APPROACHES TO LEARNING

"A 2007 survey of 400 hiring executives of major US corporations identified their top four requirements of new recruits as being oral and written communication skills, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, professionalism and work ethic, and teamwork and collaboration skills"
(Trilling and Fadel 2009).

The DP ATL Initiative - The DP ATL Initiative aims to develop and introduce a new dimension of the DP to improve the quality of learning and to support key values and principles of IB Education

The development of skills such as thinking skills and communication skills is frequently identified as a crucial element in preparing students effectively for life beyond school. Similar skills lists have been developed by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and are also the subject of numerous books such as *The Global Achievement Gap* (Wagner 2010). Yet many students struggle with some of the basic skills of effective learning. For example, good note making has been positively correlated with academic achievement, yet research suggests that many university students have difficulty even with the fundamental skill of making notes from lectures or texts (Kiewra 1985, O'Donnell and Dansereau 1993).

Developing students' ATL skills is about more than simply developing their cognitive skills. It is also about developing affective and metacognitive skills, and about encouraging students to view learning as something that they "do for themselves in a proactive way, rather than as a covert event that happens to them in reaction to teaching" (Zimmerman 2000: 65). By developing ATL skills and the attributes of the learner profile, DP students can become "self-regulated learners" (Kaplan 1998). Self-regulated learners have learned how to set learning goals, ask good questions, self-interrogate as they learn, generate motivation and perseverance, try out different learning processes, self-monitor the effectiveness of their learning, reflect on achievement, and make changes to their learning processes where necessary (Zimmerman and Schunk 1989, de Bruin et al. 2011, Wolters 2011).

The term "skill" is therefore used in a broad sense in the DP to encompass cognitive, metacognitive and affective skills. Cognitive skills include all the information-processing and thinking skills, often called "study skills" in a school environment. Affective skills are the skills of behaviour and emotional management underpinning attitudinal factors such as resilience, perseverance and self-motivation, which often have a large role to play in educational achievement. Metacognitive skills are the skills that students can use to monitor the effectiveness of their learning skills and processes, to better understand and evaluate their learning. Although these skills may be in use when manifesting a certain natural ability or talent, they are different to both of these because proficiency in any skill can be increased through the deliberate use of techniques and strategies, feedback and challenge. Skills are therefore highly teachable.