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# Laura Mitchelson

## PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY

### I'm Laura.

I work freelance helping schools with strategic HR, which has the power to transform the performance, reputation, and success of a school.

My projects generally make use of a mix of tailored strategies that might include research, leadership dialogue, planning - both strategic and tactical - coaching, expert and peer mentoring, situational leadership training, workshop facilitation, competency framework and behaviour matrix design, middle management skills training, career road-mapping, in-house HR advisory, horizon scanning, employer value proposition crafting, personality/working style profiling, 360 feedback planning, and survey design.

In many respects, I operate like a chef, blending "ingredients" and methodologies to create recipes that cater precisely to the individual/team/school needs and budgets.

My approach is humble, open, pragmatic, and under the radar. I'm unmoved by fame and notoriety of even the most minor kind, and would always rather the spotlight be directed elsewhere. I believe people realize this about me early on, which helps in building rapport. I appreciate and honour the often complex organizational dynamics of schools, and therefore work with diplomacy and tact, driving consensus and alignment, even when it seems unlikely.

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A fascination, and experience with facilitating hundreds of intercultural management programs for businesses, infuses my work with a strong focus on bringing all voices to the table.

I believe confidence and competence building at an individual and team level can be an unparalleled catalyst for positive organisational change on a large scale.

I believe that the sometimes unglamorous areas of talent planning and performance management offer huge potential for schools hungry to grow in the coming decade.

I don't believe that coaching should be the reserve of the few at the leadership level. It is simply too powerful a tool, and that's why I coach as much as I can, even if only in short bursts.

My core skills include strategic thinking, commercial judgment, the ability to sit comfortably with paradox, ambition on the part of others, and determination. The results for the schools I work with are usually fewer HR challenges in the short term, cost savings in the medium term, and a more resilient and agile staff in the long term.

Previous roles include Director of Enrollment and Communications at Dwight School Hanoi, Impact and Innovation Unit Advisor at Qibao Dwight High School, North Asia Managing Director for ICUnet, Leadership Consultant specialising in middle leadership programs, Secondary Language Teacher at Millfield School, Founder at Amber Industry Insights, Deputy Director of the China-Britain Business Council, and Commercial Officer at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

I have a BA in Political Studies from Leeds University, a Chinese (Mandarin) diploma from Zhejiang University, a PGCE from Bath Spa University, and an Executive Coaching Certificate from the British School of Coaching. I work in English, Chinese, or both.

One of my favourite quotes is, "If you don't like where you are, move. You are not a tree." Improving retention and engagement is often about helping people, teams or the whole school make a mental move, learning to work differently, and better.

Finally, I hail from Bristol in England and I'm based in Bath, where I read voraciously on the topics of organizational growth, the strategy and processes of successful global organizations, social psychology, and career coaching, while trying to persuade my family to get out into nature.