



Abbkart 2020: Harnessing Creativity for Global Development

“I have learnt that
everybody can be creative.

I really didn't know that
before. I thought it was just
either something you had,
or you didn't!”

– Student

You're never too young to tackle a global agenda! Year 6 students at Abbotsleigh harnessed both their love of billycarts and their problem-solving skills to create prototypes inspired by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

To begin with, students unpacked the meaning of creativity and examined the specific skills and behaviours related to the disposition. The class teachers then facilitated a 'Week Without Answers,' where students were provided with a range of open-ended provocations which served as a creativity pre-test. These experiences prompted students to reflect on the skills and behaviours that are conducive to creativity and allowed them to set informed goals to ensure their continued development of the disposition. Students also participated in a presentation about the evolution of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This presentation was intentionally framed through the lens of creativity and emphasised the importance of the disposition in developing innovations to progress these goals. From here, the students undertook independent research on a goal of their choice, and they used this information to design an innovation that would assist in progressing their selected goal. Having students continue to reflect on their use of creativity throughout the unit ensured that they were able to discuss the progress they had made in the development of their creativity at the conclusion of the project.

The effectiveness of the Abbkart 2020 project lay in the tightly integrated progression of teaching and learning activities across Science, Mathematics, English and Geography. The Learning Design Planning template was pivotal in ensuring that authentic connections between these disciplines were explored and sequenced in a way to provide students with feedback and scaffold their creative and metacognitive thinking. Additionally, digital technology was leveraged to document the progression of student thinking. In this case, each student created a personalised e-book containing reflections on both their creative process, and the skills and knowledge gained throughout the unit of work. When learning is deepened through integration and documentation, students can see the real-world application of their learning and the growth in their thinking.

One of the most exciting outcomes of this project was that the students were able to 'unpack' what it meant to be creative, and they could identify the skills and behaviours relating to this disposition that they had developed. Student insights, such as, “your thoughts can take you to many different places if you persist,” demonstrated not only a newfound understanding of what creativity is but also the types of learning habits that support the development of this disposition.

Abbkart 2020 shines a light on the four elements of deep learning enabling student voice and choice in the design of a solution for a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal. In terms of pedagogical practices, maker-centred learning, metacognitive strategies, inquiry questions and well-timed provocations placed creativity at the heart of the unit. Learning partnerships across the school community ensured that guest presentations, woodwork demonstrations, integrated assessment practices and celebrations of student learning could occur. Further, a range of learning environments, including the use of outdoor areas and a specialist Maker-Space, supported these learning partnerships. Finally, digital technology was leveraged to document student thinking in a multi-modal way and to provide students with a way to test their prototypes through coding.

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