As the work of Carol Dweck has proved, no matter how able, a child’s perception of themselves as learners will determine their academic careers. If it is poor it will:

- Undermine their resilience, so that they give up at the slightest obstacle
- Make them defensive learners, unwilling to challenge themselves
- Make them over-reliant on teachers and on received opinion
- Write-off successes as ‘flukes’
- Under-perform in exams and tests
- Have low aspirations and under-achieve in life

Whilst there are other self-esteem tests, no other test measures a child’s perception of themselves, specifically as learners, so well. This is why MALS has gone around the world as the key test to use to measure a child’s image of themselves as learners and thinkers. Using it will enable you to:

- Uncover, beneath external shows of confidence, which children have poor views of themselves as learners and therefore will be liable to under-perform
- Pinpoint exactly where their problems are
- Measure progress in developing ‘open-mindsets’ in children

Teacher Skills

The MALS is also a very subtle test of teacher performance – those teachers who succeed in lifting a child’s MALS score have the ability to motivate and teach the skills of independent learning... and vice versa! This too is often far from being easily visible.

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**The Author**

Robert Burden is Emeritus Professor of Applied Educational Psychology and a former Head of the School of Education at the University of Exeter. He has previously taught children with learning difficulties and has worked as an LEA educational psychologist. He established the Master’s degree professional training course in Educational Psychology at Exeter in 1971 and has held leadership positions in both the British Psychological Society and the International School Psychology Association.