The Relationship between Competencies and Behaviours

Competencies and behaviors are two concepts that directly influence each other. Behavior is the naturally instinctive predisposition of how an individual approaches tasks, communicates and interacts. Competence, on the other hand, is the ability to do something well. Competencies can be obtained through education and training.

Simple neuroscience reveals each student's unique behavior preferences which are not influenced by circumstance, background, or academic performance. These preferences are the bridge to natural competencies that every student possesses.

Through low self-awareness, students overlook and undervalue these capabilities, hidden in plain sight. Bringing into awareness instinctive traits empowers students to connect with their innate abilities and realize their potential in several ways:

Ease of application: innate competencies feel natural because they require less conscious effort or learning. This occurs because the individual's behavior preferences already support the kind of actions or thinking a competency requires.

Greater Potential for Growth: while individuals can develop competencies outside their natural behavior preferences, those that align tend to have a greater potential for growth. This is because natural behavior supports continuous improvement in areas where students feel intrinsically motivated.

Sustained Performance: when behaviors and their competencies align with the needs of a job, individuals are more likely to perform consistently at a high level. The person is less prone to burnout or dissatisfaction because they are working within their natural inclinations. Or, to put it another way, they are applying themselves the way their brain likes to work

Support career decisions: competencies are often contained in job descriptions and job adverts. This provides students with more evidence and scope to match themselves with a job, and increased confidence in the hiring process, by clearly articulating their unique strengths. A student who understands and can explain their natural competencies is more competitive in the jobs market.
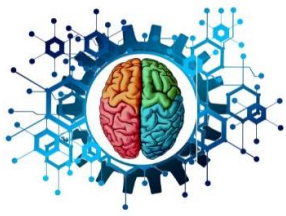
Bringing Competencies into the Classroom

The concrete nature of revealing a student's natural competencies enables conscious application in the education journey and becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: the more a student consciously applies a competency, the stronger it becomes.

Innate competencies differ by student based on their set of natural behavior preferences. This results in diversity and scope to utilize students working together, bringing their competencies to a project, learning competencies from one another.

Imagine a team of students working together on a project. Competencies like collaboration, empathy, critical thinking and learner mindset are applied, students experience how a project progresses by utilizing one another's competencies. By doing so, students experience those competencies that are less natural to them, which in turn develop.
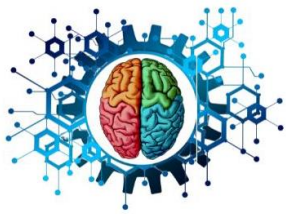
Consistent with neuroscience logic, innate competencies are quantifiable. Quantifying these traits helps educators integrate them into the learning journey, strengthening engagement, enhancing outcomes, and preparing students for success in future careers.
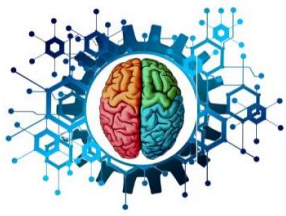
North Caroline Portrait of a Graduate

PRISM, the simple neuroscience-based survey, analyzes eight-behavior dimensions. Seven of these behaviors align with the seven Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

The following pages match the two together.

Every student will have a match for more than one competency. Why? We have the capacity for all these behaviors, what makes us uniquely different is the subtle combination from natural to very high preferences, moderate preferences and low preferences. It is a student's natural to very high preferences where the competency development journey starts.

Competency	Description	PRISM Behavior Preference
ADAPTABILITY	▪ Demonstrate agility in thought processes and problem-solving. ▪ Accept feedback, praise, setbacks, and criticism. ▪ Balance diverse viewpoints and beliefs to reach workable solutions. ▪ Demonstrate flexibility when navigating challenging situations. ▪ Easily adjust to changing circumstances	**INNOVATING** Has a highly original and creative approach to problems. Challenges the traditional way of doing things, initiates change, experiments and innovates. Thinks intensively and originally.
COMMUNICATION	▪ Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written, and nonverbal skills. ▪ Listen to decipher meaning, values, attitudes, and intentions. ▪ Ask questions and synthesize messages to seek understanding. ▪ Engage in productive discourse to resolve disagreements. ▪ Craft communication for a range of purposes and audiences.	**FINISHING** Good at communicating complex data, pays high attention to message accuracy and effectiveness, asks probing questions to clarify and understand, listens intently. Intentional use of the right communication format.
CRITICAL THINKING	▪ Analyze, assess, and reconstruct personal thought processes. ▪ Apply thinking that is clear, rational, and evidence based. ▪ Evaluate and prioritize solutions to difficult or complex problems. ▪ Employ creative improvements to systems, processes, and organizations. ▪ Remain open minded and inquisitive	**EVALUATING** Rational and analytical, good at analyzing and evaluating lots of complex details, does not take things at face value. Makes sound judgements unaffected by emotional prejudice. Very effective at improving on existing ways of doing things.
COLLABORATING	▪ Contribute and respond to diverse perspectives to achieve a common goal. ▪ Leverage strengths to resolve conflict and foster teamwork. ▪ Interact respectfully with others in digital and in-person interactions. ▪ Embrace a variety of roles in a group as a participant and a leader. ▪ Remain open to others' ideas and opinions.	**COORDINATING** Values diversity and make good use of other people skills by encouraging individuals to work together to achieve shared objectives. Open minded. Ensures that all points of view are considered. Cultivates teamwork. Highly consultative.

Competency	Description	PRISM Behavior Preference
EMPATHY	- Demonstrate understanding, sensitivity, concern, and respect. - Share in others' feelings, opinions, and experiences. - Value and embrace diverse cultures and unique perspectives. - Foster belonging and trust through mutual respect and dialogue.	**SUPPORTING** Quickly offer support and encouragement to others. Is a good listener, empathetic and sensitive to individual needs. Highly perceptive and promotes unity by being patient, accommodating and sensitive.
LEARNERS MINDSET	- Possess an ongoing desire to learn, unlearn, and relearn. - Embrace curiosity to experience new ideas and demonstrate growth, - Translate knowledge to provide different contexts to drive change and creativity. - Develop positive attitudes and beliefs about learning. - Has the capacity to use change and challenges as opportunities for growth.	**INITIATING** Curious, spontaneous, enthusiastic. Enjoys searching for new opportunities and challenges. Open to experimentation. Is highly effective when it comes to picking up ideas and moving them forward.
PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY	- Earn trust and respect through honest, principled behaviors. - Honor commitments. - Recognize how personal decisions and actions have impacts beyond self. - Take ownership of decisions and persevere through challenges. - Demonstrate self-control and composure.	**DELIVERING** Independent with a strong need to achieve good results. Very effective at meeting tight deadlines by being self-sufficient, purposeful and very hard-working. Can work with a minimum of supervision, works well under pressure, comfortable to make decisions, and take ownership.