**Hong Kong Exchange Program**

Our sister school partnership which began in 2007 is a reciprocal exchange between Princes Hill Primary School in Melbourne and Po Leung Kuk Luk Hing Too Primary School in Hong Kong. The program really began as a cultural experience, but really what we needed to do was to question the value add to the school's program. We then looked at it through a new lens of how it could be totally linked in to our strategic plan. In 2012, the partnership broadened to include Luocum Experimental School in Foshan, mainland China. The key features of the exchange program now covered multiple aspects across the school. They involve student learning outcomes of how do we get deep meaningful learning for the children through character building, through global citizenshi0p, through inquiry. Recent exchanges have seen a major shift in the way we support children to enrich their experience. So last year, we took the research project of the children even deeper. We brought in a member of our community who is an anthropologist.

I worked with the children to develop a research question involving what it means to be a child growing up in China, and it facilitated not only an inquiry into another culture but also a deeper understanding and a reflection on our own approach to life.

Our research projects included some questions. We interviewed the parents the Chinese and Hong Kong buddies. Some of the questions we asked our Chinese buddies:

What do you want to be when you grow up?

What are your aspirations for the future?

Who decided what you're going to be?

What are your goals for when you grow up?

I want to be a dance teacher, because I love dancing.

One really unique aspect of our exchange program is the fact that we travel to Hong Kong, and the children with their buddies from Hong Kong then travel into China. What's really unique about this is that the Hong Kong children then become the translators for the children between Australia and China.

What do think you need to do to get to your goals?

[Children translating]

I found that it was very different to our life here in Australia and that their traditions, and their culture is a lot different, and their life is, I guess, they put them under a bit more pressure because of homework, and getting a job, and going to uni. What we're trying to get for the kids out of it, is that sense of "how does that connect to me and how does it strengthen or deepen my understanding of who I am in my place in the world."

It's not just about going out and looking at another culture, but it's actually then saying, "Well what does this what does this mean for me?"

Each year we also have a real focus for research for the teachers. One year we went in to absolutely examine mathematics teaching. The Pisa results had come out stating that Hong Kong and China were high within that area. As a research project, we went in to examine what was mathematical teaching. What could we learn from the teaching in Hong Kong and China? It's a wonderful experience because we were given the opportunity to share our own teaching practices Tim and I gave an animation related lesson which showed the philosophy of the school and our values of collaboration. It was very interesting, because that's a very different way to how they approach teaching.

For me, it just it just reinforced or it it made me consider that aspect of collaborative learning and learning communities a lot a lot deeper and how we can go further with that. I've personally been involved in the Hong Kong exchange program for five years and over that time I've really built a deep relationship with the principals of the sister schools and really set a goal for things to examine and to discuss and see them as a resource to actually tap in throughout the year to work with and really the network between us has been come as strong as my network with my colleagues here in Melbourne.

What this partnership has achieved for our school is the means of having an authentic context for learning for children.

Children live within a global society, they need to be able to explore this concept of a global citizenship, and this brings about an opportunity for a really contemporary modern approach to teaching and learning. The key enablers of our sister school partnership have been links to our school policy and vision, strong leadership support, embedding the relationship in the curriculum involving the whole school community and a shared vision and common interest with our partner school.