

THE JAMIE DRAKE EQUATION

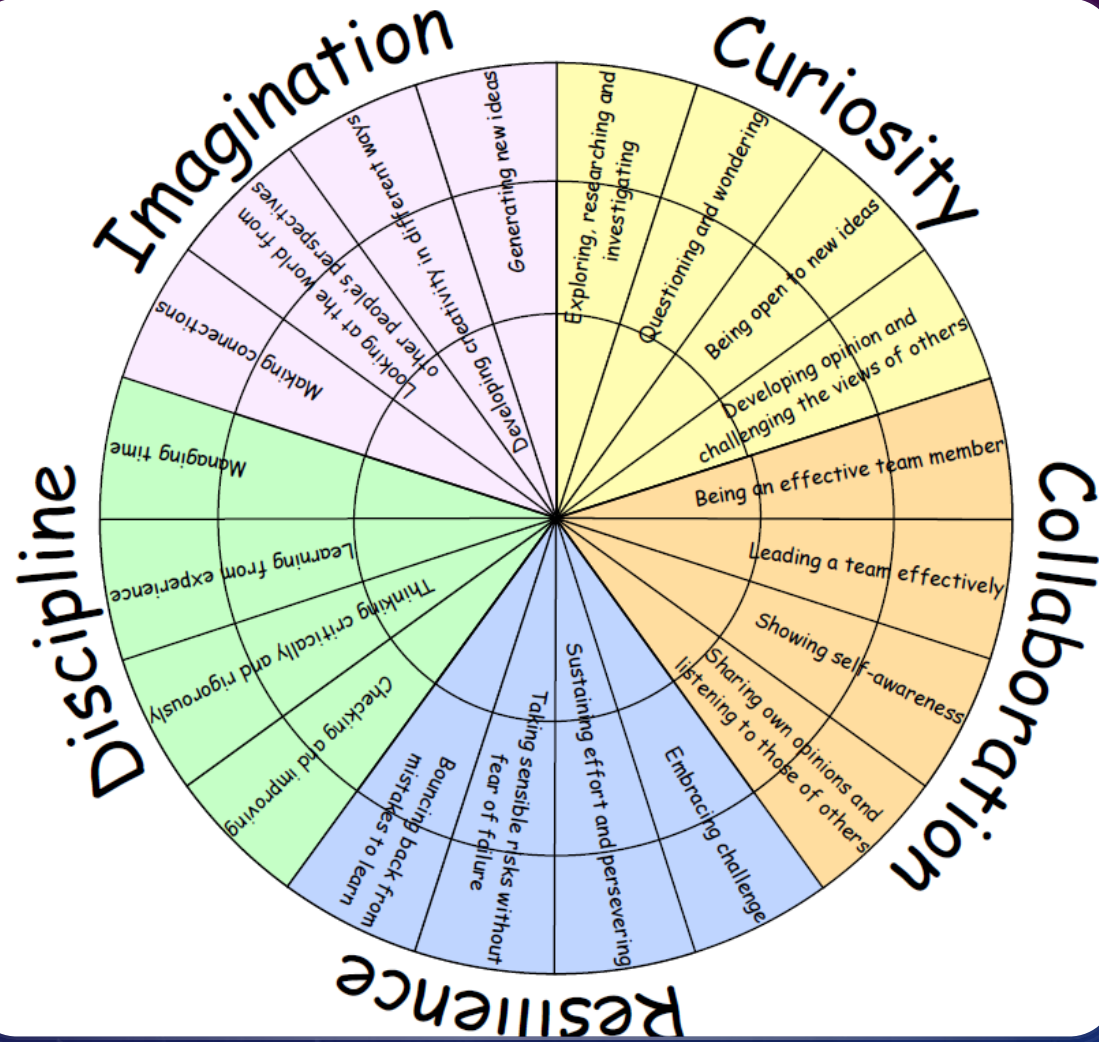
BY CHRISTOPHER EDGE



RESPONDER (15II)

- I can articulate personal responses to literature, identifying how and why a text affects the reader due to authorial intent





LEARNING HABITS

- What do you think is the most important Learning Habit?
- Is it one of your strengths or is it something you need to develop?
- How will you know that you have practised that Habit during the lesson?





“CAN YOU IMAGINE AN ALIEN WORLD?”

Mrs Solomon gestures towards the posters that she’s stuck up around the walls of our classroom. These show scenes from some of my favourite science-fiction films. There’s Luke Skywalker riding a Tauntaun across the icy wastes of Hoth, its grey-white fur almost lost in the snowy landscape. I can see the lush jungle moon of Pandora with its floating mountains and forests teeming with alien life. There’s Superman’s dad standing alone as Krypton burns. It’s like Class Six is the sun at the centre of a science-fiction solar system.

“All these alien worlds have been imagined by artists and directors,” our teacher says, pointing to each picture in turn. “Cloud cities and mechanical planets, crystal mountains and desert moons. Now I want you to use your artistic skills to create your own alien worlds.”

On the desk in front of me is a large sheet of poster paper. Pots of coloured pencils, pastels, wax crayons and charcoal mark the border with Minty’s half of the desk. She’s got first dibs on all the best felt tips and is already

starting to draw the outline of some crazy alien scene.

Minty’s the best artist in our class. In fact, she’s probably the best artist in the whole school. She does these brilliant cartoons in the school newspaper and when Mrs Solomon wanted some scenery for our class musical of *Macbeth*, Minty helped paint this really spooky castle with headless ghosts and skeletons everywhere. When we did the play, our headteacher Mr Hayes even had to cover up some bits of scenery because the Year One kids found them too scary. I bet the alien world she creates is going to look amazing.

Mrs Solomon floats around the class in her flowery dress, throwing out her usual words of encouragement.

“Beautiful yellows and greens, Jasmine.”

“Amazing patterns, Lila.”

“Lovely bold lines, Aaron. Are those tentacles?”

I look back down at my blank sheet of paper. I don’t have a clue what to draw.

“Are you stuck?” Minty asks, chewing on her pen lid as she looks up from her cartoon of an intergalactic scrap yard. In this, a huge metal dinosaur is munching on a pile of rusting robots, the jet-black sky filled with a Death Star moon. “If you can’t think of anything, then just draw an ice world. They’re simple – the only colour you need is white.”

I shake my head, my mind as blank as my piece of paper. I don’t think Mrs Solomon would be very impressed with an invisible planet. But before Minty can offer another suggestion, an insistent buzz sounds out from my trouser pocket.

“Is that somebody’s mobile phone?” Mrs Solomon enquires, a look of irritation flashing across her features. “Remember the school rules, please. If you don’t turn it off right away, it’s getting confiscated.”

She glances round to look for the culprit. Digging deep in my pocket, I clamp my hand around the phone to mute the buzzing sound. As my fingers close around its metal case, I feel a strange vibration, right behind my eyes. I blink – the buzzing of my phone instantly replaced by a silence that seems to make time stand still.

“Have you finished, Jamie?”

I open my eyes to see Mrs Solomon now standing over my desk, her face creased in admiration. For a second, I feel totally confused. How did she get from there to here so quickly? Then I look down at my desk, my blank sheet of paper now filled with the most incredible picture.

Twin suns shine in a bright purple sky above a vast forest filled with giant plants and ferns. Black flowers bloom in every direction and rising above these I can see huge golden spirals, shimmering like trapped sunlight. The shape of these unearthly skyscrapers is the same as the spiral icon on my phone, but as I stare in wonder at this impossible picture, I see that each golden spiral is actually a vast alien city winding into the sky.

“This is amazing,” Mrs Solomon says, peering intently at the poster that covers my desk. “How did you capture such incredible detail with oil pastels?”

I look down at my hands. My fingers are smeared with purple, green and gold, a rainbow of pastels scattered across my desk. In the picture, the colours almost seem to be alive – like this alien landscape is just frozen in time.

Did I really draw this?

When I closed my eyes, this page was blank and then, when I opened them a split second later, this amazing world was here. I must be going mad.

“What an imagination,” my teacher murmurs as Minty stares at my picture open-mouthed.

But as I rack my brain trying to work out what’s happening to me, the only thing I know for sure is that the mind that imagined this picture isn’t mine. So whose imagination is it?



DEDUCTION

1. At the start of the story, it seemed like Jamie didn't like Minty. Can you find any evidence in this chapter to show that he does actually respect her?
2. What can you tell me about Mrs Solomon from this chapter? What type of teacher is she?
3. What do you think is happening to Jamie when he grabs his mobile phone in his pocket?
4. What is Jamie's drawing of?
5. How does the author show Jamie's surprise at the picture in front of him?
6. Whose imagination do you think created this picture?

PREDICTION

7. What do you think has happened to Jamie's mobile phone? Why is this key to the story?



DEDUCTION

1. He says that she is the best artist in the class.
2. She seems pretty relaxed as she 'floats around the classroom'. She is also very positive because she encourages the children and praises them.
3. That an alien is somehow connecting with his mind, taking over his body and brain.
4. I think that it is the alien's home-world.
5. Jamie says 'Did I really draw this?' He also says that the page was blank one second then when he looked again, it was covered with an amazing drawing.
6. The imagination is probably the alien that appears to be living in Jamie's mobile phone.

PREDICTION

7. I think that the alien is contacting Jamie through the phone. This means that he alone is exposed to them. Ironically, his dad is trying to find aliens in space.



HOMework

LISTEN TO CHAPTERS 11,
12, 13 AND 14 ON THE
PODCAST CHANNEL.

