

INTERNATIONAL INQUIRER

Hong Kong and Southern China PYP Network Newsletter
June 2014.



COLOURS
OF THE CLASSROOM

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the Second edition of the Hong Kong and South China PYP Network Newsletter. I would like to extend my apologies to the teachers of the Kingston International School, whose articles I missed for the last edition. You will find their inspiring reads included here in our last edition for the year. I would also like to extend a HUGE thank you to the contributors who have submitted articles both in English and Chinese. The time that you have put into sharing your ideas with others is gratefully appreciated!

Colours of the Classroom, was the theme chosen for the our last edition. We had a great response with a wonderful range of articles being shared. In light of this, I thought to run with the same theme for our second edition of this year. The beauty of this broad theme is that it welcomes a variety of different stories to be shared and we have in this edition collected a variety of stories in both English and Chinese.

In keeping with our theme, I would like to share with you one of my favourite poems by the late Maya Angelou. Her words are particularly pertinent for us when considering what it means to be International Citizens and Open Minded towards others.

If you have any questions regarding the newsletter or submitting articles, please feel free to email me at reneec@zischina.com.

Happy reading and Happy Holidays!

Renee Coventry
Editor





HUMAN FAMILY

Poem by Dr. Maya Angelou

Read at the dedication of the Disney Millennium Village

I note the obvious differences
in the human family.

Some of us are serious,
some thrive on comedy.

Some declare their lives are lived
as true profundity,
and others claim they really live
the real reality.

The variety of our skin tones
can confuse, bemuse, delight,
brown and pink and beige and purple,
tan and blue and white.

I've sailed upon the seven seas
and stopped in every land.

I've seen the wonders of the world,
not yet one common man.

I know ten thousand women
called Jane and Mary Jane,
but I've not seen any two
who really were the same.

Mirror twins are different
although their features jibe,
and lovers think quite different thoughts
while lying side by side.

We love and lose in China,
we weep on England's moors,
and laugh and moan in Guinea,
and thrive on Spanish shores.

We seek success in Finland,
are born and die in Maine.

In minor ways we differ,
in major we're the same.

I note the obvious differences
between each sort and type,
but we are more alike, my friends
than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends,
than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends,
than we are unlike.



Y ICT ?

Contribution by Ryan Krakofsky - Classroom teacher, Kingston International School .

For the last 2 ½ years I have been teaching Year 2 & 3 at Kingston International School in Hong Kong. I knew that Kingston had a very good reputation in respect to their successful implementation of the PYP. This reputation was confirmed as I began to see the dedication and hard work that the teachers and administration put forth in delivering a well-balanced Program of Inquiry. During my time at Kingston, I have learned about Inquiry learning and ways of adapting my teaching to the philosophies of the IB.

After a few months into my new role as a Year 2 teacher, I started seeing how inquiry based learning was drastically different to the methods of teaching that I was used to. I used to think of a teacher as someone who shared knowledge, answered student's questions and assessed students based on the knowledge that was shared. The role of the teacher has thus changed in my mind since working at Kingston. I believe a teacher must guide students on how to find knowledge and promote attitudes that can help students become positive global citizens. With this shift in my teaching beliefs and values I realised that I needed to change my teaching style. I thought about the ways in which I was attaining knowledge, collaborating and expressing myself in my own life.

What steps need to be taken to successfully integrate ICT?

I began to visit other school's ICT departments to see how other schools were integrating ICT, attended PD sessions about ICT and assessed the infrastructure and devices available at Kingston. I understood that this was going to be a gradual learning process and I needed to be well prepared before changing my classroom environment. I am lucky to be working in an environment which encourages and promotes teachers to take initiative to try new things and enhance their student's education.

How ICT has changed my student's learning?

During the first 6-9 months of integrating ICT in my Year 2 and 3 classroom I have seen a major shift in the way my students learn. My students are now independently researching using tablets and computers to inquire into things. They are asking and answering their own questions and doing so accurately and effectively.

Edmodo, the school friendly closed social networking site has given my class the opportunity to have an online classroom which reaches beyond the regular school hours, so that students can ask and answer each other's questions, share valuable resources and knowledge, collaborate on tasks and most importantly encourage each other while communicating and sharing these ideas.

iPad applications like Explain Everything, iMovie and Doodlebuddy have allowed my students to share knowledge and express themselves in interactive and creative ways. By teaching my students the skills to use these applications, they are now feeling more comfortable in taking their own videos and pictures, creating posters, infographics, stories and movies.

My students have participated in Mystery Skype sessions where they have linked up with schools around the world to ask questions and inquire more about life in other countries. By speaking with students from all over the world, my students are getting first-hand knowledge about what life is like in these places. The IB values international mindedness and what better way to become internationally minded than to have meaningful communication with students internationally.

I still come across people that ask the question "Why ICT?" My answer for them is because we must prepare our students for their futures and not our pasts. Thanks for reading.



hongkong.appsevents.com



Connect

The premier Google in education event in Asia.



Discover

Innovative practices from schools and try the latest devices.



Learn

Google Apps Sessions led by leading Google Teachers.



PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

PUTTING THE INQUIRY CYCLE INTO MOTION!

Contribution by Kirsten McGrath, Rebecca Clark and Terra Dennis- Xiamen International

Grade 4 have just completed their UOI, under the Transdisciplinary theme, “How we organize ourselves”. The Central Idea was “members of a community make decisions that influence their environment”, with the concepts of causation, perspective and responsibility driving the inquiry. Students were involved in learning engagement finding out about the responsibility of members of an organized community, the consequences of different decisions that are made and how different perspectives shape a community.

The reason this unit was so successful and engaging for the students was that they had complete ownership in every aspect how their inquiry, perspectives and how ideas unfolded. The students were involved in role play throughout this unit from the very beginning. They created a town mural, voted on a name, chose characters, jobs, families and rights for their created town and our collective narrative began!

Social skills were used in activities from town council meetings, debates, family discussions, to creating the rights of the community members of the town and address critical situations that occur within the cities. The simulation took on life as students practised respecting others, cooperating, resolving conflict, group decision-making and adopting a variety of group roles. Students were involved in every aspect and every decision that was made in designing the town. The more they added to their town the more real it became for the students and the more engaged they became. It made it fun!

By using dialectical thinking and persuasive language the students came up with scenarios and discussed strategies for solving the problems, while taking into consideration the multiple perspectives of the members of the communities. “If we run out of power what will we do?” “What if a little girl gets bitten in the park?” By making critical decisions the students became more connected to the perspective of others.



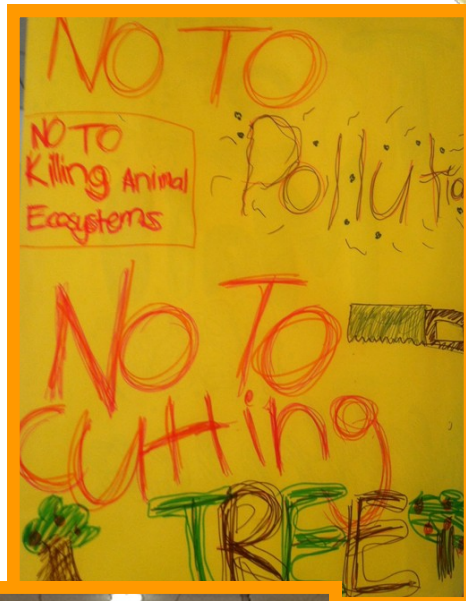
Math was integrated throughout the unit, as we studied area, perimeter, designing floor plans and construction costs. Our math assessment required students to create their house plan, choose land and justify their expenses within a given budget.

Grade 4 also connected with the Grade 5 classes who had just completed a Unit of Inquiry on energy and had created models of towns with alternative energy sources. They viewed their models, grade 5 presented their towns and grade 4s interviewed them about cause and effect relationships and ask the students about the choice of energy and why.

Towards the end of the unit a critical situation occurred in the town and a debate was held at a town meeting. The students had to get into character and take on that character's perspective and use persuasive language to participate in the town decision.

So many questions came out of this unit and students made connections about protests they had witnessed or heard about in the real world. Students reflected on the attitudes, learner profiles and skills they used in taking action and the knowledge they gained about how "members of a community make decisions that influence their environment".

The nature of the learning engagements allowed for the students to naturally go through the process of inquiry and the result was learning that we are sure will remain with the students for years to come.





THE COLOUR OF POETRY

Contribution by Matthew James Friday and Jill Duncan Gozdowski –
Grade 3 and Grade 2 teachers and joint Literacy Co-ordinators at Utahloy International School, Guangzhou.


Poetry has always been a passion of mine, and as a published poet I enjoy teaching and inspiring children to be poets. They have a natural ability to express themselves through descriptive words and metaphors. In joining our school, Jill and myself wanted to model different approaches to writing that could inspire our multilingual community of learners. Poetry is one of the best forms for students because it is relatively a small amount of writing with an inherent focus on sentence-level language richness. It enables every child to find their voice as an author and build connections with peers.

For that reason, a poetry project is a perfect to embark after any holiday period, aware of the fact that English language use in all forms regresses when the child is away from school and especially in such a diverse Mother Tongue community. Poetry, with its relatively low level of words but high conceptual content, is a wonderful way to rebuild confidence in English speaking and listening.

One of the strengths of poetry is, the opportunity to integrate literacy with inquiry learning. Poetry allows for every student to share his or her individual knowledge and view of the world. Poetry isn't 'wrong' or 'right'. Poetry should not be focussed on restrictive forms and rhyming schemes; rather, poetry gives all children the chance to really express themselves through any unit of study. Their ideas, their words, their world. Every student is already a poet. It is our job to embrace and make sure the inner-poet comes out on the paper. So why *colour* poetry? Any type of writing work should begin with reading inspiring mentor texts. Our mentor text was *Red is a Dragon – A Book of Colors* by Roseanne Thong. This accessible, colourful text appealed to all the children in our Grade 2 and 3 classes, even the children who were new to the school and English language. Every child has a favourite colour and I'm sure they've asked you about your favourite colour. It is a small but important, conceptual leap to link their colour to an object, place, feeling or thought.

This also invited an opportunity to promote the developing "buddy" relationship between our two classes. Poetic words can be shared through all levels. This is where connections happen and when shared a deeper level of understanding is celebrated. A literacy community begins to grow outside of the walls of our own classrooms and students taking action by sharing their poetry with others. This project allowed me to further my reach to the school by modelling this teaching to colleagues, Chinese teaching assistants and administrators. So how did we do it? The teaching of this poetry followed a structure I have used many times, which is a blend of the Gradual Release Model and language inquiry learning. The structure is:

- Read and discuss the mentor texts while making connections and allowing students to turn and talk as well as share out.

- 
- Model yourself as a poet by using the same planning sheet the students will use to accumulate ideas. Choose your colour and link it to a feeling, an object, a place, a thought, etc. Then invite them to share their connections to your colour. This helps to establish that all ideas are poetic. There were discussions about where ideas go on the planning sheet. The sheet is only for taking notes and shouldn't be too structured.
 - Now children create their own connections through their own colours. They work next to their *buddies* so they always have someone to share or collaborate with on an idea.
 - The following day look at the ideas and plans with a view to developing them into complete sentences. For example:
Red is the color of the setting sun when I am with my family at the beach.
Then discuss how you can use more descriptive language and select relevant adjectives (and adverbs for extension).
 - Dedicate some time to editing the above sentences for richer language choices. Extend some children, support others.
 - Model how the poetic sentences can be constructed to appear like a poem, using line-breaks. (Some children are ready for this focus while others are more focused on expressing their words.) The children decide where to put in the line-breaks or how to let them freely flow on the page.
 - Finally, publish the poetry in the children's own 'poetry books', and include pictures of what is being described.

Perhaps the most important aspect was the achievements of ALL the children as they were able to associate colours with universal images and use those to construct sentences they would not normally consider doing. They also described colours in ways we both never imagined. The end result – unique and beautiful poetry!

Here are some examples, of how our students express themselves through poetry. They chose some of their favourite verses to inspire you:

*Red is the color
of the beautiful, very attractive rose,
leaning softly in his pretty pose.*
(Jerry, P3)

*Blue is the color of my imagination car
that flies around the world.*
(Alton, P2)

*Green is the colour
of fresh rustling grass,
shaking because the wind blows softly.
(Haruto, P3)*

*Orange is the color of slowing really
beautiful Christmas lights
making sure Santa Claus knows where
we are.
(Teun, P2)*

*Blue is the colour
of a crying lonely star
that is lost in the dark cold sky.
(Lisa, P3)*

*White is the color of a tired and angry
white bread
because a man is eat for lunch.
(Joshua, P2)*

*Red is the colour
is a beautiful, pretty bird
is flying in the blue clean air
because she is finding her
little cute baby.
(Lydia, P3)*

*Blue is the color of a ginormous flower
that makes me not be by myself.
(Simon, P2)*

*Blue is the colour of
the cold, icy, far away planet Neptune
spinning slowly, trying very hard
to get heat.
(Maaz, P3)*

*Light blue is the color of a relaxing feel-
ing that takes me to the sky
where I could feel like I am flying with
my own wings.
(Catherine, P2)*

*So what next? To establish a culture of
poetic writing requires frequency and
familiarity. So in short, more poetry. En-
joy this lesson and let us know how it
went. Happy Poetry Writing!*

*Please contact us if you would like help
doing the same in your school.*

*mfriday@uisqz.org and
jgozdowski@uisqz.org*



主題閱讀的實踐

Contributed by Winifred Kwok, Kingston International School, Hong Kong

一、了解——問題的產生

國際學校的學生在中文閱讀上遇到了難題，原因是識字量少，能看得懂得圖書內容太淺，適合閱讀的圖書又看不懂，結果，隨著年齡的增長，學生對中文閱讀的興趣越來越低。五年級的學生在做閱讀報告時，看的是圖畫書，目的是為了完成作業，應付老師。如何解決這種現象，幫助學生提高閱讀的能力、愛上閱讀呢？這是每位中文老師面對的難題，也是我需要解決的問題。



二、發現——閱讀的方向

在《小學項目的實施：國際初等教育課程框架》中指出，良好語言課堂實踐其中一項是通過探究接觸文學作品，從而使學生產生對語言的熱愛與享受。具體的方法可以是通過閱讀一系列圖書對一位作家進行研究，是基於文學作品展開學習。教師的理解會決定為學生選取哪些資源（國際文憑組織，2010）。一系列圖書可以是一位作者的作品，也可是同類的文學作品，它的特點是能集中對一位作者進行探究，找出其文化背景與作品的關係，作者的寫作手法如何被其經歷、文化背景所影響。找到了方向後，我著手與學生討論，一起解決閱讀上的困難。

三、整理——計劃的形成

俗話說：知己知彼，百戰不殆。老師要了解九歲的孩子對文學作品的興趣，需要知道學生曾經看過的圖書，以及他們喜歡閱讀的書籍類型。然後，在學生已有的閱讀經驗上，擬定了一系列的閱讀主題。這些主題是：童話故事、寓言故事、兒童故事、偵探故事、神仙故事、民間故事、名人傳記。再根據學生的興趣定出每個月閱讀主題的順序，並盡量配合探究單元。

接著遇到的困難時是如何解決圖書資源。學校的圖書館不能在同一時期提供相同主題的書本。社區可以為教育提供良好的資源。於是大家決定就地取材，每個月去家附近的圖書館借同一類的主題書，集中資源一起分享。大家同意每星期平均看一本書，當然讀書進度要取決於書的厚薄長短。用主題閱讀的方法去認識作者，去分析作品。



四、深入探討——問題的解決

閱讀後的指定動作是寫閱讀報告，每週一篇。有的同學很用心，有的同學只有兩句話。比如：這本書很好看，我很喜歡。囫圇吞棗，理解不了文本，也達不到探究的目的，更談不上與作者產生共鳴。《小學項目的實施：國際初等教育課程框架》對於小學高年級學生的要求是學生需要表現出能夠理解閱讀、思考和反思之間的關係，養成閱讀習慣，有自己喜愛的作家以及吸引讀者的寫作手法（國際文憑組織，2010）。維高斯基認為，要發展學生的最近發展區，需要在一個有知識的他人的支持和引導下達到目標（穀瑞勉，2001）這個有知識的人可以是老師，也可以是有能力的學生。於是我根據學生的能力分成幾個閱讀小組。每組四人，由一個小組長負責帶領閱讀和討論。老師有時在旁觀察，遇到有疑問時可以提供幫忙；有時老師加入小組帶領學生一起討論。在討論中澄清重要概念，理解文本脈絡，提升閱讀能力。討論的題目：

這本書由哪幾個部分組成？
插圖如何配合故事？
故事主要人物的性格有何特徵？
情節如何發展變化？
作者用了什麼方法寫故事？
你認為作者的文化背景如何影響他的作品？

書與書之間有何連繫？
書中的情節與我們的生活經驗有何關聯？
我們如何知道作者的文化背景？

小組討論後可選擇一個題目做分享，大家集思廣益，也可提出疑問，表達自己不同的看法，還可以探究同一系列書籍的特徵。比如，在童話故事系列，同學們發現故事的主人翁都是美麗善良的；美麗善良的人都會得到好的結果；熱心助人的，也會得到別人的幫助。



五、採取行動——讀寫的結合

閱讀和書寫是分不開的，有意義的閱讀會引發有意義的書寫。閱讀是寫作的基礎，寫作能促進閱讀，閱讀和寫作是連接在一起的。在學生充分理解文本的基礎上展開了寫作。學生根據分享的內容圍繞著一些題目寫讀書報告。

讀書報告的內容：

改寫人物的性格；
擴展故事的情節；
改寫結局；
評價一個故事；
改寫一個故事；
把故事改寫成劇本；
對作者的評價；
對圖書的評價。



“兒童是通過寫作學習寫作的，僅僅掌握一

套孤立的寫作技巧是無法將它們變成作家的，只有通過寫作表達思想觀點的過程中，學生才能發展、運用和精通各種寫作技巧，不斷提高書面表達的效果”（國際文憑組織，2001）。由於讀書報告的形式不拘，範圍廣泛，比起單一的概括內容、寫感想的讀書報告比較有趣，因此，學生都能寫出自己獨特的報告，在寫作中磨練各種寫作技巧。通過不斷的有意義的書寫練習，詞彙量增加了，學生整體書寫能力也提高了。

六、反思——學生的收穫

在主題閱讀中，學生能一起探討文本的脈絡，澄清一些概念，理解艱澀的詞語，共同探討一個作者的社會文化背景，這種獨特的社會文化背景如何影響作者的作品，以及文學對大眾文化的影響力。可賀可喜的是通過主題閱讀學生培養了閱讀的習慣，有自己喜愛的作者，也會利用社區資源，每份閱讀報告都有自己獨特的心得。學生詞彙量少的問題迎刃而解了。如果閱讀主題能配合小學項目的探究課題，那麼，相信學生探究書本的深度和廣度將有所不同。我想，主題閱讀為學生學習語言提供了豐富的取之不盡的資源，並能有效地解決學生閱讀中的困難。

參考文獻

Dixon-Krauss, L.著, 穀瑞勉譯(2001):《教室中的維高斯基—仲介的讀寫教學與評量》,台北: 心理出版社。

國際文憑組織International Baccalaureate(2010):《小學項目的實施: 國際初等教育課程框架》,英國: Paterson House

MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE SUPPORT AT RENAISSANCE COLLEGE, HONG KONG.

Contribution by Julz Davis, Y3 Classroom Teacher and Transdisciplinary Learning Leader

Current research tells us that there are many advantages for students' academic, social and personal success when they are supported with language development in the languages of instruction, as well as their Mother Tongue (MT) language. Language expert Jim Cummins claims that both languages are nurtured when the educational environment permits children access to both languages. As opposed to many older theories, which claimed that speaking in other languages at school could be detrimental to the development of English, he also says that "Mother tongue promotion in the school helps develop not only the mother tongue but also children's abilities in the majority school language." The IB supports this research, and the document Making The PYP Happen, clearly outlines that the support of MT languages is a part of the Standards and Practices for all PYP teachers. The IB states that "*the ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes intercultural understanding.*" !



Here at RCHK, our PYP Self Study in 2012-13 indicated that this was an area for development - as it is within many schools in the region. There are a number of initiatives that have since been put into place to address this issue in a sustainable manner, for the benefit of students at our school.

1. A Transdisciplinary Learning Leader (TLL) position was allocated to the development of MT Languages within the school. (This position allows the school to have a dedicated temporary role to address areas of need.) I was employed into that role. !
2. I was assigned a Strategic Team that included classroom teacher representatives from each year level and our Learning Support Team.
3. The Strategic Team brainstormed, designed and implemented a range of activities, strategies and initiatives across the school year.
4. I joined an ESF "Snapshots of Learning" group to encourage collaboration across the English Schools Foundation, sharing best practice and creating resources that will be available to other teachers by the end of the school year.
5. I visited other schools to see what is currently being implemented, and what success has been achieved.



During this academic year, we have seen a significant change in the attitude of teachers towards the use of MT languages in the classroom and school environment, based on the evidence that has been shared with them. Students are taking a genuine interest in the languages that their peers speak and learning simple phrases with them. This shows a shift in student attitudes regarding the value of all languages, and an appreciation of each others' cultures. In terms of student language outcomes, it will be difficult to ascertain the degree of success we are able to reach, but our aim is to see students develop a higher level of proficiency in the *academic language* in their mother tongue. In turn, we believe that this will see increased English development (due to the transfer of understanding from one language to another) and deeper understanding of the conceptual learning taking place. An environment which allows students to nurture both languages is known as an environment of "Additive Bilingualism": adding value to both languages and developing the social and academic language of both.!

So: what have we done at RCHK to achieve these shifts in perspective and attitude?

Below is a list of some of the things that have been achieved with the support and drive of Mother Tongue Language Support at RCHK 2013-14! The Strategic Team, classroom and specialist teachers, EA's and leadership across the school.

- We hosted a Primary Staff Meeting information session outlining current supporting research and best practice for classroom support and maintenance of MT languages.
- We conducted a survey of students, for collection of more accurate data regarding Mother Tongue Languages represented in our primary school.
- Baseline evidence gathered via a Student Voice video. Shared with parents and across some ESF schools (via Snapshots of learning group).
- RAPT Coffee afternoon presentation: where I shared information, current practice and support strategies with RCHK Parent body.

We hope to continue in the spirit of collaboration and the sharing of best practices across schools. We also hope to see greater input from RCHK parents and families, to see more use of MT languages in our classrooms and hubs. This is a huge part of our strategic direction for next year, as we have seen this work very effectively in other schools. It has been inspiring to be a part of the MT implementation at RCHK this year, and to see the immense support from the staff, students and our school community. I feel that momentum is building and it's exciting to plan for the year ahead, to build on the successes from this year.

References:

- Cummins, J. 2001. "Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why Is It Important for Education?"*
- IB PYP, MYP, DP, 2008. Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes.*
- IB PYP 2009. Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education.*
- IB PYP, MYP, DP, 2010. Programme Standards and Practices.*
- Virginia P. Rojas Language Education Consultant
vprojas@aol.com!



VISIBLE LEARNING IN MATHEMATICS INQUIRY

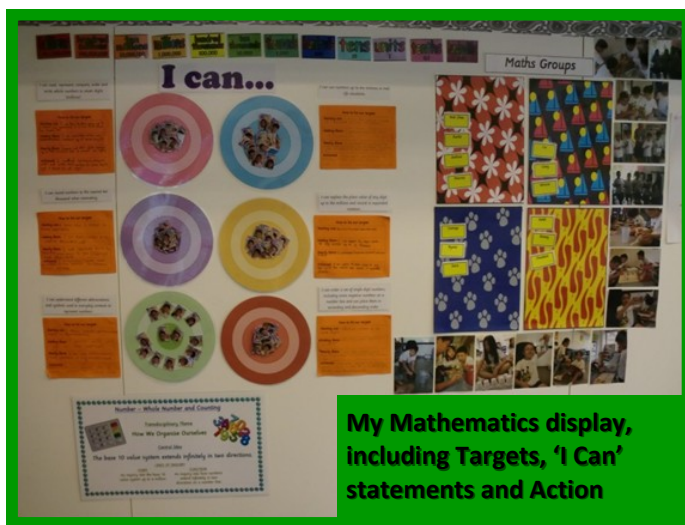
Contribution by Kellie Berry - Classroom Teacher, Kingston International School, Hong Kong

Kingston International School is a small PYP school in Kowloon Tong that has the privilege of being the first authorized PYP school in Hong Kong. With a dynamic group of enthusiastic teachers, the school continues to evolve. I am proud to say that I have been a part of this development. In my 3 years at KIS, I have seen what an incredible place Kingston is for learners.

When incorporating Visible Learning was pitched to me as a challenge by my school's Upper Primary Deputy Principal, John Harper, I was eager to explore the idea. I had approached his office one morning with a question about planning for mathematics and in signature IB style, had left with a tool and a direction to seek out my own solution.

John Hattie's visible learning approach was going to make its way to my classroom but I had no idea how this would transform my teaching yet. Kingston's two DPs had attended the conference that John Hattie had given a few weeks before. From my conversation with John (Harper), he and the Lower Primary DP Emily Flach had embraced the idea and believed in the benefits. They wanted to see it in their classrooms, and now I was their guinea pig.

After researching into Hattie's approach for myself, I had become more familiar with his philosophy. Hattie (2004) summarized his research in his University of Auckland lecture (1999) to this: "So far the prescriptions for influencing student learning are clear: dollops of feedback, specific and challenging goals, and a constant attention to asking, 'How am I going?'" This made sense to me and my visible learning snowball started rolling.



In a previous year's PD afternoon, Nicki French came to explain to Kingston staff the way in which she facilitated mathematics inquiry in her classroom. At the time, she was working at Sha Tin Junior School and through her sharing, I had been shown the benefits of 'I Can' statements during inquiry. After Nicki had shared her approach to mathematics instruction, these statements had become a part of my Mathematics teaching from time to time, but only at the instructional point of the teaching and learning cycle.

At this point, I decided to incorporate 'I Can' statements into the visible learning approach I was planning, by changing my upcoming number unit's mathematics indicators into 'I Can' statements. 6 indicators became 'I Can' statements which would become targets for my next unit. My idea was taking shape. The word *'targets'* caused quite a light bulb moment for me. It made sense to use targets as my visible learning tool. Learners would have something to aim for but in my opinion didn't have the competitive factor that a ladder or a linear model would have. My learners would be aiming to reach the center of those targets but it would be a self-reflective process. It was a work in progress but I could really see the development. That feeling of having more work to do but being excited and motivated to continue with the idea is certainly what drove me through the more tedious decisions and planning.

The targets looked great on my wall and formed a focus for beginning the unit. I was getting a sense of what Hattie meant about making learning visible. I decided to create a sense of ownership for learners by making thumbnail sized pictures of each of them to put on the targets. These were a hit with my class as the day of the photographs happened to be Halloween and they were all in costume. They loved their little photographs and it was a little different from the usual laminated name cards that I used. They kept revisiting the targets to check themselves out even before we had started the targets.

The next hurdle for me was how I was going to make the 'I Can' statements more like an action plan. I adopted another idea from Hattie at this point and gave my learners some ownership of their goals by asking them to do the breakdown themselves. In pairs, students decided on the steps that would be needed to achieve their goal far quicker than I had imagined. I realised at this point, how successful this teaching tool would be for them because I was already asking my class to inquire into technical vocabulary, discuss possible learning experiences and write a learning sequence for each target. This was conducted when the central idea and lines of inquiry were introduced. Although some vocabulary was a little tricky, I saw the value in keeping the technical words and my learners took it in their stride.

In hindsight, at that point I had not thought too deeply about how this was changing my teaching approach of mathematics. The students had not even started the learning experiences and they were mapping their own goals and writing success criteria for their own learning. The self assessment and reflection process had already begun and I could see the drive of each little individual to learn and succeed. Discussions about their own prior knowledge and opportunities to prove their current understandings were occurring in my classroom before we had touched the materials or started new learning experiences. I remember at this time, taking a moment to pause and look around at my buzzing classroom, alive with wonder, excitement and eagerness. I realised then how valuable this part of the process was in their learning.



Reflection on 'I Can' statements. Students self evaluating themselves against the action plans and Targets.



The display looked great. My minor case of OCD with regards to my learning environment and wall displays was appreciated by the class. In line with Hattie's approach (2004), my goals were clear, the tool gave relevant feedback and students could ask how they were going with their own learning. My mathematics lesson began and ended every day of that first week with the Targets. It could be argued that this was time consuming, but because the goals were clearly stipulated and reflected upon each day, my learners were striving for self improvement and moving much faster as individual learners than they had previously. They were asking more relevant questions, they were approaching learning tasks with a sense of what they were trying to achieve and they continued to go back to the targets to evaluate their own progress.

Visible Learning tool for the two Learner Profiles in my current Transdisciplinary Unit of Inquiry

My grade level partner, Leigh Nam, had decided to jump on my visible learning band wagon early on in that first unit and now we were very pleased with how it was working in our classrooms. The unit flowed very smoothly we witnessed active learning and many 'aha' moments in our students. The self monitoring and reflection was evident and the learners were verbalising their own progress. I remember one of my boys standing up after a short discussion I had witnessed between him and another learner. He then approached the targets confidently and moved himself closer towards the target center, clarifying his advances in learning by referring to the action plan that had been created by the students themselves. If I had not placed those targets on those walls, I do not believe that he would have recognised his achievements at that moment. "Achievement is enhanced to the degree that students develop self-strategies: to seek and receive feedback to verify rather than enhance their sense of achievement efficacy" was how Hattie (1999) described the process. Reflection and self assessment were powerful with the Targets and I was enjoying seeing the effects on my class.

I visited John Harper's office throughout the unit to report on the success that the visible learning approach had become for me. He had observed lessons and witnessed the value of the Targets in my classroom and I had his full support. John and Emily were both very keen for me to share the Targets and my experiences with the all the teachers.

Twelve months on, Targets are still part of the foundations of my stand alone mathematics inquiry. I am proud to say that after work-shopping the successes of P5 and continued sharing with my colleagues, Targets and 'I Can' statements now form a part of all upper primary stand alone mathematics at Kingston. In lower primary, teachers have adapted the mathematics 'I Can' statements to suit their younger learners but the same philosophy of visible learning applies and teachers, after adding their own creative flair, are motivated to continue using it.

Kingston has since adopted visible learning in all primary classrooms, and bilingually, across the grades. The most recent development has been to make the two focus Learner Profiles for each Transdisciplinary Unit of Inquiry into visible learning displays and now teachers are transitioning to use visible learning for the focus Attitudes of each of their units. Teachers seem inspired and motivated to be creative with this approach and there has been a lot of pedagogical discussion around the topic.

Visible learning will continue to evolve in my classroom. I see so many benefits of this teaching approach and have enjoyed the learning curve. It has become a valuable teaching tool for me, promoting independence in my learners. I have witnessed students develop better metacognitive thinking skills and ownership of their learning.

References

Hattie, J., (2003) Teachers Make a Difference: What is the research evidence?. Australian Council for Educational Research. http://growthmindseteaz.org/files/RC2003_Hattie_TeachersMakeADifference_1_.pdf (Accessed 29/10/2013)

Hattie, J., (1999) Influences on Student Learning. Inaugural Lecture: Professor of Education, University of Auckland. http://growthmindseteaz.org/files/Influencesonstudent2C683_1_.pdf (Accessed 29/10/2013)

Project Zero at VSA

Conference on
Visible Thinking and Global Competencies

Hosted by Victoria Shanghai Academy

Ron Ritchhart is a Senior Research Associate at Harvard Project Zero where his work focuses on such issues as teaching for understanding, the development of intellectual character, creative teaching, making students' thinking visible, and most recently the development of school and Classroom culture.



Sept 15
2014

Veronica Boix Mansilla is a Principal Investigator at Project Zero. Her research examines how human beings enhance their understanding of complex problems by using the lenses of disciplines like history, science, or the arts, or by combining disciplinary approaches in novel ways.



Online Registration:
www.vsa.edu.hk/conference2014

Course Fee*:
Early Bird Rate \$1,000 (register before 11 June 2014)
Regular Rate \$1,200 (registration close on 15 August 2014)
*Refreshment and lunch included.

Victoria Shanghai Academy
Tel: 3402 1000
Website: www.vsa.edu.hk
Email: conference2014@vsa.edu.hk
Address: 19 Shum Wan Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong



CAINE'S ARCADE BRINGS UOI TO LIFE

Contribution by Jordan Rose - Year 4 Classroom Teacher, Zhuhai International School, Zhuhai

Over 5 and a half weeks this winter our Year 4 class at Zhuhai International School found some fun and hands on ways to inquire into forces and how they create and affect motion. Our How the World Works Central Idea was: Forces help us to move and make things work.

The unit began with a fun teacher provocation you might have heard of before: 'The Egg Drop Challenge'. For those of you not familiar with this challenge, it is an activity that asks the students to create something that will keep an egg from cracking when dropped from a certain height. The students are given a handful of materials and need to work in a small group to design and put together something that will help them meet their goal. If you've never tried a problem-based learning task such as this I highly recommend giving it a shot. You will be amazed at the motivation and creativity that students put forth when given a challenge and the freedom to meet this challenge on their own.

After the eggs were dropped, and returned unscathed, our students were tuned in and ready to learn about the forces that had affected the success or failure of their challenge. We learned about gravity and air resistance and conducted experiments that helped deepen our understanding of these forces. Our class also made an inquiry into friction, and the way that it affects the motion of vehicles moving on different types of surfaces.

Once we had a good understanding of how different forces create and affect motion it was time for our summative assessment task. For inspiration we looked to our favourite Youtube video of all time: 'Caine's Arcade' <http://cainesarcade.com>. If you've never seen this video it's a wonderful story about a boy who creates his own arcade at his father's used auto parts shop full of imaginative games made out of old cardboard boxes. The boy becomes famous when one day a young filmmaker happened to stumble onto Caine's arcade and was so impressed that he made a short film about him. The film went viral and now Caine's arcade has inspired children around the world to find hands on outlets for their creativity.

With Caine as our inspiration, we set out on building our own cardboard games in small groups of two or three students. While creating their games our students had to take into the account the motion involved in the game, and the forces that created and affected that motion. For our assessment the students described these ideas in writing, in diagrams, and in a presentation to their classmates. After that there was only one thing left to do with our cardboard arcade...play!! Our classroom became an arcade for a day and all of our Primary Years classrooms came through to test out the students' creations. A good time was learned by all.



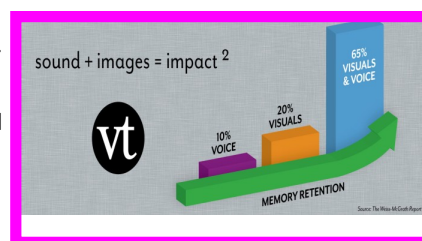
VOICETHREAD A POWERFUL TOOL TO EXTEND STUDENT LEARNING

Contribution by Kasumi N Koo- Classroom teacher, Kingston International School .

I have been fortunate enough to be teaching in an IB school for the past 5 years in Hong Kong. The entire IB concept and approach was new at first and it was a learning journey for myself alongside my students. Now, with a more grounded understanding of the IB curriculum I reflected on my personal journey of inquiry and came to realise my passion for ICT. *“What tools could I use in my current Primary 3 classroom? How could my students effectively use different ICT tools to share their work and thinking? What would be the best way to introduce it to them?”* These were some of the questions I asked myself. As Keren-Kolb (2013) mentions in her *Engage, Enhance and Extend Learning!* article, there is no point in integrating ICT if that tool does not engage the learner, enhance their learning experience in a way that traditional methods could not, and provide them with the skills that enable them to extend their learning beyond the classroom.

VoiceThread

When I was exploring potential Web2.0 tools for my students, our Unit of Inquiry was about relationships and how people can communicate and express themselves in different ways. That is when I came to decide on using VoiceThread. VoiceThread is a cloud application that allows users to “communicate ideas using more than one sense, connect with an audience in an authentic and simple manner, [and start] a discussion that stimulates a live presence” (VoiceThread, 2013). By creating a classroom under your (paid) VoiceThread account, that space becomes an online platform where students can collaborate on other class members’ VoiceThreads by providing constructive feedback and/or comments about their creation. This can be in the form of an audio voiceover, video comment, text comment, doodle over, or a combination of all which opens up many opportunities for students to communicate with each other through multiple medium.



‘Engage’ the students

Having an enthusiastic group of students made this step easy. The moment I said, “We will be using the computer and iPads to share our work.” the students were hooked immediately. Now the question was *“How to introduce the program and its function to the students without spoon-feeding every little step?”* So I demonstrated how to upload a photo and add a voiceover once. Although this was slightly risky, I then decided to allow the students to explore the program for themselves for 30 minutes in groups of 3 in hopes that my social-constructivist approach would be successful. I was pleasantly surprised to see the students eagerly inquiring into the program and its function. The various discussions the students were having with each other in trying to solve problems was invaluable.

'Enhance' student learning

By this time, students had gained the skills to use the program correctly and have been creating Voicethreads to introduce themselves, share about their holiday and present their original narratives which they were working on earlier. When I asked several students what was so appealing to them about Voicethread, they answered:

- I like it because if I make a mistake when I'm recording I can try again. (Isaiah)

- I like listening and watching other people's Voicethreads. (Catherine)

- It makes me happy when other people comment on my Voicethread. (Liana)

- I like it because I can make a Voicethread about anything, anywhere. (Liam)

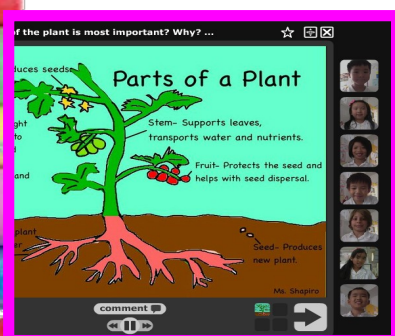
- I like to share what I know about plants. (Tobias). This was during our plant Unit.

One point I also noticed was how this tool was powerful in encouraging those students who struggle to get their ideas onto paper but were still able to share their knowledge and understanding. Whenever students were given a choice in the way they could present, more than half the class would choose to use Voicethread. Not only has Voicethread motivated students to want to finish their work and share it with others, but it also allowed students to demonstrate their understanding of various concepts in a way they couldn't before with just a pencil and paper.



'Extend' their learning beyond the classroom

It was during our Plant Unit that this tool showed its true potential. Students started sharing various Actions they have taken outside of school through Voicethread. Several students started growing their own plants and shared the process, some shared interesting characteristics about plants they already had at home while describing the different parts of that plant, others enjoyed viewing their classmates' Voicethreads and contributed through providing feedback, giving comments and through asking questions. Through the ongoing process of peer questioning and communication using this tool, students were able to consolidate what they know about plants in a more authentic way. By providing them with a platform where they have an audience to present something to, they learn to organise their thoughts before sharing. Furthermore, students can continue their growth as learners in this ever changing technological age by creating a bridge between their school learning and everyday experiences (Keren-Kolb, 2013).



Voicethread has opened up new opportunities for my students to explore their creativity in ways traditional methods could not, while learning the skills necessary for communicating with classmates in a constructive manner. When used in conjunction with clear learning objectives, Voicethread becomes a powerful tool which can engage and enhance student learning within the classroom and beyond.

References:

Keren-Kolb, L. (2013). Engage, Enhance, and Extend Learning! Learning & Learning with Technology, May, 20-27.

VoiceThread - Conversations in the cloud. (2013). *VoiceThread - Conversations in the cloud*. Retrieved November 21, 2013, from <http://voicethread.com/>

WHAT IS A PLANT

植物探究单元掠影?

Contribution by the teachers of Guangdong Country Garden School, Guangzhou.

广东碧桂园学校PYP幼儿园刘光春

在春暖花开，生机盎然的季节里，孩子们开始了对“植物”这一主题的探究活动。

What is a plant? What do you know about plants? 带着这些问题，我们开始了探究旅程。首先，老师和孩子们一起来到了图书馆来查阅不同植物种类的书籍。这是孩子们第一次有目的性的查找图书资料，对于识字量有限的幼儿来说，是有一定难度的。为了帮助幼儿更准确的查找，教师提前制作了图片和字卡，让幼儿对应查找，观察发现，部分幼儿运用了这种方法。孩子们发现了很多与植物的书籍，从书中也了解到了多种多样的植物特征，孩子们用画笔记录下她们的发现。

孩子们自己寻找卡片，用卡片对应查找图书。老师和孩子一起记录在图书中的发现。



孩子们自己查找相关书籍。发现了一本关于植物的大书。

在进行了图书资料的查阅之后，孩子们对植物有了概念性的认知。对于以上提出的问题，孩子们有了自己的答案：如：**What is a plant?** Jason说：“葫芦、向日葵、还有蓝莓都是植物”；Gigi说：“树是植物”；sunny说：“蝴蝶兰、梅花、西瓜也是植物”，孩子们还提到了“草莓、狗尾草、菊花茶、玫瑰花”等他们了解到的植物。为了让孩子们更真实观察植物，老师和孩子们一起来到了学校生物园，一路上，孩子们总有惊喜的发现，同样是树，有的树的叶子是绿色的，有的树的叶子是红色的，有的树的叶子像毛毛虫，有的树却开满了小花；来到植物园，孩子们发现了各种的盆栽和花朵，高年级哥哥姐姐种植的萝卜、番茄、油菜也让孩子们开了眼界，原来，大萝卜是长在地底下的，番茄刚长出来的时候是绿色的，看来，这次活动让孩子们的收获还真不少呢！一路捡拾着树叶和落花，我们回到了班级，结束了此次活动，这些收集来的树叶、花瓣等将成为下节课活动的主角哦！



这棵树上开着小花，还有香味呢！这个树的树叶像毛毛虫。



大树的皮怎么都裂开了呢？这棵植物的叶子很特别，是什么植物呢？



这种植物的果实可以吃——番茄！原来这就是油菜啊，它的花很漂亮！



这些树叶是红色的。看，我们收集的不同的树叶。

在对植物有了初步的认识之后，孩子们结伴到华南植物园参观了！在出发前一天，老师与孩子们进行了KWL表格的问答，孩子们对植物有许多想知道的问题，都等着到华南植物园一探究竟呢。为了让孩子们更好的了解植物的不同品种，老师提前收集了不同形状的叶子，在出发前一天请孩子们给叶子取名字，孩子们表现得非常活跃，给叶子取了许多有趣的名字：蜘蛛叶、针形叶、毛毛虫叶、雨滴叶、扇形叶、星形叶等等。



孩子找到一片树叶，通过比对发现是“毛毛虫叶”。



KWL表格



我找到“星形叶”啦！也像“鸭脚叶”！躺在厚厚的树叶上比家里的床还舒服呢！我找到的叶子可以当扇子用了！这种花的花朵是黄色的！



在泥土中间挖个洞洞才能让植物种进去！



老师说这个叫樟树，是做樟脑丸的，我闻闻有没有味道！

哇，回去的路上发现蒲公英，我来传播种子咯！



咦，这种植物好奇怪，它叫什么名字呢？