Practical Implications of Challenge

1. Start each day with 10-15 minutes of challenge based ‘warm-up’ activities e.g. anagrams, cryptic clues, memory tests, logic puzzles, Sudoku, concentration exercises, speed quizzes – individual and shared, personal and competitive.

2. Build on learners’ prior knowledge by getting them to identify issues and challenges i.e. problematise the topic. Introduce topics in terms of challenges, questions and problems rather than content.

3. ‘The children now learn by enquiring, investigating and collaborating together, as well as through creative approaches to learning such as painting, dancing, music, model-making and role-play; all hands-on, shared, problem-solving experiences that encourage them to lead their own learning and to think for themselves.’ (From the International Primary Curriculum)

4. All students engage in sustained research projects (that may form the basis of homework) over a period of time. See the International Baccalaureate for examples of research based learning at primary, middle and diploma level.

5. Strategies and skills to support responding to learning challenges are used consistently across the school and all members of the school community are given regular support to embed skills into consistent practice:
   - Learning aptitudes and dispositions – effective learners understand and are able to deploy different ways of learning and how to develop and assess their effectiveness as learners i.e. they develop metacognitive strategies. They are aware of, and confident in, accessing, different types of support for learning.
   - Reasoning – students learn to think analytically and systematically and how to apply these strategies to real-life situations. They are able to construct an argument and critique other people’s arguments.
   - Creativity – students are supported in developing innovative approaches and experimentation. Rich opportunities are provided across the curriculum to experience the possibilities of creativity.
   - Engagement and intrinsic motivation – students learn to enjoy and love learning for its own sake and as part of understanding their personal growth.
• and development. They have positive self-regard and high personal aspirations. They are confident when challenged by the expectations of others.
• Core skills – students achieve high confidence and mastery in literacy, numeracy, and spatial understanding and high standards of competence in handling information and communications technology.
• Research – students develop a range of techniques for accessing, evaluating and differentiating information and have learned how to analyse, synthesise and apply it.
• Reflection – students understand the importance of review and reflection and applying critical judgement and learn how to do so for themselves and in collaboration with others.
• Self-management – effective learners are confident in scheduling their use of time, planning projects and workload and accepting responsibility for their personal well-being

6. Once a year the entire school is involved in ‘Challenge Week’. This could involve all students and adults being involved in activities outside the standard curriculum that involves a range of personal challenges and opportunities for new experiences and learning. In addition to sports day and house sports competitions organise ‘Thinking Olympics’.

7. Setting up a ‘Challenge committee’ responsible for developing challenges across the school and curriculum. Instituting the ‘Challenge of the Day’ designed to get the entire community focused on an issue or problem.

8. Set up a chess club and other clubs to play games based on strategy and problem solving. Introduce debating. See the English Speaking Union Schools mace competition and the Institute of Ideas debating matters competition. Set up reading circles to focus on key ideas and texts.