KAMBALA

KITE | A Magazine

for Learning and Teaching

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KAMBALA
INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING
EXCELLENCE

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Instilling unwavering courage and curiosity to educate women of ambition, integrity and consequence.

Humanity | Courage | Curiosity | Respect

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Ms Jane Danvers

Principal

Welcome to KITE, our Institute for Teaching Excellence

The pages of this publication tell stories of learning and teaching at Kambala. Here, we pull focus to our adult learners, our educators, sharing the ways they model and engage with our Kambala value of curiosity.

There is no doubt that success of any school hinges upon its teachers understanding their impact on student learning (Hattie, 2009). Through the provision of a rich professional learning program, we hope to give our educators every opportunity to not only pursue their own development goals, but to better understand and utilise the evidence base that will lead them to have maximum impact in our classrooms. This forms the purpose of KITE, our Kambala Institute for Teaching Excellence.

Fullan reminds us that when a school focuses on shared goals, and when the professional learning is a collective enterprise, the research overwhelming points to increased levels of student achievement (Fullan, 2014). This publication details Kambala's School-wide focus on 'cultures of thinking' (Ritchhart, 2015) and our engagement with renowned researcher and thought leader Professor Ron Ritchhart. Dr Ritchhart's work with us has provided an exciting opportunity for our educators to join together with a shared learning focus. Since welcoming Dr Ritchhart as Kambala's inaugural Academic in Residence, we have seen the strengthening of our professional learning community as we consider ways to continue enculturating thinking as a way of being in our School.

Dr Ritchhart brings years of experience in researching and working in schools worldwide, and most notably, through his work as Senior Research Associate at Project Zero (Harvard Graduate School of Education). What is particularly impactful about his work with us is the way he urges us all to strive to be deeply critical reflectors of practice, something he models in workshops with our staff and through his presence in team teaching opportunities in our classrooms.

Our teachers have conducted their own research too, and here you will read about the inquiries they are making into their professional practice. We proudly continue to be at the forefront of girls' education, and the research efforts of our teachers described here have given us much to use and think about as we aim to respond to our girls and ensure our approaches to teaching and pastoral care are contextually relevant.

The reflections written by our teachers in this publication remind me that teaching is not a static skillset or prescribed technical work; to be a great teacher is to continually evolve and change your ways, your thinking and your approaches to the teaching of students under your care. I commend these stories of professional learning to you, and thank our teachers for sharing their experiences and insights with us all, and the courageous ways they are growing their understanding of this profession.





"… we hope to give our educators every opportunity to not only pursue their own development goals, but to better understand and utilise the evidence base that will lead them to have maximum impact in the classroom."

Lifelong Learning at Kambala – the *Kambala Institute for Teaching Excellence*



Miss Samantha Gooch

Executive Director Kambala Institute for Teaching Excellence (KITE)

Kambala staff collectively define lifelong learning in the following ways:

"A lifelong learner will continually evolve through reflection, self-awareness, curiosity and mindfulness … to be a lifelong learner is to be open to other perspectives, to be a critical thinker and to be passionate and empathetic in order to enrich humanity and make our world a better place."

"A lifelong learner will evolve through embracing curiosity, challenge and reflection."

"A lifelong learner will possess an open and curious mind that is willing to reflect and respond in a manner that acknowledges experience and connections with others."

We know learning as the relationships that form through curiosity and dialogue where thinking is challenged and stretched to form new and deep understanding.

These conceptualizations were not easy to land upon! We have spent some time delving into the culture of learning that we ultimately hope to curate at Kambala. To synthesise our thinking, I believe these definitions encapsulate perfectly what we dream our learners, ultimately our Kambala graduates, will possess as an entitlement of their years of education here.

Kambala is a thriving and vibrant place to learn and to work. The magic of what happens daily in our classrooms cannot be easily captured through a single article. Rather, learning happens here in moments of connections between peers and friends. We know learning as the relationships that form through curiosity and dialogue where thinking is challenged and stretched to form new and deep understanding. Yes, while it is near impossible to summarise the learning and professional development of our students and staff through a single publication or array of images, sharing thoughts and experiences from some of our educators and through our professional development experiences provides us the opportunity to celebrate and appreciate the powerful learning happening School-wide.

Whether you are reading this copy as a parent, teacher, student or visitor to Kambala, we hope your curiosity about what our educators do here is ignited. It is with pride that stories of our adult learning are presented within the pages of this magazine. I thank our dedicated educators for their ongoing commitment to lifelong learning, and willingness to contribute to the wonderful place of learning and connection that we call Kambala.











01/ Professor Ron Ritchhart, Principal Jane Danvers and Executive Director of KITE Samantha Gooch.

02/ Professor Ron Ritchhart delivers a workshop to Kambala staff as a part of his residency at Kambala.

03/ Learning and thinking together: Kambala staff during a workshop centred around 'Cultures of Thinking'.

04/ Deputy Head of Junior School Kate Moore presents Kambala's wellbeing professional learning journey to the Association of Independent Schools of NSW.

05/ Individual members of Kambala's staff are recognised for teaching excellence and service at Kambala's Annual Prize Giving Ceremony.



‘Nothing Without Joy’: The Reggio Emilia International Study Group

01.

Each year, the esteemed early childhood programs in Reggio Emilia, Italy, featuring the highly regarded Reggio Emilia approach, open their doors to international guests through study tours for educators. Founded by educational theorist Loris Malaguzzi, the schools provide an innovative curriculum and method of learning. Caroline Glover, Educational Leader of Hampshire House, travelled to Northern Italy in 2023 to participate in the study tour.

“Our task is to help children communicate with the world using all their potential, strengths and languages, and to overcome any obstacle presented by our culture.”

Loris Malaguzzi (from the Catalogue of the exhibit *The Hundred Languages of Children*, 1996)

While participating in the Reggio Emilia International Study Group, hosted by the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre, I joined 420 delegates delegates from across the world, including 100 from Australia, to engage in pedagogical dialogue, teaching and learning workshops, lectures and centre visits.

The study tour offered a rich opportunity to engage with teachers from many different backgrounds from across the world and with teachers, pedagogista and atelierista within the Reggio Emilia Municipality.

Across the five days, many moments inspired deep reflection around our image of the child and our own Hampshire House learning environment, the rich intentionality within our educational program at Kambala, and pedagogy of relationships within our community.

The image of the child is central to the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Walking through the streets of Reggio Emilia and visiting the Infant-toddler Centres and Preschools, a strong image of the child is present. From the ‘Rights of the Child’ (Malaguzzi, 1993) and learning on display in streets and laneways, it is evident the city strongly values children’s voices and the research surrounding placing the child at the centre of all learning. Such celebrations demonstrate the respect, capability and competencies of children gained through democratic involvement and responsible citizenship present within the Municipality, challenging my thinking around how we can strengthen the image of the child beyond the doors of Hampshire House. This created space for dialogue around possibilities and action to foster deeper connections with local schools, organisations and councils.

Within the Infant-toddler Centres and Preschools, environments are designed around light, open spaces and natural materials to provide a rich environment to ignite curiosity, creativity and exploration. Environments are intentionally and thoughtfully created, prompting the aesthetics of connection and using the environment as the ‘third teacher’.

The simplicity of provocations and materials available to children offers an inviting space to explore through inquiry, questioning, research and collaborative learning. Engaging in atelier workshops and observing small group work in action inspired me to challenge our approach to projects and lines of inquiry. Teachers as researchers within Hampshire House have since engaged in Action Research Projects to explore how we can further enhance our approach and resources to facilitate deeper curiosity and discovery within our learning environments.

Malaguzzi states, “We need to think of the school as a living organism” (Malaguzzi,1994). Observing the relational pedagogies in action throughout the Municipal early childhood programs in Reggio Emilia was truly inspirational, as well as affirming of our holistic approach to teaching and learning in Hampshire House. Recognising and upholding the importance of respectful, reciprocal relationships, connections with families, children, teachers, colleagues and our environment, we too come together as a ‘living organism’.

I am extremely grateful for the transformative experience to engage in the study group and tour. Through inspiration from Loris Malaguzzi, who reminds us, ‘Nothing without Joy’, I continue to share my learning with Hampshire House and the Kambala community with joy, curiosity and a commitment to building a community of lifelong learners.





02.



03.



Ms Caroline Glover

Educational Leader
– Hampshire House

"The study tour offered a rich opportunity to engage with teachers from many different backgrounds from across the world and with teachers, pedagogista and atelierista within the Reggio Emilia Municipality."

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01/ Cervi Infant-toddler Centre, Reggio Emilia.

02/ Cervi Infant-toddler Centre, Reggio Emilia.

03/ Loris Malaguzzi atelier space, Reggio Emilia.

Action Research: Research-Informed Approaches to Girls' Education

kambala institute for teaching excellence

A KITE Initiative

At Kambala, we remain up to date with current trends to ensure that our commitment to best practice translates to innovative, research-informed pedagogy. We are always searching for ways to cater for the rapidly evolving educational needs of students, and this has a particularly pertinent place in single-sex schools. As part of our KITE initiatives to ensure teaching excellence across the School, we have embraced Action Research through our support of the International Coalition for Girls' Schools (ICGS) Global Action Research Collaborative on Girls' Education (GARC) and our own research alliance with another leading school for girls.

Our alliance with Ruyton Girls' School, an independent girls' school in Melbourne, has seen us pilot our own on-site action research. The partnership focuses on the specific interests, needs and engagement levels of our students. Our first participants in the program are Greta Beaumont-Kennedy (English Faculty), Samantha Nahum (History Faculty), and Hattie Wilson (Mathematics Faculty). We have identified key priorities across both schools, providing fertile ground for sharing and comparing our findings with a similar school context.

Our alliance also includes the involvement and influence of academic mentors adjunct Associate Professor Dr David Smith and Professor Emerita Robyn Ewing AM, FACE, BEd(Hons) PhD. Both academics have contributed significantly to understanding the importance of action research in education. Their role in the Kambala-Ruyton alliance is to offer their expert knowledge and understanding of action research for our participants to engage in a rigorous and accurate data-collection and reflection process. We interviewed Dr Smith about the power of action research in a school setting, which appears on the following pages.

For Dr Smith, the importance of Action Research is that "it produces raised awareness and understanding of the problems being investigated by teachers, leaders, parents and students" and evaluates the benefits of any interventions and changes with "a higher level of reliability and validity". The cyclical nature of action research, involving continual implementation, reflection and evaluation, has already enabled us to examine our practice closely and to question the opportunities we provide our girls, in ways that are contemporary and relevant.

Where the benefits of Action Research extend to the broader educational community, the process and purpose is highly "contextual to a particular site".

Dr David Smith, 2023

01/ Kambala and Ruyton Girls' School researchers; Rachel Criticos, JJ Zhang, Greta Beaumont-Kennedy, Hattie Wilson, Samantha Nahum and Lisa Carolan.

02/ Hattie Wilson and Samantha Nahum introduce their research project to students.

03/ Teachers explore research topics collaboratively in the Tivoli courtyard.



01.

An interview with Academic Mentor, Dr David Smith

1. Why do you think action research is important in education?

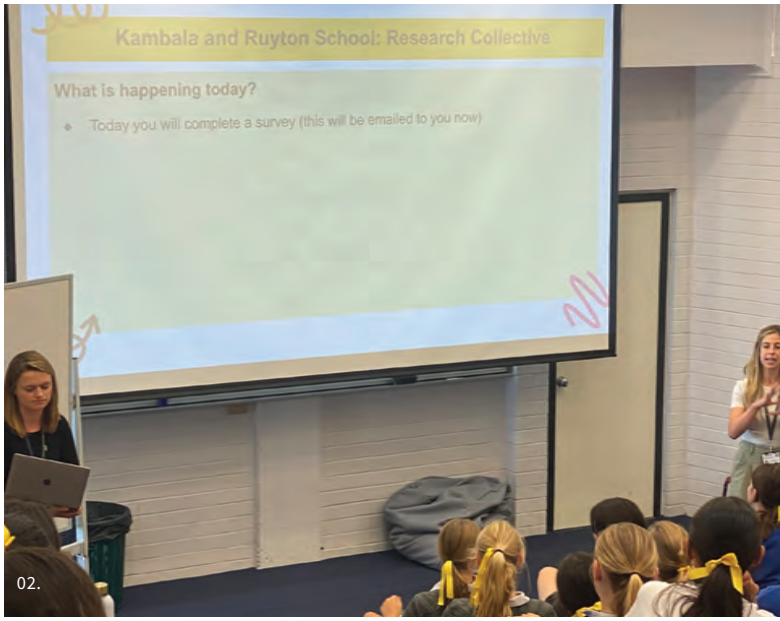
Action research (AR) is in many ways, arguably **The** most important type of research in education!

Any education context is very difficult to research by traditional methodologies/methods which are generally aiming at high levels of reliability and validity – even generalizability – very often, because policy makers, politicians, and now, philanthropists, demand that – using statistical manipulations.

Many research methodologies/methods demand strong control of variables to produce high levels of reliability and validity. This sort of control is impossible in most cases because of the large number of variables associated with a population of individual learners, all with their own characteristics, some of which, (for example, motivational states, motivations, engagement) vary from day to day, teacher/s characteristics (which also vary) and contextual variables (what happened in homes before school, what happened in the school playground before class, weather).

In addition, one or more strange researchers present in a room changes the entire climate and zeitgeist of the research site – students behave very differently. Because of all these reasons many traditional types of research do not produce accurate, reliable or valid results – one of the reasons lots of educational policy decisions don't work in practice! But people still want those and researchers still use them.

AR is important – and very often, if done well, and combined with Action Learning, it produces a raised awareness and understanding of the issues/problems being investigated by teachers, leaders, parents and students – if the latter are, as they should be, engaged in the AR. Because of that raised awareness and understanding, the decisions that are then made for changes often have a higher level of reliability and validity.



02.



03.

More importantly, it is much more likely that those changes can be implemented successfully because they are based on the practicalities and exigencies of the specific context. They are also, because of that, likely to have the support of leadership, other teachers, parents and students.

So, one of the most important reasons for the importance and success of AR is that it is specifically **contextual** to a particular site. It is not trying to generalize to anywhere else (unless, as in the Humanities Project in the UK, it involved hundreds of sites and teachers investigating their own contexts). Also, very important, is the fact that the research is being completed by the students' own teacher – not a stranger who has no relationship with the students – this raises other issues in the research of course but these can be dealt with (for example, use of a 'critical friend').

Another important factor is that the teacher, if the AR is managed well, is developing a lot more understanding about their own teaching practice and is the one who then is able to identify the changes that might work best.

Finally, AR is a process of overlapping cycles that develop from one another. Thus the results and changes implemented after one cycle can be evaluated as part of the reflective element of the last cycle and built into the next research cycle.

There are lots of studies, not only in education, but other social contexts, even international ones, that demonstrate the efficacy and effectiveness of AR as a strategy for social change. Of course, this was the original purpose for which it was created!

2. Where do we currently see the benefits of action research in education?

Unfortunately in too few publicised places. There are books and international journals that are mainly concerned with publishing AR accounts. I could give you many examples from my own consultancy experiences of successful AR in schools in NSW. We also include AR as a central component of the Internship part of the pre-service teachers' Master of Teaching degree at The University of Sydney. There are similar examples in other degrees in Australia and overseas, including Victoria and Canada. However, because AR is contextually specific and carried out by teachers in schools, very often the point of the AR is not to be published but to make practice more effective.

3. Are there identifiable gaps in action research in education?

In my humble opinion, no. I think there is a large body of published writing and research on AR if you want to look for it. The principles of AR are well established and there are plenty of good examples. The most identifiable gaps are the lack of recognition of the importance and efficacy of AR as a successful strategy for greater understanding of teachers' professional practice and school-based change by schools and school systems, by education policy makers and school leaders, and thus the complete lack of funded support to undertake it.

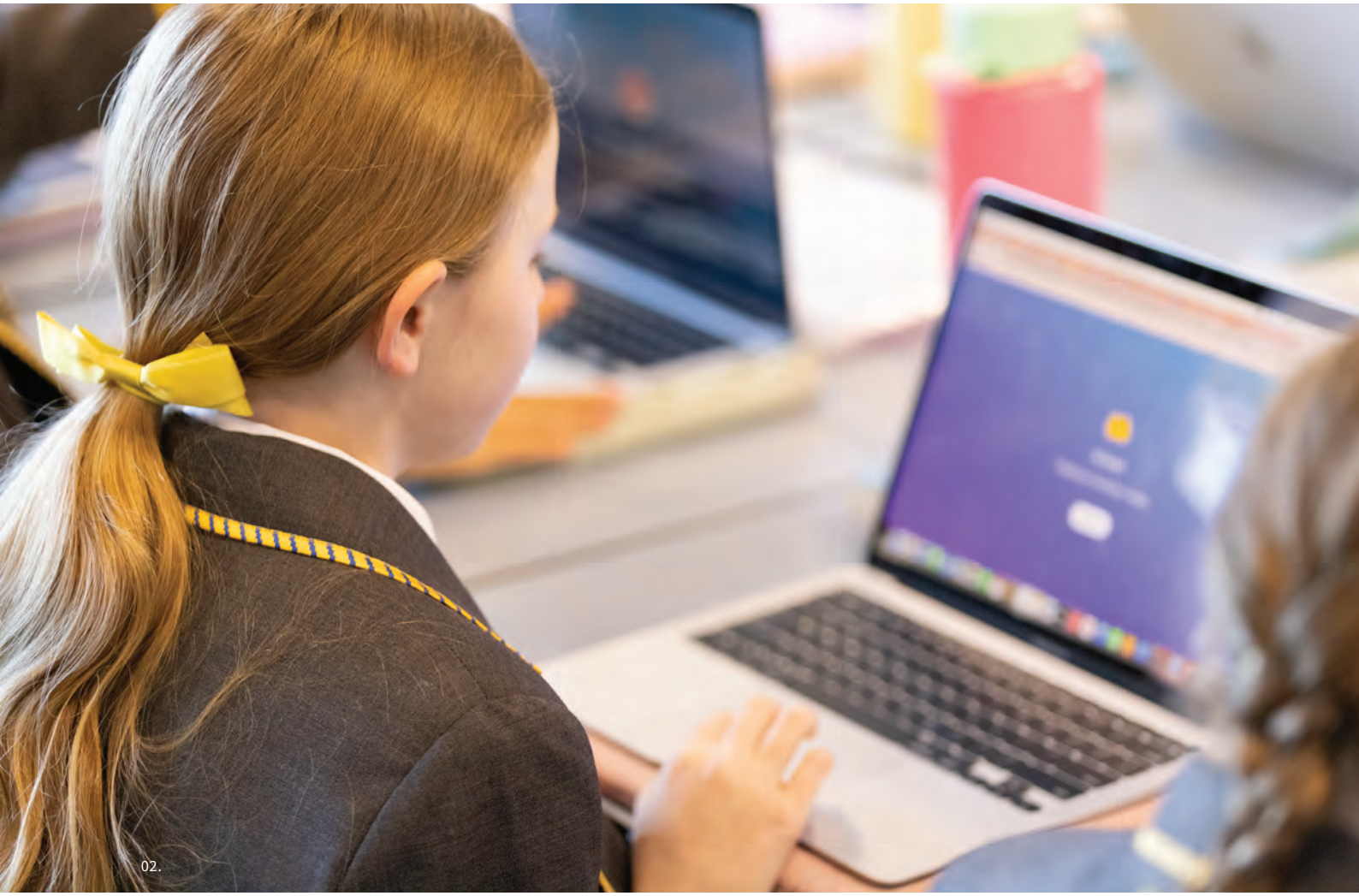
"... the teacher, if the action research is managed well, is developing a lot more understanding about their own teaching practice and is the one who then is able to identify the changes that might work best."

01/ Kambala researchers at Ruyton Girls' School.

02/ Year 5 students took part in Mrs Sweeney's research project as 'change makers'.



01.



02.

International Coalition of Girls' Schools

icgs

Advancing Girls' Education Globally



Mrs Sheridan Sweeney

Junior School Teacher

Global Action Research Collaborative: Kambala's inaugural GARC Fellow

The International Coalition of Girls' Schools (ICGS) is the leading global advocate for girls' schools. As a member of the ICGS, Kambala is able to connect and collaborate with other schools and mission-aligned entities dedicated to educating and empowering girls.

During a research fellowship with 'ICGS Global Action Research Collaborative (GARC), teacher Sheridan Sweeney investigated a timely topic aligned to her professional interests, 'How teacher-implemented action research can empower Junior School girls who 'Dream About Being a Saviour' to be Curious, Ethical and Active Global Citizens'.

As Kambala's first GARC Fellow, Sheridan details her participation in GARC and the impact of her research on our School.

Action Research Project: An Overview

GARC is an 18-month program that engages teachers, as academic fellows, in a rigorous action research project and culminates in the presentation of findings at the ICGS Global Forum on Girls' Education. The theme for my research cohort, Global Reset: New Opportunities for Educating Girls, provided me the opportunity to think about programs that enable girls to develop lifeworthy skills to be global leaders in their ever-changing world.

"The first object of any act of learning, over and beyond the pleasure it may give, is that it should serve us in the future" (Bruner, 1982, p. 17).

Ensuring girls' education serves them with the skills they need to succeed in contemporary society means educators must ask themselves: "What is lifeworthy learning?" A reimagined, lifeworthy education, prepares girls to thrive within a dynamic globalised society and is built on curricula which offer opportunities for girls to be connected global citizens and to develop deep understandings of complex global challenges.

My research aimed to understand the impact of a global competency learning program on Junior School girls and their curiosity for global knowledge and disposition to participate in transformative global action. It explored strategies for connecting girls with international peers and embedding lessons with thinking routines to scaffold rich discussions and critical thinking. These strategies were specifically chosen and implemented to develop girls' global competencies and to support them to grow into ethical global citizens who have the skills to participate in transformative global action.

Why does global leadership education matter?

The PISA 2018 Global Competence assessment measured students' capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective wellbeing and sustainability.

It highlighted the fact that girls are less likely than boys to:

- learn about the interconnectedness of global economies
- be asked their opinion by teachers about international news
- participate in class discussions about world events or analyse global issues.

Action Research Question

How does a global competency learning program strengthen Year 5 girls' curiosity for global knowledge and participatory disposition towards transformative global action?

The Research Action

The global competency learning program that I designed is a structured, project-based learning program that includes two key strategies. They are:

- an international collaboration using virtual discussion boards;
- thinking routines to scaffold rich discussions and critical thinking.

During lessons, the girls researched climate action, critically examined and discussed ideas using thinking routines, and connected, questioned and reflected on virtual discussion boards with international peers. Lastly, the girls collaborated to plan and undertake a climate action project.

Key Findings

Knowledge sharing through sustained peer dialogue strengthened the girls' curiosity for global knowledge.

Sustained dialogue provided girls with the opportunity to share knowledge in a synchronous manner with peers in the classroom, and asynchronously through virtual discussion boards. "My perspective has changed after talking with my peers because they helped me think more deeply about the topics."

Collaboration developed the girls' courage to participate as a learning collective and evolve from individual dreamers to collective doers.

The structured processes resulted in the building of individual confidence, a positive shift in self-efficacy and the motivation to participate as a collective.

"The most impactful part of the global scholars to me was creating my action. I learned to collaborate more in my group, bounce off our ideas which gave me greater insight."

Global thinking routines facilitated critical thinking, encouraged rich discussions and cultivated curiosity.

The shift in confidence with the global thinking routines as a scaffold for critical thinking and collaborative discussion led to opportunities for nuanced thinking, generating a deeper understanding of topics and a curiosity to learn. "Thinking routines helped me learn more about global issues because it helped me broaden my thinking and go into topics that I've never really touched base with before."

Conclusion

Implementing a global competency learning program, which included opportunities for international peer connections and scaffolded learning with thinking routines, unquestionably engaged Junior School girls in global citizenship education. The data provided evidence that the girls developed their curiosity for global knowledge and willingness to participate in transformative global action.

The girls remained highly engaged when collaborating with international peers, which created a positive learning environment. At the conclusion of the program, the girls provided comprehensive evidence that international connections were the main catalyst for the development of their curiosity for global knowledge. Thinking routines provided a scaffold that encouraged the girls to collaborate and discuss perspectives, draw conclusions, and build knowledge. Additionally, data analysis showed that many girls found the enormity of being an advocate for change overwhelming and therefore they remained apprehensive about engaging with a participatory disposition. However, with time, students came to discover that working as a collaborative could foster individual and collective strength to engage as participants in positive global change.

In identifying global competency as lifeworthy learning, the impetus is for educators to design intentional programs that allow students to develop such skills. This program, measured through various cycles of action research, has provided us a model for rich, globally-responsive teaching and learning going forward.

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Daring to Lead: A focus on the learning of our leaders



Miss Samantha Gooch

Executive Director Kambala Institute for Teaching Excellence (KITE)

Brené Brown defines a leader as "anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes, and who has the courage to develop that potential" (Brown, 2018).

In the pages of this *KITE Magazine*, you will read about initiatives and happenings at Kambala that see our staff and students 'showing up', in their classrooms, on the sporting field, on the stage or in their staffrooms. A key to instilling this type of courage in our people is having a strong, skilled and united leadership team, one with the passion to keep this as a driving force of what we do and what we hope to achieve.

Leadership is everywhere at Kambala. Within our KITE program, I am fortunate to work specifically alongside our teacher leaders: Heads of Year, Heads of Department, School Directors and influential teachers who are masters of their discipline and who take subtle yet powerful roles in modelling, guiding and mentoring their colleagues. Each of our teachers embraces the responsibility of leadership in their daily work in finding, recognising and developing potential in their students, or opportunities for learning more generally. Our middle and senior leadership teams extend their practice of leadership in their role as academic and pastoral leaders of staff teams. Their role and responsibility in leading both students and teachers is complex and careful work.

"... a key feature of KITE is to provide our middle and senior leaders with development opportunities that capitalise upon and enhance teachers' cognitive processes ..."

"Each of our teachers embraces the responsibility of leadership in their daily work in finding, recognising and developing potential in their students, or opportunities for learning more generally."

Research shows that by engaging in these intricate daily practices, educators who are able to think at a higher level produce students who are higher achieving, more cooperative and better problem solvers (Thinking Collaborative, 2023).

In consideration of this, a key feature of KITE is to provide our middle and senior leaders with development opportunities that capitalise upon and enhance teachers' cognitive processes so they can respond to the busyness of school life, while 'showing up' and helping their people to show up too.



01.

This year, under KITE, each member of our senior and middle leadership team will train as a Cognitive Coach. Cognitive Coaching is a research-based model that sees participants learn the art of intentional conversation, with a focus on how to develop trust and rapport. The course is intensive in that our leaders have spent time practising and applying the four support functions of a cognitive coach: coaching, evaluating, consulting and collaborating.

If a key responsibility of ours as leaders is to see and support potential, then cognitive coaching upskills us as deep listeners who support the thinking of others (not, simply the behaviour). In this way, we assist our people to initiate, make choices, problem solve, take action and produce new knowledge and understanding for and about themselves.

We know it is this type of commitment to professional development that will have the most impact on our leaders, and therefore on our teams and their students.



02.



03.

01/ Education expert, author and thought leader Gavin Grift leading Cognitive Coaching Certification at Kambala.

02/ Teachers participate in Cognitive Coaching workshops.

03/ Teachers participate in Cognitive Coaching workshops.



Ms Olga Ibrahim

ICT Integrator and Science Faculty

Delving into the strategic integration of technology: Embracing AI at Kambala

You may have recently encountered comparisons of the advent of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to seminal technological milestones, such as the popularisation of portable calculators in the 1970s or the inception of the World Wide Web in 1991. Drawing a parallel with another revolution, AI expert Andrew Ng likened the influence of these new technologies to that of the introduction of electricity (AI Frontiers Conference, 2017). Andrew Ng explains that electricity redefined myriad sectors including transportation, manufacturing, agriculture and healthcare, projecting a similar trajectory for AI in the modern era.

It is evident that this prediction has begun to materialise. Today the pervasive influence of AI is undeniable, reshaping numerous aspects of daily life, including education. Students today have seamlessly integrated these tools into their study environments, using AI as a tool embedded in the creative process. The crafting of detailed study planners, being provided with immediate feedback on drafts and the ability to efficiently self-assess using syllabus content are just some examples of how our students are harnessing the power of AI. The promise and potential are indeed reminiscent of the transformation ushered in by electricity.

Upon the launch of OpenAI's large language model-based chatbot on 30 November 2022, I vividly remember grappling with a mix of awe and anxiety, contemplating the profound implications this development would have for educators. It was apparent that an urgent dialogue needed to be initiated, to acquaint ourselves with this rapidly evolving tool, which was still largely unexplored terrain for many. With the full support of Principal Jane Danvers, I embarked on a mission to familiarise the Kambala community, encompassing students and staff alike, with the monumental shifts that generative AI tools could bring to our teaching and learning paradigms. We encouraged its use as a tool that could be used to enrich teaching and learning at Kambala. This collaborative journey entailed a thoughtful reassessment and updating of Kambala's academic policies to reflect the ethical considerations that such technologies invariably introduce.

Since then we have undertaken continuous efforts across the Junior and Senior Schools to foster safe and ethical engagement with AI tools. This commitment has translated into initiatives such as the 'Day of AI' for Year 5 and Year 6 students, an opportunity for students to delve into the fundamentals of machine learning, ethics in AI and the phenomenon of deepfakes. Further enriching this initiative, Year 6 students ventured into the realm of AI art under the guidance of expert Dr Jessica Priebe, an art historian and lecturer in art and emerging technologies at the National Art School. This fascinating exploration culminated in a virtual showcase of the artworks in the burgeoning metaverse, adding a futuristic dimension to their educational journey.

In the Senior School, we have instituted 'Appropriate Use of AI' sessions for different year groups, fostering a deep understanding and responsible use of this technology. To complement these educational sessions, we offer a wealth of resources through our dedicated online Student AI Hub. This platform not only serves as a repository for guiding ethical AI use and practical study tips but also acquaints students with the latest AI tools available at their disposal. Moreover, it delineates updates to the assessment policy and provides a comprehensive guide on mastering prompts for generative AI tools. Here, students may independently enrol in a rich 15-hour AI course developed by IBM and the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE), further encouraging them to delve deep and expand their horizons in the fascinating world of AI.

In June 2023, I had the privilege to be among the 7,000 attendees converging at the renowned ISTE conference held in Philadelphia, USA. The gathering was a vibrant hub of insights and revelations, shaping the narratives around the pivotal role of technology in education. For me, a central takeaway underscored the importance of aligning the advent of AI tools with our core values for us at Kambala, Humanity, Courage, Curiosity and Respect. We are reminded that amid the whirlpool of technological advancement, we must continually revisit and affirm the unique qualities and strengths that define our human advantage, while also understanding the undeniable potential and use of AI tools.

The onus is upon us as educators to immerse ourselves in the dynamics of AI, embracing its potential with an informed mind. At Kambala we look forward to continuing our own professional learning in this space, integrating and leveraging these tools, imparting to our students not just the knowledge in how to use them, but the wisdom to do so with effectiveness, safety and ethical integrity.



"This not only sparks their curiosity, aligned with one of Kambala's core values, but also offers them a real-world application and expression for their creative ideas."

Mr Julian Ko

Junior School Classroom Teacher
and Digital Technology Integrator

Using our collaborative time and professional learning opportunities, in the Junior School we have delved into the strategic integration of technology within the unique context of Kambala, with a specific focus on its applications in teaching, leadership and staff professional development.

During the EduTECH conference of 2023, keynote speaker Michael McQueen echoed the urgency of this challenge, drawing upon the wisdom of Mark Warschauer from the University of California, who aptly stated, "The challenge of education in this century is to equip young people to aim further ahead of a faster target."

To address this challenge, Kambala has embarked on a journey of experimentation with various AI-driven educational platforms and applications, designed to offer personalised and interactive learning experiences for students. As we begin to utilise applications like Diffit, Gamma, Adobe Firefly and Canva, a select group of educators have explored their potential as valuable resources for enriching the learning process.

AI, in all its diverse forms, including generative AI and the fascinating world of augmented reality (AR), is playing a transformative role in how lessons might be delivered. For instance, Year 1 students had the opportunity to engage with AR Makr, a tool that empowers them to create animations within their immediate environment. This not only sparks their curiosity, aligned with one of Kambala's core values, but also offers them a real-world application and expression for their creative ideas.

In the rapidly evolving landscape of education, the measured integration of AI at Kambala displays a deep commitment to equipping students for a digitally connected world, where innovative technologies are harnessed to foster curiosity, creativity, and personalised learning experiences. What we have learned along this process is that the role of the teacher as learner has been vital, and we have leveraged our teachers' ongoing commitment to curiosity and their willingness to explore and experiment with new technologies and discover new possibilities for learning.

01/ Year 6 explored datasets and machine learning at 'Day of AI' hosted at Kambala.

02/ Julian Ko with his students.

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01/ Kate Moore

02/ In the Junior School, the wellbeing of our students is of paramount importance in all we do.



Ms Kate Moore

Deputy Head of Junior School

Defining 'Wellbeing': RULER case study

In 2020 the Junior School embarked on a journey to embrace RULER, an evidence-based approach to social and emotional learning developed by the Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence (YCEI). RULER brings the entire school community into a shared focus on identifying and using emotions to create and maintain positive environments (YALE, 2024). Deputy Head of the Junior School, Kate Moore, leads Kambala Junior School's approach to pastoral care and wellbeing and is passionate about the potential of the RULER approach to create optimal environments for student learning.

It is the aim, perhaps the primary aim, of schools to achieve optimum academic outcomes for students. In order to achieve these outcomes, students need to experience social and emotional wellbeing (Spearman & Watt, 2013). In the Junior School, the wellbeing of our students is of paramount importance in all we do. We work to ensure all girls feel a sense of belonging and connection. The care we offer our students to foster their wellbeing enables them not just to flourish academically, but to thrive in life.

Pastoral programs and initiatives can go a long way towards fostering wellbeing, however there is a need for these programs and practices to be firmly based in empirical research to ensure effectiveness, demonstrated outcomes and impact. With so many resources now readily available for schools, it is important to be discerning in what programs and practices are adapted. They need to be much more than complementary practices developed through fragmented activities (Cross, 2023) and instead be holistically embedded formally and informally through teacher pedagogy, curriculum, the social and physical environment and organisation of the school (Chittenden, 2002).

The Junior School leadership team was fortunate to be trained in such a program in 2020; the Yale RULER program. This program is based on a large body of research from the Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence. Studies through this institute clearly indicate that RULER improves school climate by enhancing teacher instruction and increasing student engagement (Hagelskamp et. al, 2013). Those classrooms that implemented RULER were found to have more emotional support, better instruction and organisation. Students who received instruction in RULER were shown to perform better academically, particularly in English language arts and in their work habits (Brackett et. al, 2011).

RULER is a systemic approach to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). It aims to imbue the principles of emotional intelligence into the culture of schools, informing how leaders lead, teachers teach, students learn, and families support students.

RULER is an acronym for the five skills of emotional intelligence. Recognise, Understand, Label, Express and Regulate.

The first component of RULER (R = Recognise) encourages us to identify our moods, feelings and emotions, build our emotional vocabulary and work to understand how those emotions impact our daily lives. Once we learn to recognise our moods and emotions we can then seek to understand, label, express and ultimately regulate them. This aligns very closely with five areas of development for Social and Emotional Learning developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL): self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

The beauty of the RULER program is that it offers four simple yet highly effective 'tools' to develop these social and emotional skills – the Charter, Mood Meter, Meta-Moment and Blueprint. Each of these tools has been adapted into our programing and pedagogy in the Junior School. Students create a classroom Charter to decide how they want all members of the classroom to feel, they use the Mood Meter to better identify, understand and regulate their emotions and they are encouraged to take a 'Meta-Moment' where they stop, breathe, and imagine their best self before responding to a challenging situation. Teachers use the Blueprint to support conflict resolution to ensure the best outcomes for all concerned.

After an intensive year of training, the leadership team was appointed a facilitator from Yale University who supported the team through the introduction and implementation of RULER for all Junior School staff and students at Kambala. Much of 2021 was spent training staff in the program and implementing the tools in the classroom. Parent education also formed a vital part of the program being embedded in our practice and a number of articles, videos and information sessions were available to parents.

Each year, Junior School staff engage in a 'RULER Refresher' session and new staff are trained in the use of the RULER tools. In walking the Junior School at Kambala you will see the RULER acronym, the Mood Meter, Charter and other tools in every classroom. In 2023 we introduced a student-led Wellbeing Team who, at each week's assembly, educates their fellow students



"After an intensive year of training, the leadership team were appointed a facilitator from Yale University who supported the team through the introduction and implementation of RULER for all Junior School staff and students at Kambala."

about RULER and highlight tools and strategies that are then added to each students' 'Wellbeing Toolbox'. The shared language and understanding that RULER has brought to the Junior School has been instrumental in improving wellbeing outcomes for our students.

The University of Melbourne professor and child clinical psychologist Sophie Havighurst writes that there is body of research showing that developing emotional competence – understanding your emotions and regulating them – improves children's social skills, academic functioning and physical health, and reduces mental health problems in childhood and throughout their lives. Developing emotional competences also supports parents in helping their child validate and label their emotions and problem-solve as a result (Havighurst et. al, 2020).

Emotions also affect the teaching-learning process. When educators stand before students, they hope to hold their attention, engage them to participate, and provide content they can remember and can apply on a test and, perhaps, in life. To do this well, educators must attend to their own and their students' emotions. "The emotional climate of a classroom seems to be the best predictor of student engagement, student performance as well as student behavior" (Brackett, 2019).

RULER helps students, and the adults in their lives, learn about and manage their emotions. This is important for success in nearly every aspect of life. In adopting RULER, we are strengthening our skills of emotional intelligence, building a stronger community, and preparing our students for optimal growth in school and beyond.

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KITE Scholarship to Project Zero Classroom

Harvard Graduate School of Education

The capstone of the KITE program is an opportunity for teachers to attend Project Zero Classroom (PZC), a week-long professional learning seminar at Harvard Graduate School of Education. A selection of Kambala teachers first attended the renowned PZC in 2018. Since then, with the generous support of our KITE patrons, the School has been able to offer a yearly scholarship for a select group of Kambala educators to attend the Institute and spend a week in Boston, USA at Harvard University, one of the world's most renowned learning institutions.

Continuing Kambala's commitment to Project Zero learning principles and its intention to provide teachers with inspiring opportunities, we share the reflections of our most recent PZC scholars on these pages.

"What Project Zero has offered Kambala teachers is not only the memorable experience of undertaking learning at a world-class Ivy League institution, but the chance to meet leading researchers and theorists in the field of education … those who challenge our assumptions about how understanding is developed and most importantly, encourage us to question the true purpose of schooling."

Miss Samantha Gooch
Executive Director of KITE

Anna Goodman
Junior School

I used to think … 'thinking routines' could be used in conjunction with the mandatory syllabus content.

Now I think … 'thinking routines' are a rich tool to facilitate a deep understanding of syllabus content. They are routines that should be set up just like any other classroom routine and expectation. Thinking routines should be regularly practised and as much a part of what students do in the classroom as packing up or getting ready to go home at the end of the day.



Lisa Moir
Drama (Head of Drama)

I used to think … establishing a culture of care and valuing each student was important to motivating students to learn what I wanted them to know.

Now I think … it is vital that students feel that their differences and individual experiences are acknowledged and celebrated so that they feel empowered to engage with what I hope they will understand. Students can curate their own learning if their strengths are illuminated and utilised.

I used to think … if I provided students with enough information they would have the capacity to learn it and apply it.

Now I think … by facilitating thinking you can lead students to greater understanding. That it is in the process of grappling with discovery and uncovering truths that real understanding occurs. That each student's discoveries are unique and powerful and that it is okay not everything is known. That it is more important to slow down to allow deep understanding to occur … to cover less but to embed understanding authentically.

I used to think … the process of learning was an individual one.

Now I think … it is by listening to the differing points of view of others and sharing perspectives that nurtures new and richer understanding.

01/ Head of Drama Lisa Moir

Michelle Pearce-Denovan
Junior School

I used to think … 'thinking routines' were used to extend upon a student's thinking capabilities, to encourage them to think more deeply, as individuals.

Now I think … 'thinking routines' need to be 'routine' in facilitation so that the students see thinking as an integral part of learning. A classroom of learners discover that others may think in different ways, which provokes further investigation and acquisition of knowledge, propelling students into improved learning and ability to think critically. Learning in a group situation is better than learning in isolation.

Melissa Archey
Mathematics

I used to think … teaching and learning of mathematics involved memorising and applying rules and facts which are taught, explained and then practised, striving for the correct answer.

Now I think … when incorporating Project Zero Thinking Routines in the Mathematics classroom, the focus becomes less on memorisation but rather on the promotion of deep understanding, encouraging students to analyse, evaluate, find complexity, and make connections. It is always the thinking that matters, not simply a correct answer.

Kathryn Tamminga
Languages

I used to think … as a teacher, my role was both to teach and to facilitate my students' learning.

Now I think … students grow into the intellectual world around them. In addition to the above, I also need to make my own learning visible to my students. Spending a week at PZC in the role of both educator and student enabled me to really stretch my learning. It felt amazing! Learning happens at the point of challenge and, when I was stretched, my brain engaged and my world expanded. This in turn made me more curious and excited and the pattern continued.

Nikki McDonald
Science (Head of Science)

I used to think … Project Zero approaches were about thinking routines and structures that enhance metacognition - thinking about how we think. I knew Project Zero approaches were a great way to help my students to develop their analytical and critical thinking skills.

Now I think … that a Project Zero approach to learning is also about growing a community of learners (teachers and students) who have trust in each other and curiosity to learn more about everything they encounter. It's about me modelling and teaching my students how to use a variety of tools, mindsets and skills to create a learning environment in which student self-efficacy and self-advocacy are nurtured, so that every student's voice is heard in every lesson. This naturally leads to a deep understanding of content and the ability to think critically and creatively.

Anna Derrig
Junior School

I used to think … 'thinking routines' had to be predetermined in order to implement them into lesson planning… I saw them as a quick activity that could be used at the start or end of a lesson.

Now I think … what is done with students' thinking is equally as important as the 'thinking routine' itself. Since returning from PZC I have made a conscious effort to use the information gained from thinking routines to further extend my students' thinking with questions and to make thinking visible by displaying my students' ideas and referring to these throughout the unit. I also allow my lessons to be more flexible and to ensure each of my students has the opportunity to think and explain their shifts in thinking.

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Ms Ky-Lee Murphy

Director of Curriculum
Junior School

The Years Following Project Zero Classroom: A Lasting Impact

Director of Curriculum in the Junior School, Ky-Lee Murphy, recounts the lasting impact of her experience at Project Zero Classroom, sharing how her leadership has been influenced by her involvement with Project Zero ideas.



"Inviting understanding, provoking wonder and offering significance – make those the heartbeat of education."
David Perkins, 2019

This quote is what inspired me the most while attending the Project Zero Classroom in 2019. By creating opportunities for our students to develop deep understanding, display curiosity and uncover complexity, we can provide optimal learning spaces for them to flourish in their learning.

If learning is the result of thinking (Perkins, 1992), as educators we need to design tasks that compel students to be critical and creative thinkers, not just passive recipients of content. Many educators are committed to the idea of engaging learners to think critically and creatively. However, even with the best of intentions, it can be surprisingly difficult to make the shift from the teacher as the source of knowledge, to a collaborative model where the ideas and experiences of students contribute to the teaching and learning environment. A deep knowledge of how understanding is truly developed is key, and this is a continued focus at Project Zero. I often reflect on the following through-lines, or main ideas of inquiry, from the conference I attended in 2019:

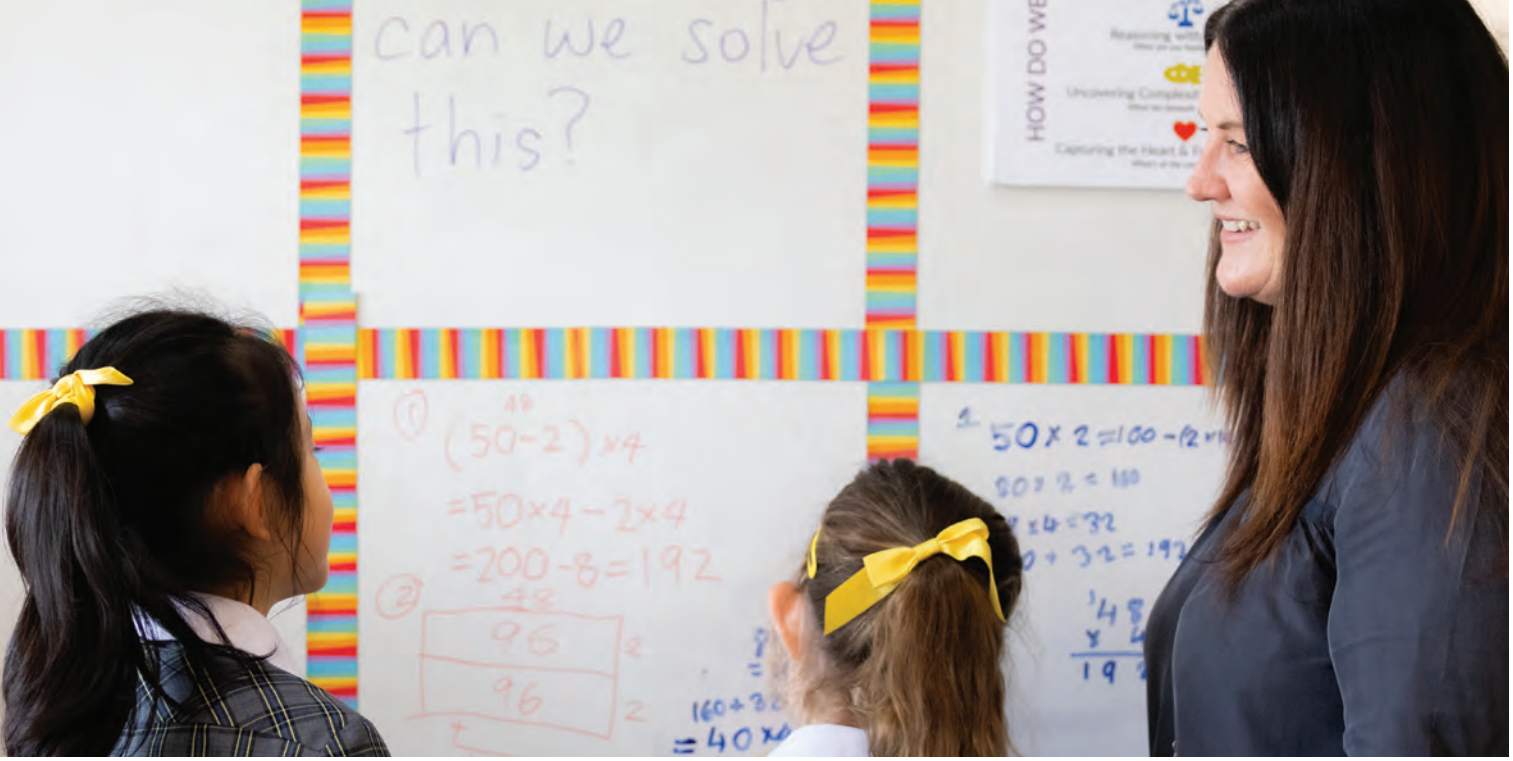
How does understanding develop?
How do we nurture critical and creative thinking?
How do we ensure that all our students are learning?

In my leadership role, the principles of Project Zero have inspired me to enhance the way we deliver our curriculum by a focus on the explicit teaching of the thinking moves that enable students to make meaning and develop understanding. This starts with teachers naming student thinking moves until they are able to internalise these as thinking skills.

- **Observe closely and describe what's there**
  "What do you see and notice?"
- **Wonder and ask questions**
  "What's puzzling about this?"
- **Make connections**
  "How does this fit with what you already know?"
- **Consider different viewpoints**
  "What's another angle on this?"
- **Build explanations and interpretations**
  "What's really going on here?"
- **Reason with evidence**
  "What makes you say that?"
- **Uncover complexity**
  "What lies beneath the surface?"

Ritchhart, Church and Morrison, 2011





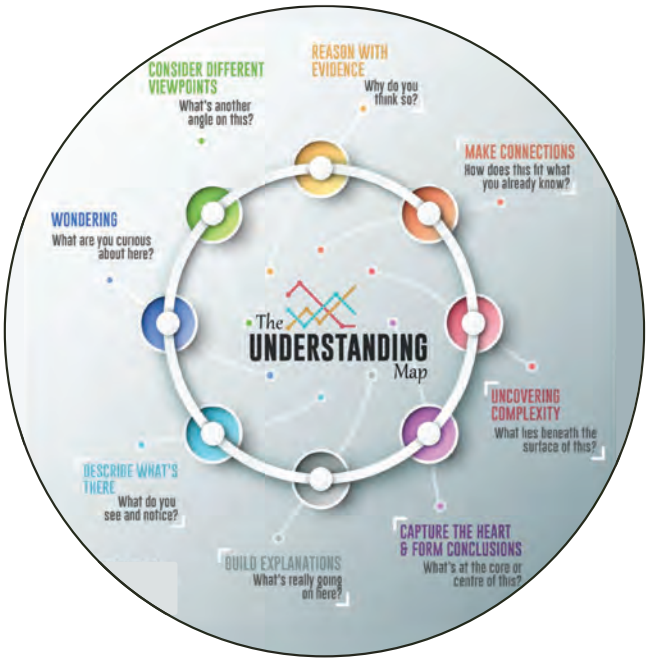
As Junior School staff, we have been exploring how to support student agency through making students' thinking visible to themselves and others. We have been examining how the use of thinking moves can foster classroom communities where student agency is not only allowed, but actively encouraged and supported. A focus on thinking moves, usually through the use of 'thinking routines', essentially assists students to develop new pathways of thinking, which in turn enables them to build deeper understanding.

"As Junior School staff, we have been exploring how to support student agency through making students' thinking visible to themselves and others.

Our classroom displays are an organic evolution of student learning. Post-it notes make students' thinking visible and students can change their ideas as their understanding grows. When students see their thinking and the thinking of their peers, they can see how understanding shifts and the impact of learning as a consequence of thinking.

The process is just as important as the product. When students make their theories public in the classroom, their ideas are validated, they are respectfully challenged and they learn from one another by considering different viewpoints, which acknowledges and celebrates diversity. Teachers who use routines extract deep thinking from their students. They are not teaching thinking lessons, they are creating cultures of thinking where students engage with the content by collaborating, reasoning and innovating.

From the first day of school, we begin the process of growing a culture of thinking. It is through a strong and supportive culture that we can best nurture critical and creative thinking dispositions and develop student agency.



Cultures of Thinking in Action | pz.harvard.edu/projects/cultures-of-thinking

PROJECT ZERO
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Cultivating a School-wide Culture of Thinking

Academic in Residence: Hosting Professor Ritchhart at Kambala

kambala institute for teaching excellence

A KITE Initiative

KITE is honoured to host Professor Ron Ritchhart as Kambala's inaugural 'Academic in Residence'. Professor Ritchhart has been a Senior Research Associate at Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education since 1994. His teachings focus on how to develop, nurture and sustain thoughtful learning environments for both students and teachers.

The research of Professor Ritchhart is based on the premise that when teachers belong to a culture of thinking, they are more likely to engage in rich conversations about learning, including the discussion of problems, strategies and solutions (Ritchhart, 2023). His most recent writing illustrates an ideal paradigm of professional learning for teachers, which he refers to as "transformational learning" (Ritchhart, 2023). This approach is a significant shift from more traditional and didactic forms of professional learning, where teachers might receive information about new practices or tools from an information session or workshop. Instead, Professor Ritchhart advocates for opportunities that call on teachers to "question the assumptions that undergrid our practice through participation in constructive discourse with our colleagues" (Ritchhart, 2023, p. 4).

What does this look like at Kambala? Through his residency, Professor Ritchhart encourages us to keep our sights firmly set on the ways we can embed new practices, namely, through the critical reflection on our actions in the classroom and on our own assumptions about how our students learn. More broadly, as staff we have considered the deep philosophical question surrounding the purpose of school, and what is it that we hope our students will be like as adults after their time at Kambala.

This has seen Professor Ritchhart facilitate a variety of different sessions with our Kambala teachers. An impactful strategy we have been utilizing is called Learning Labs. In a Learning Lab, a small group of teachers come together to collaboratively plan a lesson, observe its delivery and following that, reflect on their noticings, linking what they observed to how they might approach a similar lesson with their students or their practice in general. Through all observations, the focus centres on the students and their thinking, and how a teacher might plan learning to ensure student thinking remains at the heart of learning design.

Our Academic in Residence program complements our existing commitment to Project Zero philosophies, including our annual scholarship for teachers to travel to Project Zero Classroom. Both opportunities have led to a shared understanding of theory, research and language, spanning from our Early Learning Centre to our Senior School. With a shared commitment to cultivating a School-wide culture of thinking, we are able to focus our collective efforts on the creation of learning environments that allow our teachers to focus on how we develop our student as thinkers.



01/ Professor Ritchart working with students at Kambala.

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"Current research indicates that teaching practice has the biggest influence on improving learning for students… the way to maximise this influence is to cultivate a collaborative culture where educators support one another to deeply examine their impact through focused inquiry and deliberate action. Such a culture leads to a genuine desire in teachers to evolve their professional practice to ensure all students succeed."









01/ Kambala hosted the Project Zero Australia Network conference, *Cultures of Thinking in Action*.

02/ Kambala staff at Harvard Graduate School of Education for Project Zero Classroom.

03/ Project Zero principles encourage thinkers to 'make their thinking visible'.

04/ Staff regularly come together to share 'Pictures of Practice', illustrations of teaching and learning that are shared across our School.

05/ Our Professional Development Days see teachers come together for meaningful and collaborative planning opportunities. Here, the Social Sciences Faculty joins together to represent their collective efficacy in a culture of thinking.

Cultures of Thinking in Action

Pathways for Thought: Thinking Routines in the Year 8 classroom



Ms Himmi Cheruvu

English Teacher

English teacher Himmi Cheruvu illustrates how her engagement in professional learning experiences surrounding Cultures of Thinking have influenced her practice.

In the contemporary educational landscape, the emphasis has shifted from merely imparting information to cultivating critical thinking skills. Professor Ritchhart's encouragement to focus on supporting student thinking rather than prescribing 'what to think' has spurred a transformative journey in my Year 8 English classroom. This shift has not only lightened the cognitive load on me as a teacher during phases of instruction, but also empowered students to take ownership of their intellectual development.

Challenges in Traditional Approaches

Reflecting on the past Empowered Voices poetry unit, I recognised the pitfalls of a content-heavy and didactic approach. The overload of complex material, delivered in a lecture-style format, seemed to contribute to cognitive overwhelm rather than fostering genuine engagement. Indeed, the Latin origin of the word 'lecture', meaning 'to read aloud', hinted at the passive nature of the learning experience. It became evident that a paradigm shift was essential.

Centering Knowledge on Problematic Thinking

Inspired by bell hooks' philosophy of education as the practice of freedom, I aimed to centre knowledge on problematic thinking. My goal was not to dictate a singular perspective but to develop activities that encouraged students to grapple with diverse voices and perspectives. Progressive holistic education, as advocated by hooks (1994), goes beyond conventional pedagogies by emphasising wellbeing and self-actualization.

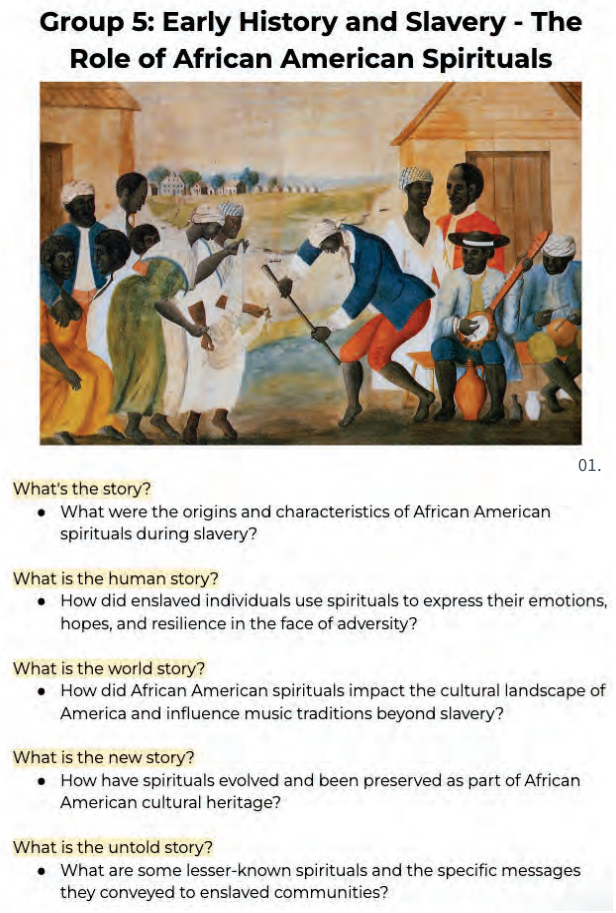
The Power of Thinking Routines

How does a teacher incite learning? How do I draw favour for my subject matter, particularly in this historical moment of iPhones, video gaming, on-demand entertainment and chat platforms? I wanted to conceptualise how we might organise pedagogy to compel students' attention.

Hooks postulates that the classroom is an ideal forum for introducing radical ideas to individuals who may not otherwise be exposed to such critical discussions. My intent was to present arguments that disrupted students' often comfortable, dominant notions about gender, race, class and sexualities. Rather than the class learning one right answer, I use thinking routines to rigorously encourage their theorising skills and build their own well-honed opinions while learning about theory-building as a process.

Thinking Routine: Unveiling Stories

In the Empowered Voices unit, we explored three key themes: Indigenous Australia, African American and 'Contemporary Asian Voices'. A notable example was our approach to delving into the diverse legacy of African American peoples. Rather than relying on content-heavy slides, we employed the thinking routine "Unveiling Stories" (Project Zero, 2019), which invites learners to develop a sensitivity to big ideas and issues that are facing the world as well as those they face themselves. Students were then well equipped to research major developments in African American heritage, including the 'The Transatlantic Slave Trade' the 'Post-Civil Rights Era – The Black Power Movement' and the 'The Role of African American Spirituals'.



01.

01/ Using the "Unveiling Stories" thinking routine (based on Project Zero, 2019) to contextualize the study of American poetry.



01.

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Thinking Routine: The 4 C's

In the previous iteration of the program, there was a lack of a contextual task to introduce 'Contemporary Asian Voices'. To address this gap, I designed a group task that leveraged the "4 C's" thinking routine (Project Zero, 2019). In this collaborative activity, students engaged in a research task aimed at exploring various facets of contemporary Asian voices.

Students delved into a diverse array of discursive and informative texts sourced from platforms such as National Public Radio, *The New Yorker*, ABC News, and *The Sydney Morning Herald*. This approach served to introduce them to key concepts, including but not limited to 'second generation', 'language attrition', 'the model minority myth', 'Asians are not a single monolithic group' and 'systemic racism'.

Aligning with the new syllabus requirements for Year 7 to Year 10, which emphasises 'exposure to a variety of text types – short prose, visual, spoken, multimodal, and digital texts' – the group task incorporated a rich mix of discursive articles.

Enriching Poetry Analysis Through Thinking Routines

In the realm of poetry analysis, thinking routines played a pivotal role. The "Connect-Extend-Challenge" routine served as a prelude, urging students to contemplate broader themes before applying the conventional "Example-Technique-Analysis" scaffold.

Moving Learning Forward

The infusion of thinking routines into the Year 8 English classroom has marked an impactful shift from a content-centric to a thinking-centric approach to this unit. As we navigate this historical moment of digital distractions, the strategic use of thinking routines has become a wonderful resource to draw students into the world of learning.



Forgetting My First Language

By Jenny Liao
The New Yorker

When I speak Cantonese with my parents now, I rely on translation apps.

Forgetting My First Language

The 4 C's Thinking Routine

Connections:
- The author talks about feeling like an acquaintance rather than a daughter when communicating with her parents. Have you ever felt a similar disconnect in your family due to barriers in culture, language, ideology/belief systems or something else? How did you try to bridge that gap?

Challenge:
- The author's parents believed that mastering English was crucial for success in America. Do you think this mindset is still prevalent today? What are some potential drawbacks or advantages of prioritising one language over another in a multicultural society?

Concepts:
- Why do you think the author refers to losing her first language as a "dull ache" rather than a sudden loss? What emotions and experiences might be involved in this gradual process?
- The author discusses the *social currency* of adopting English as a primary language. How can language be used as a tool for both inclusion and exclusion in society?

Changes:
- The author relies on translation apps and online dictionaries to communicate with her parents. How might technology be both helpful and limiting in maintaining and preserving language and cultural heritage?

02.

01/ Ms Himmi Cheruvu in the classroom.

02/ Using the "The 4 C's" thinking routine (based on Project Zero, 2019) to contextualize the study of Asian Australian poetry.

Gamifying Learning: How to Engage the Post Lockdown TikToker



Mr Michael Clark

Visual Arts

Quizziz, Kahoot!, Blooket, Flippity, Wordwall, JeopardyLabs, Gimkit, Padlet. Welcome to the post lockdown classroom! Each of these quirky terms unearths a plethora of educational games that can be tailored to all subjects.

But why gamify learning? Students have returned to the classroom 'gamified' – the attributes of gaming and social media are embedded in their lives, and in their approaches to learning and discovery. A yearning for instant gratification, a hunger for immediacy, a smooth cognitive journey with minimal effort required. Appraisal over effort has become a common objective for this new generation of learners. Is this surprising? With our global community being indulged in choices in our daily lives, our future learners have been conditioned to be consumers. Students are cognitive investors, and in this digital world, leasing cognitive stock to their teachers for even shorter periods of time.

I was honoured to present at the Visual Arts and Design Educators Association (VADEA) on the topic 'How to Gamify Learning'. This unusual presentation was in response to the conference theme 'Off-Grid', one that sought alternative pathways to teaching and learning. So, how might we engage the post lockdown TikToker?

A core strategy I have used to not suppress but embrace the TikToker learner is through this approach: treating my lesson structure as a three-course meal. A clear starter to entice, a main to nourish and a dessert to finish. My lesson menu always begins or finishes with a three to five minute game, whether it be online or hands-on, assisting the facilitation of a mental reset for students and assisting them to cognitively transition from one classroom to the next, versus just physically showing up. These games invite learners back into the collective mindset we are trying to establish as a community of visual arts learners.

Educationalist Dylan Wiliam's research on formative assessment (2011) begs the core question: who is doing the intellectual heavy lifting in your classroom? Too often teachers spend lesson times trying to lasso students back into a collective mindset of the content and concepts previously taught. The gamification of learning provides a means to build these cognitive structures, making them a routine part of learning and of our lesson time together. While these games might sometimes include solely review-based questions, they provide at minimum, a foundation and a vernacular for learners to build upon.

More importantly, the gamification of learning provides the opportunity for success to every learner. Games elevate all students into active participants. They have a low threshold for entry and stimulate a sense of curiosity and excitement, demystifying the stereotype of what learning might look like for some students. The quick summary reports generated from these games then provide an immediate cross-sectional snapshot of the individual and collective understanding of the students in front of me, offering adhoc tailoring to my planned lesson… otherwise referred to by Wiliam as 'assessment for learning' (2011).

"A core strategy I have used to not suppress but embrace the TikToker learner is through this approach: treating my lesson structure as a three course meal. A clear starter to entice, a main to nourish and a dessert to finish."

Overall, these games are a novel learning activity that may appear frivolous to the unexpected visitor to my classroom. Nonetheless, they are a learning experience that involves all the students, promotes retrieval practice (AERO, 2021), values the metalanguage of my subject, provides a clear lesson routine, reduces teacher centered learning and if nothing else … are fun.

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Innovative Practice: A Choice-based Approach to Curriculum



Ms Lauren Walsh

Head of Curriculum Innovations

The educational space is full of possibilities. While we may consider syllabus outcomes an impenetrable boundary, the way we approach our curriculum can move us beyond perceived constraints. Yet, any change in how we conceive education requires us to delve deep into the narratives that influence our learning culture. For the English Faculty, "uncovering the old stor[ies]" of competitiveness, high academic expectations and hierarchical approaches to teaching where "the politics of domination are often reproduced in the educational setting" through an expert teacher/ passive learner dichotomy, inspired our choice-based framework that emphasises the importance of empowering students to be agents in their learning (Ritchhart, 2015, p.20; hooks, 1994, p.39).

In the process of crafting a 'new story', we developed a clearly articulated vision that centred on collaboration and innovative organisational structures. Within the department, this involves team meetings to promote resource sharing, team leader roles to democratise leadership in faculty, and shared delegation of responsibilities. In our learning programs, this manifests in carefully organised scopes around a set of principles that value choice and as such provide multiple opportunities for students to opt into different workshops, tutorials, lectures, or consolidation sessions that appeal to their academic interests and needs. This is organised as a rotational model whereby students attend three core classes with their designated teacher and a weekly cohort, challenge or clarity session.

The whole year group sessions offer shared peer learning experiences, translating the concept of classroom into a cohort. Teacher/s will lead this session based on their expertise, and ensure age-appropriate material and differentiation in content delivery. For example, in a close critical study of Macbeth, a pair of teachers modelled different approaches to reading the play, with one teacher adopting the voice of early 20th century male literary criticism and the other embodying the persona of contemporary feminist interpretations. The approach was dynamic and enabled students to witness varying perspectives in a respectful and fun way. Another cohort session was an Introduction to Year 7 English, with the teaching team creating a series of drama-based activities that used embodied pedagogy to inspire tableaus, a short scene, or a poem. These experiences are an opportunity for us to model our collaborative strategies so students can witness our shared commitment to a culture of thinking.



"… to understand the culture of a school or classroom, we need to look at the story about learning each is telling. Beliefs, messages, values, behaviours, traditions, routines, and so on are not the culture itself, but are significant indicators of culture to the extent that they reinforce the core story being told. They are the means by which we identify the story of learning."
– Ritchhart, 2015, p. 21



As our new story evolved, so too has the expansion of our choice model. Each week, seven to 10 students opt into the challenge and clarity sessions that cultivate curiosity and empower students to reflect on their individual interests and needs. The emphasis in clarity sessions is on scaffolding, modelling and consolidating information for students who require extra support. These are smaller group sessions that provide students a more personalised environment to delve into deep thinking about the content. The challenge sessions are determined by the interests and expertise of teachers and evolve according to student interest. These options may include tasters of philosophical theories, interpreting critical material, or reading complex accompanying works to broaden knowledge of a set text. In our approach to Carol Ann Duffy poetry, the challenge sessions varied from palimpsestuous readings of the poems, feminist critical theory as a framework for interrogating texts of the past, and an Hegelian approach to critical writing.

This approach depends on dedicated teachers, who are invested in their subject, pedagogy, and the specific responsibilities that come with teaching in an all-girls school. We have a shared set of principles that align with our School's strategic vision to inspire our students to be courageous in their learning. Where our rotational model nurtures students' skills, it also provides opportunities for self-reflection that challenge them to become aware of their personal learning needs. As such, our culture of thinking is one that requires commitment from all involved – teachers and students alike.

If education is to prepare young people for the future, then the way that we approach it needs to centre on dynamic ways of thinking. Our approach demonstrates the creative potential of learning spaces and the way that this can be a practice of critical and liberatory thinking.

"Each week, seven to 10 students opt into the challenge and clarity sessions that cultivate curiosity and empower students to reflect on their individual interests and needs."

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A love of learning: Fostering a culture of exploration and risk-taking

According to Australian and New Zealand PISA data, girls at single-sex schools are more likely to report committed and passionate teachers who use adaptive and flexible instruction strategies in classrooms (Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia, 2020). In Term 4, Year 7 to Year 10 English classes experience such agility with teachers devising 'Passion Projects' based on student interest areas. These projects are creatively rich units that suit the interests of each cohort. As students collaborate in groups, the freedom inherent in these non-assessed units becomes a catalyst for learning for learning's sake, fostering a culture of exploration and risk-taking to cultivate a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom.

With curiosity as a core value of Kambala, the Year 7 English Passion Project course, titled 'WitchFest', is a project-based unit designed to harness the energy of our Year 7 students. The unit tracked the representation of 'the witch' across transhistorical and cultural contexts with the exploration of a variety of textual forms ranging from Greek mythology to modern-day TikToks. After establishing a theory-based knowledge, students work in groups to plan, script, revise and film their own witch-themed short films. By stepping into the role of film directors, students consolidate their knowledge of film analysis while building their collaborative abilities through creative, embodied learning.

The magic of this unit stems from the eponymous event itself: WitchFest 2023 where Year 7 students, parents and friends gathered together to watch an official screening of select short films. From featuring music videos and slapstick comedies to horror-thrillers and 'whodunnit' mysteries, WitchFest 2023 was a purple-lit evening of laughs, screams and gasps all-round. The evening was both a showcase of student talent and a demonstration of the power of collaborative learning; echoing research that suggests girls' pedagogical preferences for "interactive approaches" (Younger, 2016, p.6).



Mr Thomas Israel and Ms Sophie Webster

English Teachers

The value of education is among the greatest of all human values

Virginia Woolf, 1938

With an emphasis on unpacking theories that ensure our girls are nurtured, challenged and empowered, the Year 10 Passion Project focuses on unpacking 'The Gaze' through an immersive exploration of film theories and their application (Stannard, 2024). The course delves into cinematic theories on the male and female gaze, challenging students to critically apply these concepts to Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and Sciamma's *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*. To build real-life connectedness for our students, the delivery is seamlessly integrated with the interdisciplinary unit 'Existential Crisis'. This added layer prompts students to engage in deep introspection, grappling with profound questions such as, 'Can we control how others look at and construct versions of us? Do these versions exist? Are they in any way 'truthful'?' The intersection of film theory and existential philosophy creates a rich tapestry for students to connect with complex ideas.

This approach to unit planning was inspired by a shared commitment to delivering 'learning that matters' for our students (Perkins, 2012, p.4). With students "empowered" to blend theoretical knowledge with creative expression, they experience a deeper understanding of themselves and their world.



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A Bilingual Instruction Approach in the Early Years: Using EAL/D Students' Home Languages to Support Language and Literacy Development



Ms Sherry Chen

Languages and Learning Enrichment Teacher

Research supports two languages as better than one for children's cognitive development (Thomas and Collier, 1997). While being bilingual provides lifelong cognitive benefits, English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) students in primary schools, especially in the early stage of schooling, may often face challenges when transitioning from a home environment where a language other than English is spoken to a school environment where English becomes the sole language of instruction and interaction. These challenges may include understanding instructions and engaging in social interactions.

To capitalise the unique strengths of EAL/D students while also enhancing their language and literacy development, Kambala draws upon a bilingual instruction approach, using dual languages with linguistically diverse students to introduce storybooks and concepts at the Kindergarten level. The primary aim is to facilitate language and literacy skills in the crucial early years of education, establishing a solid foundation for future academic achievement.

This bilingual instruction approach is built based on the evidence associated with Cognitive Load Theory and Social Constructivism. These theoretical models provide clear practical implications for educators, including the need for explicit teaching and the inclusion of sufficient scaffolding to fall within an individual's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Imagine a newly enrolled EAL/D student in Kindergarten trying to comprehend an English story filled with unfamiliar words; cognitive overload can hinder full understanding of the text due to the working memory being overwhelmed, busy trying to decode, make connections and all the other skills involved with reading. Through our program, both English and Mandarin are used with EAL/D students to explicitly elucidate new vocabulary and background knowledge within a story. This method effectively lessens students' cognitive load, freeing up cognitive space for the development of new vocabulary and other important reading skills such as prediction.



Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978) emphasises the crucial role of 'scaffolding' to guide a learner from what they can achieve on their own, to what they can learn with the guidance from an expert other. When applied to supporting EAL/D students in the early years, the bilingual instruction approach allows students to work under the guidance of a Mandarin-speaking teacher, responding comfortably to texts in their preferred language, especially to explain more detailed concepts. Being able to communicate in their first language allows students to process and grow their learning so that they are able to take on new skills and understandings, thus moving from what they 'can do', to what they 'can't do' more efficiently.



Recognising the complexity of being a bilingual speaker and learner, the bilingual instruction program enriches students' learning experiences by connecting literature with their backgrounds and introducing new concepts. Through the use of dual languages, students are exposed to a wide range of diverse storybooks and concepts. Immersed in this rich linguistic environment, EAL/D students actively engage in mainstream lessons, cultivating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. For us, the collaboration between class and EAL/D teachers has been pivotal and has emphasised a shared commitment to evidence-based literacy instruction in Massie House. Through this innovative approach, we know our students are empowered to thrive academically and culturally, ensuring a holistic and enriching educational journey.



"Kambala draws upon a bilingual instruction approach, using dual languages with linguistically diverse students to introduce storybooks and concepts at the Kindergarten level."

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The Teachers of Tomorrow: the KITE/ KOG Scholarship for Teacher Education



Olivia Cramer-Roberts

OG20



Olivia Thoma

OG22

In recognising the important role teachers play in communities, the Kambala Institute for Teaching Excellence (KITE) and Kambala Old Girls' Union (KOG) facilitate a scholarship for university study in the field of education, offered to a Kambala graduate. The offering serves as a way to support undergraduate teachers by providing them access to outstanding practitioners at Kambala, mentorship and financial grant access throughout the duration of their degree. Meet some of our scholarship recipients here.

Olivia Cramer-Roberts

Why did you decide to pursue teaching as a career?

Starting from a young age I had a deep interest in learning and education. Throughout my schooling I recognised the disparities between different education institutions and felt really passionate about this. Having had an incredibly enriched learning at Kambala demonstrated to me the importance of quality teaching, educational resources and hands-on learning. When school was commencing, I recognised that I didn't want my various work with children to also come to an end. Choosing education as my future career was as clear as anything to me.

What impact do you hope to make as a teacher?

When I commenced my degree I was unaware of all the various opportunities that a Bachelor of Education (Primary) came with. Working as a Student Learning Support Officer for over a year has highlighted to me my interest in specialised and behavioural education. I quickly noticed that my strengths and skill set were suitable to work with those students who had additional needs or required additional support. As a future teacher I strive to make an impact within the world of specialised education. I wish to ensure that my practice is one that is inclusive, strengths and student-based, where those students who are otherwise marginalised in a mainstream system, receive the same education as their peers.

What has been a highlight or the most interesting part of your graduate study so far?

Going into my fourth year of study, it has become evident to me that the education system has adjusted to our current research and understanding of student learning.

Olivia Thoma

Why did you decide to pursue teaching as a career?

At the conclusion of my schooling education I was told to look for a career which I found inspiring and that I would look forward to every day. While most of my friends found themselves longing to leave school and move into offices, I soon came to realise that the space I felt most joyous and confident was in a school. In this time I realised that the passion I had for ongoing learning would translate well into pursuing a teaching career.

What impact do you hope to make as a teacher?

Certainly, the impact I wish to make as a teacher is inspired by the impact my teachers had on myself. In particular I wish to build respect-based relationships that are then able to flourish and lead students to build trust around one's learning, curiosity and passions. I hope for my future students that I am someone they deeply trust and are inspired by, so that I can help them in all aspects of their life, whether it be their academics, or wellbeing.

What has been a highlight or the most interesting part of your graduate study so far?

The most interesting part of my first year studying a Bachelor of Primary Education has been two subjects, 'Rethinking Education' and 'Sociological Perspectives in Education'. These subjects have challenged me to think about how I can improve the classroom and the education system for all students. The assessment for these subjects was through critical reflection which I found rewarding and very affirming of my beliefs.



Postgraduate Study: KITE scholarship for Postgraduate study

Under our KITE program for further study, some of our educators have chosen to continue their formal education through postgraduate study. From leadership masters programs, education specialisations or more technical courses aligned with their discipline, these teachers have immersed themselves into the tertiary world in order to expand their knowledge and find joy in extending their learning at university level. Of course with this comes a lot of hard work and an appreciation of what it means to be a student again.

Michael Clark
Degree: Master of Education Curriculum and Assessment
University: UNSW

I have used this study opportunity to focus closely on curriculum and assessment within my subject area, Visual Arts. Specifically, I have examined how students engage with the theoretical constructs of the syllabus to shape their critical reasoning. I have investigated the constraints of the postmodern frame to interpret contemporary artworks. With an ever-evolving artworld, my research project has examined how students might employ a post-structural epistemology to infer, develop and sustain a critical analysis in response to newly encountered artworks.

Samantha Gooch
Degree: Graduate Certificate of Education Research
University: UNSW

I have been involved in a research project with Dr Laura Tuohilampi (UNSW) that centres around mathematics engagement. Through my study with UNSW and under her stewardship, I have worked as a research assistant in the Love Maths research project. It has been valuable to learn about education research while pursuing an area of personal interest and inquiry, and to work with passionate academics in the mathematics space.

Robyn Howell
Degree: Master of Education (Learning and Leadership)
University: University of Technology Sydney

The Master of Education (Learning and Leadership) has encompassed a broad range of experiences that develop the knowledge and skills to lead innovative learning. This course builds upon practice and extends theoretical knowledge in the context of contemporary and emerging trends in education. The desire is to utilise practice-driven research, applying it to my own leadership in order to develop future focused learning environments at Kambala.

Anna Koutsoukis
Degree: Master of Education (Gifted Education)
University: UNSW

Completing the Master of Education (Gifted Education) at UNSW, complemented my experience in teaching gifted and talented students at Kambala. The course provided research-based evidence for teaching academically gifted learners and meeting their academic and social/emotional needs. My major research project investigated the identification of underperforming and twice-exceptional students, and their inclusion in gifted programs.

Jennifer Lewis
Degree: Master of Education – Educational Wellbeing
University: Southern Cross University

This study has provided the opportunity to discuss contemporary educational leadership and contexts with other educators from all over Australia and internationally. I decided to major in Educational Wellbeing due to my interest in pastoral care. Some of the units I have studied include a focus on enhancing student wellbeing, valuing diversity and supporting students in difficult times. I feel this is particularly relevant to anyone in a classroom teaching role.

Ariel Mekler-Peled
Degree: Graduate Diploma in Design and Technologies Education
University: Australian Catholic University

This study opportunity has allowed me to further refine my understanding of design and technology education. Courses are linked to different elements of the curriculum such as: timber manufacture, product innovation, electromechanical engineering and coding. Through this, I have been able to redevelop programs to better suit the needs of students in a rapidly changing technological world.

Marius Ndiaye
Degree: Master of Education (Leadership and Management)
University: Notre Dame

I have learned so much from undertaking the Master of Education program. In fact, I have used a lot of what I have studied in my teaching practice and have implemented changes to our programs in Health and Movement Science as a result of my learning experiences. I have thoroughly enjoyed being challenged and have benefited from learning from experts in the field of education.

01.


02.


03.


04.


05.

Lauren Walsh
Degree: Master of English Studies
University: The University of Sydney

My ongoing engagement with the Master of English Studies has continued to ensure that I am current in my approach to teaching English and interrogating literature from fresh, academic lenses. This has directly impacted my capacity to ensure rich learning experiences for students through programming and sharing with colleagues my developing knowledge.

Paige Zavaglia
Degree: Master of International Relations
University: The University of Sydney

In undertaking this degree, I have engaged in conversations on topics as diverse as the importance of China's foreign policies in our region, the role that BRICS plays in challenging power structures, and the importance of effective global governance in mitigating climate change. My learnings, while personally of great interest, have primarily been valuable in enriching debate in my History and Politics classrooms.

01/ Ariel Mekler-Peled, Art and Design Faculty
02/ Anna Koutsoukis, Junior School Learning Enrichment
03/ Jennifer Lewis, Music Faculty
04/ Robyn Howell, Social Sciences Faculty
05/ Paige Zavaglia, History, Philosophy and Religious Education Faculty

Meet *our Faculty*



Ms Tina Bramis
Art and Design Faculty
Dean of Teacher Accreditation and Registration

Teacher accreditation provides a consistent and clear process for teachers to demonstrate their ongoing efforts to develop and strengthen effective practice to enhance student learning. At Kambala, our Dean of Teacher Accreditation oversees and supports our teaching faculty in their acquisition of and growth through the levels of teacher accreditation according to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Tina Bramis explains her commitment to this role below, showing how she draws upon her own experience as a classroom teacher to guide teachers through the stages of critical reflection needed to reach various levels of teacher accreditation.

Describe a day in your life at Kambala.

A typical day involves many moving parts and one of my main roles is overseeing the process of teacher accreditation, but I am fortunate to continue dedicating time to my passion – teaching. I spend a large part of each day planning and liaising with staff from across the School, planning lessons, marking and giving feedback to students, and before meeting with students to give them additional guidance with their study. While there is structure to my working day, I like the fact that each day is different and I'm always using different skills to engage, support and care for our students and staff.

What do you see as the value in teacher accreditation for graduate teachers?

It is so inspiring to work alongside graduate teachers as they engage and are passionate about improving their pedagogy and teaching practice. The value in teacher accreditation for graduate teachers is that it provides a framework for ongoing quality education, fostering continuous improvement and accountability among staff. The process serves as professional development and helps maintain teaching standards, instilling confidence from our students, parent body and the education provided at Kambala.

How does Kambala support its teachers through the various stages of teacher accreditation?

The overarching goal in the process is to ensure a strong culture by putting the right processes and systems in place. We support teachers at the accreditation stages of Conditional, Provisional, and Proficient Teacher, as well as those seeking voluntary accreditation at Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) by providing resources and guidance specific to each career stage. We provide tailored support collaboratively with the teachers to give guidance on understanding requirements, to help with documentation, to offer tips for effective classroom practices and to assist in addressing specific challenges teachers may face during the specific accreditation process.

What is the most enjoyable part of your role at Kambala?

The most enjoyable part of my role at Kambala is witnessing an environment where students are motivated to learn, and teachers are inspired to teach, and this creates a ripple effect which expands with every conversation a teacher has with a colleague about their learning experience. Overall, I see a positive impact on educational quality and teachers constantly expanding their knowledge, using innovative teaching methods and building strong connections with students. It is rewarding witnessing these 'aha' moments.

What advice do you have for teachers hoping to achieve higher levels of teacher accreditation?

We maintain an open-door policy and invite staff to use us as a resource, as they brainstorm ways to explore different avenues in the accreditation process. My advice to teachers would be to focus on professional development, demonstrate commitment to student success, actively engage in reflective practices and seek mentorship opportunities to enhance your teaching skills.





Ms Patricia Wong
Mathematics Faculty
Mathematics Faculty Co-Leader



Faculty members who join the profession after a career outside of education always bring new ideas and perspectives to our School. We have been pleased to welcome Patricia Wong to Kambala and into the leadership team as the Assistant Head of Mathematics. Here she discusses her career paths in engineering and education, telling us about what it was that led her to become a passionate teacher of mathematics for young women.

What inspired you to become a mathematics teacher?

I have always loved mathematics, seeing patterns, and working through puzzles to find solutions. I just wanted to pass on my passion and enthusiasm for mathematics to another generation. Becoming a mathematics teacher felt like the natural fit, and since working in the classroom, I have never looked back.

Tell us about your career prior to becoming a teacher.

I have worked as an engineer for over 18 years in various countries, including the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Norway, Malaysia and Brunei. I worked as a Process Engineer in gas plants and offshore platforms. Over time, I transitioned into supporting commercial negotiations, developing new gas opportunities, and later, managing the execution of large projects. In all these roles, the values that Kambala holds dear – Humanity, Courage, Curiosity and Respect – were key to my success. Working in international, multidisciplinary teams required careful interface management. To earn respect and trust, it was important to demonstrate humanity and respect for others. Optimising processes and exploring new ways of working involved curiosity and courage.

What is your favourite thing about teaching mathematics?

My favourite thing is simple: seeing students' faces when they understand. I have been teaching for a while now, and I still get so much joy from witnessing their thinking develop. However, I also enjoy the creative side of teaching mathematics and exploring different ways to engage students' thinking, ensuring their understanding is solid.

Do you see any application from your previous roles to your teaching of mathematics?

I see a myriad of connections. In my 18 years of industry experience, I have undertaken a variety of roles and have seen first-hand how mathematics is applied in finance, statistics, modelling and planning. Bringing that experience into the classroom allows me to put topics into perspective and helps students make clearer connections.

What is one thing that women should know about the study of mathematics and its value.

Mathematics is invaluable for developing your mind to work more effectively in solving problems. In industry, the problems may not always be mathematical, but the problem-solving skills you acquire in mathematics are transferable. When working on a mathematical problem, you read the problem, underline key words, assess all the information you know, consider how it's related, determine if it can help you get closer to the solution, identify what else you need, and figure out how to obtain that information. Industries are always looking for people who are adaptable problem solvers.

What advice would you give to young women who are interested in the pursuit of STEM-related careers?

Whether you are interested or not interested in STEM careers, take a closer look. For instance, the field of engineering is vast, offering numerous study options that cater to a wide range of interests. These programs provide you with the basics to work in an even broader array of roles. You can specialise and have a technical role, or work in commercial negotiations, project management, and work in various industries, such as pharmaceuticals, robotics, programming, water management and construction, etc. One of the aspects that attracted me to engineering was the opportunity to travel and work. However, I also discovered that there is a lot of flexibility and choices along the way.





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