



THE PYP INCLUSIVE

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Travelling the PYP Journey

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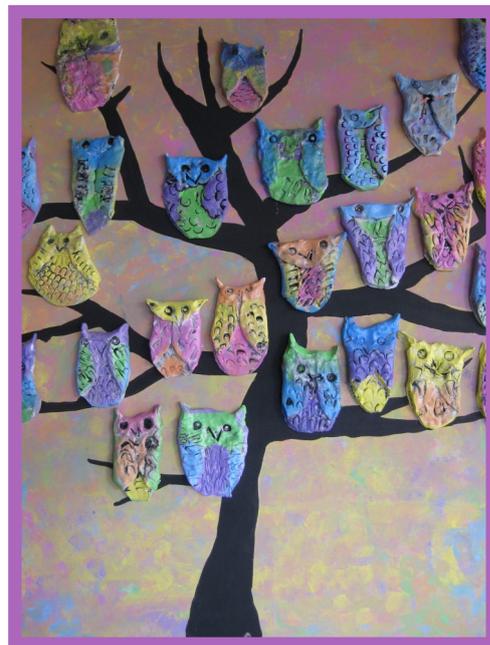
Who can believe that another year is almost at an end? For those working in the southern hemisphere, reports and end of year concerts are the order of the day; for those in the northern hemisphere, the school year is in full swing. Wherever you are, though, there is still time to stop and read *The PYP Inclusive*. Not only is this issue packed with great reading and ideas, each article reflects the passion of the educator writing. There is something that gets under your skin when you are working in a PYP environment – something special and unique! Sincere thanks to our contributors—there is something here for everyone.

The process of reflecting on practice and the power of collaboration to support this is clearly outlined in reflections from Dr Lyn Bird. Mathematics is the focus of two articles, thanks to Dean Kuran at Mt Scopus and Kristie Gibson at AIS in Singapore. Mathematics continues to be highlighted in an article by Nathan Benn that shows the true transdisciplinary possibilities when the social effects of migration are explored through mathematics and visual arts. Inspiration for the arts that is the product of attending a regional workshop is explored by Sue Gadler-Hel from Mount View Primary School. And, supporting arts' teachers who may be looking for inspiration within a PYP framework, is the impetus for Petra Glaser's contribution from Toorak College. Nicola Beale's article on creativity rounds out a wonderful range of arts' based ideas in this issue.

many practical examples of how this is being lived out in both Year 1 and Year 4 classrooms.

Teachers are always interested in reading about how student led conferences look in other schools and Michaela Dalgleish provides great food for thought as she shares how invitations to this event go digital!

And so, wherever you are, do stop to read this issue! As always, enjoy!



It is great to hear about language opportunities in the Chinese classroom at McKinnon Primary School, as well as to read about spaghetti fun in Year 1 at the Australian International Academy. A team from Sandringham House at Firbank Girls Grammar School shares their journey with thinking about thinking; highlighting inspiration from attendance at a conference, to work with staff, as well as documenting

*Nothing we ever imagined is
beyond our powers,
only beyond our present
self-knowledge.*

Theodore Roszok

What's happening around the network

The power of collaborative critique



I like how he tries to make art accessible to all students and help them appreciate and understand art and different ways to gain inspiration.

As part of the teacher appraisal cycle, I am presently reading the teachers' reflective diaries. Each teacher has carried out an inquiry into their practice and had the opportunity to share their journey at three quality learning circles (QLCs) throughout the year. Using strict QLC meeting protocols teachers have presented and critically reflected on their practice showing how a specific intervention has impacted on student progress and achievement. It has also helped them to clarify their next steps on an accepted continual journey of self-improvement.

I like the way she is concentrating on helping students to verbalise their learning more, to explain more deeply, and how she linked this through to student led conferences.

Teachers have also critically reflected on the inquiry presentations of their peers making connections to their own inquiries, posing questions, making conclusions and utilising practical ideas. The most valuable part of teachers as *listener learners* at QLC meetings is their ability to give written feedback to their peers about their practice in situ, with deep respect and meaningful comment.

Her desire to make students passionate about

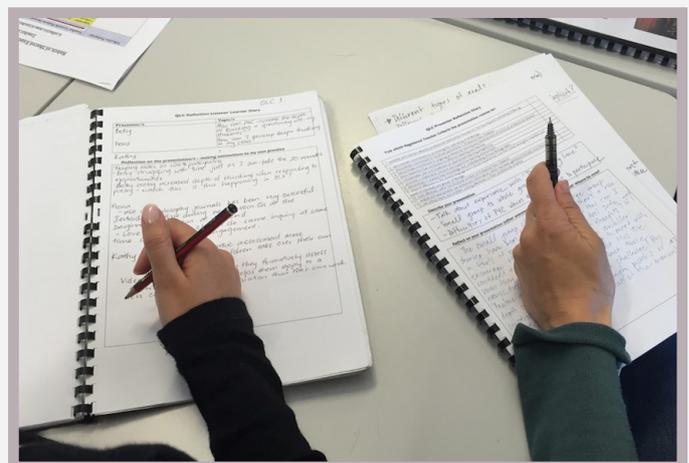
----- is clear. A true focus on the experience rather than the outcome has been very successful.

After they have listened to a colleague share their inquiry and critical reflection on their practice, each teacher then reflects in their diary making connections to their own practice. This is a practice that builds a collaborative culture based on true respect and trust.

The following peer feedback comments are powerful examples:

Conclusions made:

- I can see using video to record student progress is powerful!
- It is important to include reflection time in all areas.
- Less teacher talk leads to student self regulation.
- I realise how important it is to break down goals and to scaffold helping the students to reach their goals over time.
- Children learn more when they formatively assess the work of their peers.
- It is important for students to understand the real life connections to all learning.
- Too often I concentrate only on the girls when concentrating on myself would allow me to be more reflective and make changes to be a better teacher.



What's happening around the network

The power of collaborative critique



Specific feedback about practice:

- I love that she is trying to empower her students to be "little authors"
- I really liked her ideas for P4C, the written point/counter point activity sounds very exciting and provocative
- Her SRL ideas are fantastic! The programme is well

thought out and it has reaffirmed my thought that reflection and goal setting/planning are vital

- I love her use of SCAMPER. She is encouraging the girls to self-judge/evaluate
- Love how her frequent formative assessment allows her to be more responsive
- She showed us great use of peer review and self-critique.
- I am always so impressed with her skill in working with the girls to develop their IT abilities.
- Her passion for not only teaching but also capturing the moments of learning is inspiring!
- She did a fantastic job of capturing verbalised reflections. I can see how I could implement this effectively and gain powerful results.
- She has done a superb job of asking students how they want to share achieved goals and progress.

And finally, a comment from a teacher about their QLC peer group:

Always impressed with the level of professionalism.

The QLC and reflective diary is an important feature of a multi-faceted appraisal and growth programme that helps me as a principal to clearly link my intent to that of my teachers. Like students, getting teachers to articulate their practice, share their reflections and clearly state their next steps is not easy, but is crucial!

Peer coaching includes similar practice, that is spotlighting one aspect of practice and deep questioning, however the QLC model adds the *listener learner* aspect resulting in critical reflection from all teachers in the group. In the process they question their own beliefs, values and assumptions and are challenged to examine their practice.

As Mielke (2012) states:

When adult learners are empowered to objectively analyze and understand their own practice and have a clear vision of where they can improve, they are intrinsically motivated to embark on a pathway that leads to expertise.

Thank you teachers, I applaud your self-assessment, self-direction, reflection on practice, and professional conversation and moral practice.

So, is your school a listening, learning school?

As part of your teacher inquiry process do your critical reflective questions take thinking well below the surface and actually challenge your mindset?

Does your inquiry process support innovation, allow success and risk taking? If yes, to what extent?

*Dr Lyn Bird
Principal
Selwyn House School
Christchurch
New Zealand*



What's happening around the network

A mathematical inquiry

An inquiry based on our school's learning principles, a set of beliefs about learning, which align closely with the PYP philosophy.

Central idea:

Mathematical problems can be solved in a variety of ways, yet some strategies are more efficient than others.

Lines of inquiry:

- How the operations of addition and subtraction related to each other and (Connection)
- Strategies that help us do calculations in our heads (Function)

This term we have been exploring addition and subtraction in our number strand. Our data informed us that many of our students had already reached benchmark level for the end of the year. I had been struggling to find learning engagements for my students that would spark curiosity, provoke questioning and drive mathematical inquiry and thinking.

'We learn in different ways, depending on abilities, learning styles, preferences and interests.' (Learning Principle #1)

Considering this belief, I placed three words on the whiteboard: Split... Jump... Compensation...

I asked my students what they thought these words had to do with mathematics and received the following responses:

- They must have to do with addition and subtraction because that's what we're learning
- I remember seeing those words a while ago
- They might be things we do to work out problems

A healthy start. I wondered what questions they might have to guide some independent inquiry:

- Why do we need to split numbers?
- Can we use all those words at once?
- Which one is the easiest to do?
- What does compensation mean?
- How do we find out what they mean?

'Learning takes place through inquiry: questioning, exploring, experimenting and problem solving.' (Learning Principle #2)

Reflecting on the first half of the term, perhaps I had made assumptions about what the children *had* to know and the way they *needed* to learn. I had neglected to remember the way learning happens for the most positive results – it's not my job to continue to question my students; they should be directing their own learning and exploration through their own questioning.

'Learning is active and social and is enhanced by collaboration and interaction.' (Learning Principle #3)

They dispersed around our learning space; some to iPads, some to Chromebooks, others to poster paper. Some worked independently, some in collaboration with others. But the key was the freedom and 'no-holds-barred' approach to their inquiry.

I could walk around the space, see how and what each student was learning, and check in when I needed to. I could support and scaffold those who were not feeling as confident with the concepts.

'Learning includes acquisition of skills and knowledge, constructing meaning and transfer to different contexts.' (Learning Principle #4)

- Mr Kuran, I just learned about friendly numbers, which end with 0 or 5
- Mr Kuran, the jump strategy is like what we did when we looked at number lines
- Mr Kuran, the split strategy is the easiest to do
- Mr Kuran, this video doesn't explain the strategy as well as the last one
- Mr Kuran, this website was helpful because it uses pictures to explain the process

What's happening around the network

A mathematical inquiry

The first notable change here was that my students weren't 'learning by box-ticking'. They were learning *authentically*. They didn't concern themselves with what they 'expected' me to see.

As we moved through the lesson, I noticed some students sharing their ideas with others. Some picked up strategies more quickly than others. Some required further explanation. *Students were teaching students! But that wasn't in the memo!!??*

'Learning includes meta-cognition and reflection, which support learners taking ownership of their learning.' (Learning Principle #5)

At the end of the lesson, each student had something to show and share (which I neglected to leave time for – note to self for next time!) about their learning. Some used their books. Others created collaborative presentations using Google Slides. One student embedded a helpful YouTube video into his slideshow because he wanted to *share his ideas with others*.

In our lesson later in the week, we proudly shared our thinking and made connections to our prior learning:

- The split strategy is what we use when we look at place value
- The compensation strategy could be really helpful with worded problems and estimating
- The jump strategy is helpful when we look at bigger numbers on number lines

And more questions:

- Will all the strategies work for subtraction too?
- How do we know when it is the right time to use a strategy?

J loved the freedom of being able to put his *own* ideas down on paper. E suggested that having to go find their *own* responses meant they had to use their brains!

'Learning needs to be challenging, meaningful, purposeful and engaging.' (Learning Principle #6)

I had preconceived ideas for what my students would find meaningful and challenging. I put myself in their shoes and made assumptions about how, what and why they need to understand. This time they had a voice.

I was too direct with my instruction. This time I took a risk and let them go.

My idea of inquiry learning has changed a lot. This has happened through my own self-assessment and data collection. I need to hold myself back a bit and trust the process. Trust inquiry as a stance, not a *'thing we do'*.

I need to give students opportunities where what I will see is a reflection of them as learners. I want them thinking.

It's not always just *'what the teacher wants'*. **It's not always about ticking boxes.**

Dean Kuran
Year 3 teacher
Mount Scopus College
Melbourne



What's happening around the region

PYP attitudes and mathematics

Student Led Conference provides opportunities for student reflection and goal setting in relation to all areas of learning. This year, in my year 3 classroom, I used the PYP attitudes to provide a backdrop for this type of self-assessment; specifically in relation to Mathematics.

Phase One: Connection

Initially, students were given a chance to reflect on the attitudes and how they relate to Mathematics. As a focus question, students were asked:

"What would these attitudes look like in a maths lesson?"

Discussion was rich and varied. Student comments included the following:

- If you're enthusiastic about maths, you can't wait to start working on a problem
- Curiosity means asking questions and going deeper
- Commitment looks like sticking with difficult problems and not going straight to you for help
- Some of the attitudes are connected. Like, if you're confident in maths, you're going to be enthusiastic about it.

Interestingly, some students had questions that others answered. For example:

Student A: "I don't think empathy is really relevant in maths. I mean, how can you show empathy?"

Student B: "Actually, I think I can show empathy by helping others who don't get it."

This discussion really helped students to make connections beyond playground examples of the attitudes. Often students in my class explain the attitudes as play based intentions or more generally in relation to their learning. For example, "I show integrity by being honest about my behaviour."

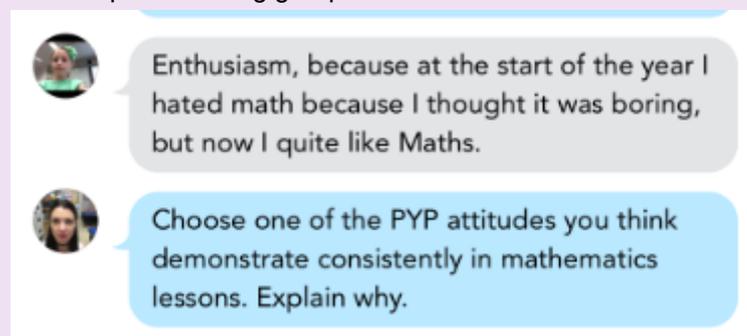
Phase Two: Self-assessment

Following initial discussions, students were asked to consider an attitude they felt they have consistently demonstrated in relation to mathematics learning. At first hesitant, students became more vocal as individuals shared their reflections. Students were encouraged to provide examples and evidence of their attitudes. Examples included:

I have always shown independence because I like working on tough problems by myself

I am confident at maths

I cooperate during group tasks



Students recorded their attitudinal strengths and this led naturally into consideration of areas for improvement. Students were asked to identify an attitude they would need to more consistently demonstrate during maths lessons as well as describe what this would look like during the lesson.

Examples of most attitudes were represented and included:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| appreciation | supporting others in their different approaches and strategies |
| confidence | working on fluency at home so I can be more confident at school |
| enthusiasm | talk positively about my maths abilities |
| commitment | setting and achieving goals |
| creativity | trying to solve problems in more than one way |
| cooperation | working more productively in groups and listening to others' ideas |
| tolerance | working with my head down for the whole lesson even when problems are difficult |
| empathy | helping others to understand when they don't |

What's happening around the region

PYP attitudes and mathematics



I will adopt them by trying to tolerate with struggle town. When I'm independent it will look like me sitting by myself.



I think tolerance and independence because when I'm struggling with the task, I sort of give up and I always work with a partner.



Choose one of the PYP attitudes you think you need to show more of during maths lessons. Why? How will you adopt this attitude? What will it look like in your learning?



I think I have to improve on confidence because I normally say that I can't do any more sums or questions. In the class it is going to look like I am struggling and thinking and not talking to others to distract them. I will achieve it by struggling and thinking.



Choose one of the PYP attitudes you think you need to show more of during maths lessons. Why? How will you adopt this attitude? What will it look like in your learning?

Phase Three: Evaluation

As a one-off exercise, this series of experiences would have had little long term benefit. With that in mind, we have revisited these goals throughout the year. My lesson structure is mostly as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Warm up | |
| Presentation of task | |
| Attitudinal goal revisiting | What is your goal? |
| | What will that look like during THIS task? |
| Students attempt task | |
| Student sharing | |
| Consolidating tasks | |
| Closure | |

Summary

Students were able to confidently explain their goals and attitudes to parents during Student Led Conference. I have noticed improved attitudinal change in the cohort generally and in particular with some students. Other benefits have included improved understanding about the attitudes in relation to mathematics for both the students and teacher. Students reported that it was an important process in helping to improve their learning.

Kristie Gibson
 Head of Year 3 (Curriculum)
 Australian International School Singapore

What's happening around the network

Linking migration, mathematics and visual arts



Australia is known for its rich diversity, evidenced by the thousands of migrants from all over the globe that have chosen this country as their home. As part of our *Where we are in place and time* unit of inquiry into migration, Grade 5 students at Coatesville Primary School investigated the many reasons why people migrate and the impact human migration has on people's lives. Taking a closer look at Melbourne and the nationalities that have made their home here, the students chose to create an artwork to represent their research.

Drawing inspiration from the diverse backgrounds of the children in our grade, students worked in groups to create their artwork. Using census data, the top 23 nationalities living in Melbourne were identified. Each of these countries were to be represented by a thumb print. The average size of the class's thumbprint was calculated in order to find out how many prints would fit into the cityscape. Then the percentage of thumbprints needed to authentically represent each nationality was calculated, too. The final step in the mathematical component of the work was to choose which colours would be used to represent each nationality and how the children would mix the colours to ensure there were 23 distinct colours. Below is the spreadsheet the students created to track their thinking and to plan the final artwork.

| Country | Population | Percentage | Number of Thumbs | Colour | Status | How many people each thumb print represents |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|---|
| India | 122,000 | 28.65% | 78 | Maroon | Already printed | 2178 |
| Vietnam | 81,900 | 19.81% | 51 | Red | Already printed | 2191 |
| China | 81,800 | 19.80% | 43 | Teal | Already printed | 2183 |
| Thailand | 80,200 | 19.76% | 36 | Violet | Already printed | 2228 |
| Canada | 70,500 | 17.44% | 30 | Gold | Already printed | 2387 |
| USA | 68,200 | 16.60% | 31 | Turquoise | Already printed | 2203 |
| UK | 49,900 | 12.13% | 23 | Dark Blue | Already printed | 2173 |
| Malaysia | 48,900 | 11.92% | 20 | Magenta | Already printed | 2190 |
| South Africa | 39,700 | 9.70% | 18 | Yellow | Already printed | 2210 |
| Philippines | 38,000 | 9.35% | 17 | Green | Already printed | 2235 |
| Scotland | 29,800 | 7.35% | 14 | Aqua | Already printed | 2128 |
| Germany | 28,000 | 6.92% | 13 | Navy | Already printed | 2155 |
| South Africa | 24,400 | 6.02% | 11 | Lilac | Already printed | 2222 |
| Netherlands | 23,800 | 5.87% | 10 | Orange | Already printed | 2183 |
| Malta | 19,700 | 4.86% | 9 | Hot Pink | Already printed | 2192 |
| Spain | 18,800 | 4.62% | 8 | Baby Blue | Already printed | 2284 |
| Hong Kong | 18,200 | 4.50% | 8 | Light Yellow | Already printed | 2275 |
| Croatia | 17,200 | 4.25% | 8 | Light Green | Already printed | 2156 |
| USA | 15,800 | 3.92% | 8 | Red | Already printed | 2105 |
| Turkey | 15,800 | 3.92% | 8 | Burgundy | Already printed | 2061 |
| Poland | 15,300 | 3.75% | 7 | Super Light Blue | Already printed | 2340 |
| Lebanon | 15,200 | 3.73% | 7 | Light Pink | Already printed | 2267 |
| Indonesia | 14,600 | 3.59% | 7 | Light Purple | Already printed | 2090 |

This truly transdisciplinary mathematical journey not only linked beautifully with their unit of inquiry, but allowed mathematics and visual arts to work hand in hand in the classroom.

Nathan Benn
Grade 5 teacher Coatesville Primary School

What's happening around the network

Visual arts beyond the art room

In May of 2014, my colleague, Jude, and I attended a 3 day workshop with the guru of IB PYP and the Arts, Mr Theo Mandziy. In those three days we gained incredible inspiration and clarification from him about our learning journey teaching the PYP Visual Arts so that our students will experience a richer, broader visual arts education. Theo cemented our prior knowledge, encouraged us to look further into our own experiences and seek out new topics. He guided our thinking of the importance of every aspect of the PYP arts program, from connecting to the PYP concepts to integrating the attitudes and learner profile attributes into our everyday teaching.

As we worked through the program we set about developing a unit of inquiry as a stand-alone unit. After days of questioning and extending our knowledge, it was quite the challenge to think of great ideas on the spot, but Theo did not waiver. It was at this time that my colleague and I developed a unit that I believe is one of our most successful stand-alone units in the sense that it taught a lot more than planning an art work and creating it. Instead, it brought in Australian art history, made us challenge our opinions of what is art, taught new skills and took us out into the school yard for the final installation of the works. This was all whilst we were working with the concepts of change and form as well as the transdisciplinary skills of thinking and self-management.

Sculpture (in particular, clay sculpture) was the focus for this Year 5 unit. We both have a background in ceramics and sculpture and took this from our own experiences as the starting point for planning this unit. Then we got to thinking about art, public art, public sculpture and how times have changed. Remember Melbourne's "Yellow Peril"?

So we set about designing a unit of inquiry around the transdisciplinary theme of *How we express ourselves*. It is a natural fit to choose this theme when visual arts is about expressing ourselves, so we focused on how artists of the past expressed themselves through their art and how changes in art have forced the changing opinions of 'what is art?' today.

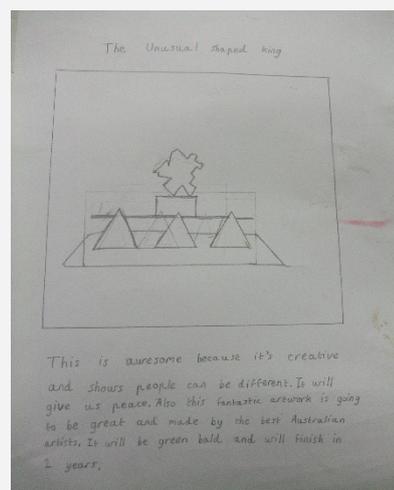
Today we see public art in many of our work and wider environments. Consider the introduction of freeway art and city centre pieces. And yet, back in 1980 when artist Ron Robertson-Swan won a competition to create an art work officially known as "The Vault" for the Melbourne City Square, the work created so much controversy, not only for the cost of \$70,000 but for the boldness of its design, which was considered to be 'unsympathetic to its environment'. Even the Queen on a visit at the time suggested a "more agreeable colour". Yet today this work stands in its new home in the

Arts Centre precinct and sits comfortably in its environment, whilst other bolder, brasher and some far more confronting art works are now commonly installed in our public environments. A lot can happen in just 35 years!

So do our children of today realise how much art has changed? How opinions have changed? How their environment has changed? Mostly, no.



Some collaborative comments from the children about other public art



Presentation of the student's proposed design and why it is worthy of installation in the public environment.

What's happening around the network

Visual arts beyond the art room

Our central idea was, 'Abstract public sculpture can be appreciated in different ways'. A simple, straight forward idea, yet so much could be explored. The concepts of change and form suited perfectly. Change – changing opinions, changes to an art work as it develops, changes to ideas of what is art. And form – to create a ceramic, abstract sculptural form and develop an understanding of sculptural forms in public art.

Our unit sent the children on an Australian art history journey. They observed and analysed well known public sculptures of today such as Inge King's "Wave" and confidently gave opinions about what they loved about the works, trying to understand why the public were so confronted with "The Vault" in the 80s. They developed opinions about abstract art and sought reactions from their families to public art. At times the children would eagerly come to school with photos and stories of art they had seen in their environment and shared what "Dad really thinks about it"!

We looked at images of many old and new public sculptures. We discussed articles about "The Vault" in the newspapers from 1980. We analysed the works and decided what parts we liked about the art works so that we could use this as inspiration for the creation of our own abstract, ceramic public art sculptures.

For the summative assessment task the students were required to design a proposed sculpture from all angles - side,

front, and aerial and present their design with an explanation as to why their art was worthy of being installed in the public environment. Then after a little exploring and experimenting with clay construction techniques, they set about creating a free standing, slab constructed clay, abstract sculpture. Much was to be considered, not only in regard to working with clay, but how would the work look from all angles? How would it be viewed? What colour should it be painted to have the best effect? How should it be presented? So a lot of thinking had to be done to work through the process. The children were confident and proud of their choices and wanted to 'shock' the viewer by picking bold colours and forms – very unlike art of the past! They particularly wanted to only use one colour – in keeping with their respect for "The Vault". Finally, the works were finished and after a focus on self-management skills - work within time frames and work with a fickle medium, we went out to install the art works into the school grounds. We placed each work on the grass and photographed them from a low angle – a visual trick to imply the work is actually very large.

So each term and each year as you plan your units, both aligned and stand-alone, don't just consider what the next medium to do is or what style of art would be easiest for that age group. Try to see beyond creating "nice" art and engage in an experience about art – it will be remembered.



Student works installed in the school yard.

*Sue Gadler-Hele
Mount View Primary School
Melbourne
Victoria
Australia*

What's happening around the network

Planning and applying the visual arts to the PYP

On numerous occasions during professional development experiences and in Art TeachMeets, I have experienced a common thread of angst and a sense of confusion amongst the participants. This is especially evident with primary teachers who are teaching Visual arts in relation to content, planning, and assessment. Having previously been in a similar position, my solution was to seek advice from more knowledgeable others and so I began to build a knowledge base that I continuously add to and which has served me well over the years. The following words are penned in order to assist teachers and, in particular, new teachers who are grappling with ideas about how to plan within the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and apply it to the visual arts.



As a visual arts specialist teaching in a PYP school, it is crucial that the planning undertaken is collaborative, meaningful and productive. Regular and authentic dialogue, shared documents and planners with input from the classroom teachers are a great way of developing the units of inquiry in a collaborative manner, rather than the, 'art teacher', working in isolation to merely support areas of the PYP.

As a secondary art teacher now working in the primary arena, I find that my personal knowledge of the arts is of key importance. The knowledge, practice and experience that I bring into the art studio shapes the resources that are chosen, the learning experiences and how effectively the program is delivered. Having regular contact with colleagues within the Arts and those who share a commitment to teaching arts via inquiry also helps in maintaining and enhancing my own practice.

Learning tasks within a PYP inspired art program need to be meaningful, engaging, authentic and challenging and the design and creation process helps to develop technical skills, communicate meaning, and produce innovative and creative outcomes and productions.

Wherever possible, art is taught through the units of inquiry within the curriculum. When planning selected art tasks in the PYP environment, and after collaboration with classroom teachers, it is important to consider that not all art tasks will link to the transdisciplinary themes or central ideas in a similar way to the inquiry in the classroom. Therefore, it is very important to consider planning tasks around the concepts of the PYP from the start. Purposeful inquiry in the art room can be delivered via discussion of the students' prior experiences and linked to their current understanding. Links can then be made to the appropriate PYP concept/s that assist the students' ability to make connections and apply their learning to new situations.

During the transdisciplinary unit of 'Where we are in place and time', Year 5 students were investigating how immigration shapes communities as the central theme. They had been on an excursion to Sovereign Hill and discovered how numerous people had come to Australia from other countries during the gold rush in the 1800s. The art related task was tailored to a 3D unit working with clay through causation, change and connection. The students created a trinket box where they learned new skills which included forming the shape of the prism and subtracting some clay to create the interior cavity. To adorn the exterior, the students learned how to incise lines and stamp designs using specialised tools followed by two methods of paint application.

From the earth, gold is found so the students, as arts practitioners, worked with earth (clay) to create a vessel to hold gold, (in the form of trinkets or precious jewels), thus creating a reversal of roles.



What's happening around the network

Planning and applying the visual arts to the PYP

Through causation via the arts perspective we consider art as a creative and thoughtful interpretation of the world; influenced by cultural and personal experience. We asked why this piece of art was made and why would people visit galleries to view it?

Change is the process of movement from one state to another. The Arts are never static so as the world changes, methods and means of art evolve. The experience alters according to the interpretation of the participant or audience. We asked how earthenware may or may not have changed over time – and considered the firing process.

Connection – the Arts are a universal language that allows us to communicate within and across cultures and time periods. We asked how art helps us to commemorate and how art can help us to find out about the past, such as the terracotta warriors and artefacts found in Pompeii.

Such concepts assisted in driving the inquiry and practice in the art room. The students approached their work with such fervour and as the trinket box developed, a new found desire and engagement to drive forward and complete them became evident throughout the term. It was also interesting to note how the students gave their peers advice and some critical analysis when finalising their artworks. They made connections to the design elements of line, rhythm, colour, texture, the appearance and presentation of the final piece. Such reflections were added to the planner before, during and at the completion of the task.



Petra Glaser
Visual Arts teacher
Toorak College
Victoria

Victorian PYP Network Training day for staff new to PYP Thursday 21 January 2016

“Intro to the Language of the PYP”

NB: Only available to teachers from Network member schools

Purpose: Back again after continued success and attendance over the past 5 years, the Victorian PYP Network offers this professional learning opportunity to Network schools (candidate or fully authorised only), that have staff beginning in 2016 who are **NEW** to the PYP.

As the title implies, this is an introduction to the language of the PYP and is aimed at providing an initial collective experience which is intended to be enriched and extended back at schools as per normal induction and professional learning provided by PYP coordinators. This event will be available (simultaneously) at 4 different venues so schools can select the one that best suits them and/or their new staff.

Please be aware that this is not to be seen as an official IB workshop, but rather provides a general introduction to the language of the program and will be facilitated by trained IB PYP workshop leaders from within our Network.

This day is suitable for all new PYP teachers (ELC, classroom & specialists) and school administrators. *NB: Staff who have previously attended any IB workshops should not attend.*

Four venues across the Network

Schools can select their preferred venue for attendance from the following

Auburn South PS ~ Essendon North PS ~

Kunung PS ~ St Margaret's School

PYP Coordinators—you need to register staff online via the individual event link for each school venue. Please see Base-camp for further information.

What's happening around the region

Creativity. Why?

Creativity is traditionally associated with brilliant people doing brilliant things, often in the field of the arts. However, the definition has continued to develop and today educationalists define creativity as being a response to a problem that, through experiences, ideas, experiments and failures, reach a new, different and worthwhile understanding. Even in the case of Archimedes, his Eureka bath moment was the culmination of years of puzzling and experimentation; it was the sum of his experiences, not a spontaneous isolated event.

We are surrounded by systems and inventions that are creative responses to real life problems; house design, investment options, transport networks and new recipes have all been thought about, explored and created by looking at these puzzles from many different angles. It is in inquiring into problems from many different perspectives and finding new ways to answer questions that we are being creative.

To understand what stimulates creativity, I have found it useful to reflect on what has stifled it. Whilst writing this article I have been able to pin point events that have acted to undermine my confidence and stifle my creativity, especially in the arts. Most of these events have been negative criticism by adults that has acted to interrupt the flow of experimentation. "Oh what a mess," was a teacher's feedback on observing my experimentations with colour mixing. I was using my seven years of skills, experience and creativity to try out something that was new to me but a teacher much further along the path of colour theory knowledge completely stifled my experimentation by inflicting their adult criticism upon my childish explorations. Picasso quote: Every child is born an artist; the trouble is trying to remain one as you grow up.

Research shows that creativity is a combination of intelligence and imagination. Some psychologists believe that by the age of seven, children have developed a bank of creativity; it is through the exploring, questioning and natural inquisitiveness and imagination that this develops. Some think that children are naturally more creative whilst still others relate their creativity to an innocence and lack of understanding that enables them to look at the world without adult constraints. (Piaget, Bruner et al.)

I would agree with these definitions. To observe young children at play is to watch them freely make sense of the world without the inhibitions which encroach upon us as we grow up. The activities you see in a typical kindergarten class are providing opportunities to understand the world through being creative with a range of materials. Schools; however, are a small part of this process and parents can play a huge part in providing an even more stimulating set of experiences for their children. We often laugh at the way children spend more

time playing with the box their gifts came in than a gift itself, but this is children being creative. Often times, bought toys do not allow for personal creativity. Creativity is limited by the gift itself. Building, dressing up, painting, outdoors play, playing with others all help children to expand their experiences, knowledge and skills and thereby to explore and develop their creativity.

I am not saying that a child's life should be a free for all, but it should be a careful balance between learning of skills and knowledge and time for children to experiment following their own imaginations. There should be a wide range of experiences and options available to children if we want them to be rounded, interesting and creative people.

But why do we want people to be rounded, interesting and creative people? Many cultures and individuals want their children to become specialists or brilliant in one area. The view of many is that creativity helps us to solve problems of huge complexity. In an increasingly mixed existence, global problems need viewing and solving through creative and thoughtful ideas that take into account the many experiences and cultures they affect. The days of one culture forcefully imposing its control over others, whilst not eradicated, is hopefully diminishing. The International Baccalaureate recognises and has included, as part of their mission statement, "... encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right". In an increasingly complex world, with a spiraling population and problems associated with it, this way of thinking, acting and being is necessary.

The above has made me reflect on how to stimulate creativity in the classroom, where a rich and broad collection of experiences, confidence, self-esteem and time to be creative are key to a child's development.

How many times do we as adults speak too soon, give our opinion about what a child is doing instead of asking them? By observing their inquiries and making a simple request, "tell me about your work", we open the doors to encouraging creativity. When children talk about their artwork, the explanations they give are often long, complex, include a story and personal experiences. They use specialist language to explain choices for the elements that they have included. When I understand their thought process and journey I can then ask them if they are finding any aspects of their work difficult and would they like help with something. They are then the ones to say, I can't get this line correct or my colours are too dark and we work together to solve the problem. Personal imagination and self-esteem remain intact and self-reflection, col-

What's happening around the region

Creativity. Why?

-laboration and confidence are developed.

I am by no means an expert so this year one of my teaching goals will be to assist children in experimenting with and developing their own creativity through their artwork. I will continue to teach artistic skills and techniques to facilitate in depth discussions about artists work. But I will allow for more time for children to then use their experiences, skills and develop their techniques in their own way. Furthermore I will ask the child about their work and encourage self-reflection so I am not commenting without fully understanding their choices, decisions and frustrations. We only have to look at the hundreds of expressions available to us from global cultures to realise there are as many different ways to interpret the world around us as there are people. By allowing children to create work that celebrates their creativity we will be adding to and enriching the ways in which the world is viewed. And ultimately the world around them.

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Nicola Beale has worked as a teacher, coordinator and administrator in all areas of primary school education. She is constantly questioning and seeking to improve the learning experiences of children and teachers. A creative person who experiments with and seeks to improve the life of everyone she comes in contact with. Nicola is currently developing her own artistic creativity and coordinating the arts at the International School of Azerbaijan. You can follow her by subscribing to her website www.spareroomdesigns.com - or contact her on Facebook and LinkedIn.



What's happening around the network

Supporting transdisciplinary themes in the Chinese classroom

Over the past few years at McKinnon Primary School, we have built a partnership and friendship with the teachers and students of our sister school, Miduqiao Primary School in Changzhou, China. This year our relationship has grown further in the LOTE (Chinese) classroom, establishing a link between the year 5 classes to support the 'Sharing the Planet' unit of inquiry surrounding the Central Idea: **'Communities develop partnerships for a variety of purposes'**.

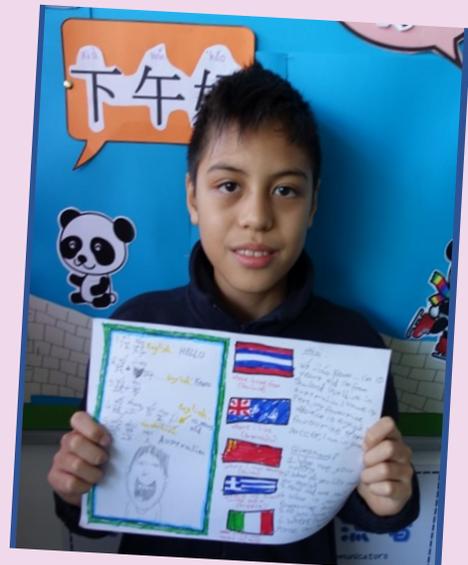
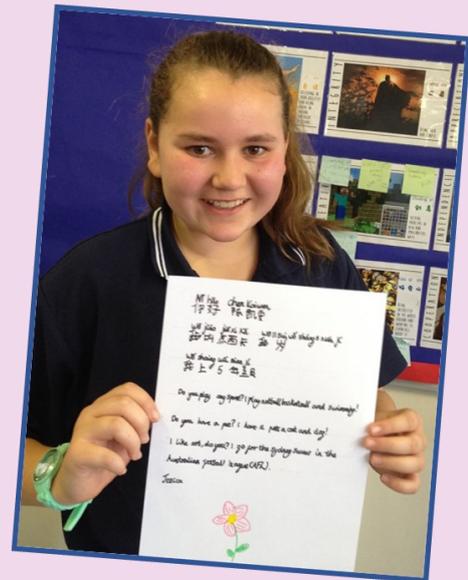
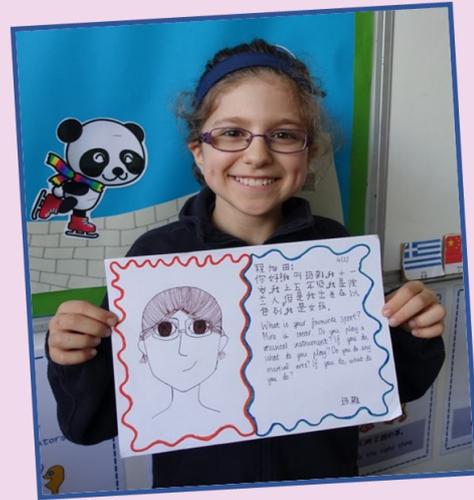
Within the unit, I started a pen pal program among the students of McKinnon Primary School and Miduqiao Primary School, encouraging our students to write bilingually and engaging them globally with the students of our sister school through the form of pen pals. I started with a brainstorming, having the students think of any things they regard 'common' in their day-to-day life and schooling. Then from the things we listed together, the students picked the aspects they were interested in inquiring into their pen pal's life and schooling.

After hearing back from our new friends, we gathered information together from their letters and examined the similarities and differences with a Venn diagram. This pen pal program served as a platform for the students to explore and build their understandings of another country and explore the complexity and variance in culture. It also provided the students of both schools with an exciting and first-hand experience to investigate the similarities and differences of daily life, schooling and culture between China and Australia. For our students, these learning engagements encouraged the students' development of international-mindedness and promoted an appreciation for their day-to-day life, history and culture.

From the aspect of LOTE teaching and learning, the students showed great enthusiasm in Chinese writing during the unit. Writing to a pen pal in China gave their learning a real purpose, enriching their learning experiences and, most significantly, fostered student-initiated learning of both Chinese language and culture.

In the future, I hope to further our partnership with the sister school, including collaborations with more year levels and involving new ideas and technologies, to encourage the students' development of intercultural awareness and international-mindedness.

Yuxuan Chen
Specialist Chinese teacher
McKinnon Primary School
Victoria
Australia



What's happening around the network

Spaghetti fun!!

The students have been very engaged with our new inquiry into MATERIALS, begun a week and a half ago at the start of Term 4. In week 1, we studied the properties of raw and cooked spaghetti. We learned the 'Spaghetti' poem by Shel Silverstein and made spaghetti pictures inspired by this. We learned about adjectives and how they can enhance our descriptive writing. I decided to go with the 'spaghetti' theme and extend it into the area of Mathematics, as it integrates so well with our current inquiry into MATERIALS. The addition of marshmallows (halal) is also engaging for the students and a good provocation for the inquiry.

UOI – Materials

Transdisciplinary Theme – *How the World Works*

Central Idea – *'Everyday materials can be changed in a variety of ways'*

Key Concepts – *Change & Function*

Inquiry Cycle – *Finding Out*

LITERACY (shared reading – spaghetti poem; read to: 'skeleton' story; adjectives; genre writing (description) about 'My Skeleton')

MATHEMATICS (3D objects – making 'skeletons' of prisms and pyramids out of spaghetti and marshmallows)

UOI (investigating, observing and recording properties of raw spaghetti and marshmallows)

Lesson by Hilary Phelan, 1A Class Teacher, A.I.A. King Khalid Campus, Coburg North, Victoria, Australia

LESSON OUTLINE

LITERACY (shared reading – spaghetti poem; read to: 'skeleton' story 'Funnybones' as well as information books about skeletons; adjectives; genre writing (description) about 'My Skeleton')

- Tune in by introducing the visitors and reciting the poem 'Spaghetti' learnt last week. Have a discussion about the properties of spaghetti, recall the word 'adjectives' for **words to describe** spaghetti.
- Introduce the word 'starchy' for the unrinsed, cooked spaghetti – that's why it sticks. Recall how sticky your fingers were. That was the starch. If we had have rinsed the spaghetti, all the starch would have washed off and the spaghetti wouldn't have been able to stick to your picture.
- Marshmallows are also very sticky so you need to keep them on a tissue on your table as you will be cutting them up and using them later. We will also be thinking about 'marshmallow adjectives' to add to our 'Materials Big Book' later.
- Genre writing description about 'My Skeleton' at the end of the session (if time).

MATHEMATICS (3D objects – making 'skeletons' of prisms and pyramids out of spaghetti and marshmallows)

- Begin by recalling the skeleton stories and information books (done earlier).
- Look at the box of 3D objects. Explain that we are going to make 'skeletons' of some of these objects using spaghetti and marshmallows whereby the spaghetti will represent the 'bones' (edges) and the marshmallows will represent the joints (vertices).
- Should we use cooked or raw spaghetti to make the skeletons? (visit the adjectives section in the big book)
- If raw spaghetti is the bones, which 3D objects **can't** we make? Why? (cylinder, cone, sphere) – refer to 'little bit bendy' on adjectives page – 'but can we bend it into a circle?'
- Revise faces, edges and 'pointy parts' (vertices)
- What will the spaghetti represent? (edges)
- What will the marshmallows represent? (pointy parts)
- Do you think it will work better with long spaghetti or short spaghetti? Why? (short, tensile strength – demonstrate this and the students can explore this later during the activity).
- All these other objects can be classified into either prisms or pyramids. Start with what the students know (Egyptian pyramids). What are the features of pyramids and prisms?
- Students will be given a piece of coloured A4 paper, 5 pieces of spaghetti and 2 marshmallow and they will make a prism or pyramid of their choice, working either independently or cooperatively.
- They will then write a description about it and draw it and its net on their paper (to be followed up in later sessions).

What's happening around the network

Spaghetti fun!!

UOI (investigating, observing and recording properties of raw spaghetti and marshmallows)

Inquiry cycle: *Finding Out*

Concepts: *Change & Function*

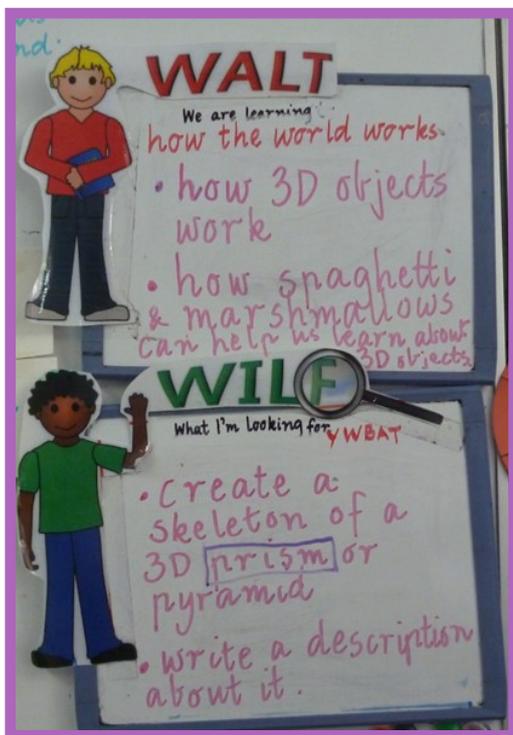
Transdisciplinary theme: *How The World Works*

Learner profile: *Reflective*

Attitude: *Curiosity*

Skills: Self-management: a high degree will be required as the marshmallows are EXTREMELY sticky!

Thinking: What will you need to reflect about before you start making your skeleton? (how many pieces of spaghetti you will need, how many pieces of marshmallow you will need).



Specific learning objectives and outcomes clearly stated, and connected to the **Transdisciplinary theme**.

New words to be learned highlighted.

Youssef D showed a lot of **commitment** making a skeleton of a rectangular prism – he **found out** that this type of skeleton was not very stable, and we got the photo just in time before



Sarab began by attempting a rectangular prism, but then **changed** to making a pyramid when she realised that the prism did not **function** very well. Great strategy!



Sophia made a square based pyramid. She was very proud of her efforts, and was the only student to begin writing a description about it. She showed a lot of **commitment and enthusiasm**. She found a pyramid to be quite a strong structure.

It collapsed!

What's happening around the network

Spaghetti fun!!

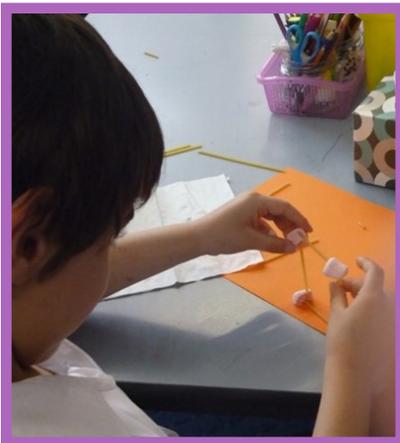
Abdullahi and Saad showed excellent **cooperation** and **application** of mental maths strategies to figure out how many edges and vertices in a hexagonal prism.



Finding Out Differentiation by choice

The students were very engaged. Most chose to work **independently**, but some preferred to work **cooperatively**.

The concentration was fierce! You could practically hear the brain cogs whirring. The students showed a high level of **commitment**.



Thinking Skills, Independence, Cooperation, Rania **reflected** on what she would need and used a real model of a pyramid to measure the length of her spaghetti. Even though Rania and Sonia worked independently, they **shared** the resource **cooperatively**.



This lesson has since been followed up in following sessions, with further investigations into which structures are the strongest and why. We found out that pyramids are stronger than prisms, particularly the triangle-based pyramid (tetrahedron), because it is made of triangles, which we found were more stable than squares or rectangles. We also investigated the nets of prisms and pyramids. In Literacy, we followed up by writing descriptions, using the correct genre text structures and features.

The students thoroughly enjoyed this activity and really learned a lot about 3D objects, as well as revising their genre writing in a meaningful and authentic way.

Hilary Phelan, 1A Class Teacher, A.I.A. King Khalid Campus, Coburg North, Victoria, Australia

What's happening around the network

Thinking about thinking

Working towards a whole school culture where thinking is valued, visible and promotes greater understandings at Firbank Grammar School, Sandringham Campus.

"Understanding is the goal of thinking." Ron Ritchhart

After being fortunate enough to attend the Project Zero classroom at Harvard University in Massachusetts, Boston, and in addition to attending a collaborative group each term which focuses on Thinking Routines and developing a culture of thinking, run through Bialik College, my next challenge was to begin to make authentic connections for both staff and students to see that thinking is recognised, valued and extended.

At Firbank Sandringham, an action inquiry group was established with the aim of inquiring into how students' best learn and what impacts on learning. We wanted to know more about Thinking Routines and how they can be best used to support thinking and learning in classrooms and how to embed them as routines within the fabric of our classrooms, rather than just using them as activities.

The aim was, and still is, to promote a Culture of Thinking within the classroom learning environment where thinking is supported, extended and valued as a part of our curriculum, rather than an added extra. It becomes a part of what we, and our students, do naturally.

Our inquiry action group developed a shared vision that serves as our anchor and has enabled our Culture of Thinking to launch from. Our vision is "to equip our students to be metacognitive and understand their thinking dispositions." Thinking dispositions to us, mean curiosity, concern for truth and understanding, a creative mindset, not just being skilled, but also alert to thinking and learning opportunities and eager to apply them (Ron Ritchhart defines a disposition as an enduring characteristic or trait of a person that serves to motivate behaviour). The definition of thinking dispositions lends itself seamlessly to the International Baccalaureate learner profile.

Through creating a Culture of Thinking, Ron Ritchhart, identified eight cultural forces that need to be present. If culture is to be transformative, it must be created, sustained, and enhanced.

Our inquiry action group has, and continues to, explore each of the eight forces below.

- **TIME:** We give time to the things we value. Students will pick up on this.
- **OPPORTUNITIES:** What makes a powerful lesson? Are

there meaningful opportunities? Does it push learners to clarify a position?

- **ROUTINES:** The reason the thinking routines are ROUTINES is, as like any classroom routine, we aim to establish that they need to be repeated, developing familiarity, clear expectations and become more than merely activities.
- **LANGUAGE:** It is embedded in our instruction and conversations with students. Do we use pronouns such as "WE", "OUR", "US"?
- **INTERACTIONS:** Thinking being a social endeavor, where listening and questioning are paramount.
- **MODELLING:** Modelling who we are as a learner as students watch us.
- **ENVIRONMENT:** Can tell a lot about the learning. What is valued in your classroom?
- **EXPECTATIONS:** What is it we want FOR the students, not what are we demanding? The goal of learning should be to take students further, not for rote memorisation.

Our inquiry action group also connected with the below six keys principles of the Cultures of Thinking project, as they are pervasive throughout all aspects of teaching and learning.

- **Skills are not sufficient; we must also have the disposition to use them.**

Within our focus group we made connections to the PYP approaches to learning (transdisciplinary skills). Through opportunities to rehearse and refine, we develop a natural and acquired habit to use these in various contexts.

- **The development of thinking and understanding is fundamentally a social endeavour.**

Thinking is collaborative and does require discussion and social interaction. Thinking tools and thinking routines were aligned with learning engagements and as learning engagements within the units of inquiry. Collaboratively, we identified routines for introducing and exploring ideas, synthesising and organising ideas and digging deeper into ideas.

- **The culture of the classroom teaches.**

Opportunities and valuing thinking in our classrooms models to students that thinking is valued and identifies ways to express thinking through different mediums; thus catering for multiple intelligences and learning styles.

- **As educators, we must strive to make students' thinking visible.**

Through embedding thinking routines, teachers at Sandringham House have identified both the importance and opportu-

What's happening around the network

Thinking about thinking

opportunities for students to share, justify and discuss their thinking. What makes you say that....?

- **Good thinking utilises a variety of resources and is facilitated by the use of external tools to “download” or “distribute” one’s thinking.**

The thinking routines are the external tools to help engage student thinking and give students an entry point or a stimulus for their thinking before making connections to the required context. As thinking routines have low entry levels and high ceilings, all students can celebrate success.

- **For classrooms to be cultures of thinking for students, schools must be cultures of thinking for teachers.**

As teachers we talk about lifelong learning and model this to students. We cannot possibly answer all of the questions that our students ask. Through our wonderings we model thinking to our students.

These principles model best practice in all classrooms and serve as a good reminder to us.

Our action inquiry group, inundated with many facets of information, including the eight cultural forces and, the six key principles of the Cultures of Thinking project, then set about translating this information into the classroom whilst introducing and exploring the Thinking Routines as outlined in the Project Zero classroom. We were conscious of developing Thinking Routines as routines rather than stand-alone activities or engagements. A routine is a procedure, process or pattern of action that is used repeatedly to facilitate the accomplishment of specific goals or tasks. Thinking routines can be simple structures that connect to the process of learning. Our focus is for thinking routines to become a part of the culture and classroom promoting thinking and the way we, as teachers, and students go about learning.

Our action group reflected on the following:

- *Do my classes and interactions with students give students opportunities to be personally involved?*
- *How is thinking promoted, keeping in mind LEARNING IS A CONSEQUENCE OF THINKING?*
- *How do we make learning active, and not a passive process in our own learning environments/ classrooms?*
- *How do I know my students are learning?*
- *What learning will be most relevant for the lives my students will live?*

Connections were made to the importance of thinking and the concept of perspective in the world we live today. Naturally, we want our students to see and define problems and to be curious and follow up on their curiosity.

USING THINKING ROUTINES

As we identified Thinking Routines as **TOOLS** which are used repeatedly in the classroom to support specific thinking moves, we went further to explore routines for: introducing and exploring ideas, routines that lend themselves to synthesising and organising ideas; and, routines for digging deeper into ideas through reference to the thinking routines matrix as developed by Ron Ritchhart. We reviewed our units of inquiry and together we selected a routine from the Introducing and Exploring Ideas matrix and trialled this within our classes. There is, of course, scope for each of the routines to be used outside of the programme of inquiry as well. There are no limitations as to where they can be connected to highlight student thinking

Several year levels have embraced Thinking Routines, whilst also exploring, how to best develop a culture that enhances and promotes thinking. Students in most year levels have worked with Thinking Routines and student questioning connected to the routines with the aim of revealing students' thinking and making it more visible.

Year 1 have incorporated several Thinking Routines into their classroom practice. The examples below highlight how these have been included, through both units of inquiry as well as in other disciplines.

ZOOM IN

As a provocation for the unit of inquiry, *Sharing the planet*, a 'zoomed in' portion of an image was presented to the children. As more and more of the image was revealed, children began to express their observations and interpretations. Children were encouraged to explain their thoughts, predictions and questions as well as reflect upon how these may have shifted or changed as the image was revealed. There is no right or wrong response. All thinking is appreciated!



What's happening around the network

Thinking about thinking

CHALK TALK

Sharing thinking in front of peers can be a daunting prospect for some young children. Chalk Talk is an excellent way for children to express their thinking through a silent conversation on paper. This routine has been used as part of our writing sessions to unpack a 'writing seed' as well as promoting student thinking within the unit of inquiry: *How we organise ourselves*. The statements, 'using public transport is a good choice' and 'using public transport is not a good choice' were recorded on large sheets of paper. The children were invited to think about and record their opinions, ideas and questions about each statement. They were encouraged to connect ideas and elaborate or comment on the ideas of others. This was all done silently! Collaboratively reflecting upon the children's thinking led perfectly into our genre focus, expositions.



WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?

This critical question is asked routinely in the Year 1 classrooms in order to promote deeper level thinking. When responding to picture story books, during reading response sessions, children are encouraged to explain and justify their thoughts, feelings, predictions and wonderings about texts. The children enjoy making text-to-self, text-to-text and text-to-world connections. By asking the question, 'What makes you say that?' the children know that their thinking, whatever it may be, is appreciated and valued.



CONNECT-EXTEND-CHALLENGE

Whether it be a whole class shared reading experience or a small group guided reading session, Connect-Extend-Challenge has proven to help to develop children's critical literacy skills. After reading a text, we ask the children questions that push beyond knowledge and promote discussion:

How did you connect with this story/picture/character?

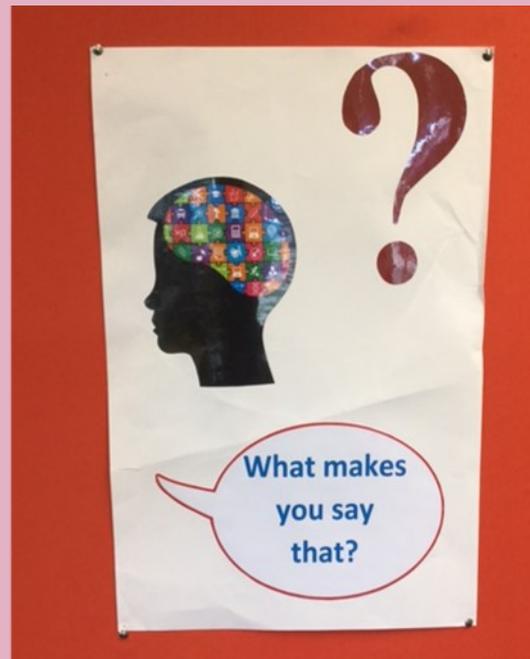
The Year 1 children have become extremely adept at explaining the connections they have made with texts.

How did this story extend your thinking?

This question is frequently answered, "I didn't know that..." "I used to think..."

What challenges or puzzles have come up in your mind now that you have read/heard this text?

Year 1 children often present these challenges in the form of questions.



What's happening around the network

Thinking about thinking

Year 4 acknowledged that if the thinking was to be valued, visible and actively promoted as part of the ongoing, day-to-day experiences of all members, it needed to occur within a cultural context or, as Ron Ritchhart adeptly calls it, *enculturation*. Students are given a consistent message that their ideas are important and that showing the teacher their thinking, regardless of if it is written on a post-it note or a well presented written document, does not matter. The vital ingredient is to show their teacher and peers what they are thinking and be able to justify and make connections with their thinking.

Throughout the year, all students in Year 4 have been exposed to numerous Visible Thinking Routines, firmly planted within a Culture of Thinking classroom environment. These routines have permeated every aspect of the classroom and through all subject areas, including units of inquiry, mathematics and language. Here is a sample of routines and the context they were used in:

CHALK TALK

This routine was used as a provocation for the unit of inquiry, *How we organise ourselves*. Students were asked "How much money could change a life?" Students conducted a silent conversation on paper. They built on the thoughts and comments of others, making connections to the thinking of their peers as well as making connections to prior knowledge and



understandings.

I USED TO THINK...NOW I THINK

This routine is continuously incorporated into the regular classroom routine, when students are expressing an idea or opinion. The purpose of this routine is to highlight how thinking has shifted and then to further reflect on why thinking has shifted. It is an ongoing formative assessment and can be used to compare how thinking has shifted from the beginning of a unit of inquiry to the end of the inquiry.

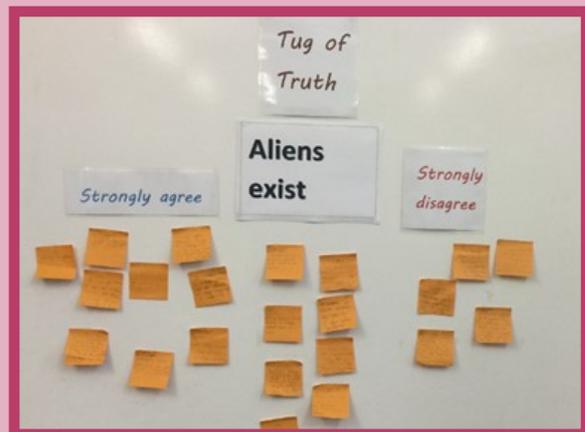
CIRCLE OF VIEWPOINT

As students inquired into *Where we are in place and time*, the routine Circle of Viewpoint was a great thinking tool as the students were required to analyse an Indigenous Dream Time Story. Through this routine, students were able to put themselves into the shoes of a different character in the story and to understand complex issues including belonging and the pull of family and country. Creating questions from the different perspectives also promoted thinking and connected to the concept of perspective.

TUG OF WAR

Tug 'O Truth was ideal for the unit of inquiry, *How the world works*. Students inquired into what elements are required to sustain life and then considered if life existed outside of Earth. Through identifying their personal 'pull' towards each side of the argument, student understandings of the central idea became more transparent. This was also a great formative

as-



assessment through the unit of inquiry. To extend student thinking further, 'What if?' questions were raised for students to consider and discuss. As the unit continued to evolve, it became apparent that the students had very strong views on the existence of aliens. This routine allowed students to articulate their opinion and to shift their thinking after hearing others' opinions.

What's happening around the network

Thinking about thinking

ZOOM IN

As for the Year 1 students, this routine was used when introducing a concept or an idea. This was the provocation during a mathematics learning engagement when introducing symmetry and shapes. Parts of an image were highlighted and students were required to identify what they could see and what they thought. Throughout the routine, students were required to justify their thinking and expand on their thoughts, until eventually the entire image was visible to the students.

CONNECT – EXTEND – CHALLENGE

This routine is used regularly in both Language and units of inquiry. The picture story book, *Thank you, Mr Faulker*, which focused on a young student who had difficulty reading and a teacher who believed in her, was used as stimulus to assist students to make connections, extend their thinking and articulate any tensions. Student responses were recorded on sticky notes and added to the headings throughout the session. As students become more familiar with the routine, they began to question one another and lead the conversations as they begin to connect new ideas to prior knowledge. This routine has also been used with images connecting to various units of inquiry.

Through developing the use of Thinking Routines and consciously focusing on developing a learning environment that enhances and develops thinking, we were able to identify the Thinking Routines as tools to enhance what we are trying to do in the classroom, not take away from it or be seen as an extra.

These routines are becoming a part of the classroom routine as students become aware that their thinking is important, valued and that, regardless of the level they are working, all students can think! The level of student engagement is always high during these routines as students who do not usually experience academic success, are able to shine. Many students have demonstrated their ability to articulate their thinking, ask questions to gain further insight and even to shift their thinking if new information is presented to them. All of these are characteristics of a lifelong learner.



SEE – THINK – WONDER

As with *Connect, Extend, Challenge*; *See, Think, Wonder* is a routine which lends itself well to both literate and visual literature. Students explored the picture story book, *The rabbits*, aiming to elicit deeper thinking in relation to the impact of settlement on indigenous people.

Throughout the routine, students are regularly asked, 'What makes you say that?' Their thinking becomes visible and valued and students have grown in confidence to share their thinking.

Karen Chandler (PYP coordinator), Leanne Williams (Year 4 teacher), Lauren Ross (Year 1 teacher)

Sandringham House

Firbank Girls Grammar School

Victoria

Australia

What's happening around the region

Student led conferences go digital

**Student led conference accepts invitation from our 21C classroom:
SLC invites go digital!!**

With the seamless integration of technology into our every teaching practice, the search for new and innovative ways to share student learning in a digital format is constantly at the forefront of my mind. Planning and delivering a student-centred program that aims to cater to each individual's needs and strengths, while equipping them with the necessary tools required to not only participate, but excel in a digitally literate world, really are 'big' areas of focus for 21st century teachers like myself.

At the Australian International School we are conscious that our students operate in an increasingly digital and global world. The use of 'Technology' in my classroom is very highly valued and promoted. I believe technology can provide a platform from which my students are encouraged to research, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, innovate, create and present in ways which celebrate individuality and creativity, as well as connecting them in a collaborative sense with their peers.

"Technology amplifies my pedagogy, inspires my students and produces multimodal pieces of work that can be shared globally with the click of a button!"



For our Student Led Conferences (SLC), this year, my class embraced the idea of co-constructing multimodal invites that were presented in a digital format to their parents prior to the event.

Each invite was individually written and included personalised snippets of 'the day's events', 'logistics', 'proposed timetables' and 'work samples' that the students' were

most proud to share and engage with on the day.

The students' presentations were recorded and then uploaded to our class website. A uniquely individual "QR Code" was then generated for each student and printed on his or her family's SLC invitation. QR stands for 'Quick Response Code' and is the machine-readable optical label that contains intelligence about the item to which it is attached. Using 'QR Code Reader' the parents were able to simply hold their devices over the code and the magic of technology took them directly to our class website and their child's recorded invitation.

The feedback received from our parent community regarding this type of approach to SL was overwhelmingly positive, with many stating the highlight of the invitation was the chance it provided them to be more actively involved in their child's learning experience.

As an educator in a classroom where 1:1 iPads are a reality, I really enjoyed the opportunity to engage and interact with my community of learners in a new and innovative way. I invite all of you to explore the challenge of going 'digital' where possible. I promise you'll be asking yourself why you didn't do it sooner.



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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)



Victorian PYP Network Committee 2015-2016

POSITION

Chairperson of Network

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Joint Chairs—Coordinators

Chair—Professional Development

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Auburn South Primary School

Sharon Bailey
Firbank Grammar School, Brighton campus
Bronwyn Gowty
Mentone Girls' Grammar School

Melissa Graham
St Margaret's School

PD OPPORTUNITIES

20–22 January 2016. Adelaide

An Introduction to the PYP Curriculum Model, cat 1
Making the PYP Happen in the Classroom, cat 1
Making the PYP Happen in the Classroom in the
Early Years, cat 1
Pedagogical Leadership, cat 2
Teaching and Learning, cat 2
Concept-based Learning, cat 3
Digital Citizenship, cat 3
The Role of the Coordinator, cat 3
3-5 Year Olds, cat 3

20–22 January 2016. Melbourne

Making the PYP Happen in the Classroom, cat 1

May 2016 Melbourne

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

