

Australia (Victoria)

## Manchester Primary School

### Community / School Film Festival Collaboration

*The objective of the Community/School Film Festival program is to engage primary school students with the curriculum through experiences of developing short films. Filming is used as a cross-curricular activity which involves flexible movement around the school, group negotiation, planning, evaluation, and on-teaching between students and staff, and is regarded as a tool for students to demonstrate their understanding. Teachers and technicians from the shire support the students. The projects culminate in a regular Children's Film Festival, in which an increasing number of schools participate, fostering exchange of resources and expertise. The Film Festival program was initiated to engage boys at risk, but has been replicated with other student groups and in several schools, based on a manual written by the developers.*

**Main focus of innovation:** CONTENT, RESOURCES

**Other keywords:** learning space, technology-rich

#### General Information

**Name of the ILE:** Manchester primary School Community/School Film Festival Collaboration.

**Location/Address:** Victoria, Australia.

**ILE submitted by:** Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, Victoria, Australia

**Rationale**

*Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning challenges?*

This project bears all the hallmarks of education of the future. It began as an engagement program and has become a vehicle for self expression accessible to all children. The lessons learned by our cluster of schools and the Shire of Yarra Ranges can now be transferred to the entire region, state and the world. Students responded so well because the medium is a popular one, because it engages all the senses and learning styles and is an authentic way for students to express their concerns for the world using their own distinctive voices.

One of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenges is not coming to grip with the technology....but having teachers understand that children will, by and large, take care of the technology through their own native desire to play with and explore the potential of technology.

The challenge is to keep teachers empowered and engaged with the students by making them realise that they have a definite role to play in the production team. Skills' including literacy, use of image, and sound in the communication of a clear message ensures that teachers are engaged with the entire process.

**Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE**

*What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)*

Overall the e5 principles apply as intrinsic parts of the project. The engagement of students is of paramount importance. Children have the opportunity to explore the potential of the medium (as do the teachers). On-teaching and collaboration facilitate the "explain" and "elaborate" areas and the evaluation phase incorporates the meta-cognition and critical awareness that is developed through the project.

Personal, Social and Interpersonal elements are covered also through the planning, collaboration and organisation of the project. Literacy is a common element to film no matter what the genre and specific domains may be targeted depending on the subject matter negotiated with the teacher. Interdisciplinary areas covered include thinking, ICT and communication through a variety of media including spoken text, non verbal communication, image as text and sound as text.

**Learners**

*Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?*

While this project began initially to engage "at risk" middle year boys, much of the self esteem they gained was through the on-teaching of the concepts. As a result not only was all of Level 4 exposed to the medium in 2008, but the on-teaching continued into Level 3 with the grade 3 students producing 3 films that were excellent and which were included in the 2008 film festival. At Mooroolbark College the targeted boys spread their skills through their year level opening up a new avenue of self expression. It is hoped that in the future the Mooroolbark Children's Film Festival will have so many entries that there will be age group and genre categories and that that each school will be able to screen their own discrete film festivals in order to select their film entries for the Shire event. This will improve the quality of the material being produced by students.

**Facilitators**

*Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?*

The facilitators are classroom teachers.

Students work in groups of 3-6 to develop their films.

One teacher/facilitator from each school can work with the Shire in their steering group.

Teachers from new schools use existing Mooroolbark Children's Film Festival staff as resource or reference staff.

Technicians and support staff from the Shire support the project as required.

**Organization of the ILE**

*How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?*

Learning is school based and predominantly classroom based.

Student learners interact with peers and teachers in an assessment for learning structure with planning, organisation and filming being constantly reviewed and repeated /re-filmed as needed.

Facilitators can communicate through email or wiki, which we are planning to establish this year.

ICT is used to engage and stimulate learning. Explicit literacy teaching is directed to film –plot development, storyboarding, character development, text development. Supplementary areas such as acting, costuming, music are explored.

Classroom teachers see the filming as being a cross-curricular activity and their topics include Bio-diversity, Entertainment the Gold Rush and Action Story Telling. At our school ICT has become a tool by which students can demonstrate their understandings. They choose a medium that they feel comfortable with and which is expressive to their needs ...and the vast majority of students choose film since they understand that a picture can tell a thousand words. In grade 3 children have been involved in a multi-media activity incorporating film and Action Story Telling to present a stirring and informative piece for their Biodiversity unit.

Engagement with the curriculum through authentic experiences of developing short films.

Groups work collaboratively and productively. Students are text analysts and outcomes are more vibrant and 3 dimensional. Student and staff negotiation of curriculum occurs and students have more control of their outputs. They LOVE making films.

The curriculum is structured as appropriate for individual grades and schools.

**Learning Context**

*In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?*

Learning occurs as part of the normal curriculum. The tools being used are less conventional, and the skills required to negotiate a filming outcome are more authentic and involve more social interaction.

On a class base, it means flexible movement around the school, group negotiation and class and group evaluation and refinement. Constructive feedback will be used and the norm for small group collaboration which is supported by our TRIBES processes.

On a school base there is sharing across levels.

On an interschool mentor basis, communication will be supported by meetings, email links and wiki contributions.

Parents will be involved in review processes and they and the broader community will play their part as audience. The Shire actively supports the film festival with technical expertise and the commitment of facilities for the festival. Welfare agencies play a particular role because they see the potential of this medium to deal with issues that children and families are experiencing.

### **History of ILE**

*Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?*

Our I & E Innovations Leader initiated the project in 2007 with funding from the Shire of Yarra Ranges as a method of engaging middle years boys at risk in the 5 Red Earth Cluster schools. The success of the project as an engagement tool was immediate and as a result, a cultural grant was granted to us to compile a Manual to facilitate the duplication of the project even further afield to schools throughout the shire.

A major part of our brief (and the most immediate legacy) was the creation of the Mooroolbark Children's Film Festival which began in 2008 and will now be a regular part of the Children's Week calendar. It is being promoted further in the Shire so that more children can have a voice. It has been taken up with particular fervour by agencies dealing with the recent bushfire victims. They see the potential for this project to give voice to children who have suffered as a result of recent loss.

This program began as an engagement program for disengaged boys and rapidly became something far more widespread. The six boys returned and on-taught their skills to six more children. Those twelve went on and trained staff and all the Level 4 students (comprising 85 grade 5 & 6 students). The levels of engagement were so high that the Level 3 students also wanted to be involved and in turn, they and their teachers were trained. This meant that almost half of the entire school population was involved in films for the Mooroolbark Children's Film Festival.

This year we have been discussing the visual literacy involved in creating good quality films and how important it is that children start early with these skills. We discuss the framing of a picture for their drawings – even in prep with both art teachers and classroom teachers. To further facilitate this skills development and to enhance the children's e-portfolios, each grade has a flip mino and have begun filming for a variety of purposes. The preps have produced several pieces of work using these wonderful little digital devices- the major one being the Action Story Telling item of the Little Red Hen.

This year Level 4 has also begun a specialised project with a film maker and two animators to improve the quality of the work they are producing for the Film Festival.

### **Funding of the ILE**

*How is it funded?*

Funding is locally raised through grants. Ongoing maintenance and software need to be considered once hardware has been acquired.

Local decisions are made school by school about the responsibility for this project, but the Shire handles the community end of promoting the project.

**Learning Outcomes**

*What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?*

Anecdotal/formative data is overwhelming in relation to engagement. ATS and PoLT data can be examined when considering connectedness to school, engagement and challenging learning, but cannot be precisely linked to the film making project. It would, however, contribute to the overall sense of engagement and feelings of wellbeing at school.

Separate questionnaires could easily be devised dealing with the project, but much of that feedback already comes back to us in the form of reflection and in contributions in community circles and evaluation sessions.

Student learning is assessed in end product, in classroom data on social interaction and organisation, in student feedback in audience feedback and in its inclusion into the film festival program. First attempts are often focused on film clichés, but subsequent attempts are far more intelligent responses to the project aims and guidelines.

While this program began as a student engagement program it has spread not only throughout the school but has been replicated in other schools as well. We have established a strong bond with the Shire of Yarra Ranges and the film festival project has brought us into closer contact with neighbouring schools with which we are sharing resources and expertise.