classroom and school-wide behaviour (Lickona, 1996).

Outside of the education space, the field of psychometric testing could be seen to offer a solution to the problem of assessing attitudes and behaviours. Psychometrics is the discipline of measuring and predicting psychological traits, aptitudes and behaviours (Wijsen et al., 2022). Today, psychometric tests such as the 16 Personalities Test, DISC or OCEAN, are often used by Human Resources professionals to assess candidates' skills, attitudes or behaviours. However, the main psychometric tests used today do not assess key workplace behaviours such as resilience, an enterprising mindset or confidence. Instead, they assess different values: the DISC test assesses dominance, influence, steadiness and compliance, whilst OCEAN measures openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Moreover, the 16 Personalities Test can be seen to add to the 'jingle/'jangle' of vocabulary around workplace attitudes and behaviours, as answers come in the form of abstract nouns such as 'The Campaigner' or 'The Consul'.

Essential skills

So far, we have examined ways that workplace attitudes and behaviours have been conceptualised, and some pedagogical approaches to teaching and assessing these. Now, we will turn to focus on essential skills.

As mentioned, essential skills are highly transferable skills that everyone needs to succeed in almost any job. After comparing 45 existing skills and employability

frameworks, the Essential Skills Taskforce identified the eight essential skills as Listening, Speaking, Problem Solving, Creativity, Staying Positive, Aiming High, Leadership and Teamwork (Ravenscroft and Baker, 2019). The Skills Builder Universal Framework provides a consistent definition for each of these skills, and breaks them down into sixteen teachable steps, which allow learners to identify their next steps and to measure their progression.

There is widespread agreement on the importance of these eight essential skills: 94% of employers, 97% of teachers and 88% of young people saw these skills as being at least as important as academic grades to students' future success (Skills Builder Partnership, 2022). Meanwhile, 61% of parents would consider essential skills provision when choosing a school for their child (Skills Builder Partnership 2023), and 86% of teachers agree that the national curriculum should include essential skills (Skills Builder Partnership, 2024c).

How can essential skills be taught and assessed?

Skills Builder Partnership is an organisation dedicated to the mission that 'one day, everyone will have the essential skills to succeed' (Skills Builder Partnership, 2024a). As part of their work, the Partnership supports educators, employers and social impact organisations to build people's essential skills. In their programmes with schools and colleges, Skills Builder Partnership adheres to six pedagogical principles to effectively teach, reinforce and assess essential skills (Ravenscroft, 2022).

The first of these pedagogical principles is *'keep it simple.'* According to this principle, schools should try to build a consistent language around essential skills, to avoid confusing learners. Ways of building this consistent language include boosting awareness through displays and staff training, school-wide assemblies and events, and incorporating the language of skills into rewards.

The second of the Skills Builder principles of good practice is *'start early, keep going'.* This principle is based on the recognition that building essential skills takes time, so learners should be introduced to them as early as possible and continue to build them throughout their lives.

The third principle, *'measure it'*, recognises that consistent measurement and formative assessment bring rigour to the teaching and learning of essential skills. The Universal Framework provides a useful progression with which to assess essential skills. A range of approaches can be effective in assessing and informing the essential skills, for example individual assessment by a teacher, group-level assessment by a teacher, and individual self- or peer-assessment. Each of these methods has advantages and disadvantages: individual assessment by a teacher is time-intensive but gives a detailed insight into students' progress; group-level assessment is quicker but does may not be appropriate in classes with a wide range of abilities; self- and peer-assessment encourage students to take ownership of their progress, but usually works better with older students. Ideally, such assessments should be low-stakes, regular, and should be used to inform next steps.

The fourth Skills Builder principle is *'focus tightly'.* This principle acknowledges that, in order for learners to make any progress in the essential skills, there needs to be some focused time available for the regular, explicit teaching of essential skills. The Skills Builder Partnership's teacher platform, Skills Builder Hub, provides a range of tools and resources that can be used to build these essential skills, including short lessons, workshops and skills stories for younger learners.

The fifth principle, *'keep practising'*, is based on the idea that the explicit teaching of essential skills should be complemented by wider reinforcement and deliberate practice across the curriculum, and beyond. This gives learners the opportunity to apply their skills in different contexts and appreciate their importance. Strategies for providing students with these opportunities include placing visual reminders of the essential skills in classrooms or on lesson resources, building an essential skills focus into lesson planning, or making explicit reference to the essential skills in extracurricular activities.

The final principle for the teaching and learning of essential skills is *'bring it to life'.* This principle encourages educators to use links to the working world and wider life in order to demonstrate the depth and transferability of the essential skills. In order to put this principle into practice effectively, schools and colleges can weave discussions of the essential skills into project-based learning and employer encounters. Older students can also be encouraged to reflect on how they used essential skills in work experience placements or apprenticeships.

A comparison of pedagogical approaches to teaching workplace attitudes and behaviours, and teaching essential skills

Having reviewed the pedagogical approaches to teaching and assessing workplace and attitudes, and the approaches to teaching and assessing essential skills, there are some clear similarities.

The importance of a consistent language

Firstly, the Skills Builder principle *'keep it simple'*[4] is similar to the idea of *'character caught',* as both recognise the importance of a consistent, universal language when learning about essential skills or workplace attitudes and behaviours. Indeed, the approaches suggested to build such a language are remarkably similar: for both essential skills and workplace attitudes and behaviours, suggested strategies include staff training, school communications, displays, rewards and school policies. Ravenscroft (2022) and the Jubilee Centre (2022) also recommend engaging parents, governors and local organisations in order to build a universal language in the wider community.

However, whilst the Skills Builder Universal Framework identifies the eight essential skills and provides a consistent definition for them, our overview of the literature on workplace attitudes and behaviours reveals that these are more difficult to 'pin down'. There seems to be much less consensus on which attitudes and behaviours are important in the workplace, and the plethora of different names for each behaviour creates a 'jingle/jangle' effect which is an obstacle to any kind of universal language in this space (SRI International, 2018, p.3). Whilst the Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education (2022) identifies important values, it covers a range of behaviours and skills, and does not provide definitions for these.

The importance of explicit teaching

Another point of similarity between the pedagogy of workplace attitudes and behaviours and essential skills is the importance of explicit teaching. This idea is at the centre of the fourth Skills Builder principle, *'focus tightly'*[5], and is also a central tenet of the Jubilee Centre's Framework for Character Education: 'direct teaching of character provides the rationale, language and tools to use in developing character

---

[4] According to this Skills Builder Principle of good practice, schools should try to build a consistent language around essential skills, to avoid confusing learners.
[5] This Skills Builder principle of good practice acknowledges that, in order for learners to make progress in the essential skills, they need to receive focused, explicit teaching.

elsewhere in and out of school' (Jubilee Centre, 2022). In their 'character teaching inventory' the Jubilee Centre put forward a selection of strategies that could be used in these explicit teaching slots, for example discussion-based learning and reflective journals. They also provide a set of ready-made lesson plans and powerpoint presentations that teachers can use to build certain attitudes and behaviours. These resources are similar to some of the resources for teaching essential skills on the teacher platform for essential skills, Skills Builder Hub (Skills Builder Partnership, 2024d).

The importance of different contexts

One final similarity is that both the literature on teaching essential skills and the literature on teaching workplace attitudes and behaviours recommend providing students with opportunities to apply their learning in different contexts. Much of the guidance for educators looking to build behaviours like resilience and confidence focuses on the co-curriculum, work experience and service opportunities (Paterson et al., 2014). Similarly, the Skills Builder principles *'keep practising'* and *'bring it to life'*[6] focus on providing students with opportunities to apply their essential skills in the wider curriculum, extra-curricular activities, employer encounters, work experience placements and project-based learning. Skills Builder Partnership also goes one step further in providing students with ready-made reflection resources which use the consistent language of the Universal Framework.

The question of assessment

Whilst there are many similarities between the pedagogical approaches to teaching workplace attitudes and behaviours and essential skills, one key distinction is the question of assessment. The Skills Builder Universal Framework adds rigour to the teaching of essential skills by providing a progression which can be used to measure student's progress, identify areas for development and inform future teaching. With the Skills Builder Hub lessons linked to the framework, teachers are able to pitch their teaching at the correct level for their students.

Meanwhile, the lack of any such framework for workplace attitudes and behaviours makes it difficult for teachers to assess their class, or for them to pitch their explicit teaching at the correct level. Instead, teachers must assess attitudes and behaviours more 'holistically', for example using their own qualitative judgements and encouraging students' self-reflection (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p.16). However, such

---

[6] The Skills Builder principle *'Keep practising'* recognises that the explicit teaching of essential skills should be complemented by wider reinforcement and deliberate practice across the curriculum. *'Bring it to life'* encourages educators to demonstrate the depth and transferability of the essential skills by making links to the working world and wider life.

holistic methods can be time-consuming; with teacher workload such a prominent issue, a framework similar to the Universal Framework might help to speed up this process. If teaching resources were linked to the progression of this framework, teachers would also be able to tailor their teaching to their class's ability.

Teacher Survey

Methodology

The aim of this paper is to explore the interplay, opportunities and challenges in the teaching of essential skills, and of workplace attitudes and behaviours.

In order to explore this relationship, a literature review was conducted, to identify some of the key areas of consensus and debate when it comes to defining, teaching and assessing essential skills and workplace attitudes and behaviours.

Primary research was then conducted, in the form of an online survey circulated with 230 teachers. The survey was completed by 50 teachers.

Survey design

The survey was completely anonymous and consisted of five questions. The first two questions focused on twelve key attitudes and behaviours, some of which had been identified in the literature on workplace attitudes and behaviours. Teachers were provided with a list of these attitudes and behaviours, and their definitions:

1. A growth mindset (belief that you can develop through hard work)
2. A positive or 'can-do' attitude (approaching challenges with optimism)
3. Being enterprising (resourcefulness and initiative to spot and make the most of opportunities)
4. Compassion (acting out of sympathy to help others)
5. The drive to make money
6. Confidence (believing in yourself and your abilities)
7. Courage (willingness to undertake challenges)
8. Deference (polite submission and respect)
9. Gratitude (showing appreciation)
10. Grit (perseverance and a passion for achieving a long-term goal)
11. Honesty (speaking and acting truthfully)
12. Resilience (ability to withstand adversity)

Teachers were asked to rank these attitudes and behaviours on a scale of importance for both working and wider life. When asked about the importance of these attitudes and behaviours for working life, teachers were also given the option 'it depends on the job role.' Respondents were also given the option to note down any additional attitudes or behaviours that they considered important.

The next two questions focused on ten strategies which were mentioned in the literature on the topic as ways to develop positive attitudes and behaviours. First, teachers were asked to rank the strategies on a scale of perceived effectiveness, from very effective to very ineffective. They were also invited to suggest any additional strategies that they thought would be effective. Next, teachers were asked if they already used any of these ten strategies, answering either 'yes' or 'no'. Again, teachers were invited to note down any additional strategies that they already used.

In the final question, teachers were asked whether a range of tools and resources would help them to develop students' attitudes and behaviours. Teachers responded 'yes' or 'no' and were able to note down any additional tools or resources that would help them.

Data collection methods

The anonymous survey was circulated via email to 230 teachers. A total of 50 teachers completed the survey, with one of them submitting an incomplete set of responses. This teacher's responses were excluded from the data set to avoid skewing the results.

Data analysis

After removing the set of incomplete responses, the data from the 49 complete sets of data was analysed. A series of charts were created to help visually demonstrate the responses.

Sixteen teachers submitted qualitative responses to Question 1, about the importance of different attitudes and behaviours for working life. A thematic analysis of these responses was conducted. Such an analysis was not conducted on the qualitative data for other questions, as there were very few qualitative responses for each of these.

Key findings

(a) The importance of a positive or 'can-do' attitude for working and wider life

In the survey, teachers were asked about the importance of different attitudes and behaviours for working and wider life. This included some of the attitudes and behaviours discussed in the literature review.

A positive or 'can-do' attitude was the attitude that teachers believed to be most important for working life. 100% of respondents considered it to be important, with 76% of these believing it to be very important.

A positive or 'can-do' attitude was also seen to be very important for wider ife: 100% of teachers considered it to be important, with 67% of these believing it to be very important.

These results are particularly interesting as a positive or 'can-do' attitude was not one of the main attributes identified in the literature review. However, such an attitude requires a certain level of confidence, which was a key attitude identified in research by Lucas and Hanson (2016), the Ofsted inspection framework and the Department for Education's Character Education Framework.

(b) The importance of resilience, confidence and grit for working and wider life

The teacher survey echoes some of the findings of the literature review by highlighting the importance of resilience, confidence and grit for working life. 100% of respondents believed that resilience was important or very important for working life; this figure was 98% for confidence and 96% for grit. The percentage of teachers who considered resilience to be very important for working life (73%) was much higher than the percentage that considered confidence (51%) or grit (49%) to be very important.

Teachers also agreed on the importance of these three behaviours in wider life: 100% considered resilience to be important or very important; this figure was 98% for confidence and 92% for grit.

(c) The importance of being enterprising for working life

An enterprising mindset was one of the key attitudes and behaviours identified in the literature review as being important for working life. In general, teachers agreed with the Commercial Education Trust and Young Enterprise on the importance of being enterprising: 94% considered it to be important or very important for working life. However, only 29% of teachers considered being enterprising to be very important for working life. This figure is much lower than for other behaviours such as resilience, which 73% of teachers considered to be very important for work. (73%).

Teachers were less convinced of the importance of being enterprising for wider life: 27% considered it to be very important, 57% considered it important and 16% ranked it as neutral.

(d) The importance of the drive to make money versus being enterprising in working life

The drive to make money and 'being enterprising' could be considered to be similar attitudes, due to their associations with business. However, the key difference is that 'being enterprising' does not necessarily involve a financial focus. In the survey, being enterprising was defined as 'resourcefulness and initiative to spot and make the most of opportunities'. This definition was based on research from the literature review.

Interestingly, teachers generally considered 'being enterprising' to be more important for working life than the drive to make money: 94% of teachers considered being enterprising to be important or very important, whilst this figure was only 28% for money-making. 2% of teachers thought that the drive to make money could be actively detrimental for working life.

These findings suggest that, when developing resources and programmes to develop entrepreneurial attitudes amongst young people, it might be useful to focus on using initiative rather than making money.
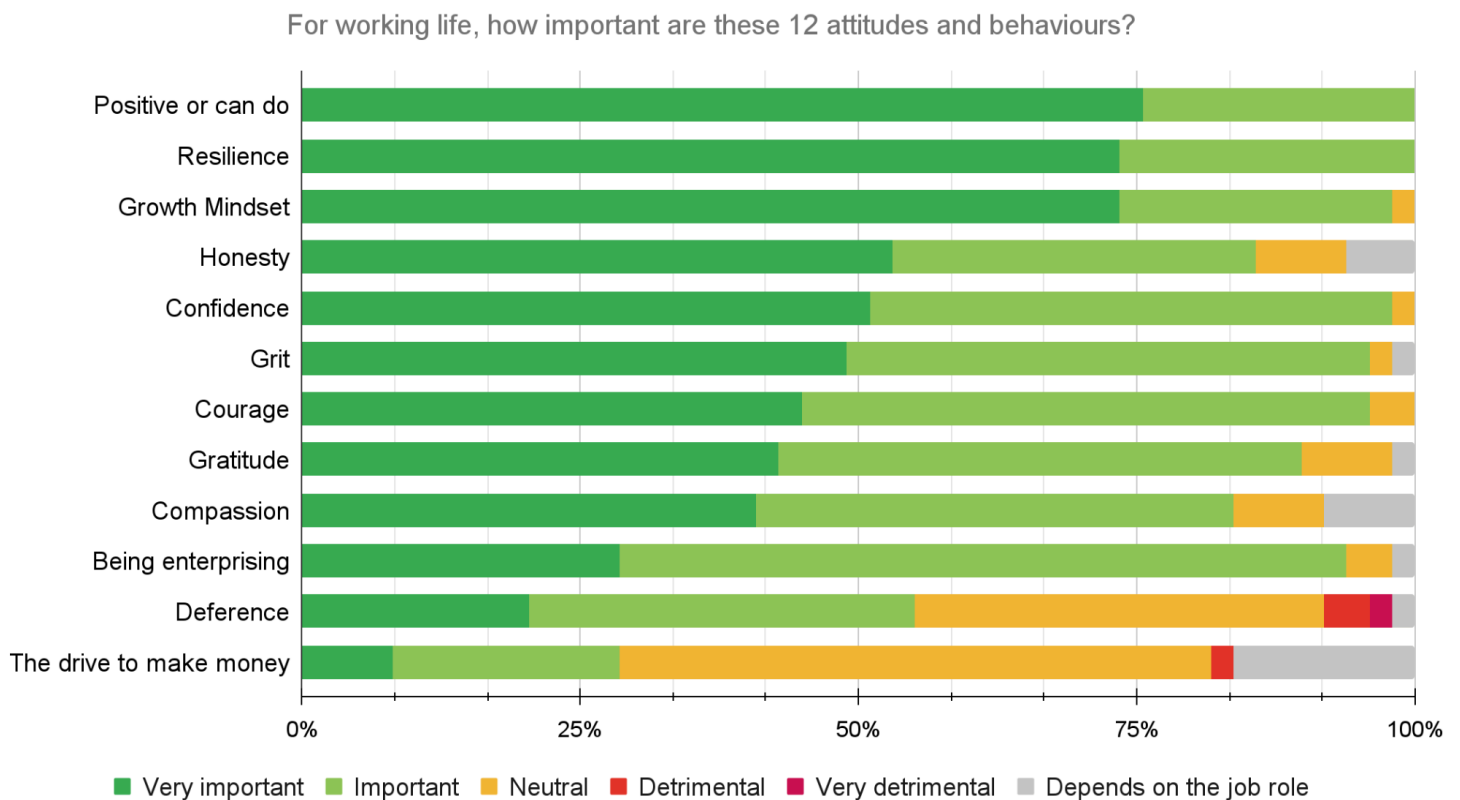
For working life, how important are these 12 attitudes and behaviours?

Legend: ■ Very important ■ Important ■ Neutral ■ Detrimental ■ Very detrimental ■ Depends on the job role

Figure 1: teacher perceptions of the importance of attitudes and behaviours for working life

(e) Some attitudes and behaviours are not universally positive

When asked about the importance of different attitudes and behaviours for working life, teachers were given the option to respond 'it depends on the job role'. Whilst some behaviours, such as resilience and a positive attitude, were considered to be universally important, others were seen to be more dependent on the type of job.

In particular, the drive to make money was seen to be more important for some job roles than others, with 16% of teachers saying that its importance was dependent on the job role. Similarly, 8% of teachers thought that the importance of compassion depended on the job role; this figure was 6% for honesty.

Moreover, teachers' responses showed that certain behaviours are considered more important for wider life than working life. For example, 61% of respondents thought that compassion was very important for wider life, whilst only 41% thought it was important for work.

On the other hand, certain behaviours were considered more important for work than for wider life. Whilst 73% of teachers thought that a growth mindset was very

important for work, only 55% considered it very important for wider life. Similarly, 49% of teachers thought that grit was very important for work, whilst only 39% considered it very important for wider life.

These figures seem to answer one of the key points that arose from the literature review: that the importance of many attitudes and behaviours is dependent on context. In order to prepare young people for the future, it would perhaps be best to focus on developing more universally positive attitudes and behaviours, such as resilience and a positive or 'can-do' attitude.

	Very important for working life	Very important for wider life
Positive or 'can-do' attitude	76%	67%
Growth Mindset	73%	55%
Resilience	73%	71%
Honesty	53%	57%
Confidence	51%	57%
Grit	49%	39%
Courage	45%	45%
Gratitude	43%	49%
Compassion	41%	61%
Being enterprising	29%	27%
Deference	20%	22%
The drive to make money	8%	8%

Figure 2: teacher perceptions of the importance of attitudes and behaviours for working life versus wider life

(f) Attitudes and behaviours are teachable

The results of this survey reveal that almost all teachers believe that attitudes and behaviours can be taught. 96% of respondents thought that explicit teaching was very effective or effective in developing attitudes and behaviours. This confirms the Jubilee Centre's hypothesis that 'Character is educable: it is not fixed and the virtues can be developed' (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p.7).

Aside from explicit teaching, teachers highlighted several other strategies that they considered to be effective or very effective in building students' attitudes and behaviours: discussion about role models (96%), praise and rewards (92%) and extracurricular activities (88%). This range of strategies supports the Jubilee

Centre's argument that character can be 'taught', 'sought' and 'caught' (2022, pp.13-14).

How effective do you think these 10 strategies are in developing attitudes and behaviours?
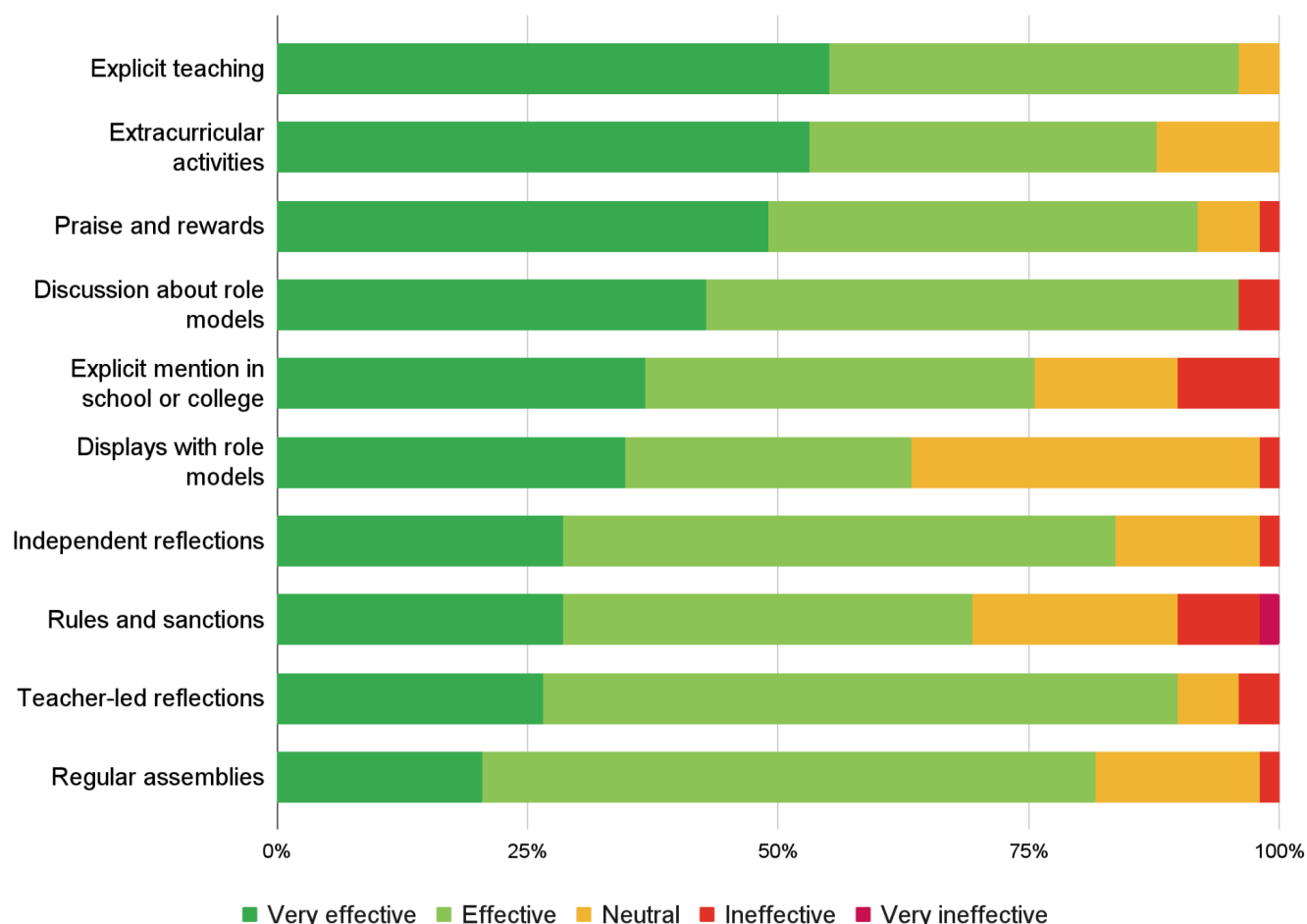

Figure 3: Teachers' perception of the effectiveness of strategies to develop positive attitudes and behaviours.

(g) Teachers are committed to developing attitudes and behaviours, but they are not always using the strategies that they consider to be most effective

In the survey, teachers were asked if they were already using any strategies to develop students' attitudes and behaviours. 100% of teachers were doing something: the most common strategies were praise and rewards (100%), explicit mention in school/college values (94%), rules and sanctions (90%) and explicit teaching (88%).

32

Interestingly, the results of the survey suggested that teachers are not always using the strategies that they consider to be most effective in developing attitudes and behaviours. For example, 84% of respondents consider independent reflection to be effective or very effective in developing positive attitudes and behaviours, but only 57% of those surveyed are currently using this strategy. Similarly, 96% of respondents considered discussion of role models to be effective or very effective in developing attitudes and behaviours, but only 82% are currently using this strategy. There is also a gap between perceived effectiveness and actual usage for explicit teaching and teacher-led reflection. It would be interesting to conduct further research into the barriers preventing teachers from using these strategies.

It is worth noting that some strategies commonly used by teachers are not seen to be very effective. For example, 94% of respondents said that attitudes and behaviours are mentioned in their school or college values, but only 76% considered this to be effective or very effective. Similarly, 90% of respondents said that they used rules and sanctions, but only 69% considered this to be effective or very effective. Interestingly, both of these are strategies of *'character caught'*; this data could suggest that these strategies alone are not enough to develop positive attitudes and behaviours.

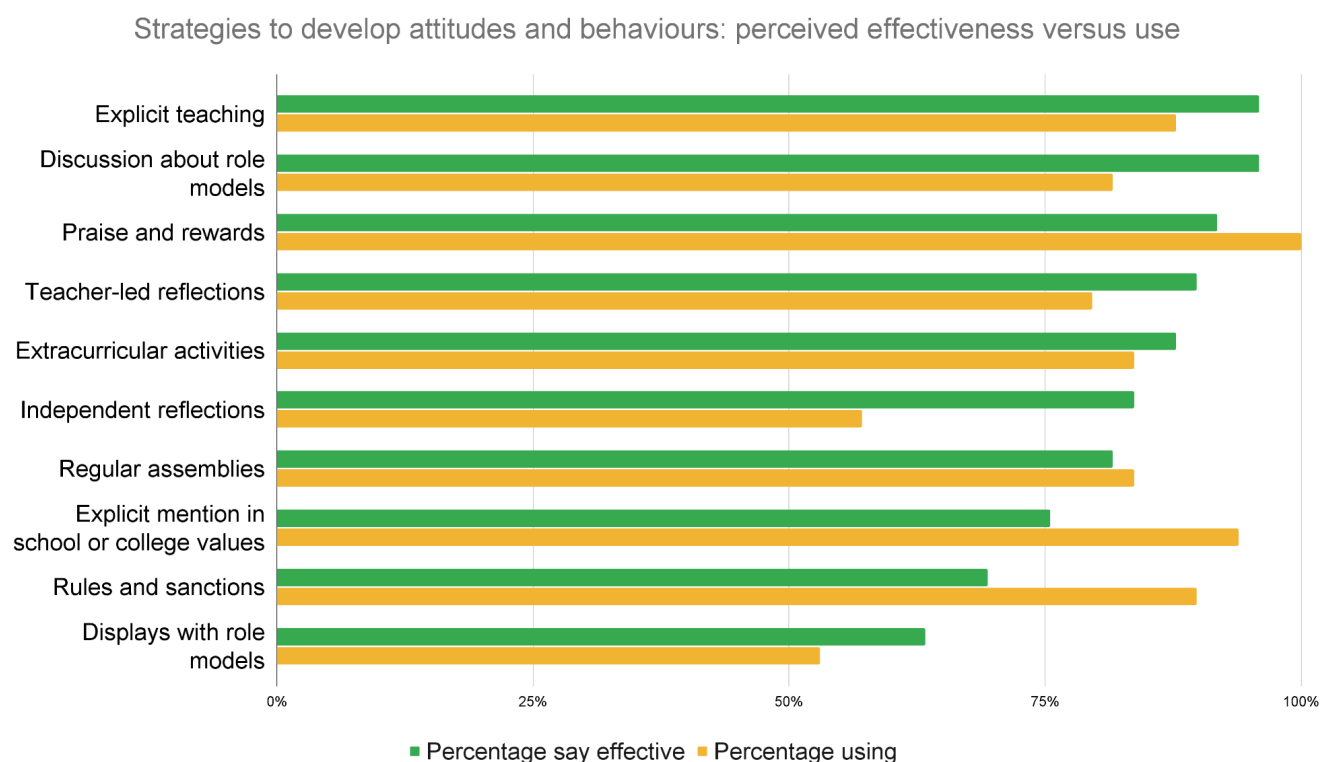Strategies to develop attitudes and behaviours: perceived effectiveness versus use

*F*igure 4: Teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of strategies to build attitudes and behaviours, compared to the percentage of teachers using these strategies.

33

(h) Teachers would like more support to develop positive attitudes and behaviours

Teachers in the survey were asked which tools and resources would help them to develop students' attitudes and behaviours. The most popular resources were lesson plans and resources (98%) and staff CPD (98%). 88% of teachers said that assessment or tracking tools would be helpful, whilst 84% said that students would benefit from a wider range of extracurricular opportunities to develop attitudes and behaviours.

This data provides us with some useful insight into potential barriers preventing teachers from using strategies to build attitudes and behaviours.
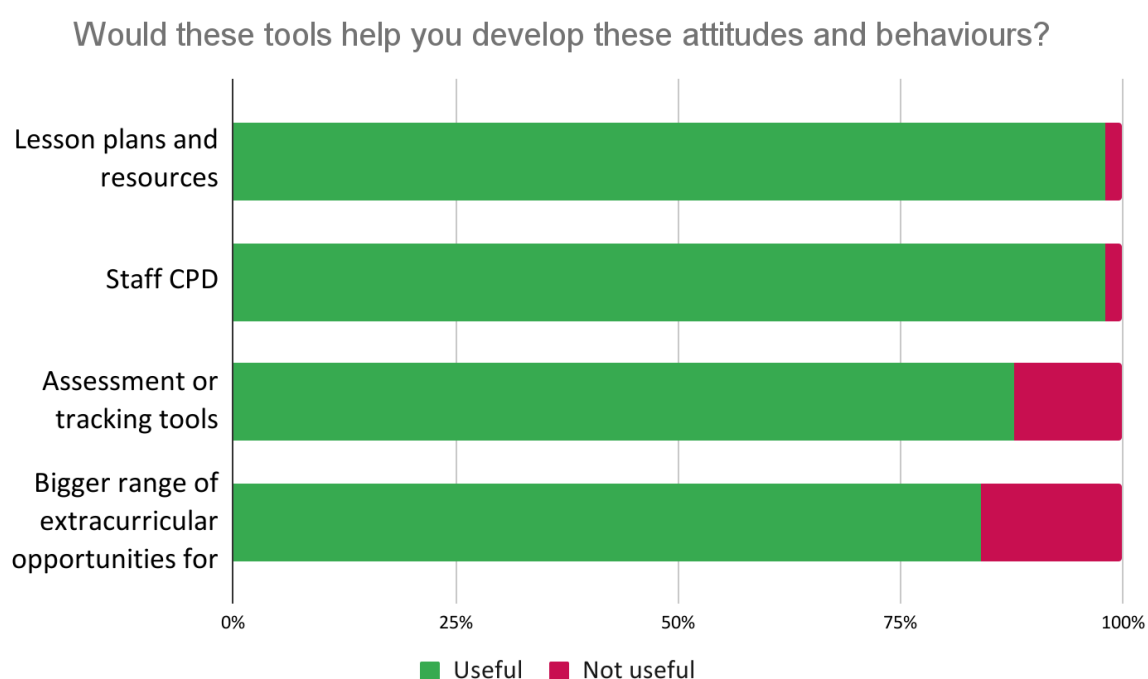

Would these tools help you develop these attitudes and behaviours?

Figure 5: Teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of tools and resources to help develop attitudes and behaviours.

(i) Teachers recognise the importance of essential skills for working and wider life

In the survey, teachers were given the opportunity to suggest any additional attitudes or behaviours that they considered important for working life. Although the focus of the survey was not essential skills, five of the sixteen qualitative responses to this question referenced essential skills such as Speaking, Listening or Teamwork. This not only highlights the importance of essential skills; it also echoes some of the

findings from the literature review with regard to the confusion of essential skills and attitudes or behaviours.

Implications and next steps

Key attitudes and behaviours to develop in young people

The literature review and the results of the teacher survey point to some key attitudes and behaviours that prepare young people for the workplace. In particular, there seems to be universal acknowledgement of the importance of resilience and a positive or 'can-do' attitude, both for the workplace and for wider life. Any intervention focused on building work readiness should therefore seek to develop these attitudes and behaviours in young people. Teachers would also welcome interventions focusing on confidence, grit and a growth mindset, which they considered important for the workplace.

Although teachers did not consider being enterprising as the most vital attitude for the workplace, 94% of respondents did consider it to be important. One can therefore infer that teachers would welcome interventions or resources focused on building an entrepreneurial mindset. However, given teachers' mixed responses to the idea of the drive to make money, these resources should focus on using initiative and being resourceful, rather than on simply making profit.

Recommendations for the Universal Framework review

Currently, the Skills Builder Partnership's Universal Framework focuses on building essential skills as tools to be used in the workplace and in wider life. However, in order to effectively apply these essential skills, it is important for people to be equipped with a positive attitude and a degree of resilience.

The upcoming Universal Framework Review provides the perfect opportunity to consider how the Universal Framework and handbook can be more deliberate in supporting users to build these attitudes and behaviours. In particular, Skills Builder Partnership should consider opportunities to build a positive attitude through the Aiming High framework. There may also be opportunities to build resilience through some of the lower steps of the Staying Positive framework, which focus on keeping trying. The higher steps of Staying Positive focus on using initiative to look for

opportunities, and may therefore provide opportunities to build an entrepreneurial mindset. There may also be opportunities to build confidence through the Leadership framework. By explicitly using words such as 'resilience', 'a positive attitude' or 'being enterprising' within the framework, Skills Builder Partnership could help to create a consistent language around positive attitudes and behaviours.

Recommendations for Skills Builder resources

Alongside the review of the Universal Framework and handbook, Skills Builder Partnership should consider opportunities to develop attitudes and behaviours through the teaching resources, for example the short lessons on Skills Builder Hub, the activities on Skills Builder Launchpad or the resources circulated with schools in possession of a Skills Builder award.

In particular, the partnership should look for opportunities to incorporate the strategies that teachers considered most effective, for example explicitly teaching students what certain attitudes and behaviours involve, or incorporating prompts to encourage discussion of role models. There may also be scope to encourage the use of praise through the short lessons. The partnership should consider how it can provide structured, scaffolded resources to support teachers to run independent reflection activities, as this strategy was generally considered to be effective but was not widely used. Including more reflection activities could also help to build confidence by encouraging learners to take stock of their progress.

Skills Builder Partnership should also consider opportunities to provide CPD to support its network of teachers develop key attitudes and behaviours.

Wider recommendations

A key finding of this report is the lack of consistent language around positive attitudes and behaviours. The lack of such a language can create confusion, which hinders attempts to develop these attributes. In order to create more consistency in this space, it would be useful to develop a widely-used framework which identifies and defines key attitudes and behaviours. This framework could provide a progression to assess and monitor the development of attitudes and behaviours, although more research would be required to establish the feasibility of this approach.

Another important finding in this report is around teachers' perceptions of being enterprising and the drive to make money. Whilst teachers recognised the importance of being enterprising, the drive to make money proved to be more controversial. Organisations looking to build an entrepreneurial mindset should therefore be wary of an over-emphasis on making money, as this could affect teacher buy-in. Instead, interventions and teacher resources should focus on building initiative, resourcefulness and spotting opportunities.

Finally, the results of the survey suggest that 88% teachers would like more support when it comes to monitoring and assessing attitudes and behaviours. However, the literature review did not provide many concrete answers to the question of assessment. It would be useful to conduct further research into the best way of assessing attitudes and behaviours.

Bibliography

- 16 Personalities, (2024). *Personality Types.* Available at: https://www.16personalities.com/personality-types (Accessed 08 August 2024).

- American Psychological Association (2024) *APA Dictionary of Psychology.* Available at: https://dictionary.apa.org/attitude (Accessed: 08 July 2024).

- Berkowitz, M. W., and Bier, M. C. (2007). 'What Works in Character Education'. *Journal of Research in Character Education,* 5, pp. 29-48.

- Berkowitz, M. W., Bier, M. C. and McCauley, B. (2017) 'Towards a Science of Character Education: Frameworks for Identifying and Implementing Effective Practices', *Journal of Character Education, 13, pp.33-51.*

- CBI (2012) *First steps: A new approach for schools.* London: CBI.

- CBI (2022) *Skills: Creating the conditions for investment.* London: CBI.

- Commercial Education Trust (2024) *Workplace Attitudes and Behaviours.* Available at: https://thecet.org/commercial-ability/attitudes-and-behaviours (Accessed: 07 August 2024).

- Department for Education (2019) *Character Education Framework Guidance.* London: Department for Education.

- Duckworth, A., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., Kelly, D. R. (2007) 'Grit: perseverance and passion for long-term goals', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 92 (6), pp. 1087-1101.

- Dweck, C. S. (2006) *Mindset: The new psychology of success.* New York: Random House.

- Dweck, C. S. (2015) *Carol Dweck Revisits the 'Growth Mindset'.* Available at: https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-carol-dweck-revisits-the-growth-mindset/2015/09?cmp=cpc-goog-ew-growth%20mindset&ccid=growth%20mindset&ccag=growth%20mindset&cckw=%2Bgrowth%20%2Bmindset&cccv=content%20ad&gclid=Cj0KEQiAnvfDBRCXrabLl6-6t-0BEiQAW4SRUM7nekFnoTxc675qBMSJycFgwERohguZWVmNDcSUg5gaAk3I8P8HAQ (Accessed: 07 August 2024)

- Ecclestone, K. and Lewis, L. (2014) 'Interventions for resilience in educational settings: challenging policy discourses of risk and vulnerability'. Journal of Education Policy 29(2): 195–216

- Gutman and Schoon (2013) *The impact of non-cognitive skills on outcomes for young people.* London: Education Endowment Foundation.

- Heckman, J, & Kautz, T (2013). *Fostering and Measuring Skills: Interventions that improve character and cognition - NBER Working Paper No. 19656.* National Bureau of Economic Research.

- Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2022) *The Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education in Schools: Third Edition.* Birmingham: University of Birmingham, Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues.

- Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2023) *The Jubilee Centre Framework for Virtue-Based Professional Ethics.* Birmingham: University of Birmingham, Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues.

- Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (2024) *Secondary Programmes of Studies.* Available at: https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/?character-education-=secondary-programme-of-study (Accessed 07 August 2024)

- Lickona, T. (1992) E*ducating for Character: How Our School can Teach Respect and Responsibility*. New York: Bantam Books.

- Lickona, T. (1996) 'Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education', *Journal of Moral Education, 25(1), pp. 93–100.*

- Lickona, T. (2004) *Character Matters: How to help our children develop good judgement, integrity and other essential virtues.* New York: Touchstone.

- Lucas, B and Hanson, J (2016) *Learning to be employable: Some lessons for young people from character education.* London: City & Guilds

- Masten, A. S., Cutuli, J. J., Herbers, J. E., & Reed, M. J. (2009) 'Resilience in development', *Oxford handbook of positive psychology,* pp. 117–131. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Nagaoka, J. and Farrington, C. (2015) *Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework.* Chicago: CCSR.

- Ofsted (2024) *School Inspection Handbook*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook-for-september-2023 (Accessed 07 August 2024)

- Oxford Professional Consulting (2024) *Dis Psychometric Profiling.* Available at: https://www.opcoxford.com/profiling/disc/ (Accessed 08 August 2024)

- Paterson C, Tyler C, Lexmond J (2014) *Character and Resilience Manifesto. The All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility with CentreForum and Character Counts.* Available at:

40

http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2014-appg-social-mobility.pdf (accessed 07 August 2024).

- Pye Tait (2021) *Research into the feasibility of improving commercial awareness and education in the UK through the creation and implementation of a suitable competency framework.* London: Pye Tait Consulting.

- Ravenscroft, T. (2022) *Skills Builder: Handbook for Educators.* London: Skills Builder Partnership.

- Ravenscroft, T. and Baker, S. (2019) *Towards a Universal Framework for Essential Skills: A Review of the Skills Builder Framework.* London: Essential Skills Taskforce.

- Ravenscroft and Baker (2019) *Towards a Universal Framework for Essential Skills: A Review of the Skills Builder Framework.* London: Essential Skills Taskforce.

- Roccas, S., Sagiv, L., Schwartz, S. H., Knafo, A. (2002). 'The Big Five Personality Factors and Personal Values.' *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin.* 28 (6): 789–801.

- Skills Builder Hub (2024). *Browse Resources.* Available at: https://hub.skillsbuilder.org/resources/ (Accessed 08 August 2024)

- Skills Builder Partnership (2022) *Essential Skills Tracker.* London: Skills Builder Partnership.

- Skills Builder Partnership (2023) *Essential Skills Tracker.* London: Skills Builder Partnership.

- Skills Builder Partnership (2024) *Essential Skills Tracker.* London: Skills Builder Partnership.

- Skills Builder Partnership (2024a) *Six principles for building essential skills effectively.* Available at: https://www.skillsbuilder.org/principles#:~:text=We%20build%20essential%20skills%20with,experiences%20and%20aspirations%20to%20succeed (Accessed: 07 August 2024).

- Skills Builder Partnership (2024b) *The Universal Framework.* Available at: https://www.skillsbuilder.org/universal-framework (Accessed: 07 August 2024).

- SRI International (2018) *Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance: Critical Factors for Success in the 21st Century.* Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

- Wijsen LD, Borsboom D, Alexandrova A. *(2022)* 'Values in Psychometrics', *Perspectives on Psychological Science.* 17(3), pp. 788-804.

- Young, D. (2014) *Enterprise for all: the relevance of enterprise in education.* London: Department for Business Innovation and Skills.

- Young Enterprise (2023) *Company Programme Impact Report 2022-23.* London: Young Enterprise.

- Young Enterprise (2024a) *Our Mission & Vision*. Available at: https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/what-we-do/our-mission-vision/ (Accessed: 07 August 2024).

- Young Enterprise (2024b) *Enterprise Education.* Available at: https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/teachers-hub/enterprise-education/ (Accessed: 07 August 2024)