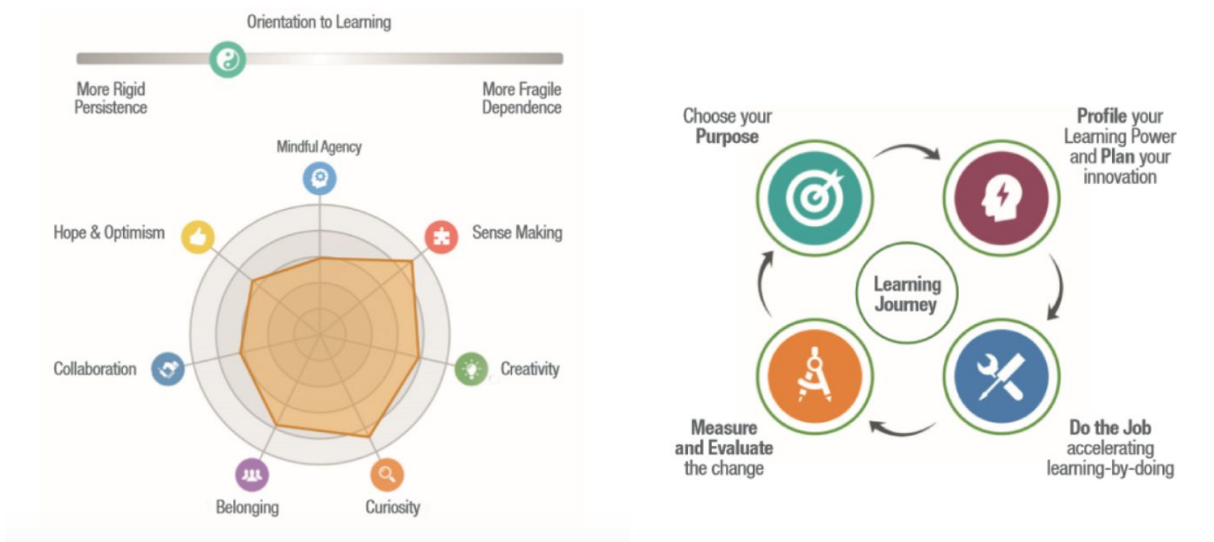# EVALUATION OF CLARA

By Melanie Laurie

One of the big ideas in BC's Career Education curriculum (2018) is that lifelong

learning supports self and career exploration. Because of this focus, I was drawn to CLARA

because the developers describe it as a tool that can help students build resilience and

self-reflection. I wanted to know how CLARA accomplishes this, and if it could be a tool that

our school could employ.

Although I did not have direct access to CLARA, the user guide (Learning

Emergence, 2018) and evaluation report (Crick, n.d.) were descriptively thorough. CLARA

is a self-reporting survey tool to create a personalized learning profile of a student's

learning skills and capacity. From student responses, CLARA creates a spider diagram to

show where a student is at for each learning dimension, of which there are eight: mindful

agency, sense making, hope and optimism, creativity, curiosity, collaboration, belonging,

and open to learning (Crick, n.d.).

I used the first outline of Scheffel's (2014) EFLA's framework because it provided

more factors to consider:

Dimension	Quality Indicator	Evaluation of CLARA
Objectives	● Awareness ● Reflection ● Motivation ● Behavioural Change	The spider diagram allows students to see where they are at with each learning dimension, and helps them identify areas of strength and areas that need growth. The purpose of CLARA is to increase student self-awareness and reflection of their approach to learning, ultimately encouraging them to become more resilient and agents of their learning process. The developers behind CLARA believe that with this knowledge, students will be more willing to make changes to their learning behavior (Deakin Crick et al., 2015).
Learning	● Perceived	CLARA is both exploratory and diagnostic in that

Support	Usefulness ● Recommendation ● Activity Classification ● Detection of Students at Risk	students can explore the different aspects that make up a learning disposition and they can receive actionable insights to further develop a growth mindset. Though CLARA is used in the context of education, the developers consider its use more holistically and see note that this tool can help students develop skills that are transferable to other learning or life contexts (Crick, n.d.). The analytics can be supported by a meeting with a trained mentor/coach, who provides the student with more insight and clarification into the analysis (Crick, n.d.). There is also a 'buddy' bot that can offer individualized help within the tool. The Learning Journey Platform that CLARA is embedded in prompts students to create targets for growth and a growth plan in the aspects that are identified as weaker. It also prompts students to retake the survey at a later date and reflect on the process to identify if or where growth has occurred (Learning Emergence, 2018). CLARA is able to identify possible 'at-risk' students by drawing on an "underachieving adolescent" profile created by previous research (Crick, n.d.).
Learning Measures and Output	● Comparability ● Effectiveness ● Efficiency ● Helpfulness	One of the strengths of CLARA is that it provides students and educators with a common language and structure to understand the complexities of the learning process and how one can develop their learning skills (Deakin Crick & Goldspink, 2014). What makes this an effective tool is that students can access it at any time, either to review their profile or plan, to understand each dimension more, or to complete the survey again. The spider diagram can be overlayed with student goals and retests to show their progress over time (Crick, n.d.).
Data Aspects	● Transparency ● Data Standards	Without direct access to CLARA, it seems that students only see the spider diagram (without

	● Data Ownership ● Privacy	numerical values) and use the supports in the learning platform. Educators and leadership have access to both individual and group results. The privacy policy for CLARA is not public, so much of this information is unknown. An educated guess would be that their data policies fall under the university policies where the research was done.
Organizational Aspects	● Availability ● Implementation ● Training of Educational Stakeholders ● Organizational Change	The student learning profile is also available to the teachers and leadership so that they can see where the strengths and weaknesses are of their students both individually and as a group. In addition, CLARA is able to show comparisons of group spider diagrams of students in different areas of study (Crick, n.d.). This information can be helpful for leadership to better understand their student body makeup and what learning dimensions different departments might be focusing on. CLARA seems robust enough to be implemented at small and large scale institutions. Researchers note that the success of CLARA does partly depend on how it is integrated into students' coursework and how much training staff and mentors received (Crick, n.d.).

The developers and researchers behind CLARA have published their research on how they established the eight dimensions of learning and structural equation modelling that make up CLARA (Deakin Crick et al., 2015). They thoroughly ground their work in supporting literature and educational theory to show how learning analytics can be applied to the area of learning dispositions. They have also presented their work on the validity and reliability of CLARA (Buckingham Shum & Deakin Crick, 2012). Evidence of CLARA's positive impact on learning or performance is illustrated in these bodies of work, but not

quite as a stand alone tool. Deakin Crick et al. (2015) and Deakin Crick & Goldspink (2014) note that CLARA was combined with teacher/mentor facilitation of the reflective process that produced positive results in students. Thus, the success of CLARA seems dependent on the program that is developed around its use and the student's self-reflection in context.

Although Deakin Crick et al. have been working for over two decades on understanding and affecting learner dispositions, one critique of CLARA is that the data is reliant on self-reporting measures, in which accuracy is a concern. This is partly due to the nature of learning dispositions; they are internal factors and not easily observable or measurable (Buckingham Shum & Deakin Crick, 2012). The researchers attempt to address this with using large sample sizes. However, it would have been helpful if researchers could have collected students grades pre and post CLARA program to see if there was any significant quantitative change. One could assume that consciously improving one's learning disposition should result in more success in learning and thus higher marks.

After my exploration into CLARA, I would like to share my findings with my administrators and actually test the tool out myself. Having a framework and tool that allows students to better understand how they learn and to tangibly track their growth is really beneficial to my Career Education program. Even to receive training on how to coach students with a better understanding of how the eight learning dimensions can impact student agency would be a great help to my teaching as I strive to equip my students with the knowledge and skills they need for their future careers.

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