



THE PYP INCLUSIVE

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Editor
Kathy Saville
Deputy Director of Curriculum
Wesley College Melbourne

Travelling the PYP Journey

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|----|
| Mornington Primary School—our first exhibition | 2 |
| Who we are—Kingsville Primary School—Year 6 exhibition | 4 |
| We've cancelled the flight! | 7 |
| Year 6 exhibition at Wesley College Glen Waverley Campus | 10 |
| PD opportunities | 11 |
| PYP network contacts | 11 |

Where, oh, where has the year gone? If anyone has an answer, do please let me know!

We only have a few articles for this issue of *The PYP Inclusive*, but what we do have is quality!

It is exhibition season in Australia, as the articles that follow show. It is always interesting to read how other schools interpret the exhibition document and create amazing demonstrations of students' passions and knowledge for particular areas.

Mornington Primary School chose the *How we express ourselves* theme as their focus and the lessons learnt that they share from their first experience undertaking an exhibition are good advice for any school planning one.

Who we are was the focus for Kingsville Primary School's exhibition and I really do suggest you read the actions that resulted from this inquiry—they are significant, and even more so when you consider that these students are only 11 and 12 years old!

An article by a student from Wesley College, where the focus was again under the *How we express ourselves* theme, concludes by offering advice to Year 5 students who will experience the exhibition next year. Sage advice, indeed, from one so young!

Leah Opie, a Year 1 teacher from Mentone Girls' Grammar School, shows the magic that can happen when you challenge yourself to find a better way forward for a unit that seems comfortable, but doesn't really hit the mark. Make sure you read it!

And, also, make sure, wherever you are in the world, that you take time to relax with family and friends in the upcoming breaks, be they long or short, in summer or winter!



To know that we know what we know and that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge.

~Confucius~

What's happening around the network

Mornington Primary School—Our First Exhibition

Failing to plan is planning to fail.

Alan Lakein

In many ways, this quote sums up the attitude that Mornington Primary School took into its very first PYP exhibition this year.

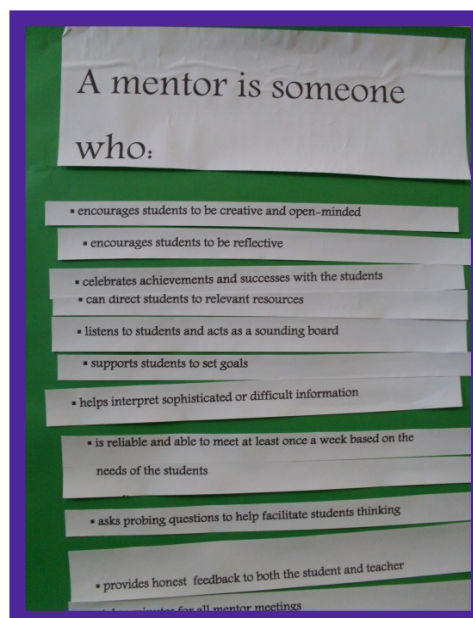
After becoming fully authorised in September 2012, our very first exhibition this year was approached with both excitement and apprehension:

- Would our students have developed the knowledge and skills required to plan and undertake their own unit of inquiry and reflect on their PYP journey?
- Would the students feel supported, yet free to be independent and follow their interests and passions?
- Would our staff feel confident in how to manage the process?
- Would our school community feel fully informed and involved?
- Could a central idea be developed that would allow students to engage in in-depth, collaborative inquiry that allowed them to consider multiple perspectives and maybe take action?
- Would our staff feel confident to become mentors?
- Had we planned well enough for the physical materials and equipment required by the students?
- How could we find out at the end what we did well and how we could improve in the future?

Early in our planning, we realised that one of the keys to success was going to be how engaged the students and parents were with the exhibition process. For our first exhibition we decided to suggest that all students work under the same central idea and develop their own lines of inquiry. Allowing plenty of time to give all stakeholders an opportunity to contribute their thoughts and suggestions to the central idea was a key strategy in ensuring everyone felt connected. Students, staff, school council members and parents all had opportunities to contribute ideas and suggestions. It was actually a thought provoking experience for many of our parents to grapple with how to think about a central idea, the characteristics it needed to have and how it needed to reflect the aspects

of our theme, *How we express ourselves*. With the students making the final decisions about our central idea, we arrived at **“The way we express ourselves can influence people to take action”**.

Staff at our school were involved in a wide variety of professional learning about the exhibition process. For several years we have been providing opportunities for staff to visit other exhibitions. This year one of our Professional Learning Teams, in conjunction with the PYP coordinator, spent time considering the further learning needs of our staff. Using the eight key concepts, staff were able to explore the many facets of the exhibition and how to be effective mentors. Even simple charts which were coconstructed with staff under the headings of “A mentor is...” and “A mentor is not...” proved very useful. This team also spent time early on in the year considering what success would look like, what sort of feedback the students and school would require after the exhibition and who would be best placed to provide this.



Throughout 2013, much time was spent planning and creating a student handbook which was designed with multiple purposes. As most of our staff had never been directly involved in a PYP exhibition, we tried to design the book to scaffold them through the early stages of the preparation required by the students.

What's happening around the network

Mornington Primary School—Our First Exhibition

The handbook was also designed to guide the students through the initial planning phases; much time and effort was spent trying to ensure that what was offered to students could adapt to their needs. The third purpose of the handbook was to assist our parents to fully understand the journey the students were on and to provide them with a regular avenue for feedback, questioning and reflection.

Even seemingly basic things took thought and planning; upgrading the wireless capacity in our hall, budgeting for and purchasing display equipment and materials, running information sessions, setting up protocols for regular mentor feedback and reflecting on the suitability of the various aspects of the student handbook and student progress.

When you have been planning something for a long time, it is extremely exciting and satisfying to see it all finally come together. This is the way many of our students and staff felt when finally the time came to stage the exhibition. The levels of nervousness, enthusiasm and anticipation summed up how everyone was feeling. When finally the exhibition came to a close, the smiles, elation and pride witnessed in our students, staff, parents and school community spoke volumes.

What did we learn?

- Never, ever underestimate the capacity and passion of your students to learn and take action
- Setting high expectations early, is a great way to begin the exhibition process
- Allowing students to set their success criteria is vital to ensuring ownership of the process
- Good planning is essential; however no matter how early you started planning, unforeseen challenges will still occur
- You will undoubtedly be amazed by the generosity and commitment of staff members, experts and mentors
- Remember to organise some sort of celebration for the students – they will deserve it!
- And finally, remember to pop a tissue into your pocket during your final exhibition session, just in case you shed a tiny tear of pride!!!



Susan Mattingley
PYP Coordinator
Mornington Primary
School
Victoria
Australia

What's happening around the network

Who we are - Kingsville Primary School—Year 6 Exhibition

The transdisciplinary theme of *Who we are* was the impetus for a number of the children to take significant action during and after their exhibition experience. As a result of the connection, provocation and tuning in sessions many forms of action were taken by the children and embraced the ideas of:

- **Direct** - Person-to-person service, eg tutoring or working with elderly
- **Indirect** - Projects that benefit a community, eg environmental awareness, construction, restoration, food drives
- **Advocacy** - Creating awareness about issues in the community, eg writing, speaking, lobbying
- **Research** - Finding, gathering and reporting information.

Some of the more notable examples are below.

Laughing group: This group's exploration into mental health made them aware of how endorphins impact on a person's wellbeing. They investigated a laughing club and planned a number of events in the school yard and in classrooms. The first event, before school began, attracted a range of children and curious parents. The group then used the opportunity to talk further to the group about mental health. <http://www.laughterclubsvic.org/>



Zip it: This group was exploring mental health issues and depression. The action undertaken by this group involved placing tape over their mouths to highlight the idea that many people who suffer from mental illnesses cannot speak for themselves. They empathised that when you want to speak up and share your pain, you cannot find a voice. <http://www.zipit.org.au/>

Smallpox. Eli was caught up in an inquiry into the section relating to the personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health of *Who we are*. He was inspired to investigate the impact of diseases on society and the drive by 'man' to find answers. Part of this inquiry motivated him to have his body painted with spots at the fete to represent someone with the smallpox disease. He reflected on the experience of spending the day with people avoiding him, staring in wonder and harassing him over his action. Apart from being able to share his knowledge, he got to appreciate the impact of being ostracised due to a physical appearance.



What's happening around the network

Who we are - Kingsville Primary School—Year 6 Exhibition

Street party: Sophia was investigating the concept of relationship and revised the tuning in experience presented by her teacher.

Neighbour Day was founded in Melbourne, Australia in March 2003 by Andrew Heslop after the remains of an elderly woman were found inside her suburban home.

Mrs Elsie Brown had been dead for two years – forgotten by her neighbours, her friends and her family.

It was not until a neighbour eventually realised she had not seen Mrs Brown for an extended period of time that Victoria Police were notified. Sadly when officers broke into her home they found Mrs Brown's skeletal remains still wrapped in a blanket on her sofa.

It is estimated Mrs Brown had died sometime in January 2001. Remarkably the gas, electricity, telephone and water all remained connected. <http://www.neighbourday.org/>

This experience moved Sophia to think about her neighbours and those that lived in her street. She was aware of a lack of connection that existed. Sophia worked on her parents to assist her in organising a street party. Unfortunately the council would not allow this so she persisted and held a BBQ in her front yard. A significant number of children and adults came and got to know each other. Her elderly neighbour from across the road could not attend as she was too frail, so Sophia visited her and made a strong connection. Her elderly neighbour was so impressed that she had her son trim the front bushes so she could see out onto the street.



What's happening around the network

Who we are - Kingsville Primary School—Year 6 Exhibition

You're not alone: This group was also investigating the idea of mental health and discovered that there were a number of different organisations that provided assistance to those who were suffering. They selected a number of these organisations and decided that the community they lived in needed to be more aware of how they could contact these groups. They came up with the idea of a flyer to post on power-poles in their community. The poster read: 'You're not alone. There will always be someone there for you'. They followed this up by visiting the community health organisations and asking if their flyer could be displayed on their premises.



Giving up an addiction: A number of groups inquired into the idea of addiction, investigating the impact of alcohol and smoking on individuals and the community. Their investigations led them to greater knowledge, understandings and solutions to the problem. They were very vocal in expressing this new found knowledge and making bold statements about the courses of action those addicted to these substances could take to be healthier. During a reflective component of the exhibition a discussion led to the idea that these children should empathise with those members of the community addicted to these drugs. They were challenged to give up something in their lives that they were 'addicted to.' There were instances of children trying to give up technology, soft drink, television and game consoles for a period of time. The record of their journey and their reflections were lessons in perspective and empathy for many of the children.



Jeff McDonald
PYP Coordinator
Kingsville Primary School
Victoria
Australia

What's happening around the network

We've cancelled the flight!

As we approached our *Where we are in place and time* unit of inquiry; 'Lifestyle is determined by the location in which we live', my Year 1 teaching partner and I felt an impending sense of dread. We had both done this unit together in the previous year and upon reflection we felt it was not one that we, or more importantly, our students, were able to truly connect with.

Let me paint you a picture. Last year we had begun the unit by creating an airport and aeroplane in our classrooms. The students entered on the first morning of term and then we were off on a pseudo 'journey' around the world for the next 10 weeks.

Many teachers of junior classes will be finding this a familiar sounding scenario as I have encountered the exact same type of unit in many classrooms at different PYP schools. It is most certainly an enjoyable unit when done in this manner. The students enjoy a wide variety of crafts, multicultural dress-ups, foods and the busy colouring in of flags throughout the following weeks. We invited a host of enthusiastic parents in to share their own cultural backgrounds (cue in more food!).

Although we all enjoyed the sharing of cultural food, craft and parent involvement, we began to wonder if we were really delivering an inquiry unit or rather an extended thematic 'show and tell' experience. Firstly, we have a relatively affluent student population, many of whom have had opportunities to travel around the world in real life as opposed to on our imaginary plane. Many of them had experienced other cultures themselves on many occasions. How authentic and meaningful would our visits to 10 countries in 10 weeks be for them? What were they gaining from our classroom journey?

We ultimately felt that the unit had become tokenistic and was simply ticking the multicultural boxes without really engaging the students in any valuable inquiry. It was time to critically re-assess our planning document and look for connections between our central idea and summative assessment. We also needed to seriously look at our lines of inquiry and whether they truly reflected our chosen concepts. Armed with last year's reflection, we had a series of collaborative meetings with our PYP coordinator and specialist staff.

During these meetings we decided to adapt one of our lines of inquiry to read 'an inquiry into the lifestyles and opportunities of young girls around the world'. This particular line of inquiry would prove to be a game changer. It reflected our concept of 'connection' strongly. We teach Year 1 girls and felt that exploring the lifestyles of children of their own gender and age would resonate with them in a meaningful way.

Choosing to inquire into the lives of only girls was an interesting idea that our team grappled with during our discussions and planning. Ultimately, we felt that the lifestyles and opportunities of girls and boys are different around the world and this was something worth exploring. As our inquiry progressed it allowed many opportunities to compare and contrast the lives of girls and boys from a variety of countries.

To kick off the unit of inquiry, rather than the traditional 'plane journey' experience, we gave each girl a holiday task. Each girl was to create a way of presenting five elements of her own 'lifestyle' to the class in the first week back after the holidays. The presentation style was open and we enjoyed seeing how the girls interpreted this task in a diverse range of ways.

This tuning in task was an invaluable activity. Lifestyle is a key word in our central idea and most certainly a related concept for this unit. The girls' presentations really helped us to unpack the concept of what a lifestyle means and also gave us a very clear direction for the inquiry.

What's happening around the network

We've cancelled the flight!

Some girls made posters, others shared photos or used the interactive whiteboard to show a Power-Point. During the week that each girl presented, we made a list of each element they believed represented their own lifestyles. A small selection of examples included family, play, sport, friends, travel, celebrations, school, clubs and special places such as the beach.

Later in the unit we studied a simplified version of the *Rights of a child* together. Using the list of the elements our classes considered represented their lifestyles and the *Rights of a child*, we then worked in small groups to split the list into needs and wants. This formed the 'hook' for getting the girls to write their own wonderings or student questions to guide the inquiry.

Already the girls were engaged. The student wonderings were clear evidence that they were connecting with the central idea and in particular our line of inquiry into the lifestyles and opportunities of girls around the world. Some girls wanted to know what school was like for girls in other countries. Others wanted to know what sorts of sports and games they played. We were pleased to notice some students wondering if girls in other countries had enough food and water. The cogs were beginning to turn.

After examining and reflecting upon the student wonderings and our own teacher questions we spent the next few weeks researching and inquiring together into some key areas of girls' lifestyles around the world. The areas that we explored as a class included learning about girls' access to food and water, their homes and shelter, their health and medical care, their education, work and play and their traditions or celebrations.

During this phase of the unit, we found the UNICEF series of books including, *A life like mine*, *A school like mine* and *A faith like mine* to be invaluable. We were also thrilled when our librarian gave us a new, age appropriate series of texts from Oxfam. Each brightly photographed text covered a different topic such as homes, school, animals, etc and showed a wide variety of cultures from a child's perspective.



It is important to note here that the unit of inquiry included other lines of inquiry, concepts, assessments and learning engagements beyond what has been shared in this article; however, in the interests of brevity, I won't write about every detail of the unit. The various learning engagements done during the unit by specialist and homeroom staff are too many to list but a few were especially memorable and meaningful for the girls and staff.

One involved each girl going home and counting every tap in her home and bringing in that number to share. We then made a pictograph of all the taps in our homes. Later we learnt about the water supplies for some girls in third world countries. We added them to our graph under their country names and the students were amazed to observe that whilst some of them had 18 taps in their own homes, a village in Afghanistan may need to share one tap between many villagers.

We were heartened during the unit to find many of the students developing some empathy for girls who did not have the opportunities that they are fortunate enough to experience. The girls were shocked to find out that some girls in Ethiopia could be married at the age of 12 and may not ever attend school. They were saddened to hear that many little girls around the world have to work in the home or fields from a young age and missed out on playing and having fun due to responsibilities such as collecting water or caring for younger siblings.

What's happening around the network

We've cancelled the flight!

During the unit, as a staff, we reflected often on the way that our previous 'plane journey' driven unit would not have allowed the girls these opportunities to learn about the less positive aspects of living in another country. Previously, we had really only focussed on the festivals, the celebrations and the more colourful and exciting parts of living in a different country. Throughout the unit we heard the girls say many times, 'I am so lucky to live here in Australia'. Appreciation was not necessarily something we intended to arise from the inquiry so this has been added to our reflection as something to focus on next time.

The summative task for this unit was for the girls to create a piece of work that reflected the perspective of a girl from another country. They researched their chosen country to find out what access to food, water, medical care, housing, play, education and so forth would be like for a girl who lived there. We eventually created our own class big book based on the idea of the UNICEF text, *A life like mine*. Ours was titled *A girl like me* and each student contributed a page about her own girl.

The girls used iPads, various texts and even our parent and community 'experts' to learn what life would be like for their chosen girls. Some even researched traditional names for girls in their chosen countries so that they could name their own girls. Caitlin named her Spanish girl 'Catalina', Abigail became 'Adelina' and Makayla's Ethiopian name was 'Makeda'.

Our book was shared during recent student led conferences and now takes pride of place on the classroom book shelf. It is an often read book that the girls take enormous pride in and like to share with classroom guests such as their buddies or visiting teachers. Keeping our book in our classroom environment invites the girls to remain engaged in the unit and possibly will inspire some student initiated action in the future.

As a class we reflected on the unit and were pleased to observe many girls saying the ways in which their thinking had changed during the unit. Comments such as, 'I used to think that all girls could go to school, but now I know that some girls can't,' were shared. We talked about how a change in thinking can be considered action and recorded these thoughts on our student 'action board'.

Overall we emerged from the unit with a greater sense of accomplishment than our previous 'plane journey' had ever achieved. The girls certainly seemed to form deep connections and understandings from the unit and as a staff we felt that we delivered a unit that allowed true and meaningful inquiry to occur. In the end cancelling our flight was the best thing we could have done.

For further details about the unit or resources feel free to contact lopie@mentonegirls.vic.edu.au



Leah Opie
Year 1 teacher
Mentone Girls'
Grammar School
Victoria
Australia



What's happening around the network

Year 6 Exhibition at Wesley College Glen Waverley Campus

Term 3 has been particularly challenging for all the Year 6 students. We have been working really hard on our exhibition. For those who do not know what the exhibition was about, it was a term long project where each student had to pick a topic that related to the central idea: *The media engages its audience and invites a response.*

The exhibition was a project to demonstrate where we have learnt about the PYP. Students chose many different topics ranging from art to social media. Each Year 6 student would then present his or her newfound knowledge in any mode (such as a movie or book).

Parents and special friends were invited to a presentation at the end of last term for students to showcase their efforts. If you ask any student involved in this year's exhibition about his or her experiences, they will probably say that it was hard work, challenging, yet a lot of fun.

So, current Year 5 students, here's something for you to look forward to!

TIPS FOR A GOOD EXHIBITION

1. ***When choosing a topic, make sure that it relates to the central idea. It would be most unfortunate if you have to switch mid-term!***
2. ***Listen to the advice provided by your teacher and mentor. They will provide valuable help and guidance with your project.***
3. ***Stay on task. Be sure to research your topic and gather your information early. Do not leave too much work to the end.***
4. ***Talk with your group members and find out what topic others are doing. This will ensure that your presentation is unique.***
5. ***Make your presentation interactive and interesting so it will stand out.***
6. ***Be confident in yourself and it will help you stay calm and focused!***
7. ***Have fun with the whole project. This will be your exhibition to present.***

Nicholas
Year 6 student
Wesley College Glen Waverley campus
Melbourne
Australia

Photo showing tuning in—brainstorming forms of media



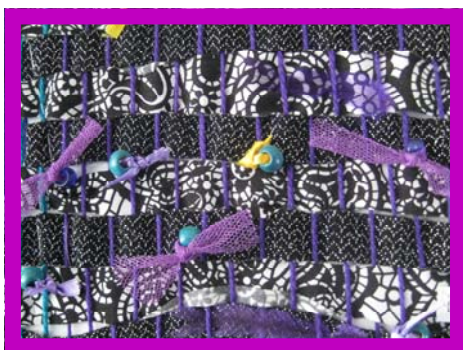
Editor
Kathy Saville
Deputy Director of Curriculum
Wesley College Melbourne

Wesley College Glen Waverley Campus
620 High St Rd
Glen Waverley VIC 3150
Australia

Phone: +61 33 8102 6888
Fax: +61 3 9803 0851
Email: kathy.saville@wesleycollege.net

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“The Victorian PYP Network seeks to model and foster the ideals and philosophy of the IBO through its actions and the provision of information, meetings and professional development opportunities that promote professional learning and encourage communication between members.” (March 2006)



PD OPPORTUNITIES

820–22 January 2014 Adelaide, Australia

Making the PYP happen C1
An introduction to the programme standards for administrators new to the PYP C1
An introduction to the PYP curriculum model C1
Pedagogical leadership C2
Teaching and learning C2
The role of the coordinator C3
Concept-based learning C3
Music and inquiry (PYP/MYP) C3
Creating Inclusive classrooms: Access for all students in the PYP/MYP years 1–3 (special needs) C3

2–4 May, Melbourne, Australia (date TBC)

Making the PYP happen
Assessment
Exhibition
Digital citizenship
Enhancing children's creative instincts
Inquiry
Inquiry in creative places
Personal, social and physical education—well-being
Learning environment and inquiry
Role of the arts
Role of ICT

Refer to the events calendar at www.ibo.org for further details.

Victorian PYP Network Committee 2013–2014

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Vice-Chairperson

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Joint Chairs—Coordinators

Chair—Professional Development

Immediate Past Chairperson

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