Creative, critical, digital

Connecting home and school literacies

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Creative, critical, digital: Connecting home and school literacies
Report on the Collaborative Literacy Learning Communities program

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I. Overview

1.1 Introduction

The Creative, critical, digital: Connecting home and school literacies project was funded by Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM). It was conducted by a team of researchers from Deakin University between March 2014 and September 2015. The lead researchers were Dr Anne Cloonan, Dr Kirsten Hutchison and Dr Louise Paatsch.

Closely aligned with the Collaborative Literacy Learning Communities (CLLC) professional learning program conducted by CEM, the aim of this research was to investigate literacy teaching and learning at the intersection of creative and critical thinking, information and communication technologies, and home-school connections.

The research is pertinent to contemporary literacy teachers. Advice within the recently released Victorian Curriculum (VCAA, 2015) requires English/literacy teachers to concurrently address learning in literacy with creative and critical thinking, and in addition specific goals for students have been set to encourage development of strong skills in critical and creative thinking (Department of Education and Training, 2015). Advice in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2012) positions all teachers as teachers of literacy, creative and critical thinking and information and communication technologies.

This research focuses on teachers’, students’ and parents’ understandings and practices of ICT and creative and critical thinking as they intersect with literacy learning; and how literacy teaching practices integrate creative and critical thinking with ICT and home–school connections through a school-based area of inquiry into literacy learning.

The research used a mixed methods design that enabled insights to be gained from quantitative and qualitative data, including surveys and case studies. It explored the experiences of middle years (Years 5–10) teachers from primary and secondary CEM schools participating in the CLLC program in 2014/15 – ‘cohort four’.

Ethical aspects of this research project were approved by the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee and the Analysis, Policy and Research Unit at Catholic Education Office Melbourne.

1.2 Research context

Research into teacher professional learning in Victoria found that teachers who undertake professional development activities do not necessarily make durable changes to their practice, regardless of how positive their learning experience. Evidence of a widespread survey showed that:

[w]hile almost all Victorian teachers in the survey indicated that they have modified their teaching to some extent as the result of their professional development, almost as many said that they have only done so ‘occasionally’ (43%) as have done so ‘frequently’ (49%) (Parliament of Victoria, 2009, p. 10).
Teacher professional learning is now firmly regarded as a priority area in education, locally (Parliament of Victoria, 2009) and internationally (Yates, 2007) with a growing body of research confirming teacher quality as one of the most important factors influencing student achievement.

CEM first offered the CLLC in mid-2009 to middle years literacy teacher leaders and teams. While the CLLC was designed to complement and build on other CEM literacy professional learning programs, its design draws on the research and experience of the Networked Learning Communities program implemented by the National College for School Leadership across England (Hopkins & Jackson, 2003) to offer innovative, differentiated professional learning by combining the concept of a collaborative learning community with structures of distributed leadership and processes of inquiry learning. Three significant principles underpin the CLLC:

- active collaboration in communities of practice and learning (Bolam et al. 2005; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Villegas-Reimers, 2003)
- inquiry-based, action-oriented learning (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Easton, 2004)
- opportunities for distributed leadership (e.g. Harris, 2008).

Countries deploying an inquiry stance as a means of engaging both pre-service and practising teachers in their learning have been shown to perform well on international testing (Jensen et al. 2012; Sahlberg 2007; Westbury et al. 2005).

In 2011, CEM contracted Deakin University to undertake research into the impact of teacher participation in the CLLC on both teachers and their students. The research found that in comparison to traditional forms of professional development, the adopted teacher-as-inquirer approach (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) is a complex undertaking that requires ongoing and sustained systemic, school and individual teacher commitment. As revealed through teacher feedback from surveys and in case studies, such united ongoing commitment makes possible a number of cultural ‘shifts’ influencing both teacher and student learning. These included increased intellectual engagement of the teacher, adoption of an inquiry stance and collaboration through distributed leadership. Where school and teacher commitment was high, sustained teacher engagement in inquiry into literacy education issues of significance to their school communities supported teacher agency, knowledge creation and ongoing pedagogical renewal (Cloonan, 2015).

The introduction of the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2012) further challenged teachers to consider their pedagogical practices and the CEM renewed professional learning offerings in light of the new challenges. In the case of the CLLC in 2014, the renewal provided professional learning for teachers as they sought to plan, implement and assess learning experiences for students at the intersection of the learning area English; the general capabilities of Literacy, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT); and connecting home and school learning.

The Creative, Critical, Digital: Connecting Home and School Literacies project explored the experiences of middle years teachers from primary and secondary CEM schools participating in the renewed CLLC program in 2014/15 – ‘cohort four’. Teams of middle years teachers from nine schools participated in four offsite professional development days facilitated by CEM staff, including presentations by CEM staff from the Literacy Team, Home-School Partnerships Team and ICON (Integrated Catholic Online Network) Team; an annual teacher showcase day; school visits from the CEM Literacy Team focusing on supporting action research projects; and a dedicated social network online site with a Google Docs...
shared space, community wiki and blog. School teams (literacy leaders and teachers) gained entry to
the CLLC through an application process to CEM. Selection criteria required a demonstrated school
commitment to literacy learning through a track record of professional learning. All selected schools
had the option of ongoing participation.

With support from CEM staff, school teams collaboratively developed, refined and addressed a research
question addressing a school-based literacy-related issue or interest area. Drawing on school-based
evidence, teams undertook cycles of participatory action research addressing the selected
issue/interest area. The professional learning was supported by opportunities for ongoing reflection,
documentation and reporting on project implementation with colleagues within and across schools. In
2014, the CLLC offsite days involved teachers exploring the rationale underpinning the three guiding
principles and how they might be incorporated into practice; engagement with protocols and
expectations around learning community engagement and knowledge creation, including in online
spaces; reflection on the integration of English teaching with creative and critical thinking and ICT, and
how home-school connections can support this integration.

1.3 Research questions
The following key research question drove the investigation:

   How are literacy teaching and learning opportunities that integrate ICT, creativity and critical
   thinking understood and practised in and out of school?

This question was supported by four sub-questions:

1. How are ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacies understood in and out of school?

2. How are ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy practices evident in and out of
   school?

3. How is literacy learning at home and at school connected?

4. How might literacy teaching that integrates creativity, critical thinking and ICT be
   enabled?

1.4 Review of relevant literature
A review of key literature related to the areas referred to within the research questions was undertaken.
These research areas include: ICT and changing literacies; creativity, critical thinking and twenty-first
century English/literacy learning; and home-school connections.

1.4.1 ICT and changing literacies
The traditional understanding of literacy – and even the existence of just one concept of literacy – has
now been supplanted by principles and an ethos of new literacies which are digital. The ‘new’ denotes
that it has changed from older approaches to express a changed understanding and viewpoint of
literacy, and the use of the plural form of literacy to ‘literacies’ indicates the acknowledgement of the
multiple, changing facets of all modes of communication (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Rowsell & Walsh,
2011; Buckingham, 1993; Pahl & Rowsell, 2011) enabled by digital technologies. For educators, the
interpretation of literacy is evolving with the times and the nature of the world in which students exist (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Rowell & Walsh; 2011; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Buckingham, 1993; Leu, 2001). The traditional, or conventional, understanding of literacy as the knowledge of reading printed text, writing and speaking, together with the responsibility of teaching such skills operating solely within the English discipline by English teachers, is changing to incorporate new dimensions of representation and digital forms of communication across all disciplines of the curriculum (Gee, 1996; Street, 2012; Walsh, 2010).

Literacy is not solely about developing skills and competencies but about developing a student who is able to discern, who is sensitive to differences, who is innovative in seeking solutions to problems and one who is capable of ‘reading’ the new and unfamiliar in a world that is diverse and constantly changing (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear & Leu, 2008). The philosophy of new literacies allows the integration or interweaving of higher order thinking skills within tasks. The use of higher order thinking brings more complex language skills to a task and has the potential for higher engagement in more cognitively demanding tasks. When critical and creative thinking skills are explicitly supported in literacy activities that reflect the complexity of authentic context, there is increased potential for higher personal engagement and more meaningful learning. This addresses the cognitive engagement Prensky (2005) so strongly advocates for as essential to learning by ‘digital natives’ and the productive absorption Gee (2007) notes when he rhetorically asks, “How do you get someone to learn something long, hard, and complex and yet enjoy it”?

Cope and Kalantzis (2009) discuss the need to supplement ‘old’ skills while students are learning how to ‘read and write’ multimodal texts that integrate all modes of language. Pahl and Rowsell (2011, p. 129) view communication about student life out of school as a way of combining these “educational spaces,” citing their case studies as evidence that “stories connected to objects and home experience can provide a platform and starting point for text-making.” To be ‘at home’ in a global world, Hull and Stornaiuolo (2010, p. 95) advocate that educators need to be “tactically determining where best to insinuate ... new literacies into old spaces,” wherein literacy skills become continuities of literacy (Bulfin and Koutsogiannis 2012).

Alongside the incorporation of critical and creative thinking skills into classroom literacy activities, students also require traditional skills to support their acquisition of literacy. Leu et al. (2013, p. 1159) state that: “Typically, new literacies build upon foundational literacies rather than replace them completely.” Walsh (2010) also advocates for blending and infusing of traditional skills of ‘old’ literacy with ‘new’ literacies. New digital literacies then, are not conceptualized in juxtaposition to older practices (Lankshear & Knobel, 2013) but rather as an outcome of the evolution of literacy in response to new demands on citizens, workers and students.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005, p. 3) ICT has “profound implications for education” in that it “can facilitate new forms of learning.” ICT is an important element of the best outcomes with new literacies. In their examination of international curriculum documents Leu et al. (2013, p. 1154) endorse the work of ACARA as an “Australian initiative [that] integrates literacy and the Internet within the English curriculum, not outside it,” thus ensuring that ideals of current and future technology move into practice:
ICT competence is an important component of the English curriculum. Students develop the skills and understanding required to use a range of contemporary technologies. *General Capabilities, Information and Communication Technology* (Leu et al., 2013, p. 1154)

As technology continues to impact on students as they participate in the wider society beyond the classroom, the need for understanding and controlling technology also becomes an inherent goal within the design of literacy tasks. As literacy educators “we need to distinguish between the technical skills of using digital technologies and the cognitive processes of interpreting and communicating meaning” (Walsh & Simpson, as cited in Rowsell & Walsh, 2011, p. 60). Literacy educators have responsibility for preparing students to be the creators and empathisers, pattern recognisers and meaning makers of the future (Pink, 2009). With meaning increasingly represented in multimodal ways, interpreting and communicating meaning requires knowledge of the integration of written and oral language together with the visual mode of meaning, such as icons, and still and moving images; the audio mode, including music and sound effects; the gestural mode, in the form of facial expressions, hand and arm movements; and the tactile mode, such as games and books requiring touch interaction and the potential evident in films with aroma capacities (Kalantzis, Cope & Cloonan, 2010).

Students also need encouragement to ask critical questions about the technology they use – whether they are critiquing online gaming, or the reliability of web information, personal privacy on the internet or issues about web-based literacy versus print literacy. Such critical questioning allows students to read, think and speak critically (Labbo & Place, 2010, p. 16).

As part of a move towards meeting the educational challenges of a changing world, both the Australian Curriculum and the Victorian Curriculum acknowledge that for contemporary students, traditional teaching areas such as English/Literacy are not discrete disciplines but intersect with strategies of student empowerment and self-management within skills and strategies as set out in General Capabilities (ACARA, 2012; VCAA, 2015). This enables the possibility of a high-end curriculum that opens the way for new literacies to be supported by, and operate alongside, other disciplines and the aspects of General Capabilities, including ICT, Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking.

New literacies tasks are best undertaken when students can work in collaboration with each other; critically reflect together; design or create together; evaluate outcomes; and change design or application and move between modes of representation of ideas. Students need to be creative and critical, to discuss, confer and advise each other (Bearne et al., 2007; Walsh, 2010).

### 1.4.2 Critical thinking, creativity and twenty-first century English/literacy learning

Critical thinking is a term used by educators to describe forms of learning, thought and analysis that go beyond the memorisation and recall of information and facts. Critical thinking involves students analysing, evaluating, interpreting and synthesising information, and applying creative thought to form an argument, solve a problem or reach a conclusion:

> A healthy and vibrant democracy requires an engaged citizenry who think critically, take positions on complicated positions, and work collaboratively to solve problems. These qualities parallel demands for twenty-first century literacies that deal with the sociological nature of reading and writing multimodally in an increasingly globally connected world (Gainer, 2012, p. 12.)
The digital environment has seen a proliferation of unedited information and a merging of commercial marketing with educational content. For many students, accessing and assessing digital information is not an intuitive skill and a lack of skills in this aspect of literacy can be a barrier to learning (Leu et al., 2007). Students have to keep a clear purpose in mind and follow that purpose strategically as they navigate through the different multimedia forms of information to avoid superficial, exploratory scavenger hunts that could potentially divert them from their original intentions (Leu et al., 2013, p. 1165).

As well as the need for intention and purpose where there are multiple choices students need to undertake a continuous process of decision-making, to be analytical and skeptical of what they read, view and create – in other words, to be critical thinkers. Teachers have paid minimal attention to critical literacies associated with multimodal production and consumption (Kellner & Share, 2009) and students are not likely to develop critical skills on their own (Alvermann, Hutchins & McDevitt, 2012). Unless students have explicit training to differentiate multiple information and multiple formats, then navigation and interpreting meanings may become a barrier to progress (Fabos, 2008).

Creative thinking (as referred to in the Australian Curriculum and Victorian Curriculum) – and creativity more broadly – are not synonymous with imagination and originality, and are not limited to the arts, but can be manifested in all areas of human knowledge (Gibson, 2005). The opposite of reproduction, creativity involves the ability to see possibilities that others have not yet noticed (Craft, 2005). It is inclusive of critical processes involved in the generation of new ideas (Esquivel, 1995) and is a form of knowledge creation. Stimulating creativity supports self-learning and learning about learning (Ferrari, Cachia & Punie, 2009). It can refer to the ability to produce work that is both novel and appropriate in that it has value in a particular context (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

Creativity requires personal traits (i.e. tolerance of ambiguity, openness to experience, independence of judgement, unconventional values, curiosity, preference for challenge and complexity, self-confidence, risk-taking, intrinsic motivation); emotional processes (i.e. affective fantasy in play, passionate involvement in tasks, affective pleasure in challenge, tolerance of anxiety); and cognitive abilities (i.e. divergent thinking, transformation abilities, sensitivity to problems, tendency to practice with alternative solutions, breadth of knowledge, insight and evaluative ability) (Runco, et al. 2009).

The upsurge of new technologies can be exploited in creative and innovative practices as immersion in media-rich environments leads students to understand text creation in different ways. The digital culture of new literacies allows and facilitates creativity by students eager to gather, tweak, remix and trade meaning in different modes and allows them to invent new and clever ways of making things (crafting and fabricating) of making things do things (controlling, programming) and of repurposing things (Ackerman, 2012).

If new literacies are multiple, multimodal and multifaceted, then developing an ability to consider multiple points of view is beneficial in analysing and interpreting multiple aspects of a problem or scenario (Leu et al., 2007). This encouragement of creative thinking is supported by the diversity of multimedia that exists in contemporary classrooms. Diverse aspects of thinking support and enrich each other and need to be infused into literacy tasks.

Creative learning is enabled by innovative teaching; it is enabled by teachers adopting and modelling creative approaches to curriculum and assessment, teaching and learning format, technology and tools.
It is fostered in a learning environment (culture) that boosts intrinsic motivation and disciplined self-learning (ability to feel rewarded by the activity itself) as well as knowledge of and interest in a learning area (Ferrari et al., 2009).

### 1.4.3 Home-school connections

A range of ethnographic studies into literacy as a social practice confirm that student learning is not solely confined to school-based literacy lessons and programs (Street, 2005, 2012; Pahl & Rowsell, 2006, 2011; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzales, 1992; Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear & Leu, 2008). Wortham (cited in Rowsell & Pahl, 2007, p. 392) noted, “people learn as part of the same activities through which they act in the world.” Literacy learning occurs in the home, at school and within the community – local and global (Pahl, 2014). Such a view embraces the understanding that students communicate and make meaning as they work within contemporary social practices, utilising the tangibles of their world (Knobel & Lankshear, 2014; Bulfin, 2009). Students’ cultural understandings of their world are drawn upon to produce new texts, which can be distributed and communicated across local and global cultures. The two crucial socialisation spheres of home and school must connect in order to create the “ecology” of literacy environments described by Sefton-Green (2004).

Teachers, as well as knowing their students in the classroom, are required to understand students’ intellectual funds of knowledge; to gain a knowledge of their students beyond the confined context of a classroom (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Comber & Kamlar, 2005). Walsh (2010) also contends that literacy is a social practice, crucially involving interaction between the learner’s background and the context of a text/task. However, case study research reveals that at times the teacher–student relationship may appear “thin” and ‘single stranded’ as the teacher ‘knows’ the students only from their performance within rather limited classroom contexts” (Moll et al., 1992, p. 134).

It follows that teachers need to move from any assumption that literacy is only what is taught and learned in schools (Street & Street, 1991) to take into account that literacy studies must also include connections to the wider community and its practices. As technologies are increasingly a part of their communicative lives, students are tending not to access print technology at home but rather are more likely to be engaged in activities that include digital and mobile technology and social networking (Walsh, 2010). New literacies research is advising educators to better understand both students out of school literacies as well as “doing literacy in the classroom” (Knobel & Lankshear, 2014, p. 99). Teachers’ literacy pedagogies are increasingly seeking to incorporate and reflect the new ideas and concepts emerging from research into multiliteracies. This involves an increased teacher awareness of the nature and significance of students’ out of school and family digital literacy practices, and, crucially, how these practices and knowledges can be incorporated into and expanded on in school learning (Honan, 2013).

However, while research is showing the importance of bringing new texts and technologies (fanfiction, social networking, etc.) into classroom literacy, Bulfin (2009, p. 5) advises that these need to be reframed “as complex meaning making activities.” If not, there is a danger that these activities will become only functional, unimaginative, “schooled or domesticated and can lose their out-of-school appeal” (2009, p. 5). It is also important to remember that the purpose of identifying students’ technology funds of knowledge is not to build a one-directional bridge from home to school or school to home. Rather, it is more a matter of creating, exploring and utilising multidirectional technology, exploiting the crossroads where students’ technology affinity groups intersect – the home, the neighbourhood, the local community, the curriculum and the global community (Labbo & Place, 2010). Moving from to a “normative model of texts” (Pahl & Rowsell, 2011, p. 132) to a new model of literacies
requires responses from educators that acknowledge that “technology familiarises students with future literacies in ways that differ from traditional literacy instruction” (Labbo & Place, 2010, p. 16).

The concept of parental involvement in education is complex and continues to be extensively researched and vigorously debated in academic, policy and community contexts. Parental involvement in their children’s education has been recognised by policy makers and teachers as a significant dimension of effective education. Parental involvement has been positively associated with academic achievement in a number of meta-analyses of research literature (Wilder, 2014; Pomerantz, Moorman & Litwack, 2007; Jeynes, 2007, 2005). High parental expectations for academic achievement and parental involvement that supports the growing independence of learners results in strong positive effects. By contrast, parental involvement that takes the form of homework assistance may in fact be associated with negative academic outcomes (Wilder, 2014).

The definitions of parental involvement and the range of programs, activities, participants and practices encompassed by the term are wide-ranging and there is a lack of consensus on precisely what the term refers to. Parental involvement has been defined as parents’ interactions with their children and their children’s school for the benefit of their children’s educational outcomes and future success (Hill et al., 2004) and is consistently conceptualised as including home and school-based strategies (Epstein & Sanders, 2002). Examples of school-based involvement include volunteering, communicating with school and participating in school governance, while home-based involvement involves helping with homework, providing structure to support schoolwork, reinforcing school learning and engaging in educational activities at home. The nature of these activities, their purposes and efficacy is the subject of extensive research and critique. Some of these approaches have been found to be less effective for adolescents in the middle years and at high school in the USA (Ratelle, Guay, Larose & Senecal, 2004) due to changing developmental needs and variations in the structure of secondary schooling (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Major critiques of parental involvement centre on the differing understandings of the role of parents in their children’s education. Dominant conceptions of parental involvement have been critiqued as unidirectional, with support for school-based activities provided by parents as cost-effective resources, serving school agendas. (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Blackmore & Hutchison, 2010). An alternative conceptualisation offers a model of a continuum from parental involvement with school to parental engagement with children’s learning (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Proponents of this model suggest that effective parental engagement with learning is evident in a parental mindset that fosters learning at home and aims to distribute agency between parents and teachers in a cooperative endeavour to support and enhance student learning. Studies of parental engagement with children’s learning argue for increases in students’ self-esteem, motivation and engagement with learning, leading to stronger positive learning outcomes for students (Fan & Williams, 2010; Fan, Williams & Walters, 2011; Goodhall & Vorhaus, 2011).

While research on parental involvement in their child’s education focuses primarily on achievement, parents – including those of adolescents in the middle years – focus more holistically on their child’s behavioural, emotional, cognitive and academic development. Parental involvement in education exists in the context of the parent–child relationship, relationships that are often renegotiated during adolescence (Collins & Laursen, 2004). Parents adapt their parenting practices as they perceive their children to be ready for greater autonomy, and also must negotiate increased conflict as a result of this push for independence and re-evaluation of parental influences (Smetana, 2000). These negotiations
impact in complex ways on the type of involvement parents have with their child’s school, especially as they transition from primary to secondary school – and parents may change their involvement in their child’s education in response to different outcomes and school contexts (Dotterer, Hoffman, Crouter, & McHale, 2008).

Parental involvement can be characterised by academic socialisation, which encompasses communicating the value of education and parental expectations for achievement; linking schoolwork to future success, fostering aspirations and goals; and planning for a future that is strongly related to academic outcomes (Hill & Tyson, 2009). As adolescents increasingly hone a sense of autonomy, self-efficacy, and self-identity (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001) the most effective types of parental involvement actively include students in their own development, scaffold their effective decision-making and problem-solving, and help them to perceive their schoolwork as related to their particular aspirations and goals. This parental engagement with the development of learning dispositions aligns parents, teachers and students within a community of learners.

2 Research methodology

Mixed methods research was used involving a team of researchers combining elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). The research questions are complex, addressing teachers’, students’ and parents’ understandings and practices of literacy learning and general capabilities. The complementary strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods enable multiple perspectives when used in combination, while countering the disadvantages, such as lack of acknowledgement of context in quantitative studies and researcher bias in qualitative studies (Greene, 2006, 2007).

Mixed methods research can capture a broad picture of the existing state of affairs and also generates new ways of understanding the complexities and contexts of social experiences (De Lisle, 2011). In the case of the current research, the understandings and practices around the changing nature of literacy teaching and learning – with implications for teacher professional learning, and understandings and approaches to student learning – were explored.

Creswell & Clark’s (2007) research used a triangulated design, collecting and analysing a broad set of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was collected in the form of an anonymous, online survey, which included a set of Likert-scaled and tick-the-box items. This research has used a triangulated design, collecting and analyzing a broad set of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was collected in the form of an anonymous, online survey which included a set of Likert-scaled and tick-the-box items. Qualitative data was collected in the form of open-ended survey questions, focus group and individual interviews with parents, teachers and students in three schools and three case studies.

The case studies were conducted using aspects of an ethnographic approach, harnessing ethnography’s concern with process and attention to experiences and context, enabling insights into the constitution of experience and “the means by which the relationship between structure and action/the particular and the general can be understood” (Skeggs, 1999, p. 37). The research team has used this methodological approach previously (Cloonan, Hutchison & Paatsch, 2011, 2014; Hutchison, Cloonan &
Paatsch, 2015) following the traditions of ethnographic classroom research and practitioner research in literacy (Comber & Kamler, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Heath & Street, 2008; Rowsell, 2012). We focus on the richness of ethnographic tools for exploring literacy teachers’ understandings and their redesign of literacy practices to integrate creative and critical thinking with ICT and home-school connections through a school-based area of inquiry.

2.1 Participants

The participants were sought from the nine schools in the CLLC cohort four. These nine schools were located in metropolitan settings across Victoria, with the student population ranging from 157 students at Sacred Heart Primary School in Diamond Creek, to 2,010 students at Padua College. Four of the schools were primary schools and five were secondary schools, including one Year 7–10 college. Schools were invited to be involved in the research through two main data collection opportunities: 1) two anonymous online surveys and 2) case studies.

2.1.1 Survey participants

Principals and teachers from all nine schools from CLLC cohort four who commenced participation in the CLLC in 2014 were invited to complete two anonymous online surveys. Survey 1 was conducted between 28 April and the end of June 2014, while Survey 2 was conducted between 29 October and 18 December 2014. Teachers from the nine schools were also asked to invite other teachers and students from their school, as well as parents, to complete the two surveys. Response rates were significantly higher for Survey 1 compared with Survey 2. Schools reported survey fatigue towards the end of 2014, which resulted in a much lower response rate. However, the purpose of these surveys was to gain an insight into participants’ understandings and practices at a single point in time rather than to be used as a tool for measuring the impact of the CLLC program or comparing results across time. As a result of the low response rate and the low number of parents who completed Survey 2, only findings from Survey 1 will be presented in this report. Table 1 shows the numbers of students, parents, teachers and principals who completed Survey 1 as a percentage of the total number of participants.

Demographics of the participants who completed Survey 1, including gender, country of birth, age and highest academic qualifications are included in Table 2. In general, questions about respondents’ demographics were optional, which may account for the low response rate for some items. For this reason, frequencies rather than valid percentages are reported in Table 2. Respondents included a broad age-range for teachers and parents, while the majority of students (172) were aged 10 to 12 years.

Of the 22% of Survey 1 respondents who spoke a language other than English, the majority identified English as the main language spoken at home (17%), 4% spoke English often, and 1% reported that they rarely or never used English at home. A variety of languages were spoken, with the most common being Italian and Greek.
Table 1 Survey 1 participants by group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant groups</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Carer</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>426</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Demographics by participant group for Surveys 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country of birth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country other than Australia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Languages spoken</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English only</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional languages</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13–15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–49</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–59</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest academic qualification</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate degree</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-degree qualification</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary or secondary schooling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>116</strong></td>
<td><strong>203</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.1.1 Teacher participants

All teachers taking part in the CLLC cohort four professional learning program were invited to complete both surveys. Results from Survey 1 showed that 28% of respondents were participating in the CLLC professional learning program, while 72% of teachers were not directly involved. Further results showed that 71% of the 116 teachers who completed the survey taught in secondary schools, while 41% of teachers were female. Sixty per cent of teachers had postgraduate qualifications and 34% had bachelor degree qualifications.
Further inspection of the data showed that 41% of participating teachers would not describe themselves as teachers of English/literacy. This is a large proportion given that under the national curriculum framework all teachers are positioned as responsible for literacy teaching. Of those who provided descriptions of their teaching area, most secondary teachers entered the name of their discipline or subject area. The most common responses were Mathematics (n=11), Science (n=5), Health and Physical Education (n=5) and Religious Education (n=4). Primary school teachers described themselves as general or classroom teachers and on occasion specified the cohort of students with whom they worked (e.g. middle years).

Thirty-four per cent of the 116 teachers who completed Survey 1 had teaching experience ranging between 11 and 20 years, while 29% had more than 20 years of experience, 26% had 4 to 10 years, and 10% had 1 to 3 years of teaching experience. Of the respondents participating in the CLLC professional learning program the largest proportion was also in the 11 to 20 years of experiences category (34%), followed by 4 to 10 years (31%), more than 20 years (22%) and 1 to 3 years (13%). Of the total number of teacher respondents, 42% held a position of leadership.

2.1.1.2 Student participants
Results from Survey 1 showed that there were 203 student respondents of whom 46% were female, 94% were born in Australia, 32% spoke a language other than English, and 85% were 10–12 years of age. Twenty-four per cent of the students were enrolled at Padua College, Mornington, 23% at St Anthony’s Primary School, Alphington, 20% at St Mary’s, 17% at John Paul College, 13% at Sacred Heart Primary School, Diamond Creek and 4% at St Francis Xavier Primary School, Montmorency. The largest proportion of respondents was in Year 7 (38%), followed by Year 5 (33%), and Year 6 (27%). Two respondents were in Year 12 and one was in Year 8.

2.1.1.3 Parent participants
Results from Survey 1 showed that of the 103 parents who completed the survey, 66% were parents of children attending Padua College, 11% had children at St Anthony’s, 10% had children at John Paul College, 7% at Sacred Heart Primary School, and 5% were parents of children attending St Francis Xavier Primary School. A total of 77% of parents had children in secondary schools. Eleven per cent of the parents who responded were male, 20% were born overseas, and 97% spoke only English. All of the parents were aged 30–59, with 72% aged 40–49 years. Fifty-eight per cent of the parents held university qualifications, including 22% who had completed a postgraduate degree.

2.1.2 Case study participants
The major participants in the three case studies were three middle years literacy/English teachers drawn from three school teams participating in the 2014 CLLC cohort four professional learning program, students drawn from classes taught by these three teachers, and these students’ parents.

The three teachers included two teachers in primary school settings (a graduate in her first year of teaching a Year 5/6 class, and an experienced teacher working three days a week and sharing a Year 5/6 class with another part-time teacher) as well as a secondary English teacher who also held school-wide responsibilities including Head of English and Head of E-learning. The student focus groups were evenly distributed between males and females. All focus group parents except for one participant were mothers. The research team also conducted interviews with the principals from each of the three
schools, as well as an interview with the literacy leader from one of the primary schools and the Assistant Principal from another primary school.

2.2 Data collection tools and procedures

2.2.1 Surveys

Two anonymous online surveys with a variety of unique pathways for each participant group were developed specifically for this study. The context of the survey was informed by an extensive literature review on middle years literacy, creative and critical thinking, and ICT, and included studies concerned with multimodal learning and teachers’ professional learning.

Question construction drew on this literature and from a range of state, national and international surveys. These surveys included:

- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) National Survey
- New York City School Survey
- New South Wales Department of Education and Communities Improving Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership survey instruments
- School Survey developed by Education Services Australia (ESA) on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Education
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Victoria Families as Partners in Learning
- National School Opinion Surveys, ACARA
- Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Staff in Australia’s Schools teacher survey
- Harvard Graduate School of Education survey templates (home-school partnerships)
- Linking Schools and Early Years student engagement with school research instruments, University of New South Wales
- European Commissions’ Creativity in Schools in Europe: A Survey of Teachers
- Teachers’ perceptions of integrating information and communication technologies into literacy education: A national survey in the United States

The surveys were developed in line with the research questions to investigate five main domains. These included:

- Participant (teacher/parent/student) background
- Understandings of ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy learning
- ICT practices in literacy learning
- Connecting home and school literacy learning
- Integrating creativity, critical thinking and ICT in literacy learning.
Domain 1 was developed to explore the background of the participants and included tick-the-box items that invited participants to provide information regarding their gender, age, country of birth, language spoken at home, and highest academic qualification. Teacher participants were also asked to state the year level they were currently teaching, years of teaching experience, whether they were directly involved in the CLLC cohort four, and whether they would describe themselves as a teacher of English/literacy.

Domain 2 was developed to specifically address research sub-question 1 which investigated parents’, teachers’ and students’ understandings of ICT, and creative and critical thinking in literacies both in and out of school. Survey items related to this domain were all five-point Likert scaled items ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Domains 3 and 4 were developed to address research sub-questions 2 and 3 which explored parents’, teachers’ and students’ perspectives of how ICT and creativity and critical thinking in literacy practices were evident in and out of school, and how literacy learning at home and at school is connected. Survey items included a range of five-point Likert scaled items; tick-the-box items that explored frequency of practices evident (e.g. “never / sometimes / often” or “not at all / a few times during the year / once a month / weekly / daily” etc.), types of tools used in literacy learning, and modes of communication between parents, students and teachers; and open-ended questions. Domain 5 specifically addressed research sub-question 4 which examined all participant groups’ perspectives of how literacy teaching that integrates creativity, critical thinking and ICT might be enabled. All survey items related to this domain were open-ended questions to gather qualitative data. Table 3 presents the number of survey items for each of the domains.

At the beginning of the survey, the three key terms for ‘critical thinking’, ‘creativity’ and ‘ICT’ were defined for all participant groups. These terms were defined as follows:

- **Critical thinking** – analysing and problem-solving an issue to form an opinion
- **Creativity** – using imagination or original ideas to create something
- **Information and Communication Technologies** – using tools (including internet, mobile phones, computers) to communicate and manage information.

### Table 3 Number of survey items for each of the five domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number of survey items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Demographics of participants</td>
<td>7 (with an additional 5 items for teachers and 2 items for parents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Understandings of ICT, creativity, and critical thinking in literacy learning</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ICT practices in literacy learning</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Connecting home and school literacy learning</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Integrating creativity, critical thinking and ICT in literacy learning</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.2 Case studies

The case studies explored three literacy teachers’ understandings and their redesign of literacy practices to integrate critical thinking, creativity with ICT and home-school connections through a school-based area of inquiry. These three teachers were situated in school teams participating in the CLLC cohort four in 2014–15. The case studies included perspectives from the three teachers, their principals, literacy leaders, as well as six focus group students from each literacy/English class and the parents of these students.

There were two main points for data collection:

- CLLC professional learning days
- School visits.

a) CLLC professional learning days

Over the course of the data collection period, the research team observed teachers working in their school teams in professional learning and planning environments, took visual and written field notes, and collected evidence of development of their research questions and projects. The dates and data collection methods are shown in Table 4.

b) School visits

Each term the teachers were asked to nominate an indicative literacy ‘spotlight task’ that integrated creative and critical thinking with ICT and home-school connections through their school-based area of inquiry. The research term visited each school during each ‘spotlight week’ and deployed the following tools in order to gain different perspectives on the teaching and learning practices:

- introductory discussion with principal and literacy leader
- classroom observation of spotlight task (field notes and photographs)
- teacher interview (audio-recorded and transcribed)
- principal interview (audio-recorded and transcribed)
- literacy leader interview (audio-recorded and transcribed)
- collection and copying of teacher planning documents
- student focus group (six students at each school – audio-recorded and transcribed)
- parent interviews (the parents of the 18 students – audio-recorded and transcribed)
- work samples of the focus group students (photographed or photocopied).

Tables 5, 6 and 7 outline the school-based research question, the date of each school visit and the data collected for each of the three schools.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Description of data collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLLC Day 1</td>
<td>Research team observed but did not collect data as Ethics applications not yet approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 March 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLLC Day 2</td>
<td>Today’s Meet - responses to professional learning provocations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 April 2014</td>
<td>Google Docs – responses to professional learning provocations and developing research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team observation and written and photographic field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLLC Day 3</td>
<td>Google Docs – responses to professional learning provocations and developing research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 May 2014</td>
<td>Team observation and written and photographic field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLLC Day 4</td>
<td>Google Docs – responses to professional learning provocations and developing research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 August 2014</td>
<td>Team observation and field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher showcase day</td>
<td>Team observation and written and photographic field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 November 2014</td>
<td>Teacher planning records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLLC Day 1</td>
<td>Google Docs – responses to professional learning provocations and developing research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 February 2015</td>
<td>Team observation and written and photographic field notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 St Anthony’s: School-based research questions, school visit dates and data collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection point and date</th>
<th>Data collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School visit 28 April 2014</td>
<td>Field notes of introductory discussion with principal and literacy leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School visit 2 June 2014</td>
<td>Field notes of classroom observation – Spotlight task 1: Broadening vocabularies through drawn and written responses to music (as part of a unit on the ‘the senses’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School visit 10 Sept 14</td>
<td>Field notes of classroom observation – Spotlight task 2: Reading Circles – planning and creation of a photo story presentation in response to a novel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School visit 5 November 2014</td>
<td>Field notes of classroom observation – Spotlight task 3: Comparing print, graphic and animated versions of fairytales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Visit 18 March 2015</td>
<td>Teacher interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

St Anthony’s Primary School, Alphington

School research question: How can we develop and broaden students’ oral and written vocabularies?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection point and date</th>
<th>Data collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School visit 8 May 2014</td>
<td>Field notes of introductory discussion with principal and literacy leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School visit 12 June 2014 (Term 2)</td>
<td>Classroom observation – Spotlight task 1: Researching, visual representing and reflective blogging (as part of a unit on ‘Natural Disasters’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Photos – classroom and work samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School visit 15 Sept 2014 (Term 3)</td>
<td>Classroom observation – Spotlight task 2: Critiquing and creating film advertisements for bazaar products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Photos – classroom and work samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School visit 27 Oct 2014 (Term 4)</td>
<td>Classroom observation – Spotlight task 3: Readers’ Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Principal interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Literacy leader interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Photos of classroom and work samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Visit 25 March 2015 (Term 1)</td>
<td>• Teacher interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Student focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Photos – classroom and work samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work samples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7 Padua College: School-based research questions, school visit dates and data collected

**Padua Secondary College, Mornington**

School research question: How can online assessment and feedback practice provide parents and students with detailed and constructive comments about student ability and progress?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection point and date</th>
<th>Data collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 May 2014</td>
<td>Field notes of introductory discussion with assistant principal and literacy leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School visit</td>
<td>Classroom observation – Spotlight task 1: Adventures in English – Evolution of the English language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 17 June 2014 (Term 2)         | • Teacher interview  
                               | • Student focus group  
                               | • Parent interviews  
                               | • Photos – class and work samples  
                               | • Work samples |
| School visit                  | Classroom observation – Spotlight task 2: Comparison of graphic novel, animation and traditional versions of a fairytale |
| 15 Sept 2014 (Term 3)        | • Teacher and principal interview  
                               | • Student focus group  
                               | • Parent interviews  
                               | • Photos – classroom and work samples  
                               | • Work samples |
| School visit                  | Classroom observation – Spotlight task 3: Literary and historical analysis of the novel: Black snake: The daring of Ned Kelly |
| 27 Oct 2014 (Term 4)         | • Teacher interview  
                               | • Student focus group  
                               | • Parent interviews  
                               | • Literacy leader interview  
                               | • Photos – class and work samples  
                               | • Work samples |
| School visit                  | Teacher interview  
                               | Student focus group |
| 25 March 2015 (Term 1)       |                |
3 Understanding, practising, connecting and integrating ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy learning: Teacher, student and parent perspectives

The following sections of the report present the findings from quantitative and qualitative data from Survey 1 in addition to interview responses from parents, teachers and students throughout the nine spotlight tasks. Data was compared within and across all participant groups as well as compared across data sets according to the particular domains that addressed each of the research questions. Specifically, data was analysed across Domains 2 to 5 (See section 2.2.1 for more details) including:

- Understandings of ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy learning
- ICT practices in literacy learning
- Connecting home and school literacy learning
- Integrating creativity, critical thinking and ICT in literacy learning.

Domain 1 included demographic data gathered and is presented in detail in section 2.1.

3.1 Understandings of ICT, creativity, and critical thinking in literacy learning

In order to investigate parents’, teachers’ and students’ understandings of ICT, creativity, and critical thinking in literacies, all participants were invited to indicate their level of agreement in four key survey items that used a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). The first item in this domain invited all participant groups to rate their level of agreement on 18 statements that sought to gauge their general understanding of creativity, critical thinking and ICT. Comparison of mean averages for each of the 18 statements across participant groups are presented in Figure 1, which shows that the results for each group was positively skewed and that in general the response trends were consistent across the groups; that is, higher means for individual statements were often high for all groups. Further inspection of the data revealed that all participants strongly believed that creativity, critical thinking and ICT were all important for learning, and that everyone can learn to develop these skills but that creativity should not be assessed. Results showed that the highest mean reported by students was 4.23 for ‘Everyone can learn to be creative’ and the lowest mean was 3.14 for ‘Creativity should be assessed’. The highest mean for parents was 4.58 for ‘Development of critical thinking is an important part of learning’, and the lowest mean was 3.34 for ‘Creativity should be assessed’. The highest mean for teachers was 4.54 for ‘Development of critical thinking is an important part of learning’ and the lowest mean was 3.20 for ‘Creativity should be assessed’.
The second survey item in this domain invited participants to indicate the extent to which they agree that creativity, critical thinking and ICT use were fostered in the home and in English classes. Phrasing for each item differed slightly according to the participant group. For example, teachers were asked to rate whether they foster creativity in English/literacy classes, while students rated the degree to which they were creative in English/literacy classes and parents rated the degree to which they agreed whether their ‘child’s English/literacy teacher fosters creativity’. Figure 2 presents the combined participant responses for each of the six statements related to this item. Results show that there was little variation in mean scores within and between each participant group. The overall trend was strong and positive. Parents scored at-home activities highest while teachers scored school-based activities highest in relation to where creativity and critical thinking were fostered.
The third survey item in this domain was specifically related to parents’, teachers’ and students’ understandings of the importance of ICT practices in developing literacy, critical thinking and creativity. Results showed that over three-quarters of this group of teachers either ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that ICT practices are important for developing critical thinking, literacy skills and creativity. Similarly, a clear majority of students also recognised ICT practices as important for the development of English/literacy skills (74%), critical thinking (60%) and creativity (75%). Parent responses also showed a high percentage of parents indicating that ICT practices were important in developing English/literacy skills (67%), critical thinking (68%) and creativity (64%). However there was also a notable proportion of parents that did not share this perspective indicating that they ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ – English/literacy skills (17%), critical thinking (16%) and creativity (21%).

Overall the findings from these three items on the survey show that teachers, parents and students believe that everyone can learn to be creative, to be a critical thinker and to use ICT, and that all three are an important part of learning both in English/literacy classes and at home. However, responses from interviews with teachers, parents and students were varied and were often in contrast to the broader views evident from the survey results. For example, case study teacher interview data indicated that some teachers had difficulty describing themselves and their teaching as creative. It also appeared that for teachers there was a collapsing of the use of the word ‘creative’ with ‘artistic’ and that ‘creative’ had with connotations of artistic endeavour. The following interview extract shows the reluctance of one teacher to identify herself as ‘creative’ or ‘a creative teacher’ to researchers.
R: So, to foster their creativity, you’re finding …

T: I have to let go basically because you need to kind of let go to know where they’re coming from.

R: And is that a creative act on your part, would you say?

T: No, because I’m not a creative person [laughs] but I think …

R: Well clearly you are – you are! Are these processes creative teaching processes?

T: It is a different type of creativity, like you’re saying. I just said I’m not creative, but creativity was mentioned in one of our [CLLC Research] questions but …. the style of teaching that we do – is creative I suppose.

R: You just said, “They are creative in the styles of teaching.” [laughter]

T: It’s like that term ‘collaboration,’ how it’s changed, the term ‘creativity’ has changed. When I was younger if someone was creative, they were artistic.

T: I think we still have that old fashioned view when we say it, because then we quickly say that we’re not. [My teaching partner] says it quite a bit – she says ‘I miss you in my room because you’re quite creative in this and that’ and I’m thinking … ‘well there are different styles’, so yeah, I think it’s a different style of creativity.

R: There’s something in your identity that’s kind of not quite allowing you to embrace it [laughing]. Would you be more comfortable with ‘innovative’?

T: No, no, that’s out there! [laughs]

R: Oohh! Really!? … I think you are innovative.

T: That’s out there – yeah.

Similarly, many parents who were interviewed at the beginning of their child’s school’s participation in CLLC cohort four also believed that ‘creativity’ was connected with being ‘artistic’ and that their child’s creativity was fostered during art classes or when completing art-related activities, such as drawing and music. For example, one parent when asked about how creativity manifests in their child’s learning in the work that they do in literacy responded with the following:

P: … not so much in those sort of straight out sort of you know …

R: … subjects …

P: English and Geography and History sort of thing … [my daughter] carts around a big suitcase full of coloured textas and pencils … and she was banned … all through year X the teachers would say, ‘now [child’s name] give me all the pencils’.

R: Oh, OK.

P: If [my daughter’s] got to answer ten questions, it will be a different colour for each one and little scribbling lines at the end… basically she wasn’t getting anything done because she was drawing her borders and … she would say her creativity is being you know, hindered.

Student responses also showed that some children understood creativity as being something that was fun and required the use of their hands in less formal activities. For example, one group of year 5/6
students were asked to describe how the making of a diorama as part of their spotlight task on natural disasters helped them to be creative. They stated that such a task felt creative because:

S1: We get to create stuff, like the scene.
S2: We get to make things – instead of just writing.
R: OK, so is it easier to be creative when you’re making something ...
S3: Yeah, like when you’re creating stuff, it’s fun. It’s not as hard – you don’t have to concentrate as much because you like doing it. Like some people don’t like writing as much – you’ve got to do the punctuation and then the editing.

However, as the teachers from CLLC cohort four refined their research questions throughout the year to focus on the intersection of creativity, critical thinking, ICT and home school connections, it became evident that some teachers’ and students’ understandings had begun to evolve. Some teachers and students articulated an understanding of the conditions for fostering creativity and critical thinking that included the importance of risk-taking, openness and support. For example, one teacher stated that supportiveness between colleagues helps create a rich teaching and learning environment that is critical for their own creativity as well as fostering creativity in their students. She reflected that:

T: It’s so important. If you feel like you can’t suggest ideas, and that you know, not safe and not trusting – I can’t think creatively. That’s a risk and a way of thinking – risky thinking maybe – you know, thinking outside the box and you can only do that when you feel safe and comfortable.
R: So stability – it can kind of allow for creativity?
T: I feel so, yeah. It can come up you know when things go wrong as well and it’s very unstable. Like you just think of something brilliant on the spot but there’s stability in the sense that there’s the trust and you know what each other … you’re on the same page and then you can start to be a bit more creative in the way you think. Question things and change them...
R: It sounds like it’s important that there’s a dynamic between the teaching team where that’s OK.
T: Yeah, for sure.
R: So you’re supporting students to take those risks as well you think … because you do it?
T: Yeah, and always, always emphasising ‘it doesn’t matter if you get it wrong – it doesn’t matter if it doesn’t always work out, just have a go, take the risk’ and I think that’s a form of allowing them to be more creative because again they feel more comfortable to explore those options.

Students were also asked how teachers support and make the space for their learning to be creative. Similarly, students emphasised the conditions for creativity as being open-ended and engaging, with opportunities to use their imagination. For example, one group of Year 5/6 students discussed how their homework task enabled them to be creative. They stated that:

S2: We had to think of it ourselves like ...
S3: We had to think – yeah, ourselves, and it make it our own – our own creative piece of work of writing ...
S1: Instead of copying something, yeah and we had to like create it ...
S2: ... I think it was like an oral presentation, if it was engaging and stuff like that.
S3: And another thing is, the thing I love about narratives is that the limits are endless ...
S2: You can just write what your imagination tells you to.

Another group of students discussed their homework task that involved the development of a product to sell at their upcoming school fete. Students were asked whether they were thinking more creatively through completing such an activity. Student responses reflected understandings of creativity as important where activities are engaging and open-ended, and allow for individuality. For example:

S1: You can really do anything.
R: You can do anything – so you’re not, you’re not looking at someone else’s and thinking mine’s better than that or mine’s not as good as that? ...you’ve got room to follow your own direction.
S2: Like if we were all making the same thing then like, it just wouldn’t be as creative. Everyone would say their ideas and people would just copy their ideas and it wouldn’t be as like, fun.
S3: In class I created an amazing monster, it was meditating, it was super fun to make.

Similarly, parents of students in classes where teachers were participating in the CLLC cohort four were also invited to reflect on their children’s creativity and critical thinking throughout the spotlight tasks. It was evident from their responses that parents also began to develop a broader understanding of how creativity and critical thinking were fostered in specific literacy learning tasks. For example, one group of Year 5/6 parents discussed how they understood how creativity may have been fostered in the design and production of a product to sell at the upcoming school fete. They responded that even if their child’s product doesn’t sell then it doesn’t mean that the child was not creative, rather that creativity involves risk-taking and openness:

P1: Of course it could be a learning thing that even though they’ve created something, somebody else might not appreciate it.
P2: It’s very personal too.
P3: It’s risky.
P1: And they don’t realise it yet.
R: Or maybe they do.
P2: That’s why it’s hard ...there’s consequences.
P3: They’ve got to hold tight because that’s his decision ... and there’s a big lead up to it ...
P1: If nothing else, they learn that creativity takes courage basically and so that’s another value base.

Another group of Year 5/6 parents commented on the changed approach to homework tasks since the teachers were participating in the CLLC cohort four. Specifically, this group of parents noted that their children were being more critical and creative, noting that:

P1: I’ve noticed there’s been a lot more creativity like in the way things are presented perhaps, or making a pamphlet or things like that, that sort of thing so ... they had to choose a community,
welfare kind of group and make a pamphlet on what these people have to offer ... so obviously
research the group, but the presentation was the really creative part.

R:  Was there a suggestion about the parent role in that task?
P1:  Not in that specific task. It was more just opening the conversation about different things you
could do ...
R:  So in the past, what would the before task have been?
P1:  Perhaps it might have been more specific and just ‘write about ... ’, ‘tell us about ... ’, maybe it’s
not about the presentation side – yeah write a paragraph about it. I think there’s been a real shift
in this semester because even the homework sheet is a different ... there’s more options.
P2:  My son had to write down spelling rules ... this changes to this in spelling and things like that. He
said ‘that’s boring’, I said ‘why?’; because ... I already know it’. [I don’t know] whether it’s just
him or maybe it’s that they’re changing – the kids are looking broader than we used to perhaps –
that was boring, writing down rules. Let’s get practical about this you know, he needed a more
creative side.
P3:  I can see a shift too with that creative ... my son’s a bit of a perfectionist, that wants the rules and
this is how you do it, and if I think how I have to do it, that’s a little bit harder. They had to write
what they wanted to achieve for the next term and write a letter to the new teacher, about what
she might need to know about the school. So again, that was like ‘hang on, that’s so open – what
do I put in that?’

It was also evident in the transcripts from interviews that the researchers needed to prompt the
students to understand how particular literacy activities fostered their creativity and critical thinking.
For example, one interview with a group of Year 5/6 students shows the importance of scaffolding
students’ understanding of creativity and critical thinking. This group of students had just completed
their inquiry unit that involved the critiquing and creating of filmed advertisements for a particular
product they had made to sell at the upcoming school fete. Throughout these transcripts it is evident
that the researchers needed to continually prompt the students to articulate these complex
understandings of creativity (and critical thinking) beyond the narrow definition of ‘artistic’ and
‘something that involves the use of hands’ to a broader understanding of creativity that occurs
throughout all aspects of learning.

R:  Yeah and do ... how do you think it helped you, if it did, to be creative? What was creative about
the activity?
S1:  Well, making it in general – just using the hands.
S2:  Well we used um, we used the computers, we used ...
R:  So you’ve got that sustainability dimension. So, are people, on your blog, are you... I just saw
there on [student’s name], it’s called a creativity blog. Can you tell me how that works?
S3:  So, well last year, last term it was just the blog, so this year, ‘cos our inquiry unit’s based on
creativity so we’ve called it a creativity blog.
R: So are you writing about being creative there or that's just the name of it and you can just write whatever you want there.

S3: I think that’s just the name of it.

R: OK, so are you finding that you are thinking more creatively through doing this kind of activity where you’re designing something and then making it and selling it? Does that encourage you to be creative? Yeah?

S1: Yep.

R: How do you think – how is it allowing you to be creative?

S1: You can really do anything.

R: So do you think it was teaching you how to be critical as well?

S2: Yeah with the blog.

R: How did you use the blog?

S2: You could have critical comments, like you could say ‘That’s a good idea but I think you could add this to make it better,’ on the blog. You could comment that.

S3: I learnt how like, when I’m watching ads, I think, ‘Oh that’s not true, that’s not going to happen.’ Like if they say “Nine out of ten people use this” but a couple of days ago, I learnt that they just say that to make it [the product] look good.

R: So you’re being quite critical, aren’t you?

Further interesting differences in the findings between survey results and responses from interviews related to the understandings of the importance of ICT practices in developing literacy, critical thinking and creativity. Results from the survey showed that there was a notable proportion of parents who ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ that ICT supported English/literacy skills (17%), critical thinking (16%) and creativity (21%). Further inspection of the responses to the open-ended item on the survey that invited parents to provide ‘any other comments’ showed that many parents used this opportunity to highlight the tensions between the use of ICT and creativity, critical thinking and literacy learning. Typical responses from parents included:

The basics of English, no matter the technology, remain the same. The ability to read, write, spell, research, summarise, think, etc., do not depend upon technology, but rather the best of all ... a good teacher, pen and paper.

Would love schools and the education departments to go back to basics with literacy ... and only use ICT as tools of assistance.

Technology is a tool – not an answer. Critical thinking cannot be fostered in an environment of superficiality, and false positivity.

I agree technology is moving fast and the kids will need strong skills in this area but not to the detriment of basic learning skills like times tables, spelling, writing, etc. Handwriting is way below standard as is spelling and creative writing skills when using ICT.
ICT is a very useful tool for creativity and learning in general and is obviously well used globally, but I also think it's a great distraction from life and therefore from alternative forms of learning, especially amongst teenagers. There appears to be an obsession in the use of ICT and therefore neglect in creative influences around them.

These responses highlight some of the apparent tensions and the need for understanding the affordances of ICT in fostering creativity and critical thinking in literacy learning. However, some of these resistances towards the use of ICT may also be attributable to the participants’ own ICT skill level. The final survey item in this domain invited participants to indicate their competencies in ICT. Sixty-one per cent of teachers either ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that they were skilled at using ICT and 73% indicated that they would like to increase integration of ICT into their teaching. Even a higher percentage of students (81%) indicated that they were skilled with ICT use and only 45% of students ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that they learn about ICT in English/literacy classes. Similarly, of the 87 parents who answered this item, 82% described themselves as skilled at using ICT and 13% ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’. Results also showed that 71% of parents ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that they would like to increase their ICT skills.

Responses from open-ended questions from the survey and from interviews with parents, teachers and students also identified the need for further professional learning to increase their skills in using ICT for learning. In particular, many participants stated the need for gaining further knowledge in the use of Web 2.0 technologies including a focus on using these tools to communicate between home and school. For example, one parent whose child’s class was using blogging to communicate homework tasks stated that:

I don't know much about chat rooms or their use educationally so it would be good to bring the parents up to speed with the latest technologies

3.2 ICT practices in literacy learning

In order to investigate parents’, teachers’ and students’ understandings of ICT practices that enable or inhibit creativity and critical thinking in literacy practices, all participant groups were invited to respond to four specific survey items. Data from these items were analysed and compared with qualitative data gathered from case study interviews across all nine spotlight tasks.

The first survey item in this domain invited teachers to provide information about the frequency with which they incorporated technology as part of English/literacy instruction. Specifically, they were asked to indicate ‘During the previous school year, how often did you use technology as part of English/literacy instruction? (e.g., the Internet, creating multimedia presentations, sending email).’ Results showed that 36% of teachers used technology daily, 49% used technologies either once or a few times a week, 9% used them once to three times a month, and 4% a few times a year. Six per cent of teacher respondents indicated that they had not used technology at all in literacy classes in the previous 12 months.

Teachers were also invited to provide information about their students’ ‘use of technology as part of English/literacy instruction during the past 12 months’. Results showed that 22% of teachers reported daily use, 58% indicated technology was used once or a few times a week, 9% used technology one to three times a month, and 4% a few times during the year. Six per cent of teachers reported that their students did not use technology as part of English/literacy instruction in the previous 12 months.
The third survey item in this domain invited parents to comment on the extent to which their child used a range of technologies at home. Teachers were also invited to comment on the extent to which the same range of technologies were used in English/literacy classes, and students commented on the frequency with which they used each of these technologies both at school and in the home. The percentage of respondents for each group who used the 21 listed technologies ‘often’ or ‘never’ are shown in Figures 3 and 4 respectively.

There are a number of differences worth noting in the responses by participant groups. For simplicity, the three most frequently used technologies and the three least frequently used technologies, as reported by each participant group, are presented in Table 8. The use of mobile devices and gaming is a more common practice in the home, while creation of documents and researching online are common at school. Publishing information on websites appears in the ‘never used’ column. ‘Consuming’ ICT practices such as creating a document and researching online were used often at school, while ‘creating’ ICT practices such as publishing on a website, participating in virtual worlds, social networks, collaborating online with other students and social media such as blogging and wikis were sometimes or never used.

The final survey item in this domain invited teachers and students to comment on ways that would help them increase the integration of ICT into English/literacy classes. Results showed five key themes that emerged from the teacher data. These included: (1) professional learning, (2) learning from others, (3) ICT resources, (4) time, and (5) developing students’ ICT skills. The majority of teacher responses (40%) indicated that teachers would benefit from some form of professional learning, particularly in the use of Web 2.0 technologies. Typical responses suggested teachers could be involved in ‘specialised professional learning such as blogging and social networking’; ‘undertaking PD using Web 2.0 tools’; ‘more training in areas that I don’t do as much work in e.g. blogs, plus continuing to upskill in latest technologies’; and ‘more knowledge about appropriate tools to enhance student learning.’
Figure 3 ICT Tools used ‘often’ in literacy learning

Figure 4 ICT tools ‘never’ used in literacy learning
Table 8 Most and least frequently used technologies as reported by teachers, students and parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never used (top three responses)</th>
<th>Often used (top three responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers (at school)</strong></td>
<td>Virtual worlds</td>
<td>Creating a document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social networking or chat tools</td>
<td>Researching information online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publishing information on a website</td>
<td>Creating multimedia presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students (at school)</strong></td>
<td>Creating a wiki or blog</td>
<td>Creating a document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blog or microblogging</td>
<td>Researching information online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publishing information on a website</td>
<td>Formulating questions to research online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students (at home)</strong></td>
<td>Creating a wiki or blog</td>
<td>Mobile devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating digital stories</td>
<td>Play games online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publishing information on a website</td>
<td>Social networking or chat tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents (at home)</strong></td>
<td>Creating a wiki or blog</td>
<td>Mobile devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publishing information on a website</td>
<td>Play games online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blog or microblogging</td>
<td>Create a document</td>
</tr>
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This identified need for professional learning was also reflected in the responses from parents when asked to comment on any other aspect regarding the integration of ICT, critical thinking and creativity in literacy learning. Some parents identified the need for some teachers to be up-skilled in the use of ICT. For example, two parents remarked:

Teachers need to model ... and digital literacy needs to be taught explicitly. Older teachers seem to avoid using ICT. With so many LMSs and other useful tools available for education, it's hard to understand why the school prefers traditional ways instead of offering a choice when it comes to communication with teachers and other staff members. ooVoo and Skype are still free. The same applies to communication between students and teachers – no innovation or collaboration outside class. Nearly all teachers still prefer paper-based resources and give paper-based homework. Interactive whiteboards are hardly used except showing videos.

I feel that the ICT and use of iPads is underutilised. I feel this is because the teachers have not had the professional development to utilise it effectively. I feel that a lot of teachers get stuck in this area because they rely on the same curriculum they have always taught and find it tricky to be critical thinkers and creative themselves – finding it hard to embrace contemporary learning. I feel that teachers need to use ICT as a tool that is not going away – children need this as we are preparing them to take part in a technologically strong age. iPads should not be used as a place to find their textbook. Apps used should be appropriate e.g. Puppet Pals is something used in prep’s – if they are using it in Year 8 you would want to hope they are using it to their maximum ability.
The next most prevalent teacher response-type from this survey item was related to the theme of being involved in opportunities to learn from others (25%). Typical teacher responses included: ‘an opportunity to sit with experienced and knowledgeable persons’; ‘watching another teacher use it in their class’ and observing ‘modelling of lessons where the use of ICT has been effective and successful.’ The final three themes emerging from the parents responses included: the importance of accessing ICT resources (22%) – ‘more devices and faster internet’; time (8%) – ‘Time!!! Time to learning skills, synthesise knowledge and think about meaningful integration’; and developing students’ ICT skills (5%) – with comments on ‘student’s ICT skills and knowledge’ and ‘greater commitment of students to using their ICT devices appropriately.’

Student responses to this survey item were also scrutinised for emerging themes. Five main themes emerged, including: (1) a desire for an increase in ICT classes, (2) learning from others, (3) learning new things, (4) a desire for an increase in use of games, and (5) the need to unblock websites at schools. The majority of student responses (49%) related to the notion of requiring more ICT related activities and resources at school. Typical student responses included: ‘having more ICT classes and learn about things that we would use more in everyday life’, ‘use more devices’, ‘more computers’, ‘more lessons on how to use things on the computer’ and ‘using our iPads more often’. The second main theme that emerged from student responses (28%) related to the importance of providing opportunities to learn from others as a way of increasing their skills in ICT. Responses showed that students wished to learn from others at home (e.g. ‘by doing it 1 on 1 with my dad’ and ‘to ask my brother because he does multimedia’); from peers (e.g. ‘to get help from my friend’); teachers (e.g. ‘getting more help form my IT teacher’); and in the community (e.g. ‘learning from a professional’ and ‘having more people around me that know heaps about ICT, so I can ask them any time I need them’). The third main theme that emerged from the data related to some students stating that they wanted to learn ‘new things’ that would help increase their skills in ICT (15%). Typical responses included ‘introduce new things that we don't know about’, ‘using different Microsoft things (like Word, Publisher, Excel, etc.)’, and ‘know a little bit more on how to do more trickier things’. The final two themes that emerged from the student responses related to the use and design of games (5%), and the desire to have access to more websites that are often blocked at school (3%). Typical responses related to these two themes included ‘more stuff to play on and find out what you can do’, ‘possibly designing games’, ‘doing more games to learn things in’, as well as ‘STOP BLOCKING 90% OF THE SITES ON THE INTERNET’ and ‘being able to go on different websites without them being BLOCKED!!!’

Parents were also invited to comment on the on ways that might help them increase their own ICT skills. However, this item specifically invited parents to indicate what would help them increase their skills in ICT to ‘support their child’s literacy learning’. Five main themes emerged including: (1) professional learning and training, (2) access to websites and apps, (3) no further support required, (4) time to learn, and (5) unsure of what is required to support their child’s literacy learning. Over half of the parent responses to this item (59%) stated that they would benefit from professional learning and training. Typical responses included: ‘perhaps a parent information night to look at some ICT tools used by teachers at the school e.g. class Instagram, class blog’; ‘workshops at the school’; ‘learning more about blogs and Twitter, Tumblr’; and ‘I need to learn more about social media.’ The second main theme that emerged from the data (14%) related to parents articulating that they would benefit from being given a list of websites or apps that the teachers were using in class so that they could familiarise themselves with these at home and support their children in their learning. Typical responses included: ‘being told
what programs they are using and how to access them so I could learn and understand what she is doing’ and ‘to explore apps and their use in creative application to assist my child in his learning’. A similar proportion of parent responses (14%) also related to those parents who did not believe they needed to increase their ICT skills to support their child’s literacy learning. Four of the eight parent responses related to this theme indicated that these parents or their children had sufficient ICT skills to support their learning, while the other four responses showed that parents did not wish to encourage the use of ICT for learning at home. One parent stated that, ‘I don’t believe it should be a focus ... it is just one tool of many and given far too much relevance in education’, while another parent wrote:

I am interested in my child developing literacy through other medium. I find that children are bombarded with much screen time and so having encourage other ways to develop literacy skills through reading, handwriting, discussion, visiting libraries, family debate, travel, map-reading.

The last two themes that emerged from the parent data for this open-ended survey item related to parents feeling that they required more time to learn about and use applications and websites (9%) or that they did not know (4%) what would help them increase their ICT skills to support their child’s literacy learning.

Further investigation of data from interviews with parents, teachers and students in addition to the nine observations of the three case studies (spotlight tasks) also showed that there were a wide range of ICT practices that were used by teachers and students to support literacy learning. As shown in the nine spotlight task PowerPoint presentations (see Appendices), most literacy activities that were observed used some form of ICT to support learning. Typically, students were observed using internet resources for researching information, images and music. It was also apparent from the observations in classrooms that students created documents, uploaded information onto the class intranet, and created multimedia presentations using PowerPoint, film, music and voiceovers. Teachers were also observed using websites to research information, explore YouTube videos and music, and using ICT to created documents such as rubrics and assessment tasks. These findings also reflect the findings gleaned from the online survey regarding range of technologies used at school (see Table 8). However, in contrast to the findings from the survey there was evidence of the use of blogging, including the creation of a blog in a Year 5/6 classroom (see section 4.2.4 Sacred Heart spotlight task 2: Critiquing, creating and reflective blogging on advertisements for bazaar products).

### 3.3 Connecting home and school literacy learning

In order to investigate parents’, teachers’ and students’ understandings of how literacy learning at home and school is connected, data from five key survey items were analysed and compared with qualitative data gathered from student focus groups, parent and teacher interviews, and observations across the three case studies. The five items were designed around the following themes: (1) ease of communication between home and school regarding students’ literacy learning; (2) importance of parents knowing what their children’s literacy learning at school involves; (3) importance of teachers knowing about students’ literacy at home; (4) reasons for communication between parents and teachers about children’s literacy learning; and (5) forms of communication between parents and teachers about children’s literacy learning.
The first survey item in this domain invited all participant groups to rate the ease of communication between parents and teachers about students’ English/literacy learning. Findings in Figure 5 show that the majority of teachers and students believed communication was ‘fair’ to ‘easy’, while the majority of parents regarded communication between home and school as ‘easy’.

The second survey item in this domain invited parents and students to indicate the importance of parents knowing about their children’s literacy learning at school. Specifically, parents were invited to indicate the extent to which they agreed with five broad statements regarding the importance of knowing what their children’s literacy learning at school involves. The items with the highest level of agreement were: ‘I want to be able to build on their skills and understandings’ and ‘I want to ensure a consistent approach to literacy learning.’ The items with the lowest level of agreement were: ‘I want to learn to use the latest technologies’ and ‘I want to learn from my child/children.’ One-third of parents neither agreed nor disagreed that it was important to know what their child’s literacy learning at school involved so that they could ‘learn from their child/children.’ Students were also asked to indicate whether it was important for their parents to know what literacy learning they do at school. Students were not asked to rate the same five broad statements given to parents but rather were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the one statement: ‘It is important that my parents know what I do with literacy at school.’ Results showed that 81% of students ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that it is important for parents to know what they are doing with literacy at school, 30% ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’, and 4% ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed.’

Figure 5 Communication about students’ literacy learning between parents and teachers: Perspectives on degree of difficulty by participant group

The third survey item asked teachers and students about the importance of teachers knowing about students’ literacy at home. Specifically, teachers were asked to reflect on the importance of knowing about students’ literacy learning at home by indicating the extent to which they agreed with five broad statements. Results showed that about 80% of teachers ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that they wanted to know about students’ literacy learning at home so that they: ‘could build on students’ understandings
and skills,’ ‘learn from their students,’ ‘incorporate the technologies the students are using,’ ‘ensure a consistent approach to literacy learning’ and ‘compensate for any possible gaps in their understanding.’

Despite these high levels of agreement, there was a sizeable proportion of teachers who selected ‘neither agree nor disagree’, suggesting that there were some reservations associated with some teachers’ responses. Students were also asked if they thought it was important for their teachers to know what they do with literacy at home. Specifically, students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the one statement: ‘It is important that my teachers know what I do with literacy at home.’ Results showed that 58% of students ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that it is important for teachers to know what they are doing with literacy at home, 27% ‘neither agreed nor disagreed’ and 14% ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’. These findings suggest that students think it is more important that their parents know what they are doing with literacy at school than it is for their teachers to know what they are doing with literacy at home.

The fourth survey item in this domain invited teachers, students and parents to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements regarding the reasons for communicating about student’s literacy learning between parents and teachers. Teachers’ responses showed that over 90% of teachers ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that communicating with parents about students’ literacy learning was important for: ‘gaining information about the child’s capacities,’ ‘sharing information about the child’s individual needs,’ and ‘sharing information about the child’s progress as a learner.’ This pattern of positive responses was also similar for parents, although over 90% of parents also ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that communication with teachers was important for ‘building relationships,’ ‘finding out about the curriculum,’ and ‘addressing problems in the learning.’ A similar number of parents (10%) and teachers (11%) also ‘disagreed’ or ‘neither agreed or disagreed’ that communication was important for ‘seeking or providing information about homework tasks in order to enhance home and school learning.’ Students were also asked to rank a number of statements regarding communication between parents and teachers about their literacy learning. The commonly selected reason was ‘to get information about how they were going at school’ (91%). Similar results to parent and teacher responses were also evident with regards to homework with only 48% of students believing that communication was important ‘to help them with their homework.’

These four survey items show that parents typically wanted to be involved in their children’s literacy learning. A similar pattern of responses regarding the importance of parents being involved in their children’s literacy learning was also evident from the responses from interviews with participants during the schools’ involvement in the CLLC cohort four professional learning program. For example, when interviewed in the early months of the teachers’ participation in CLLC cohort four professional learning program, some parents highlighted that there had been more homework tasks that required parent involvement. Initially, parents valued this input and involvement, and noted the change in the approach to home tasks. For example, a group of Year 5/6 parents commented on the change to parent involvement with specific homework tasks:

P1: It was pretty self-directed, it was pretty task specific; go on the internet and find out these questions.

P2: You didn’t really have to ask mum or dad much because you get the answers from the internet whereas there’s a bit more discussion.

P3: I’d look at what they needed to do for the week, but now I look at it and can be involved or there might be questions sort of arising.
R: Is that demanding? [more] than being asked, ‘Ah, just check that the spelling words are right’?

P4: It was easier for me to cook dinner and my son goes off and does his homework compared to now ... he used to go and do it at his table up the front whereas now he does it on the bench while I’m cooking dinner. Just little things like that – it is more time-consuming I guess, but I think it’s more rewarding ... for both of us.

P5: I think the important thing is the balance of the two; I think they’ve got it spot on because there’s definitely so much they can still do on their own but I think even though, exactly like what you said, even though it’s easier sometimes when they can do all of it on their own, it’s so rewarding and I’ve become much more connected to her learning through it, I think, because I was getting to that same thing – three kids, like you can do that so you’re right, but then we are missing out ... 

P3: I’m changing my ways too – Tuesday nights, not to be busy.

Similarly, a parent of a Year 8 student also commented on the change in their involvement in a recent homework task suggesting that while there were advantages to being more involved, there were still tensions around the need to get ‘the task done’, stating:

R: What did you think about this as a learning task then?

P: I think it’s good when they’re challenged in things they wouldn’t ordinarily think of – things that they might take for granted.

R: So what do you think the purpose of the task was then?

P: I suppose just to broaden their understanding and their knowledge of language and why and how we use it.

R: And was it fun?

P: I wouldn’t describe it as particularly fun – I would describe it as ... well, it wasn’t unpleasant [laughs] – it’s not something that, you know in the daily grind of the week – and it certainly didn’t take a long time or anything. It wasn’t laborious or horrible or anything like that, it was just a task that she had to get done. We didn’t sort of think about any other way than something that she had to get done.

Throughout the course of this research project, parents, students and teachers also articulated the challenges of maintaining the connection between home and school in relation to students completing specific literacy homework tasks that involved both parents and students. These challenges related to parents’ time, parent and teacher expectations, the role of parents in supporting their children’s literacy learning at home and being sensitive to the change in levels of parental involvement during their child’s teenage years, and parents’ own levels of skill and understandings in the use of ICT.

For example, some teachers appeared to be aware of the extra demands on parents and the difficulty for some students when there was resistance from home. For example, one teacher stated:

I’m not really sure if this is normal for families to be involved in homework ... I don’t really know how it’s been done in the past. I have had some children saying it’s hard and you know, parents are over it –
they don’t want to be involved – so that is a challenge to get the resistant families to, you know, play games and get involved and help them out. But other families have been fantastic.

Another teacher acknowledged that some students in her Year 5/6 class had expressed difficulties with their parents being involved in the literacy homework tasks. She reflected:

T: [Two students] said, ‘Oh my parents won’t do this – they don’t care’, but in a jovial way ... it was more like, ‘Oh, why do we have to do this, my parents won’t care.’ [Exasperated expression]
R: They won’t care about doing the ads?
T: Doing the activity. And I said, ‘Well, that’s a real shame because if you actually asked them if they would like to do it, they’d probably like to do it ... it’s just that you’re thinking that they won’t, but I’m sure if you asked them ...’
R: Because the collaboration needs the teacher to be open to it, then the child to be open to it and then the parent to be open to it ...

Parents also highlighted some of the challenges with being involved in their children’s literacy learning tasks at home. For example, a group of parents of Year 5/6 students discussed the difficulties of encouraging their children to participate in the class blog and their role in supporting their child’s learning, particularly in the ‘teenage years’:

P1: We always try to challenge her, because we know she’s capable of a lot of things, she has a lot of potential and that’s why probably she didn’t tell me about the blog because ... I try to not criticise her but I challenge her. She reads a lot so you expect a high level but she’s like, ‘OK, I don’t want your opinion,’ [indicates closing lips]... she closes up.
R: That’s a real challenge, isn’t it?
P1: And I’m the easy one, her dad is way harder than me.
P2: We’ve talked about these blogs having lots of purposes, but is one of them for us as parents to see what the kids are doing? Not necessarily telling them how to do it or anything, but being aware of what it is that they’re doing.
P3: Being connected to the learning is really important – not kind of in control of it, know, because they’re in control and the teachers are guiding them, but connected to it, so you can then engage with it however you want to.
P1: And I think it’s easy to slip in to pushing when you see they have more potential or that they could be doing it better, but then you can also see the walls go up. But I suppose it’s challenging for us, because we’re the ones that need to change our approach a little bit, rather than the other way around.
P3: Especially for teenage years.
P1: When he [son] was doing that thing on [natural disasters], he’d [father] read the paper, he’d say, ‘Oh [son’s name] did you see this?’ and they’d have a conversation about it. Whereas that wouldn’t have happened before, just simply because you don’t know.
P2: Then coming in and seeing it, you know, they had them [natural disaster dioramas] on display ...
Another parent highlighted the importance of completing more open-ended home tasks that required creativity, critical thinking and the use of ICT in literacy learning, but noted the challenge with her own time commitments, stating:

If tasks are meaningful and add to their learning, I’ve got no issue with it ... but I need know to have time available because most of it’s talking about things driving in the car. So we talk a lot but I don’t often have ... I have to actively make that time ... because you have to sit. In fact I couldn’t even sit for the whole interview with her, because she had to re-word things and I just had to keep making dinner.

Some parents also articulated the challenge with being involved in home tasks that required the use of ICT that they were unfamiliar with. For example, parents were required to access the class blog to write comments about their child’s work.

R: Have you been onto the blog?
P1: I’ll be honest, I haven’t been.
P2: I don’t think the kids have given their parents the code for the new blog ... because they had to archive it.
P3: I was really upset this morning about it because I tried to get in to the page and I didn’t know where to go ... well it said ‘For Parents’ but you need a code or something and I was like ... ‘What?’ I have to because the school sent me the email so I’ve got the information, so I said to my daughter, ‘Please write me down the address of the blog.’ When she was putting her shoes on to get in the car, I had to remind her about the address, so I was like, ‘I’m going to be there [at the focus group] and I don’t know anything about homework.’ [Laughter]
P1: Oh you laugh but [it] is every day with her like that: ‘I don’t know anything that you’re talking about – anything about the school homework – nothing.’
R: She never talks about it?
P1: Nothing.

The final survey item in this domain invited teachers, parents and students to indicate the forms of communication used between teachers and parents about students’ literacy learning and the communication forms they prefer to use. Each participant selected from a list of 13 items, including: ‘student diary’, ‘print newsletters’, ‘electronic newsletters’, ‘emails’, ‘Skype’ and ‘parent-teacher interviews.’ Results showed that a clear majority of teachers indicated that electronic newsletters were available to parents and in addition print newsletters, print notes, phone calls, diaries, email, class websites, face-to-face meetings, parent-teacher interviews, information evenings and informal chats were also used to communicate with parents. The preferred forms of communication were email, face-to-face meetings and phone calls.

Additional open-ended responses revealed that some schools used Instagram or school portals with subject pages, with some making students’ homework and assessment available to parents through these mediums. On the whole, students indicated that all of the forms of communication listed were utilised, with the greatest number indicating that parent-teacher interviews were available and that a school diary was a form of communication. Students indicated that they preferred interviews and email as forms of communication over the others listed. Parents indicated that they utilised the following forms of communication: parent-teacher interviews (90%), school diary (89%), electronic newsletters...
Parents also reported using the school website and Instagram. Parents preferred emails, face-to-face meetings and phone calls. Parents did not prefer school diaries, print notes and electronic newsletters, despite these being among the most accessible forms of communication.

Inspection of the parent and teacher interview data also showed a similar pattern of responses in relation to the forms of communication between home and school. For example, one teacher stated that emails were a source of informing parents of the current learning goal:

> We have been sending emails home to explain ... why we want them to play games – as you know we've been doing games to increase vocabulary.

Similarly, a parent of a Year 8 student noted the value of teachers using email to communicate with them about their child’s learning, stating:

> I must say they’re really good with emails. They email about good things and bad things – they’ll email you results and show you where your child sits in relation to the whole grade ... so their communication, from my point of view, I have no problem with it. If you need to take it further, you can have an interview or discussion with them.

### 3.4 Integrating creativity, critical thinking and ICT in literacy learning

In order to investigate parents’, teachers’ and students’ understandings of how literacy teaching that integrates ICT, creativity, and critical thinking might be enabled, participants were invited to complete a number of open-ended questions in the survey. Specifically, teachers were asked to describe an instance where they had successfully integrated ICT, creativity and critical thinking in English/literacy learning. Similarly, parents were also asked to describe an instance where their child had worked on a project that integrated ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy learning. A similar open-ended item was posed to students whereby they were asked to describe a fun English/literacy activity that involved using ICT creatively in or out of school. Responses to these survey items were scrutinised for emerging themes.

Figure 6 presents the eight key themes that emerged from all participant group responses. Seven key themes emerged from teacher responses, four key themes emerged from parent responses, while there were eight key themes that emerged from the student data.
The highest percentage of responses by teachers (32%) related to designing digital texts, including ‘Digital text- importing pictures/photos/images and designing a book,’ and ‘using Inanimate Alice as a stimulus for students to create their own episode- choosing sound, text and images of their choosing to narrate a digital story.’ Other examples of integrating ICT, creativity and critical thinking included critical analysis of texts (22%), such as using ‘many forms of online resources to listen to and read about personal stories of migration. Due to the topical nature of this unit a lot of critical thinking and questioning was developed and discussed.’ Designing films (15%) was also commented on: ‘a financial literacy task, involving students researching “scams”, then writing a script about a scam, before performing, filming, editing and then presenting it to the rest of the class.’ Teachers also reported accessing online materials (15%) as another example of integrating ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy learning. The lowest percentage of responses centred around the themes of ‘developing websites’ (7%) and ‘contributing to collaborative spaces’ (7%), while just 3% of teachers stated that they didn’t know of an example of the integration of ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy.

Four of the eight key themes also emerged from parent responses, with the highest response (40%) related to the development of digital texts. However, unlike the teacher responses, most examples
expressed by parents were related to the development of PowerPoint presentations. Twenty-five per cent of parents gave examples of designing film. For example, one parent wrote that:

One of my daughters wrote a story, recorded herself narrating the story, also recorded background music, choreographed a dance to express the story and then performed this in front of her class. How’s that for a perfect example of critical thinking, creativity and ICT skills?

In contrast to the teacher responses, parents did not indicate any examples of their children taking part in developing websites or contributing to collaborative spaces, and a higher percentage of parent responses (33%) compared with teacher responses (3%) showed that some parents did not know of any example of integration of ICT, creativity and critical thinking in English/literacy learning.

All eight key themes emerged from student responses. Seven of these themes were similar to those that emerged from teacher responses, with five themes similar to parent responses. However, the most noteworthy difference in themes between parent, teacher and student responses was the high percentage of student responses (31%) related to accessing and playing games as an example of integration of ICT, creativity and critical thinking in English/literacy learning. Many of these games were commercial products used on the students’ tablets and computers. This theme did not emerge from the parent or teacher responses. These findings are similar to the findings discussed previously from other survey items that invited participants to indicate what would help them increase their use of ICT skills in literacy learning, and what technologies they use often at home. For example, students indicated that the use and design of games would help them increase their ICT skills and playing games online was used often at home. Again, these responses were not evident in teacher or parent responses.

In contrast to parent and teacher responses, only one student gave an example of critical analysis of texts or creating a website. For example, this student stated:

Creating a website! It’s creative and may need to have work involved in it. For example: Weebly where you make a website and add learning while being creative!

Teachers were also invited to complete a second open-ended question that asked them to describe an instance where they had successfully worked in a home-school partnership that integrated ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy learning. Responses were scrutinised and three main themes emerged including teachers’: (1) inability to provide an example, (2) general communication to parents about student’ learning, and (3) collaboration with parents. The first theme included 34% of responses where teachers indicated that they had ‘never’, ‘couldn’t remember’ or ‘had never done this successfully.’ One teacher stated that they were ‘still working at combining all of these … I manage some aspects.’ The second theme included 41% of overall responses to this survey item. Responses in this theme related to teachers’ general communication to parents about students’ learning, homework tasks, and assessment tasks and outcomes. Typical teacher responses included communicating through ‘email to follow up English homework tasks with their child,’ ‘parent portals,’ ‘regularly maintained communication with parents to increase literacy learning for students,’ and ‘creation of a [website] page for each student to journal all learning.’ The final theme included 25% of responses that described collaboration between parents and teachers around an instance that integrated ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy learning. One teacher described their instance when:

… students were engaged in reconstructing their family origins. This involved interviewing available relatives, synthesising multiple pieces of information into a digital presentation to their peers, followed
by a reflective journal. These presentations were saved in each student’s digital portfolio, which went home at the end of the semester.

Another middle years teacher wrote that their instance involved ‘students making homemade substances to replace palm oil and their parents helped them make these things and consulted on the presentation,’ while another stated that they communicate ‘literacy learning through a classroom blog and invite parent and student participation in learning.’

Findings from teacher responses from interviews showed that many teachers recognised the challenges involved in connecting home and school learning and integrating creativity, critical thinking and ICT in literacy learning. One Year 5/6 teacher noted at the commencement of the CLLC participation:

We’ve been really struggling, really struggling with the home connection and that’s probably been the negative out of the whole program.

In contrast, another Year 5/6 teacher reflected on the complexity of integrating all aspects of creativity, critical thinking and ICT in literacy learning and acknowledged the enormous shift in her thinking and practice, and the benefits of being part of the CLLC to support her own learning:

ICT, critical and creative thinking, home-school partnerships are all really important and at the start [of the CLLC] it was hard to imagine how they would all look in practice, but now it makes sense ... using ICT to connect to home and critical thinking and creativity has been a big part too.

4 Case studies of professional practices

The following will present professional practices of case study teachers and schools. This will include the context of the school, the case study teachers, the ‘spotlight tasks’ and discussion of professional practices. Designed and implemented by the three case study teachers, the nine spotlight tasks integrated creative and critical thinking with ICT and home-school connections within their school-based area of inquiry. The spotlight tasks have been presented as PowerPoint presentations and are available in the Appendices.

4.1 Case study one: Professional practice at St Anthony’s Primary School

4.1.1 School context

St Anthony’s Primary School is a co-educational, Catholic parish primary school located in Melbourne’s inner-northern suburb of Alphington. St Anthony’s caters for approximately 250 students across ten classes, from Years Prep to 6. With the exception of Prep, all classes are composite. The school environment is characterised by bright, spacious classrooms and a recently refurbished playground. St Anthony’s School fosters a love of learning and uses inquiry-based learning to equip students to meet the challenges faced in an ever-changing world. A range of specialist subjects including Performing Arts, Italian and Visual Arts are offered at the school. St Anthony’s has a strong parish connection and is committed to supporting positive social and emotional outcomes for all students. The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) of 1,152 indicates that approximately two-thirds (69%) of the student population come from families considered to be relatively socio-educationally advantaged. The majority of the school population identify as having Anglo-Celtic, Italian and Greek
backgrounds, with approximately 17% of students speaking a language other than English in the home, according to 2014 data accessed from the My School website: http://www.myschool.edu.au/.

The Years 5/6 teaching team at St Anthony’s became involved in cohort two of the CEM’s Collaborative Literacy Learning Communities (CLLC) professional learning program after identifying the need to further develop students’ oracy and literacy. In 2014, a renewed school team again applied to participate in the CLLC program.

4.1.2 Case study teacher context

Gemma MacDonald is a graduate teacher, and ex-student, at St Anthony’s Primary School who simultaneously joined the teaching staff and began participation in the CLLC. Gemma’s planning for and implementation of pedagogies, as demonstrated through the described spotlight tasks, are situated in the strongly collaborative environment of the Years 5/6 teaching team. As a graduate teacher, her major responsibilities are the collaborative development and implementation of classroom programs. The Years 5/6 teaching team included Gemma MacDonald, Mark Walsh and Amy Kilpatrick, who were supported in the CLLC and in their literacy teaching by Fiona Dearn, the school’s Literacy Leader, and more broadly by the Principal, Maureen Shembrey. The three classes were taught by the four teachers during the literacy program and they collaboratively planned units of work and assessed students.

The St Anthony’s CLLC Project Team sought to improve student access to expressive, literate, receptive and oral vocabularies. The team had observed that students’ use of devices had increased and suspected that they may not be reading extensively or engaging in conversation as much in the home as a result. Teachers also noted that students had limited opportunities to speak publicly. Influenced by a range of assessment information they initially posed the following research question:

How can we develop and broaden students’ oral and written vocabularies?

As part of their ongoing participation in the CLLC and in line with the emphases of the program, the team refined their inquiry question to:

How can parents, teachers and students develop and broaden their oral and written vocabularies?

4.1.3 Spotlight task 1: Drawing and writing in response to music

Within an inquiry unit focused on ‘the senses’, teachers sought to develop and broaden students’ oral and written vocabularies through multimodal engagement. Previous lessons included experiential activities on each of the five senses, such a ‘feely boxes’ for touch and creation of word walls with related vocabulary. Students reflected on a poem by creating an artwork. The spotlight lesson focused on creation of abstract pastel drawings in response to instrumental music, followed by development of written descriptions of the responses. Further lessons required students to work in pairs to create a music video that incorporated a piece of music with descriptive vocabulary and evocative images using the program, Photo Story. The unit culminated in a parent-supported excursion to the Queen Victoria Market where students’ descriptive sensory-related words were recorded. Students developed a reflective written piece on their experience at the market. The parental connection involved parents helping students to choose a piece of instrumental music with the potential to generate descriptive vocabulary. There was a shift towards teachers engaging parents as ‘resources’ for learning. For further information see ‘Appendix A: St Anthony’s Primary School, spotlight task 1’.
4.1.4 Spotlight task 2: Novel response and reading circles – planning and creation of a Photo Story presentation

This unit focused on building expressive vocabulary and multimodal capacities through studying one of a choice of novels through the reciprocal teaching approach of ‘reading circles’. The novels included *The Giver, Shadow Master, Hating Alison Ashley* and *People Might Hear You*. In lessons prior to the spotlight task, Gemma revised the roles that students took on in their reading circles (Vocabulary Enricher, Illustrator, Literary Luminator, Summariser, Connector, Discussion Director and Travel Tracer). Students rotated through the roles weekly. They identified the main themes of selected books (e.g. loss, hope, family, friendship) using a teacher-developed list as a resource, and students linked themes and mood in literature. The spotlight task involved students planning and creating a Photo Story presentation as a novel response. They placed and ordered illustrations from their reading circles work in Photo Story, and then selected words, phrases, music and sound effects to create a response. The parental connection involved parents asking students a set of interview questions related to a novel, with students recording answers. For further information see ‘Appendix B: St Anthony’s Primary School, spotlight task 2’.

4.1.5 Spotlight task 3: Comparing print, graphic and animated fairy/fantasy tales

This task was part of a unit that focused on comparing print, graphic and animated versions of fairytales. Each of the teachers focused on one of three different texts and then students across the Year 5/6 classes could nominate which text they wanted to study. The three texts were *Rapunzel, Jack and the Beanstalk* and *The Hobbit*. Gemma supported students developing knowledge across different fairy tale versions of the fairytale *Rapunzel* (including the graphic novel *Rapunzel’s Revenge* and the animation *Tangled*). Lessons previous to the spotlight lesson explored: knowledge of characters, plot narrative and setting across different versions; creating character profiles describing qualities with reference to textual evidence; and exploring the interplay between linguistic, visual and audio modes through textual analysis. The spotlight task was the creation of alternative, multimodal narratives to the graphic novel using Photo Story. Later lessons focused on comparing and contrasting characters’ characteristics across versions and critiquing gender roles; and culminated in the assessment task of writing individual essays comparing two versions of the same text and drawing on textual evidence to present a persuasive argument. The parental connection involved students describing a graphic novel to their parents and discussing how it compared with the traditional story. Together they made five predictions about what they thought would happen. For further information see ‘Appendix C: St Anthony’s Primary School, spotlight task 3’.

4.1.6 Developing understandings and professional practices

The three spotlight tasks and the units in which they are contextualised address the school research question, particularly the development and broadening of students’ oral and written vocabularies. According to teachers and students, the work samples and assessment tasks – that resulted from writing in response to music, planning and creating photo story presentations, and comparisons of print, graphic and animated fairy/fantasy tales – evidenced development of richer oral and written vocabularies (see Appendices A to C). When we returned to interview the students the year after the spotlight tasks, we had the following exchange with the Year 5/6 focus group students:

S1: The vocabulary can help us think of our own things and like, instead of, say I had the word ‘mad’, you can change it into ‘anger’, ‘frustration’ ...
S2: ‘Exasperated’.  
R: And that makes your writing more …  
S1: … interesting.  
S3: Interesting, exciting.  
S2: Like last year when we did vocabulary it was kind of like, ‘Oh, I don’t know where we’re going to use this vocabulary,’ and then this year it’s come back and …  
S1: … it’s handy.  
S3: It’s helped us – yes!  

Here it is evident that students’ understandings about the value of an expanded vocabulary have, in their view, enhanced their capacity to use language independently and creatively.

In Gemma’s literacy pedagogies, creative and critical thinking are deeply interconnected with collaboration. She gives students a structure to work within, emphasises high expectations at the outset of each task and through ongoing feedback. In Gemma’s words:

We try and design tasks that allow students to engage in critically and creatively. We don’t tell them what needs to happen – we just set it up and they have to decide what they put into whatever the task is, like the Photo Story presentation. We said, ‘It has to be a thematic presentation about your novel, so you need to go ahead and choose which words out of the book represent that – what music best matches that,’ and they had to decide. It’s critical and it’s creative and it’s collaborative as well.

In line with the emphases in the CLLC program, student learning in the area of multimodal meaning-making was also evident, with Photo Story software used for student creation of texts and responses to texts.

T1: We realised … what they were capable of, I think, early with the first one [Photo Story] … they had the visual and the music and the words and when they got up to describe the thinking that they had done, they had to do it in pairs and they had to convince one another or decide together, all that sort of stuff – it just showed how much…  
T2: … thought …  
T1: … thought had gone in to it. And that surprised me. I thought there’d be a superficial level of involvement …  
T2: It was a lot deeper …  
T1: … they really were able to explain what they thought and why they’d made that decision and why that music matched that image …

Teachers reported deeper levels of engagement, increased higher order thinking and a critical and creative use of language, image and sound in their multimodal novel presentations and in their novel responses in essay form. Students in a Year 5/6 focus group too commented on the challenges of creating multimodal texts:

We had to think – yeah, ourselves, and make it our own creative piece of work … instead of copying something, we had to like create it … Plus with the criteria of the oral presentation, if it was engaging and stuff like that …
Students feel that their creativity is encouraged by the teachers’ emphasis on independent, open-ended learning:

R: So how do teachers help you to be creative?
S1: I think it’s just – they let you. They don’t …
S2: They don’t restrict you to stuff, they don’t restrict you.
S3: Yeah nothing is,… like it’s endless, you can do whatever you like. I think the teachers support that.

Gemma had a sophisticated understanding of the integration of ICT, both at a pedagogical level for literacy learning, and as a communication tool for teachers and parents. She initiated the practice of communicating with parents through the social media platform Instagram. Use of Instagram was taken up by other teachers in the school, as parents with younger children saw the value of being invited into the classroom via snapshots of classroom activities and student work samples. She reflected:

It [ICT] has enhanced the way we communicate with parents as well. Like with Instagram and everything, that’s just a new way that we couldn’t do without ICT so it creates more opportunities to have the home school connections … I follow the other classes as well – I love to see what’s happening in the other rooms and get ideas and things like that.

This regular, informal information sharing with parents was viewed as a catalyst for conversations about learning, rather than a demand for parental involvement in homework in a prescriptive way. Instagram acted both as a visual discussion starter between parents, children and teachers, and also as a window into other teachers’ classrooms, stimulating informal sharing of ideas and professional learning. The rapid integration of this social media platform into teachers’ daily practices prompted discussion within the school about the purposes for school wide use of Instagram and protocols for protecting privacy. The principal, teacher and literacy leader reflected:

Pr: [T]he original idea was it [Instagram] was a communication from the school to the parents, it was purely showing a piece of work, a discussion starter with the child, so the child could come home and a parent would say, ‘Oh, I had a look at this, what was this all about?’ And suddenly it’s grown …
T: It’s evolved …
Pr: So we thought, we need to have that discussion again about what’s the purpose …
R: … and the protocols …
LL: Whether the work has the child’s name on it or the child holds it up and it really is the child’s work – is it the child’s face that we’re putting on … we just have to be clear … what permissions did the parents give us and are we sticking to the parameters?
R: And what are the aims in doing it?
T: Yeah, what is the purpose …?
Pr: It’s all new …
R: … sometimes the technology can run away …
Pr: It does ... before you know it. And we don’t want to be the fun police ... the kids are so engaged and we want them to be, but I think we have to be really firm about what our purpose is and try to stick with that ...

The Year 5/6 teachers were continually discussing and rethinking their understandings and intentions about the use of ICT, the purposes for setting particular tasks and their expectations of students and parents. Through the research process, the team began to plan for and use intentional ICT integration as a stimulus for creative literacy pedagogies to emerge. As Gemma discussed with her colleagues:

T: We plan for more opportunities with ICT now, we kind of make it a focus of how could we not just do the same task, but create more opportunities for things we couldn’t do without ICT, the Photo Stories are an example. [Students] are more familiar with the program, so we’re using it [Photo Story] more frequently now. We ask ourselves, ‘How can we include ICT’? We know that’s important, so how can we do that meaningfully?

LL: Yes, it’s not just about replacing the tools we already use in ICT, but it’s actually being creative and I think we’re really conscious of that; we’re not just doing what we already do, we’re trying to do something a bit differently.

Pr: The school has an underlying philosophy about making sure that ICT doesn’t drive what we do but it enhances it ... we don’t have a laptop program or an iPad program specifically – we’ve been really selective in what we can afford and also where it’s best utilised.

Pedagogies enabling and integrating creativity and critical thinking both require and produce agency for teachers and students. At St Anthony’s, students learning is scaffolded and students are trusted in their capacity to make decisions about how they respond to literacy activities. The texts produced demonstrate increasing sophistication and complexity as a result of students’ investment in their work, as evidenced in the examples of students’ text responses in the spotlight tasks. The evolution of this autonomy requires time and a willingness on the part of teachers and students to take risks, and to develop their capacities to integrate digital literacies with creativity and critical thinking in a series of open-ended tasks.

Through engaging teachers in participatory action research, the CLLC program confronts teachers with an expectation of changed practice. Gemma displayed her preparedness to take risks and experiment in modelling and articulating this intention to students. She scaffolded students’ engagement in new experiences, enabling them to take learning risks and fostered reflective creative and critical thinking. She proved adaptable and reflexive in reflecting on the usefulness of changed literacy teaching practices, her role in the changed practices and the changes to her identity and efficacy as a beginning teacher. She was comfortable with uncertainty and as a team member with more experienced educators, and she was interested in collaboratively developing innovative literacy teaching practices.
4.2 Case study two: Professional practice at Sacred Heart Primary School

4.2.1 School context

Sacred Heart is a Catholic primary school located in the semi-rural surrounds of Diamond Creek on the north-eastern fringe of Melbourne. The school caters for approximately 160 students from a number of neighbouring, small communities. Environmental sustainability is a key focus at the school and the grounds are reflective of the area’s natural environment, characterised by a student vegetable garden and a recently resurfaced oval. Specialist classes offered by the school include: LOTE (Chinese), Information Technology and Communication Skills, and Physical Education, and in addition they are supported by a new library and facilities to accommodate specialist Visual and Performing Arts classes. Sacred Heart adopts a holistic approach based on a Catholic Tradition and Contemporary Learning, aiming to provide each student with the capacity to manage themselves as individuals and in relation to others; understand the world in which they live; and act effectively in the world.

Sacred Heart’s Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) of 1,044 indicates that around one-third of students (31%) come from families considered to be relatively socio-educationally advantaged. The majority of the students attending the school are from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds, with only 4% from families with a language background other than English, and 5% from relatively disadvantaged families, according to 2014 data accessed from the MySchool website: http://www.myschool.edu.au/. A high percentage of parents have their own business and many are in trade-related areas.

The Years 5/6 teaching team at Sacred Heart became involved in cohort four of the CEM’s Collaborative Literacy Learning Communities (CLLC) professional learning in 2014.

4.2.2 Case study teacher context

Jacinta Dalton is an experienced part-time teacher who job-shares with her colleague Claudia Neale, in teaching one of the two Years 5/6 classes at Sacred Heart Primary School. Jacinta and Claudia both have other roles in the school and communicate through a weekly planning session, via text message and also share documents through Dropbox. The three Years 5/6 teachers are supported in their CLLC project by Sandy Morgan, the school’s Literacy Leader and Assistant Principal and the Principal, Jim O’Sullivan. The teachers collaboratively plan units of work and assess students.

The teachers describe Sacred Heart’s students as being very inclusive and welcoming with many excelling in sport and creative pursuits. Many Years 5/6 students are technologically savvy and familiar with using social media but tend to use technologies purely socially rather than as collaborative tools. Just prior to their entry into the CLLC the school substantially invested in tablets and other computing hardware.

The Sacred Heart CLLC Project Team wanted to address collaboration through technology with their students and initially developed the following research question:

*How can students collaborate together to improve their reading outcomes?*

As part of their ongoing participation in the CLLC and in line with the emphases of the program, particularly the focus on home-school partnerships, the team refined their inquiry question to:
How can we connect students, parents and the community to work collaboratively through the use of digital literacies to improve student outcomes?

4.2.3 Spotlight task 1: Research, visual representation and reflective blogging about a natural disaster

Within an inquiry unit focused on ‘natural disasters’ teachers sought to develop students’ capacities to research and represent a natural disaster and explain the processes involved in representing through a visual form or model, such as a diorama. Previous lessons included developing fact sheets on natural disasters; undertaking group inquiries into selected disasters; creating natural disaster plans for their own familiar environments, such as bushfire plans and creating 60-second speeches about the theme of World Environment Day – rising sea levels. The spotlight lesson focused on identifying and using specific language to label processes represented in their natural disaster models. Further lessons required students to prepare a design brief outlining the materials and steps required to construct their model and detail illustrations of the finished product. The models were constructed in class over a series of lessons, with peer input into the clarity of information being presented to explain the natural disaster and how to rehabilitate the environment following the disaster. The parental connection involved students discussing with their parents a natural disaster that they had selected to research, and to find out questions that parents would expect to see answered through the project. For further information see ‘Appendix D: Sacred Heart Primary School, spotlight task 1’.

4.2.4 Spotlight task 2: Critiquing, creating and reflective blogging on advertisements for bazaar products

This unit focused on developing knowledge of design briefs, products and associated print and multimodal persuasive texts for the upcoming school bazaar. The spotlight lesson was very early on in the unit and involved students in critiquing existing advertisements, and then creating and assessing filmic advertisements for bazaar products. The parental connection involved parents sharing and reflecting on advertisements from their youth and collaboratively critiquing their child’s advertisement against rubric assessment criteria. For further information see ‘Appendix E: Sacred Heart Primary School, spotlight task 2’.

4.2.5 Spotlight task 3: Readers’ theatre

This task was part of a short lesson sequence that focused on rehearsing and performing for the class, a play script, using a ‘readers’ theatre’ approach. Some students prepared, rehearsed and performed short plays that they had written with peers. Others selected existing play texts. Working in groups, all students highlighted speaking parts, some prepared cue cards, and then rehearsed and performed the play for their teacher and peers. The spotlight lesson focused on preparation of the scripts, rehearsal and performance, and assessment criteria including verbal delivery, volume, clarity, expression and turn taking, movement, use of props and audience engagement. Students then gave feedback to each other and critiqued performances. This critique continued in a lesson subsequent to the spotlight task. Some of the plays were performed at the school Christmas concert as part of a showcase of work for parents. For further information see ‘Appendix F: Sacred Heart Primary School, spotlight task 3’.

4.2.6 Developing understandings and professional practices

Jacinta’s planning and implementation of pedagogies, as evidenced through the described spotlight tasks, were developed in collaboration with her Years 5/6 teaching partner. As a part-time teacher, an
important dimension of her pedagogical practices involved communicating with students about the work they had done previously with the other teacher to ensure smooth transitions between her and her teaching partner. The three spotlight tasks and the units in which they are contextualised address the school research question, of how best to use digital literacies to support collaborative learning involving students, parents and the community.

Collaborative learning was an important priority at Sacred Heart, reflected in the school’s involvement in another project in the eastern region, Schools Improving Schools, in which four schools collaborated online to plan, teach and learn together. According to the Principal:

[O]ne of our emphases has been this whole collaboration aspect, whereby our teachers can have professional learning experiences by being involved in authentic collaborations with other schools and learning pragmatically about teaching pedagogy and teaching practices, etc. So when CLLC became apparent to us, it ticked a number of boxes: it was a collaborative online project, it incorporated IT as well as professional learning through being involved with other schools. Specifically it addressed part of our concerns with our 5/6 and transition in to secondary school ... Because there are a lot of myths ... about what happens when they leave grade 6 and they come in to year 7.

One important dimension of the transition to secondary school that was central to the project team was the role of parents in learning and homework. The research process itself, through surveys and parent focus groups, provided a forum for parents to reflect on the nature and purposes for their engagement in their child’s learning, as the Principal identified:

[H]aving a parent group come in to talk with external people about what they’re seeing happening as part of their children’s learning has given them a greater awareness of their importance in that role ...
We see you as being important, we don’t just want you to come in and help with reading ... So we’ve got to provide the opportunity to listen to them to get a third-party view of what we think we’re doing.

In particular, the 5/6 teaching team were interested to explore the various meanings and forms of collaboration that were possible, between teaching teams for planning and teaching, between teachers and students in reflecting on learning, between students for enhanced learning, and collaboration amongst teachers, students and parents. Jacinta discovered that planning collaboratively required significant amounts of time, a commodity often in short supply in the context of the team of part-time Year 5/6 teachers. The team came to understand collaboration as creative in engendering learning and encouraged students to continually reflect on the nature of collaboration and assess their growing collaborative skills following each learning activity.

Individual student blogs were introduced as a means of teachers, students and parents sharing, reflecting on and assessing processes and products of various learning tasks. These included researching and visually representing a selected natural disaster; critiquing and creating advertisements for products for the school bazaar; and rehearsing and performing plays through a ‘readers’ theatre’ approach (see Appendices D – F). Adopting ICT enabled and encouraged students and parents to work collaboratively on tasks and communicate about learning. Students were initially enthusiastic, but then interest waned. As parents noted:

P1: My son was a little hesitant to show me. I don’t know whether he was a touch embarrassed.

P2: Yeah. I think a blog can get into diary territory too.
P3: They’ve got rules around what they can put in there.
P1: I don’t mean the actual content but the psychology of it ...
P2: One of the blog entries my son had to write about was: ‘What is it that you’re thinking at the moment?’ And he said to me, ‘Don’t read that because I don’t know what I’m thinking.’
P4: I must admit, I’m not sure of the blogs. I’m loving the homework in terms of the interactivity, but I’m not sure on the blog.
P1: There’s so many possible purposes for the blogs and we’re not really clear yet on what they are. Like there’s sharing work but there’s sharing work with peers and with parents, and they’re two different purposes. Then there’s reminding and asking for information or things, reflecting on how they went or how they could do it better; and then critiquing other people, and at the moment it’s all kind of blending in.

For teachers, the use of blogging was difficult to sustain, with the last spotlight task shifting away from the idea of collaboration to an invitation to watch a play performed at the school concert. While the teachers initially began the project with the intention of developing specific home tasks designed to engage children and their parents in learning, this proved challenging to sustain:

T: I think we struggled with finding something for the parents to help with … [students] weren’t too keen on asking mum and dad. They had it under control themselves, a very independent group, they had it all sorted themselves. They could do it as a group, I think they kind of had that thought that they didn’t need mum and dad.

LL: … these kids are so good at collaborating with each other outside of school. I don’t even think it’s on their radar that mum and dad can collaborate with me …

R: Well, their friends are more useful. Aren’t they? Really?

Pr: Yeah and they’re there. 24/7, so …

Reflecting on the work of Sacred Heart’s CLLC team in addressing their research question Jacinta commented:

T: We haven’t really answered our question.
R: But maybe you’ve achieved something that this question isn’t asking …?
T: I would say as a class, their critical thinking, their constructive criticism and their verbal language has improved … but we’re struggling with the home connection. … The parents don’t necessarily think that blogging is important or they don’t feel the need to be on top of everything. The kids are happy and doing what they’re meant to be doing so therefore it doesn’t really matter. They’re happy, they’re good. Everything’s great … and the kids aren’t pushing it either.

Parents saw the need to be connected with student learning, valued knowing what their middle years children were doing at school and engaged in conversations with their children about their learning. Parents greatly appreciated having ways of connecting with the content of classroom learning, but they
saw home tasks as increasingly the responsibility of their adolescent children, under the guidance of the teachers. As some parents explained:

**P1**: Being connected to their learning is really important – not kind of in control of it, because they’re in control of it and the teachers are guiding them but connected to it so you can then engage with it however you want to.

**P2**: I think it’s easy to slip in to pushing when you see they have more potential or that they could be doing it better but then you can also see the walls go up.

**P3**: Especially in teenage years.

**P4**: Like when he was doing that thing on natural disasters, my husband would read the paper he’d say, ‘Oh did you see this?’ And they’d have a conversation about it whereas that wouldn’t have happened before, just simply because my husband wouldn’t have known.

Jacinta honestly reflected on the lack of collaboration gained through the blogs, on why this situation might have developed, and the sorts of connections or collaborations that might be most useful for students as they develop as independent learners:

**T**: Maybe images would be a better way of letting parents connect with the classroom. The blogging has become a task, they have to do it, they have to write it up and they have to post it and we’ll look at it tomorrow. Whereas if they went home and said, ‘Oh I did my reader’s theatre today. We had visitors in class and they watched us, do you want to see it?’ Their Mum would say, ‘Oh yeah, I’ll sit down at dinner time and I’ll watch it’.

**R**: Has the purpose then slightly shifted from using parents as a resource to sharing information or experiences?

**T**: This project has made me think about the multiple purposes, it’s about being in charge of the purposes. I’m trying to build relationships, or I’m trying to share or I’m trying to use parents as a resource … and when they have a problem, come and see me because you noticed that Johnnie didn’t do well. The students are becoming independent and don’t necessarily like particular [parent involvement] tasks because they’ve got it under control and they don’t need mum and dad, but mum and dad still need to know what’s happening and how they’re going.

While the teachers initially began the project with the intention of developing specific home tasks designed to engage children and their parents in learning, this proved to be unsustainable. The students’ autonomy was enhanced by their capacity to communicate online with their friends about their school tasks and share their own interests in “affinity spaces” (Gee, 2007), where groups of friends shared their passions for online games or uploaded YouTube videos on how to create natural disaster models for their diorama. Students’ familiarity with ICT led teachers to increase their learning expectations. As Jacinta stated:

[You don’t have to teach the kids how to take a video – they already know that. They know how to put it on the server so you don’t have to take all that time … so they’re much more engaged and so then you can put more rigour in to what you’re actually teaching them about.]
A collaborative literacy learning community was established which included Year 5/6 students, teachers and parents. The power of collaboration for learning has been embraced as a whole school priority for the future, with a staff induction and mentoring program proposed for 2016 to embed the understandings and practices of collaboration throughout the school. The following shows an extract from an interview with the Principal and Literacy Leader:

Pr: ... our resources now include technology, our resources now include the broader community and our teachers now seeing that increasingly resources are other teachers and it doesn’t have to be a physical interaction. It can be an online interaction and there’s validity and authenticity in that type of a relationship going on ...

LL: ... the conversations have continued ... we want to work collaboratively, we want our teachers to work collaboratively, we want our kids to work collaboratively, we want our parents to work collaboratively with us. Just even articulating that has ... caused that mind shift, I guess. And like I said about the homework, even in the other year levels now, it’s not just, ‘Here’s a worksheet, go and do it.’ There’s a lot of collaborative involvement, even at home with the kids asking them to contact someone else in the class ... before it was very insular.

Evident in this school community is a sense of excitement and purpose in continuing the process of whole-school change to expand the learning opportunities for teachers, students and parents.

4.3 Case study three: Professional practice at Padua College

4.3.1 School context

Padua College is a Catholic, co-educational secondary school located on the Mornington Peninsula, south of Melbourne. The college currently provides education to approximately 2,090 students across its three campuses in Mornington (Year 7 to 12), Rosebud and Tyabb (Year 7 to 10) according to 2014 data accessed from the My School website: http://www.myschool.edu.au/. The college draws students from 25 feeder schools and employs 200 teachers and 40 teacher aides. The Mornington Campus officially opened in 1977, while Tyabb opened in January 2014 and is the newest of the three campuses. All campuses are set on spacious grounds incorporating bushland, wetlands and indigenous plants, offering students a tranquil learning environment. Students benefit from the use of facilities across the college network and come together at the Mornington Campus for special celebrations. The Padua College Mission and Value statement includes the values of welcoming and affirmation, growth, love of learning, compassion, hope, liberation, reconciliation and forgiveness. The Index of Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is 1,050 and indicates that approximately 25% of students attending Padua Mornington come from relatively socio-educationally advantaged families. The student population are primarily from Anglo-Saxon backgrounds and according to 2014 data accessed from the My School website, 10% come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. The CLLC Padua Project Team describe their students as friendly, sociable and fond of outdoor, sport and beach pursuits. The teachers suggest that for many of the school’s students, high academic achievement is viewed as secondary to more social aspects of school life, and believe there is room to further develop students’ confidence in their academic abilities.
A recent school review highlighted student and parent engagement with learning as a key issue for whole-school reform. An online platform had been developed for communicating with parents, the Parent Access Module (PAM), to facilitate more extensive information exchange between teachers and parents across the large multi-campus school environment. In particular, the leadership team was interested in enabling teachers to provide ongoing, summative feedback to students and parents, differentiated for individual students, rather than relying solely on bi-annual standardised written reports.

The CLLC Padua Project Team were interested in ensuring more detailed and timely feedback was provided to students and their parents regarding academic progress throughout the semester, leading to the initial research question:

**How can we use ICT/digital technologies to connect to our parents?**

This evolved into:

**How can online assessment and feedback practices provide parents and students with detailed and constructive comments about student ability and progress?**

As part of their ongoing participation in the CLLC and in line with the emphases of the program, the team further refined their inquiry question to:

**How can online assessment and feedback practices provide parents and students with detailed and constructive comments about student language and literacy ability and recommendations for future progress?**

4.3.2 Case study teacher context

Amy Beale has been the Learning Area Head for Digital Learning for 16 years and is also the English Area Learning Head across the College, with the responsibility for curriculum co-ordination of 36 English teachers. She has taught at Padua for 17 years, her entire teaching career. After 11 years of senior English teaching, Amy requested a junior class to maintain her connection with the interests and learning needs of younger students. Her Year 8 class has five funded students with special needs and an additional six non-funded students with language issues. She continues to teach VCE classes in English and Ethics and enjoys the range of students and the change of pace required in teaching junior levels. The school runs a 1:1 iPad program for students in Years 7 to 10. Amy was supported by Paul Fairlie, the Deputy Principal – Learning and Teaching.

Amy had recently completed a CEM-sponsored postgraduate diploma in curriculum management, where she explored the relationship between student engagement and teacher feedback. In her role as Head of Digital Learning, she was eager to explore some of the capabilities of the school intranet SIMON (a technological system integrating school databases) and PAM (Parent Access Module) to provide students and parents with electronic rather than print-based feedback:

> I guess it came from the frustration that, I would say to kids in Year 11 or Year 12, when they would be doing their goal sheet for the year or coming back after the semester and revisiting their goal sheet, ‘What have you learned from your report about what you need to do in the future?’, and 90% of the kids would say ‘What report?’ They hadn’t read it. ... So this is part of a bigger project with English and Religious Education; we’re looking at reviewing all of our feedback next semester. For me as a Learning
Area Head, it serves two purposes. Feedback that Year 7 and 8 students were being provided with in English didn’t involve criteria sheets, students just got a grade: ‘C+’. And then a comment: ‘great work’. And I think, ‘What’s great work?’ What was fantastic about it and what wasn’t good about it? What needs to be done next time? Where is that information? So it’s provided me as a Learning Area Head an opportunity to really address that concern about feedback.

4.3.3 Spotlight task 1: History of the English language
This Year 8 cross-curricula English/History four-week unit involved an investigation into the changing nature of the English language. Students explored the nature of language through questions such as: ‘What does language do? How has the English language changed over time? How and why does language change?’ Prior to the spotlight task visit, students had completed a listening assessment task, which involved viewing an episode from a British ITV series, The Adventure of English and completing a response booklet. They completed a dictionary activity and created a timeline documenting the changes in English, drawing on interactive timeline models from the British Library. Students were preparing for the major unit assessment task, an investigation and oral presentation answering the question: What is the most significant influence on the development of the English language?

The spotlight lesson involved students reflecting on Amy’s feedback on their listening assessment task. After reading her comments individually, Amy led a class discussion on the challenges of listening and locating relevant information from the documentary they watched, and centred on identifying key listening skills. Students then recorded individual reflections on what they had learnt about their own listening skills and how they would build on them in the next task. Students then wrote an initial five-minute response to the question: What do you think has been the biggest influence on the shaping of the English language? They discussed this in groups and then reported back to the whole class. The parental connection involved students tasked with interviewing their parents about the key questions for investigation and considering their responses for inclusion in the final oral presentation. For further information see ‘Appendix G: Padua College Secondary School, spotlight task 1.’

4.3.4 Spotlight task 2: Comparison of graphic novel, film and traditional fairytales
This unit was a comparative literature study of the graphic novel Rapunzel’s Revenge, the Disney film Tangled and Grimm’s Rapunzel. In lessons prior to the spotlight task, Amy and her students investigated students’ prior knowledge about fairy tales, through watching an episode of Once Upon A Time, exploring gender roles in traditional fairy tales and comparing characterisation, theme, setting and plot across print and animated versions of selected fairy tales.

The spotlight lesson was a ‘literature circle discussion’ of Rapunzel’s Revenge. Students worked in groups, taking up different roles in each lesson (as Discussion Director, Illuminator, Connector, Word Watcher and Summariser). They used colour-coded post-it notes to annotate the novel in the light of each role. Students created their own illustrations of an image from Rapunzel, such as the tower, or Rapunzel’s hair. In a whole class activity, students then used the interactive whiteboard to compare plot events across the graphic novel Rapunzel’s Revenge, the Disney film Tangled and Grimm’s Rapunzel. While there was no formal home task explicitly inviting parental involvement, students were encouraged to discuss the graphic novel form of Rapunzel’s Revenge, and reflect on their parents’ reading preferences in comparison with their own. For further information see ‘Appendix H: Padua College Secondary School, spotlight task 2’.
4.3.5 Spotlight task 3: Novel Study – Black snake: The daring of Ned Kelly

This English unit focused on the novel Black snake: The daring of Ned Kelly by Carol Wilkinson, an account of the Ned Kelly story from perspectives of multiple witnesses. The major Unit Assessment Task was an essay responding to the question: Is Ned Kelly Australia’s most maligned hero or just a despised villain? Amy and her students visited the State Library of Victoria to see an exhibition, Contesting Ned Kelly, and were expected to use evidence from this visit, together with the contrasting accounts from the novel in their essay. Students also conducted a role-play of Ned Kelly’s trial as a final activity. During each lesson prior to the spotlight task, Amy read aloud excerpts from the current chapter and discussed themes with students, before they responded to analytic questions in writing. She believed that this reading aloud was important to engage students in the text and also modelled expressive reading, which invited deeper analysis and understanding of themes. Students were expected to read set chapters for homework and complete novel response activities in class.

The spotlight task involved students first analysing a fictional chapter excerpt written from Fanny Shaw’s perspective. Students were asked to locate adjectival phrases and words creating a positive image of the Kelly Gang. They then drew wanted posters for Ned or Dan Kelly drawing on evidence from the text for information about their appearance. The third activity involved comparing accounts of the Jerilderie robbery, by listening to an audio reenactment and viewing images of the original Jerilderie letters on the State Library of Victoria website. Amy then read aloud an account of the same events from the novel and students were asked to summarise the events of the Kelly Gang’s last stand. While there was no formal home task explicitly inviting parental involvement, some students reported discussing their essay question with their parents. For further information see ‘Appendix I: Padua College Secondary School, spotlight task 3’.

4.3.6 Developing understandings and professional practices

Amy’s planning and implementation of the Year 8 English Curriculum, as demonstrated through the described spotlight tasks, are shaped by her leadership roles. As the Curriculum Leader of two key learning areas, English and Digital Learning in a large multi-campus Secondary College, her major responsibilities are to implement whole-school improvement programs and provide professional learning to support the continued enhancement of student learning opportunities and staff development. Amy was charged with renewing the feedback and assessment processes across the school and developing students’ capacities to reflect on their learning in English. The three spotlight tasks and the units in which they are contextualised address the school research question, of providing rich detailed formative and summative feedback to students and parents.

Amy was bound by a whole-school practice of completing all assessment tasks in class under timed exam conditions, which in her view limited teachers’ capacity for creative English teaching. In this multi-campus environment, curriculum development was centralised and common assessment tasks were the rule. Amy aimed to embed creative and critical thinking into the students’ text response tasks. As she says:

I tried to make sure that types of tasks we were doing were not too repetitive. Our Ned Kelly Court Case was a fantastic activity. I actually included it as part of the assessment because of how much preparation they put in to the court case. When they were on the stand, they had to become that character and the kids who took the main roles, really went away and researched their characters, tried to do the voices and use the language of the times as well everything. So for me, creativity was about variety, not doing
the same type of thing. I tried to do things in lots of different ways. English can fall into that habit of essay after essay or oral presentation after oral presentation, and I don’t think that’s creative, collaborative, critical – any of those things.

She made explicit the demands and requirements of each task in detailed and varied assessment booklets, emphasising the need for close reading, critical thinking, creativity and continual reflection on learning and teacher feedback. Communicating with parents about student progress was a key dimension of Amy’s reform agenda and while the roll out of the parent portal was not finalised at the conclusion of this phase of the project, parents appreciated the teachers’ responsiveness:

I must say they’re [Padua teachers] really good with emails. They email about good things and bad things – they’ll email you results and show you where your child sits in relation to the whole grade and ... so their communication, from my point of view, I have no problem with it. If you need to take it further, you can have an interview or discussion with them. (Parent of Year 8 student)

Parents also accessed the portal enthusiastically as Amy recounts:

In terms of statistics we’ve got on the amount of parents who’d accessed it ... in the six months SIMON’s been opened - we have 2,200 students, about 1,400 families, we’ve had 70,000 hits. The learning tasks and results are on there and so parents can see them. Some parents are looking a little bit too frequently, so some parents are looking every day ...

The combined impact of the new online communication portal and the CLLC project drew attention to the various forms and purposes for home and school communications and the role of homework. Interviews with parents at Padua revealed that the majority of parents were interested to know about homework but were unwilling to assume responsibility for ensuring their children completed it, and instead prioritised development of independent study habits. Through the Parent Access Module (PAM) parents were able to access homework timetables and tasks and stay informed about the weekly homework expectations, independent of their child’s willingness to disclose this information. This use of the school intranet to disseminate homework and teacher feedback on assessment tasks enabled conversations about school learning and homework between parents and children. It also provided teachers with a global view of assessment beyond the subjects they taught, so they were able to see where the concentrations of due dates were and periods when students may be under pressure with several assignments to complete in the same week. This knowledge led to changed assessment practices in English:

When we started to see those patterns emerge, we reduced the amount of graded tasks and have a few more ungraded or formative sort of tasks. We’ve got a couple of tasks which are teachers’ observations about work behaviour in the classroom – one of them was speaking and listening – so it’s not actually anything that the kids get up and do, but in a four-week period, the teacher would work through the class, making sure they write something about all the students’ skills in those areas.

Understandings and practices about the resourcing of student skill development and teacher professional learning in digital literacies were reshaped throughout the project. Due to the newly configured school intranet and the move to online assessment and feedback, individual professional learning for teachers required significant resourcing. Amy and others in the leadership positions
provided continual personalised instruction for teachers in the use of the new online assessment and feedback system, and in the principles of providing constructive feedback:

We’ve identified critical friends and some buddies so it’s actually not just me ... It’s been very interesting, the conversations that have opened up about the nature of feedback and what is appropriate feedback. It’s made a lot of learning areas other than English have conversations about feedback ... I found it quite confronting to see some of the things that were happening in my own learning area, things like ‘D+ You need to do some work’ or ‘A+ Great work!’ You know, really empty feedback. I just wanted the students to feel that they were being recognised for what they could do and know that they were having constructive advice about what they needed to address ... That we were really addressing how teachers were helping students with their learning.

Students were also explicitly taught in English class how to navigate the intranet, ensuring students know where and how to access materials and how to save files on their iPads to work on at home. Teaching of these ICT skills was undertaken in English, with ongoing discussion about the location of constantly emerging new digital literacies within the curriculum.

With such a large school, this reform agenda continues. In Amy’s view, the provision of high quality, accessible formative and summative feedback to students and parents is an essential dimension of agentic, independent learning:

I think we spend a lot of time in secondary schools talking about students, becoming independent learners, about taking ownership of their own learning. You can’t talk about those things without more independence and ownership in the home relationship with the child and their parent about their schooling. You have a system where feedback is visible and accessible, more formal than we get from primary schools. Parents are busy and they want that information but they often don’t have time to do those things. So it’s more of an empowered student and the parents stepping back, not stepping away.

It is also evident that teachers too are supported in their efforts to develop their own forms of student feedback. Sample feedback models were provided, together with discussion of the elements of constructive feedback to progress learning. Teachers are being encouraged to eschew the use of comments banks and compose their own personalised feedback to individual students. The sustained involvement in successive CLLC projects initiated school wide change on the mode and quality of formative and summative feedback, as Amy reflects:

I think it’s had a big impact on the school ... because what we’ve done in English is now being done throughout Years 7 to 12 in every learning area. Religious Education was with us every step of the way in terms of the trial last year ... and so every student in the school had this experience ... It’s a big change we’ve made in a short period of time.

5 Reflections on collaborative literacy learning

While the research was not specifically designed to elicit information about the CLLC program, case study participants (principals, literacy leaders and teachers) incidentally reflected on their involvement in the CLLC, as it was the context in which the research was conducted.
The CLLC seeks to provide differentiated professional learning to collaborative school-based teams of teachers, encouraging distributed leadership and inquiry-based, action-oriented learning. Inquiries were guided by school team developed research questions and influenced by the overall emphases of the imperatives of the CEM.

For those teachers who attended the CLLC as part of a school team, appreciation of the time for collaborative planning with their school-based team was evident. Principals of teams saw support of teams of staff attending these days as a ‘no-brainer’ with strong teams resulting. The team from St Anthony’s shared their opinions as follows:

- R: How important is going along as a team to the CLLC?
  - T: We do our best planning there. It’s so valuable.
  - LL: Yeah, the time we have there …
  - T: … the ideas we have at those days it’s where the inspiration comes from.
  - LL: Yes, we’re on fire on those days.
  - T: We’re very passionate.
- Pr: And the school has to commit to it and but for me it’s a no-brainer. I wouldn’t even consider not sending everybody ‘cos what’s the point? And the translation – often it’s like the Principal and your learning and teaching leader come along [to PD programs] and by the time the message gets through and it’s our voice, it’s our voices banging on …
  - LL: … and you’re imposing something on teachers … that’s the biggest thing, it’s an imposition – they don’t own it.
- Pr: So, I love this model, it’s really effective.
- R: That translation into the classroom – that’s the critical point of collaboration?
  - T: Yeah it actually has to work in the room.
- R: What was useful in the professional learning? What things really impacted?
  - T: Hearing what other schools do, I love doing that. It was all the practical tips, actually showing us ideas and explaining pedagogies and just breaking it down a bit more. It’s real, ideas that you can implement in school and the emphasis on the importance of how it’s all connected and how they support each other and making it meaningful as well. Like not just using ICT, but asking ‘Are you using it to do the same task or to enhance the learning and to extend?’
  - LL: We’re going to put in a graphic novel here … an idea from somebody else’s school so we’ve already taken from other people too.
- R: So how did that collaboration amongst schools work?
  - T: It was through us and the other schools presenting. I hope we hear from other schools next time.

The team-based model was clearly preferred over a model not inclusive of the teachers expected to implement change as a result of the professional learning program. Impact on classroom practice was seen to most effectively happen when teams of classroom teachers were directly involved. Collaboration with other schools was seen chiefly in terms of gleaning and sharing ideas that could be
modified in different teaching contexts. Collaborative inter-school sharing of practice was seen as very valuable aspects in stimulating intra-school collaboration. The leadership team from Sacred Heart also remarked on the program’s impact on the enthusiasm of participants and the support for generating change at the school level:

Pr: When they come back from CLLC days they’re all excited and fired up about … we’re going to do this, we’re going to do that …

LL: We send him [Principal] text messages during the day with ideas …

Pr: Yeah and then I, the wet blanket, come in and say, ‘Great idea, let’s just sit on it for a while,’ because you don’t want to create tension as change is permeating through the school. You’ve just got to nurture it along so the community stays on board and the other grades stay on board but you have to keep that momentum moving.

R: So the change itself has to be collaborative?

Pr: Exactly. So I don’t answer my phone during your CLLC days. [Laughs] They do text me during those days, so keep an eye on them!

LL: The last text was: ‘Let’s move our 5/6s to the library and our library to 5/6 room’. We’re still working on this issue of space.

Pr: It’s a credit to you all. They come back, they’re excited and enthused and they’ve had the courage to implement it. It’s been a continued growth, particularly in that Years 5/6 level with this project. It has spread across the teachers themselves and also through the student group as you witnessed this morning, and the involvement of the parents, it’s just been fantastic.

The schools saw the CLLC program, conducted by CEM staff, as giving them an imprimatur for change. Collaborative changes were made as a direct result of program involvement at school. For example, at Sacred Heart, the CLLC program was a catalyst for whole school reform around the notion of collaboration and learning. In the Principal’s words:

The CLLC group wanted to establish a collaborative learning community, so it is something that has obviously trickled through to the whole school community … because we’re a small school, any power that we get comes from harnessing the energies in our school, parish and wider local community. But in order for us to be able to provide the experiences that we want for our children, we need to be able to work with community in whatever fashion it comes. … Teachers increasingly understand that they don’t have the money to buy things. So they need to get people [to support], and the only way you can get people is by having authentic relationships. And that’s coming through and we’re really, really excited about that because it shows they’re seeing the power of harnessing the resources that are here, which are the people.

For the pair of teachers from Padua, a very large multi-campus college, who did not participate with a representative team of school colleagues, implementation of actions from the program was more challenging:
T: In a four week period I have 24 release periods. In a four-week period, I used every single one of those periods to see teachers about SIMON. It’s not sustainable. I did no marking and I did nothing as Head of English. The Head of RE, she’s been doing just as much.

R: So you’re supporting staff in learning areas other than English?

T: Other than English – now, yes. I primarily tackled this to address my concerns within English about the type of feedback that was being provided to students. I spent the first six months of the project working with staff about feedback and in particular, feedback in English.

While the commitment of the staff involved was clearly evident, herculean effort was required by individuals in the context of a large school with an ambitious project. Support was evident but collaboration, characterised by joint ownership of the project, was lacking. Colleagues declined the offer to attend the CLLC days due to travel demands and a reluctance to spend time away from their classes.

Participatory action research has proven to be a model of professional learning that is now used across some schools beyond the middle years, notably in the smaller primary schools. The strong, effective teams that planned together were seen an outcome of CLLC participation, as evidenced in this discussion between the team at St Anthony’s:

Pr: The action research model seems to suit our school. We’re quite happy for other areas [of the school] to be involved … that whole notion of having the theory and the learning and then having a go at trialling things and then getting feedback is a very effective way of learning.

T: I’ve learned a lot from it and it’s helped steer our planning and given us more of a focus.

LL: I actually think it’s also helped to create the very strong team in the 5/6 … each group who has been part of this program has developed in to a strong team. It’s been really good for us.

R: And throughout the school?

P: Well it’s flowed on. We’ve started it in the 5/6 and then we brought the Years 3/4 team in to our CLLC meetings at school so they are part of our action research project now.

T: We share ideas … and work together.

Pr: We think of it as a whole school approach, that’s filtered down to the other classes as well, so definitely being involved in the CLLC, it’s really suited the people who work here.

CLLC participants’ understandings evolved over the course of the program as they increasingly incorporated the emphases of the CLLC professional learning program. In 2014, the multiple program emphases were initially challenging, but over time case study teachers’ understandings developed, informed by their planning and practice. The catalyst for change was clearly participation in the CLLC. As one teacher remarked:

R: The particular foci of this year’s CLLC is on ICT, critical and creative thinking, and home-school partnerships in literacy learning … is it complex to have so many foci?

T: The way it was explained at the last CLLC session, it did make sense and I see how they’re all really important aspects and I see how they relate, so it does make sense and work together. They’re all related, which I now understand.

R: Now? But maybe not at the first and second sessions. How were you feeling then?
T: It was harder to imagine how they would all look in practice but now that we’re well into the
unit ... it’s kind of all falling into place and it makes sense. How we can use ICT, how that
connects to home and a critical thinking and creative has been a big part too.

As the project proceeded, participatory action planning and the emphases of the 2014 program
increasingly became embedded in case study teachers’ professional identities, and deeply embedded
in planning and practice.

R: How has involvement in the CLLC influenced you?
T: It’s now become a framework which I base things on and I don’t even think, ‘Oh this is CLLC’, I
just think [it] is my planning and what I’m doing connected to the homework, is it addressing
home-school connections? And I think, ‘Is it creative and critical and using digital literacies or
ICT?’ They’re now the things that I try and consider when I’m teaching and check I’m including
all of those things, so that I think will stick with me now. It’s kind of embedded in the way I
think now.

R: That’s really powerful.
T: It makes sense to me. I really think it’s a well-rounded program, if it can tick all those boxes, I
think we’re doing the right thing.

The teacher inquiries, undertaken through participatory action research, were firmly contextualised in
the context of the individual schools. School-team research questions and the imperatives of the CLLC
program co-exist with the sometimes shifting imperatives within their schools. This can be a tension in
school-based research where research questions are a catalyst from which teacher teams expand and
or shift their focus. The case study schools’ research questions aligned differentially with the emphases
of the CLLC program. All case study schools implemented innovative practices; however, some of these
were beyond the scope of the research questions.

For example, the research question developed by the team at St Anthony’s was: ‘How can parents,
teachers and students develop and broaden their oral and written vocabularies?’ This reflects a concern
with including parents and teachers within a learning community and evidence from this case study
strongly indicates that teachers developed genuinely innovative practices that had an enduring impact
on student’s oral and written vocabularies. Not captured in the question, but strongly evident from the
teachers’ practices, was the integration of creative and critical thinking into English/literacy teaching
and learning experiences. In addition, there was strong evidence of ICT being used to foster home-
school connections.

Similarly, the research question developed by the school team at Sacred Heart – ‘How can we connect
students, parents and the community to work collaboratively through the use of digital literacies to
improve student outcomes?’ – addressed the use of ICT to connect the school community in working
collaboratively to support student learning. While there was a focus on connecting home and school
through ICT, this two-way communication was not sustained. It did, however, engage parents in
discussions about the ways that they might be involved in their children’s learning. As evidenced by the
spotlight tasks, teachers also developed genuinely innovative practices integrating creative and critical
thinking into English/literacy teaching and learning experiences.
The small team from Padua focused on harnessing ICT to offer parents and students more personalised and ongoing assessment feedback through their research question: ‘How can online assessment and feedback practices provide parents and students with detailed and constructive comments about student language and literacy ability, and recommendations for future progress?’ This certainly was the focus of teacher efforts, and evidence from the spotlight tasks also showed that there was a strong focus on critical thinking, and some focus on creative thinking.

6 Conclusion

The following offers a summation of the research findings by bringing together and synthesising the analyses and responding to the research questions that guided the study (see section 1.3). These findings were derived from primary and secondary students, their teachers and parents through survey and case studies. Of survey participants, 85% of students were from Years 5/6; 71% of the teachers taught in secondary settings; and 77% of parents had children in secondary schools. Two case studies investigated the practices of Year 5/6 primary school teachers and one investigated the practices of a secondary English teacher and her Year 8 class. The focus group students were evenly distributed between male and female. All focus group parents except for one were mothers.

The findings are presented under the following five domains:

- Participants
- Understandings of ICT, creativity, and critical thinking in literacy learning
- ICT practices in literacy learning
- Connecting home and school literacy learning
- Integrating creativity, critical thinking and ICT in literacy learning.

6.1 Participants

A major finding from the gathering of data on teacher background was that 41% of participating teachers did not describe themselves as teachers of English/literacy. This is a large proportion given that under the national curriculum framework all teachers are positioned as responsible for literacy teaching.

6.2 Understandings of ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy learning

There were three main findings related to the domain of ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy learning. The first finding in this domain showed that as a default position teachers, parents and students believed that everyone can learn to be creative, to be a critical thinker and to use ICT, and that all are an important part of learning both in English/literacy classes and at home. However, there was a conflating of the understandings of ‘creative’ and ‘artistic’. Creativity was at times misunderstood as something requiring participation in less formal, hands-on, ‘fun’ activities, and restricted to some people and some endeavours.

The second finding revealed that understandings were open to change over time as the teachers engaged in the CLLC program and school-based research, with teachers’ and students’ understandings
of creativity evolving to include the importance of risk-taking, openness to different perspectives and possibilities, collaboration and criticality.

The third finding indicated that some parents did not share teachers’ and students’ understanding of the importance of ICT practices in developing literacy, critical thinking and creativity, with a notable proportion of parents disagreeing that ICT supported English/literacy skills. Some parents viewed literacy as primarily print-based and valued teaching of traditional skills, rather than endorsing the teaching of multimodal aspects of literacy and digital literacies.

### 6.3 ICT practices in literacy learning

There were five main findings related to the domain of ICT practices in literacy learning. The first finding in the domain related to the frequency of teachers’ use of ICT in literacy teaching. Only one-third of teachers used technology daily in their English literacy teaching; approximately 20% of teachers used ICT at most three times a month; and 6% not at all.

The second finding relates to the frequency of student use of ICT in literacy in English/literacy classes. Only 22% of teachers involved students in daily use of ICT in English/literacy classes; approximately 20% of students used ICT at most three times a month; and 6% not at all.

The third finding reports a comparison of the use of ICT at home and school. Mobile devices and gaming were more frequently practised in the home, while creation of documents and researching online were more common at school. ‘Consuming’ ICT practices, such as word processing and researching online, were often used at school. ‘Creating’ ICT practices, such as publishing on a website, collaborating online with other students and using social media, were only sometimes or never used at in school literacy learning.

The fourth major finding in this domain is that all participant groups want to increase their ICT skills through a staged, structured approach with adequate resourcing. Specifically:

- Teachers identified that they would benefit from professional learning, learning from others, ICT resources, dedicated time, and support to develop students’ ICT skills.

- Students identified that they would benefit from an increase in ICT classes and the use of games, learning new things from others and the unblocking of websites at school.

- Parents identified that they would benefit from professional learning and training, access to websites or apps that the teachers use in class, and more time to learn about and use apps and websites.

The fifth finding in this domain indicates the differential conceptualisations of what it means to incorporate ICT into literacy learning. Examples of incorporation of ICT in literacy learning included teachers using interactive whiteboards; students using tablet devices to access materials; instructing students on creating Photo Stories; and instructing students in interpreting and creating multimodal texts with attention on the interplay of different modes.

### 6.4 Connecting home and school literacy learning

There were five main findings related to the domain of connecting home and school literacy learning. The first finding revealed that all participants found communication about students’ English/literacy
learning between parents and teachers relatively easy, with parents finding such communication easier than teachers.

The second finding revealed that teachers communicated with parents about students’ literacy learning to build on students’ understandings and skills; learn from students; incorporate technologies students used at home; develop a consistent approach to literacy learning; and address possible gaps in their understanding. Parents communicated with teachers about their children’s literacy learning to build on their children’s skills and understandings, and to ensure a consistent approach to literacy learning.

The third finding revealed that there were diverse views regarding the nature of home-school connections held by parents, teachers and students. Parents wished to be informed about the school curriculum, topics of study and how their children were progressing; however, many parents did not want to act in the role of literacy tutor or teacher. Teachers were confident in informing parents of their children’s progress in literacy learning. However, it was also evident that teachers’ work was often underpinned by unchallenged assumptions regarding home-school connections, including the purposes of tasks and strategies for sustaining and strengthening parents’ involvement in their children’s learning. Students believed it was more important for their parents to know what they did in literacy learning at school than it was for their teachers to know what literacy practices they engaged in at home.

The fourth finding revealed that despite a widely held view of homework as an important channel of communication between home and school, the practice of designing homework that required specific parental involvement in homework was challenging to sustain. This was due to time pressures facing families, student resistance to involving their parents, and the challenges for teachers in clearly communicating the purpose of homework tasks and the roles of parents and children in completing the tasks. Most students were conscious that their parents had numerous competing demands on their time and many expressed a preference for completing tasks independently.

The fifth finding revealed that parents’ unfamiliarity with new forms of ICT used at schools to facilitate parent-teacher-student communications were experienced by parents as a barrier to involvement in homework and engagement with school-based learning. Some parents resisted and critiqued the increasing emphasis on ICT in their children’s education.

6.5 Integrating creativity, critical thinking and ICT in literacy learning

There were three main findings related to the domain of integrating creativity, critical thinking and ICT in literacy learning. The first finding relates to differences in the types of examples of successful integration of creativity, critical thinking and ICT in literacy learning as identified by the three participant groups. Parents and teachers identified designing digital texts, creating films and animations, and accessing online materials. In addition, teachers cited critical analysis of texts, some development of websites, and contributing to collaborative spaces. The most noteworthy difference between participant responses was the high percentage of student responses related to accessing and playing games, many of which were commercial products used on the students’ tablets and computers. This theme did not emerge from the parent or teacher responses. Students indicated that the use and design of games would help them increase their ICT skills, and that online games were often played at home.

The second finding relates to teacher identification of successful home-school literacy activity that integrated ICT, creativity and critical thinking. One-third of teachers could not name an instance. Almost
one-half of the teachers referred to a successful home-school literacy activity as general communication with parents about students’ learning, homework and assessment tasks/outcomes.

The third finding relates to the characteristics of teaching and teaching environments that encouraged creativity and innovation, including risk-taking, openness to different possibilities and perspectives, criticality and collaborative support. Teachers (and students and parents) found it challenging to articulate the processes of integration. There were also challenges simultaneously enacting the integration of ICT, creativity and critical thinking in literacy learning. Teachers differentially emphasised various aspects over time, foregrounding particular learning intentions in planning and enactment, reflecting a ‘big picture’ view of students’ learning.

6.6 Limitations of the study and implications for further research

As noted previously, the uneven representation of teachers, parents and students from primary and secondary schools in this study has been a limitation of this study. Furthermore, replication and/or extension into settings with students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and linguistically and culturally diverse schools may yield further insights.
7 References


8 Appendices
Spotlight Task 1

Gemma Year 5/6
St Anthony’s Primary School, Alphington

**School research question:** How can we develop and broaden students’ oral and written vocabularies?

Spotlight Task 1:
Broadening vocabularies through drawn and written responses to music

Appendix A: St Anthony’s Primary School
Spotlight Task 1
Spotlight Task 1:
Broadening vocabularies through drawn and written responses to music

**Context:** an inquiry unit focused on ‘The Senses’

**Literacy purpose of the unit:** To develop and broaden students’ oral and written vocabularies through multimodal engagement

**Purposes of spotlight task:** To build expressive vocabulary in writing and create abstract art in response to instrumental music

**Parental connection:** Challenge to engage parents as ‘resources’ for learning

Classroom context: An inquiry into ‘The Senses’
Spotlight Task 1: Broadening vocabularies through drawn and written responses to music (‘Ocean’ by John Butler)

- Introduced/engaged students in discussing examples of abstract art
- Explained the significance of ‘Ocean’ to her; lit candles, distributed soft chalk pastels
- Played ‘Ocean’, instructing students to ‘listen and draw how you feel; think of language to describe how it makes you feel.’ [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdYJf_ybyVo)

Use of dictionaries was expected as students were encouraged to use interesting words to describe their responses to the music.
Happy Always

As I drew this, I felt that it was a depressing, low and discouraged day in the city. But a wave of bright, beautiful and cheery colours come spilling into the city. Smiles flash onto everyone’s faces. The dull towers turn into radiant coloured towers. The sun shines everyone is shown over by the dazzling sunlight. The dead and sorrowful trees come alive and their leaves grow again. Birds fly, liberated from their worries.

Liberated

This song makes me feel like I am driving on a remote and dusty road away from the big, busy city. It’s dusty and when we drive on the dust jumps in the air. After a while we see green grass and flowers. I turn into a street and it feels bubbly and dynamic; then I turn into another street onto a farm and into a new beginning. I lay onto the grass and a gush of wind breeze past my face. I feel free and liberated when I look up in the sky and see the white fluffy clouds moving when the wind moves.
Students read their developing written pieces aloud.

Critical discussion on vocabulary, for example ‘whether that sounds right’.

Student thoughts on teaching

I think that they’ve done this a really good way because we’d usually just write a paragraph and then we would have to build up on this. Instead they’re first trying to make us listen to and then build on some words and then turn it in to a paragraph and really expand from that. So doing the drawing was also really helping creativity and I just think I’ve definitely learned a lot more words than I, you know, ever have in this short amount of time.
Student response to homework task

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRxofEmo3HA

Student: Mine’s called Four Seasons by Vivaldi, except I chose the spring one and I thought it was: ‘lively, beautiful, soft, cheerful, slow and joyful’ and yeah. I’ve got other words but, like: ‘loud and …’ ‘cos there’s bits where there’s thunderstorms and the birds chirping and yeah....

Researcher: And did you talk about it with anyone in your family?

Student: ‘Cos my mum when she was young... her mum gave her a record of the Four Seasons and she liked listening to it. She really enjoyed it so I thought maybe it would be nice if I chose it.
Parental response to the home work task

We were thinking of what were some famous instrumental music that we knew and the best way to convey that was through a movie....so that kids knew what it was...or through a television commercial. Things that came to mind were...crazy – television ads. You know like the Nescafe ads...

We picked Vivaldi’s Four Seasons because I played the violin so it’s one of my favourite pieces of music and it’s something that I’ve probably written about myself... about the seasons... what the composer was trying to create. There are....certain bits of it where you can hear where the instrument is representing an animal sound or a rain drop or... there’s stuff online and nice Youtube clips

There were a couple of websites that actually had just pictures of......so for spring, had the blossoming cherry blossom and it’s just got the music for that and then as it moves in to Autumn... it’s (spring’s) my favourite.
Researchers: Would you say it was fun for you and your child?

Parent: Yes, I think so. Reasonably... (laughs). Homework is a chore that sometimes I see the point of, sometimes I don’t (laughs) anything that gets kids to talk to their parents about what they’re doing — in the crazy, busy age ahhh, you know, (my child) would do a lot of her homework on her own... but you need to be around to answer questions and... the task isn’t always really clear... so something where it’s kind of a bit more discussion about things that we know about... asking them ‘what do you think about that’? I think that’s quite a nice homework task.

Researchers: Because it involves things that you know about?

Parent: I haven’t had the opportunity to talk to them that much about my experience of learning an instrument. I played the violin in an orchestra so, it was an interesting opportunity for me to talk to them about something that was important to me that they didn’t really know about.

Researchers: Ok, that is important... you said that sometimes the purpose of the homework isn’t clear. What was your understanding of the purpose of this task?

Parent: Well, getting the students to relate some kind of emotional, musical, artistic feeling to language. Yeah, so relating to music and how the music makes you feel and to some kind of language.

Student focus group: homework task

Researchers: Is this the kind of homework that you normally do?

Student: Nooo! (together).

Researchers: No?

Student: Sometimes we involve our parents but not that much.

Researchers: Not like this?

Student: This has been a very different year to most.

Student: Yeah, this has been a very different topic.

Student: I actually haven’t done much vocabulary... in my years at school, I don’t think I’ve done any vocabulary.

Student: We’ve just done spelling lessons.
Student responses to the homework task

Student: *I picked sort of like a jazz song that me and my dad really liked and we thought it was, like these are just some of the words, like: ‘rising and falling, serene, harmonious, low-key, smooth, tranquil, flowing, wavy and calming’ and we also thought sort of like movie-like, for an advertisement, like deep, streaming and bright.*

Researcher: *so how did you choose it? You just both liked it?*

Student: *yeah, it was a really nice song, like um, this song was like made for people who usually stressing out with work*
Teacher reflection on ICT in the classroom

At the moment, it’s been using YouTube to get music... I do an online concept map to put all the words up and brainstorm... like a mind map and there’s a program you can use for that called Bubble.US. [https://bubbl.us/](https://bubbl.us/)

But the big ICT component comes in when we’ll get them to work in groups of about four, find a piece of music that you all are engaged in and it does something for you and they’ll design a video clip for it using the tablets we have using Photostory... They’ll make a film clip to match the piece using visuals... so source their own visuals and have words popping up - words that they feel...you can kind of make them zoom in and fade away. But that will be their work until the end of term – to design and create their own film clip using the technology in the room and in groups so that... collaborating...I think it’s better if they do it together
Teacher reflection on critical thinking

*I think it’s been quite creative and critical in having to decide what type of piece [of instrumental music] to bring in and think about ‘well I’ve got all these pieces of music but which one is the best for the class and what has the most potential to be descriptive’.*

*A big thing that’s come up has been choosing words from the thesaurus and putting them in their writing to replace other words, but they don’t really make sense. Some think it’s a big word and it sounds cool so… put it in. One example was where to describe an old ladder, a student said ‘the elderly ladder’. And I was like ‘it does mean old but it’s….. you don’t use it for that’. I need to get them to learn, the different ways you can use words like when it would be relevant; to work out what words work in a context work and what don’t.*

Teacher reflection: Creativity, exposure and risk

Teacher: When one student was looking in the thesaurus, I asked her about the words that she would use to describe how she was feeling and she said ‘exposed’, which I thought was really interesting…

Researcher: *So they’re showing you…*

Teacher: *It’s more than just the learning, it’s risky, it’s risky for everyone… The students are more willing to express how they feel about things and try and think of words even if they’re not the most suitable words. They’re having a go at using new vocabulary and they’re more aware of writing descriptively now and it’s showing.*
A final word from Gemma...

Our final part of the unit incorporated vocabulary for all the senses in an excursion to the Queen Victoria Market.

*Parents* were invited to come along and take a small group around the market, *recording students descriptive words* for what they saw, smelled, felt, tasted and heard.

*Students brought back to school an interesting/usual food to examine and taste.*

*The final assessment for the unit was a reflective written piece on their experience at the market.*
Spotlight Task 2

Gemma Year 5/6
St Anthony’s Primary School, Alphington

Revised school research question: How can parents, teachers and students develop and broaden their oral and written vocabularies?

Spotlight Task 2:
Reading Circles – planning and creation of a photo story presentation as a novel response
**Spotlight Task 2:**
Reading Circles – planning and creation of a photo story presentation as a novel response

**Context:** an eight week focus on a choice of five class novels through Literature Circles

**Purpose of the unit:** To build expressive vocabulary and multimodal capacities through thematic novel responses.

**Purpose of spotlight lesson:** To develop multimodal responses to themes from novels.

**Parental connection:** Interview questions related to a novel sent to parents to ask of students; students to record answers.

Outline the learning intention: To plan and create a Photostory presentation which explores the theme of your novel
Reading Circles Visual Presentation

- You are to work with your reading group to create a visual presentation which shares the themes and mood of the story, not a summary. This is to be presented in 10 slides using PhotoStory.

- Use all the illustrations from the Illustrator role to share the story

- Choose the best phrases and vocabulary to surround your illustration (Literary Luminator and Vocabulary Enricher roles)

- Explain the main themes of the book as you go. E.g. loss, hope, family, friendship

- Select a piece of instrumental music to complement the mood of the novel
  - Criteria:
    - Must use ICT
    - Must provide quotes and evidence
    - Must include interesting phrases and vocabulary

Context: Reading Circles

Characteristics of Reading Circles

1. Students choose their own reading material (at times teachers may assist this process).
2. Groups are formed on the basis of books; all group members read the same text. Group sizes can vary between 4-6.
3. Students undertake assigned roles for each section read. Roles can be rotated for each new section read. All students are expected to actively take on roles. The roles help to focus the reading and the discussion. They provide direction for what is going to be discussed and who is going to lead. All members participate in the discussion.
4. Group meetings are scheduled regularly in large blocks of time. To be able to work effectively the Reading Circle members need to know when they are meeting, they need time to read, prepare role and then discuss. They also need to have their text to refer to when meeting, allowing for the independent reading and in-depth discussion expected.

A. Group members determine the focus and topics of discussion, using the roles as a basis.
B. The teacher acts as a facilitator, not a leader.
C. Each Reading Circle concludes with a group presentation of the discussion.
Context: Students’ roles in Reading Circles

Students’ Roles

Before Reading Circle groups begin, the teacher with the whole class will model each role.

Roles within the Reading Circle are:
1. Vocabulary Enricher - week 7
2. Illustrator - week 2
3. Literary Luminator - week 2
4. Summarizer - week 5
5. Connector - week 4
6. Discussion Director - week 8
7. Travel Tracer - week 5

Each student in the group accepts a task role, understanding that the roles and responsibilities will be rotated regularly, and that everyone will ultimately have a chance at each role. Alternatively, each member of the Reading Circle may concentrate on a particular role for the entire text.

Previous work

Appendix B: St Anthony's Primary School
Spotlight Task 2
Review the main themes of your selected book (e.g. loss, hope, family, friendship) using this teacher developed list as a resource

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Facing darkness</td>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>Self-preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaos and order</td>
<td>Facing reality</td>
<td>Identity crisis</td>
<td>Technology - good or bad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle of life</td>
<td>Family – blessing or curse</td>
<td>Inner vs outer strength</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming of age</td>
<td>Fate and free will</td>
<td>Injustice</td>
<td>Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companionship</td>
<td>Fear of failure</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Rebellion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to escape</td>
<td>Female roles</td>
<td>Overcoming – fear, weakness, vice</td>
<td>Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>Good versus bad</td>
<td>Power and corruption</td>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Growing up</td>
<td>Power of silence</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evils of racism</td>
<td>Hazards of passing judgment</td>
<td>Quest for discovery</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Student reflection:**
Deciding on themes to describe novel

Researcher: *Tell us how you came up with the themes.*

Student: *Our themes were ‘quest for discovery’ and ‘identity crisis’ ... we put them together and made a summary - quest for inner knowledge – we made it up*

Researcher: *That’s not on the list?*

Student: *They were on it, but not together – we had to make our own themes*

**Teacher reflections on critical and creative thinking**

*Some students identified themes that weren’t on the list... so there’s a move towards creativity and authority and saying ‘yeah we can name this.’*

*I loved that when there were two strong ideas amongst the group and they both liked both of them – it was like... ‘you can only have one, so how can you put them together?’ The thinking about and synthesising those ideas, putting them together to come up with one statement – that was a very interesting conversation – like ‘Rebellion from Control.’*
Examples of ‘mood’ with descriptions

What are some different moods? How can music help set a mood? What mood do you feel your book had?

Linking themes and mood music in Literature

Hana’s Suitcase
- The power of hope against adversity (mood: triumphant)

The Giver
- Rebellion against control (mood: strong and powerful)

The Wind Singer
- Quest for justice (mood: courage)
Steps for creating a Photostory

Student reflection: Choosing phrases and vocabulary to surround illustrations (Literary Luminator & Vocabulary enricher)

We started with **friendship, jealousy, acceptance and displacement**. So displacement for Alison Ashley because she doesn’t belong at the school. Jealousy because Erica was jealous. Friendship because it’s pretty much all about friendship and trying to be friends, and acceptance – to accept other people.
We put in our illustrations and started thinking of some words so yeah, we looked at our vocab and our sheets and our literacy books yeah and then we just found the best words to describe it and put it in to our photo story with some pictures.

Reflections on ICT in the classroom

Teacher: We are planning for more opportunities with ICT now, we make it a focus, not just do the same task but with ICT but create more opportunities for things we couldn’t do without ICT. The photo stories are an example – we’re able to do that more so they’re more familiar with the program. We’re doing it more frequently now.

Researcher: Does that come back to your planning?

Teacher: Yes, because we ask ourselves how we need to include ICT – we know it’s important so we ask how can we do it meaningfully. It’s not just replacing [print with ICT] it’s actually being creative so we’re not just doing what we’d already done, we trying to do something a bit differently.
**Homework task sent to parents via Instagram**

This week, we're asking parents to interview their child on the novel they have read this term - looking forward to hearing everyone's responses!

![Instagram screenshot](image)

**Homework task in exercise book**

| *Make up a prayer about your dad, bring these to school on coloured A4 paper, so they can be made into a booklet. | *Continue work on your country project. Remember to focus on presenting information in your own words, and use a new section for each different part of your project. | *Chance Make your own chance game using a wheel and spinner, or another type of chance device. Record the chances of each outcome as percentages, fractions and decimals. | *Finalise any unfinished work in your reading circles booklet. *Complete reading circles interview with your family. See attached sheet. | * Little Devils Circus training Thursday! * IDSSA on Friday for SOME students. Remember, if you need help – ask! |

**Week 8 Interview questions:**

This week's home task aims to engage students and their parents in a discussion about the novel they have read. We would like a parent or family member to interview the child based on the following questions. Please record the responses in the homework book and provide a signature when completed. This interview should take about 15 minutes.

- What was the story about?
- What do you think the theme or main message of the book is?
- What do you think the main character/s learnt from the story?
- If you were able to speak to the author what would you ask them or tell them?

Appendix B: St Anthony's Primary School Spotlight Task 2
Student response to homework task

Student reflection on homework question, Do you think I [parent] would/would not enjoy the book?

Student 1: Because my mum likes futuristic books I said it might be more like for children.... because it kind of makes you think are there things I don’t know that my parents are hiding from me but for an adult it would be ‘uggh, it’s just a fake’. They wouldn’t really get that from it because they’re already older – they know everything.

Student 2: Yeah, it was like a very confusing book but I knew my dad would like it because my dad’s like a fantasy guy and like a non-fiction reader and he loves like science and all that and he likes ‘Lord of The Rings’ and I also think my mum would like it ‘cos it’s got some action in it and she likes action and she understands complicated books.
Parent 1 reflection: Completing home tasks

It was going to be my husband who did the interview with her but she didn’t have a copy of the book at home and he was going to have a quick read of it, but it didn’t happen just ‘cos of the night of the week. She has to get her homework done on [redacted] night of the week… because of ongoing commitments.

If tasks are meaningful and add to their learning, I’ve got no issue with it …but I need know to have time available because most of it’s a talking about things driving in the car. So we talk a lot but I don’t often have… I have to actively make that time …because you have to sit, in fact I couldn’t even sit for the whole interview with her, I felt because she had to re-word things and things like that and I just had to keep making dinner.

….it was good to have a time guide on it so say approximately 15 minutes because that gave an idea of how long. I mean, at the 15 minute mark, that’s when I got up and did things because she was still just dragging things out and trying to work out ‘what did they mean by that, how am I supposed to answer that?’ So it was much closer to 25 minutes, half an hour.

Parent 2 reflection: Completing home tasks

I’m really sorry because I wasn’t even aware that he had to ask me questions.

I did ask him, had he finished the book [People might hear you] and he said ‘yep’. And I said ‘oh, did you enjoy it?’ ‘Nup’ [laughs]. What happened? ‘she got out?’ ‘So what was it – was it a prison or…’ ‘nup, it was just the way he lived?’ ‘who lived?’ ‘Mr Fitzgerald…’

I think that’s why he doesn’t put in effort because it’s such a struggle for him to do homework and everything.
Parent 2 reflection: Using Instagram to connect with learning

Researcher: As the parent of a child who maybe doesn’t bring work home, how do you stay aware of what’s going on for him?

Parent: I’ve found the Instagram really helpful… I’ll just look on it while I’m having lunch and they’ll post things that people have drawn or them doing stuff on the interactive board. At dinner I’d say ‘so how was your day today?’ ‘alright’. ‘What did you do?’ ‘not much’. ‘Really?! ahhh, so did you do anything in maths?’ ‘ahh, sort of.’ ‘like what? it’s really hard work. But[on Instagram] I can see that they’ve made pizzas and cut it in to quarters and it would have been really fun and they would have got to eat it and it would have been really engaging – and he doesn’t give me anything, so I’ve got to pull all this information out but I know what they’ve done because the Instagram has shown me…
Spotlight Task 3
Gemma Year 5/6
St Anthony’s Alphington

School research question: How can parents, teachers and students develop and broaden their oral and written vocabularies?

Spotlight Task 3:
Comparing print, graphic and animated versions of fairytales

Context: Literature circles

Purpose of the unit: To develop the skills to develop a descriptive essay comparing two versions of the same text (print, graphic novel and animated versions of fairytales)

Purpose of spotlight task: To create alternative, multimodal narratives to a graphic novel using Photostory

Parental connection: Students describe graphic novel to their parents and discuss how it compares with the traditional story. Together make five predictions about what you think will happen. Practice your spelling words
Unit Planning Principles

Informed by *Learning by Design* approach (Kalantzis & Cope 2005)

- **Experiencing known and new:**
  - Knowledge about fairy tales:
    - Characters (good vs evil)
    - Plot narrative
  - Setting

- **Conceptualising and theorising:**
  - Character profiles – describing qualities with reference to textual evidence
  - Interplay between linguistic and visual mode – developing meta language
  - Author rationale for setting & plot

- **Analysing - functionally and critically:**
  - Character profiles – comparing and contrasting characteristics across versions
  - Critiquing gender roles, comparing narrative devices of various modes (linguistic, visual)

- **Applying - appropriately and creatively:**
  - Describing and comparing development of key events, characters, themes across focus texts
  - Individual essay writing drawing on textual evidence to present a persuasive argument about the relative effectiveness of focus texts

Focus Text: *Rapunzel’s Revenge*

- A focus on analyzing literary texts: plot, characterization, narrative devices, across traditional and contemporary versions

- Assessment task: a literary essay, compare and contrast versions of a fictional text, using evidence (quotations, page references, specific images) to support a critical evaluation of various interpretations
Experiencing known and new: Graphic novels

Students across 3 classes chose from:
- **Rapunzel's Revenge**
  - Grimm Fairy Tale
  - Tangled
- **Calamity Jack**
  - Jack and the Beanstalk
- **The Hobbit**
  - Tolkien's original novel
  - Film

Conceptualising and theorising: *Rapunzel*

Before reading students explored prior knowledge about fairy tales:
- expectations of fairy tale genre
  - *Hot potato game*
    - representations of ‘families’
- knowledge of characters & plot
  - Know/Unknown/Unsure chart
  - read traditional versions of *Rapunzel*
  - revisit Know/Unknown/Unsure chart to confirm or revise plot knowledge & distinguish between print and film versions
Representations of Rapunzel

- Predictions of content, historical setting:
  - Cover/image analysis of:
    - Grimm brothers’ Rapunzel
    - graphic novel Rapunzel’s Revenge
    - Disney film Tangled

Student reflection: Rapunzel book/Tangled movie comparison: Known/Not sure/not known

Student 1: We basically had the idea of what the storyline but some of us didn’t know those little bits in the story. I just...I had the idea of Tangled, the Movie.

Researcher: So most of you had seen Tangled?

Student 2: yep... she’s got magic hair –I used to be obsessed with that Fairy Tale [movie] and I was like, no she’s got magic hair.

Student 3: Tangled changed it up a lot and sometimes there would be people saying things about Rapunzel but they would be from the movie, not based on the original book. There’s the original Rapunzel but Tangled is more like Rapunzel’s Revenge – a different, like a re-make of it. Like, they’re two different ones if you know what I’m saying.

Researcher: Yeah, so it’s important in your head to separate out what each one is – how each one’s telling the story.

Student: Yeah we had three different groups – what Tangled has, what the original story has and what they both have the same. They both like – so Rapunzel has long hair like everyone knows that.
Conceptualising and theorising:
Character Profiles

• Inferences from words and images – descriptive language and evidence

• How are main characters described & depicted?

Conceptualising & Analysing:
Visual and Linguistic Modes

• How do we read comics, manga, graphic novels?
• How do images add meaning to words?
• Placement of speech bubbles
• Placement of dialogue and narration
• Student creation of comic strip narrative
Analysing & Applying: Creating Alternative Multimodal Narratives

• Teachers reminded students of Photostory program location
• Projected selected images from *Rapunzel's Revenge & Calamity Jack* on IWB
• Demonstrated/reminded students how to import images to Photostory

• Teachers demonstrated new skill of voice recording in Photostory

• Students wrote scripts, rehearsed oral narration of selected scene

• Listened, critiqued, re-recorded narration
Teacher Reflection: ICT, critical thinking and creativity

It’s not just about replacing the tools we already use in ICT, but it’s being creative. I think we’re really conscious that we’re not just doing what we already do, we trying to do something a bit differently.

I think it’s very critical and creative, I think the way they’re improvising and imagining what the story could be and making decisions about their voices and the plot. It’s critical throughout the whole term because they’re always thinking “how’s Rapunzel different?” I’m hoping they come up with things like, ‘she was really submissive’ and not much of a character in the first original but then she was this powerful, independent woman.....so thinking like that...yeah

Analysing and Applying: Student’s Script

Appendix C: St Anthony's Primary School
Spotlight Task 3
Analysing: Scaffolding Essay Writing

Teacher Modelling:
Using original fairy tale, Rapunzel’s Revenge & the film Tangled, compare how the various versions explore:
• Setting
• Characters
• Plot – Complication and Resolution
• Conclusion – changed focus
Using comparison charts
Drawing on textual evidence and page numbers

Student work sample: Rapunzel’s Revenge Essay

In ‘Rapunzel’s Revenge’ the audience are able to see Rapunzel in a new light. She is no longer the bland, fair haired obeying and naive princess at the mercy of her wicked step mother. No, this Rapunzel is clever, independent and has a clear motivation to seek revenge on she who rules the land. Not only does she endeavour to ruin Gothel but she shows herself as no pushover and no one’s fool when she comes across the stereotypical handsome prince who she sends into the forest on a wild goose chase. Her facial expression on page 41 and her sarcastic “Oh, that’s so noble of you to come all this way to help her,” is evidence of her dislike for people with no character….

Now over to the original fairy tale. Rapunzel has NO intention of saving her mother, she is more interested in finding a prince to fall in love with. She only cares about romance. So, the setting and plot in the two different stories are not that similar. It is clear that ‘Rapunzel’s Revenge’ is more interesting than the old fairy tale. Rapunzel is brave, loyal and determined. But the old Rapunzel to me, is nothing compared to this Rapunzel!
**Student reflection: Critical and creative thinking**

Researcher: Can I ask if this activity is teaching you to be creative?

Student 1: yeah, it makes us think a lot more because instead of just giving us what we need to write down, they’re making us change it and that’s really making me open up my mind more on thinking, like possibilities of what could happen and possibilities of expanding my creativity like of thinking what should I do.

Student 2: I think it’s using our creativity by using it with the audio because you really need like think like, oh what’s the word? Like, to think so that you oh, I can’t...

Researcher: oh is it to think about how the sound relates to the story or tells the story. Is that what you mean?

Student 1: it’s also good because like this isn’t wrong because we know it’s not going to be wrong because it’s our imagination.

Student 2: yeah like the audio speaking and like telling a story, you just think creatively – yeah – about what you’re going to say and if it makes sense or not.

**Student reflection: Creativity**

Researcher: So what things that the teachers do to help you be creative?

Student 1: I think it’s just – they let you. They don’t...

Student 2: they don’t restrict you to stuff, they don’trestrict you

Student 3: yeah nothing is, you can do whatever you like. I think the teachers support that...

Student 1: but you never want like a long story

Student 2: yeah they just…..if it’s too long, if it’s not a good story, it’s too long and it’s not a good story if it’s too short so it’s gotta be around like 2 or 3 pages

Researcher: so they kind of give you some structure around what makes a good story
Home task

Homework - Term 4, Week 6. Please return on Friday, Nov 14th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion: Judaism. Using information from class and your own research, list 5 facts you find interesting about the Judaism religion.</th>
<th>Health: Look up the list on the United Nations Rights of a Child. Write a reflection on why you think these rights have been chosen and if there are any changes you would make to them.</th>
<th>Maths: Volume - draw and label different objects around your home and record their volume.</th>
<th>Literacy: * Describe your graphic novel to your parents and discuss how it compared with the traditional story together, make predictions about what you think will happen. * Practice your spelling words.</th>
<th>Dates to remember</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Remembrance Day reflection on Tuesday at 10.30am</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Trivia night Friday at 7.30pm</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember – if you need more explanation, please ask your teacher.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student reflection: Home task

Student 1: Some people would have found it quite difficult

Student 2: Because they wanted….. ’cos sometimes they’d be at work all the time and……

Student 1: My parents are always at work

Student 2: My dad’s always at work

Student 3: My mum had to kind of multi task - cook and interview at the same time

Student 2: Oh my dad was just sitting on the couch one day and I just asked him

Student 1: We have the bench and mum does her cooking there and I was just sitting here and asking her and she’s like ‘well...’ while she’s cooking – multi tasking

Researcher: Is that hard for your parents to be doing that and other things at the same time?

Student 2: My mum’s used to it – she does it all the time
Spotlight Task 1

Jacinta Year 5/6
Sacred Heart Primary School, Diamond Creek

School research question: How can students collaborate together to improve their reading outcomes?

Spotlight Task 1:
Researching, representing, blogging (as part of a unit on ‘Natural Disasters’)
**Spotlight Task 1:**
Researching, representing, blogging (as part of a unit on ‘Natural Disasters’)

**Context:** an inquiry unit focused on Natural Disasters

**Literacy purpose of the unit:** To research selected natural disasters and explain the processes involved in a visual form e.g., a model such as a diorama

**Purpose of spotlight task:** To identify and use specific language to label processes

**Parental connection:** To encourage students and parents to work collaboratively on tasks and communicate about learning through blogging

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**Context of Classroom Task: Researching Natural Disasters**

*Image of a worksheet titled 'Sustaining a Healthy Environment' with instructions for a project on sustaining a healthy environment.*
Classroom context: Group Inquiry fact sheets

Teacher reflections: Natural Disasters and Literacy Rotations

One group worked on labelling and researching information on their [selected] natural disaster to represent in their models….Another group looked at the Australian Savanna, reading information on their tablets and creating a poster… Some created a disaster plan. It was World Environment Day so they looked at the website Cool Australia (http://coolaustralia.org/) and created their own sixty seconds speech about rising sea levels.
Digital Literacies: Natural Disasters
Digital Diaries and Blogs

C. Using the web address http://kidblog.org/56DN this is your opportunity to publically showcase what you are learning. You are required to regularly contribute comments, links and what you are thinking about your emerging project, as well as provide feedback to your peers. This is also an opportunity for your parents to comment on your progress by using the link you will send to them with their password.

D. Discuss with your family the environment you are studying. Record two questions that your family would like answered about your project. You will

Classroom Task: Parental Involvement

E. Throughout the course of the next four weeks you will need to record your reflections/learning/thoughts/ideas/challenges in your digital diary, located in your file, in “Public” on the school server.

F. Your displays will need to be presented to your peers on Friday, 20th June 2014. They will then be displayed in our corridor for parents to enjoy when they come in for Child Chat in Week 10. All parts of this project will be assessed using the rubric, which has been provided to you.

Happy researching, creating and communicating!!
How might Blogging and Digital Diaries support learning?

- What kinds of sites and social media do students use at home?

- At school students are encouraged to think about the purposes of blogging and digital diaries.

Teachers’ Invitation to Parents

Appendix D: Sacred Heart Primary School
Spotlight Task 1
Miza’s Blog

Students analyse class blog posts and sort into effective and ineffective content for learning.

Scaffolding Blogging

Appendix D: Sacred Heart Primary School
Spotlight Task 1
Assessment Rubric: Diorama

You need to look at this rubric whenever we work on our models. Which criteria have you achieved? What do you need to do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description of Natural Disaster</strong></td>
<td>Very descriptive, well written facts and labels of disaster using key words</td>
<td>Good description of disaster using own key words</td>
<td>Short description of disaster using string key words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation of Cause/Damage</strong></td>
<td>Ability to explain the natural process and how it becomes a disaster using a variety of resources</td>
<td>Ability to explain the natural process and how it becomes a disaster</td>
<td>Minimal explanation of the natural process and how it becomes a disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual Representation</strong></td>
<td>3D representation with labels, notes and other accessories</td>
<td>2D representation with 10 labels and notes</td>
<td>2D representation with a few notes and labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary of Changes and Effects</strong></td>
<td>Display and list the effect the disaster can have on humans, life, animals and land</td>
<td>Display &amp; list the effect the disaster can have on humans, life, animals and land</td>
<td>Little information on the effect the disaster can have on humans, life, animals and land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steps taken to “fix up” land</strong></td>
<td>Lists and labels indicate what can be done to make the land sustainable. Model can be designed and built</td>
<td>Lists and labels indicate what can be done to make the land sustainable. Model can be designed and built</td>
<td>Lists and labels are very basic. Trying to indicate what can be done to make the land sustainable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prevent Damage in the Future</strong></td>
<td>Identify and record what can be done for the future of the land. Model shows what information the designer is trying to provide</td>
<td>Identify and record what can be done for the future of the land. Model shows what information the designer is trying to provide</td>
<td>Not enough information can be identified and recorded about what can be done for the future of the land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevant to the Reference</strong></td>
<td>Most, if not all, references have been used and recorded on the display.</td>
<td>Three references have been used and recorded on the display.</td>
<td>Less than three references have been used and recorded on the display.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Response</strong></td>
<td>Two questions have been asked and displayed with very informative information on the disaster</td>
<td>Two questions have been displayed and answered on the model</td>
<td>The two questions from the family have not been answered or displayed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Labelling Natural Disaster Diagrams

• Teacher talks to children about task of building natural disaster models:

You need to describe processes, how things happen. You need to put all the knowledge you have gained together over the past six weeks.
Language of Naming Processes

Reflecting on Science & Visual Texts

We looked at a diagram today, a cross-section of the earth’s crust to understand how volcanic eruptions happen. They talked about how layers are shaded in different colours to represent the different rock layers. We’re looking at technical words, images, sometimes moving images… So we’ve needed to scaffold digital literacies and scientific language a lot more…
Critical thinking: Plus, Minus, Interesting

Students provided one another with feedback on the organisation and information included in their labelling of natural disaster diagrams and models.

Parent response to home task: Volcanoes

Dad’s Questions about Volcanoes

• What causes volcanoes to erupt?
• Has there ever been an active volcano in Australia?

Kayla’s Homework Diary

• Reminder to upload parent questions to class blog.
Kayla’s Digital Diary: From Sinkholes to Volcanoes

Kayla used YouTube to find information on Sinkholes. She decided to research volcanoes instead.

Kayla: Volcanoes Design Brief

Appendix D: Sacred Heart Primary School
Spotlight Task 1
Working on the dioramas

Jack’s Invitation to Parents

Appendix D: Sacred Heart Primary School
Spotlight Task 1
Teacher Reflection: Natural Disasters Home Task

Researcher: *For this task students are asking parents to suggest questions for their inquiry?*

Teacher: *I think that discussion of questions is a perfect task. Students still have to come up with answers, but it gets parents interested in what they’re doing at school too. Whereas if you sent something home like a worksheet, why would parents be interested in filling out a homework sheet? Whereas, this is going somewhere, and it’s useful. I think with the amount of things we have in the curriculum, we have to do useful, real life tasks, because we haven’t got time for busy work anymore.*

Parent reflection: Natural Disasters Home Task

Parent 1: *So, the first time M asked me about the question we had an argument, because it was 10 o’clock at night (Laughter) and I said, ‘I’m not thinking about questions at 10 o’clock at night – go to bed.’*

Researcher: *Delaying tactic?*

Parent 1: *So that’s just making me feel really guilty, hearing that everyone else had these nice discussions and I said ‘I don’t want to hear about it!’ But then we had another discussion about it and my question was to find out where they happen most often – where volcanoes occur most often. So, I haven’t heard any more about it since then.*

Parent 2: *She’s probably frightened! (Laughter)*

Parent 1: *Laughs* Yeah, I think she’s still talking to me!

(Parents joke that she’s asking other mums)

Parent 3: *See what she writes on the blog…*

Parent 1: *Yeah, I can just imagine … As if she’s going to show me the blog…*
Revised school research question: *How can we connect students, parents and the community to work collaboratively through the use of digital literacies to improve student outcomes?*

**Spotlight Task 2:**
*Critiquing and creating film advertisements for Bazaar products*

**Context:** Students design, make and advertise products for the upcoming school bazaar.

**Literacy purpose of the unit:** To develop design briefs and products and knowledge of print and multimodal persuasive techniques.

**Purpose of spotlight task:** To critique and create filmic advertisements for Bazaar products.

**Parental connection:** Parents asked to share and reflect on advertisements from their youth and collaboratively critique child’s advertisement against rubric assessment criteria.
Discuss advertising techniques used to persuade.

Advertising Techniques
Do you recognize some of these commonly used methods?

- **Jingle or Slogan**
  a "catchy" song or phrase that helps you remember a product
- **Cartoon character**
  an animated character that promotes a product

- **Celebrity endorsement or Testimonial**
  a recommendation to use a product from a celebrity (a movie star, a model, an athlete, someone famous) who says he or she uses it
  (This is closely connected to the transfer technique because an attempt is made to connect an attractive person to another item.)

- **Transfer/Fantasy**
  Super athletes, superheroes, movie stars, the beautiful, the rich, the powerful, or things associated with them are featured with the hope that the consumer will think the qualities of these people are transferred to the product and buy the item.

- **Image appeal**
  This appeal implies that the product will make you better looking, healthier, richer, more popular, happier, etc.
  (Similar to transfer/Fantasy)

- **Bandwagon**
  Implies that everyone else is using the product, so you should, too

- **Sensory appeal**
  The product tastes good, looks good, or feels good. Sounds or pictures appealing to the senses are featured.

- **Comparison appeal**
  This brand is better than other brands of the same product.

- **Savings or free appeal**
  You will save money or get something free if you buy this product

- **Nostalgia**
  This appeal implies that this product takes you back to the "good old days" or back to nature, etc.

- **Humor**
  The use of humor may help people remember the ad and want to buy the product because of the positive association with it.

- **Statistics**
  The use of facts or statistics (even if they are meaningless) to impress people and encourage them to buy a product

Teacher scaffolding: Evian advertisement

What types of techniques do these ads use to persuade?
What’s type of emotion do we feel when we watch it?
Watch and record three words for each of the following advertisements

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQcVllWpwGs
Teacher scaffolding: Cadbury advertisement
What are they trying to make you feel/do?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVblWq3tDwY

Teacher scaffolding: Qantas advertisement
What did they use to ‘get us’ in the Qantas ad?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbGugmaDgIA
Teacher scaffolding: Coles advertisement
Why would Coles Olympic want to be sponsors? What celebrity did you notice?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBltwPf6E0

Task: In groups film and edit an advertisement of a ‘product in a box’

- Your product will be one of the products you are making for our school Bazaar.
- As you haven’t made the product yet, this (showing them a box) will be your product. Your group will decide what it represents.
- You have 20 minutes to film and upload your advertisement to your blog.
- The advertisement is going to be critiqued using a rubric (see following slide).
- Your parents will be asked to view your advertisement on your blog and respond to the following and ask two questions about the advertisement.
  - What could these questions be?
  - What technique do you think you used?
  - What is persuading us to buy the product?
  - What information do I see or hear?
**Advertisement assessment rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Script Development and Organisation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Script is complete and it is clear what each actor will say and do. Content is well organised using staging and dialogue directions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Script is mostly complete, it is clear what each actor will say and do. A few improvements need to be made to the script. It is not always clear what the actors are to say and do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of props and technologies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student has used techniques to attract the audience. Digital technologies used very well and enhance the ad.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimal use of props and very small amount of digital technology used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workload</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workload is divided and shared equally by all team members. The workload is divided and shared fairly by all team members, though workload may vary from person to person.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The workload was divided, but one person in the group is viewed as not doing his/her fair share of the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Originality and Editing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas are creative and inventive. Product shows some original thought. Work shows new ideas and insight. Uses other people’s ideas (giving them credit), but there is little evidence of original thinking and ideas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advertisement techniques</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advert displays the use of techniques discussed in class. Some techniques have been used.</td>
<td></td>
<td>A limited amount of techniques have been used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting, well-rehearsed with smooth delivery. Addresses all advertising techniques used in commercial and holds audience attention.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Delivery not smooths, but addresses some advertising techniques used in commercial and able to hold audience attention most of the time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Filming a group advertisement for ‘product in a box’**

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Appendix E: Sacred Heart Primary School
Spotlight Task 2
Filming a group advertisement for ‘product in a box’

Viewing and critiquing the student made advertisements
Teacher reflection: Purposes and challenges re parent connection

Teacher: After they made the ads we opened up our blog and they reflected on their advert—two strengths and a challenge.

Researcher: So you structured it?

Teacher: I think it’s easy for them to say – ‘oh I liked it’… And so they do need a bit of structure, rather than say ‘I liked it’ - that’s not a reflection. They had to find things they found a challenge and then they chose categories from the rubric and worked on how they would improve them. They were then going to upload the actual advert for their parents to critique but it’s too big to put on the blog so I’m going to see if email works. So it won’t be actually on their blog. And the other question was to their parents – to find or re-tell an advert that they like, so for those ones that like the computer, they can maybe try and find it on YouTube, or just tell them about an ad that they do like.

Blogging with peers about ideas - Guitar pick necklaces, candles and previous bazaars

Appendix E: Sacred Heart Primary School
Spotlight Task 2
Teacher reflection: Challenges of inspiration and time for creativity

Researcher: Is the way you’ve designed this task – is it different from the way you thought about the natural disasters tasks?

Teacher: This one’s been a lot harder to motivate and to find the right resources to immerse them in... it’s more hands on and sometimes you go into it and the lesson’s really dry because no one’s got any ideas and everyone’s struggling with it and where do you go for some more inspiration like, what else can we look at? Maybe home and look at – go to Grandma’s and look at.... You can only talk about it – it’s not tangible at the moment and I think that’s been quite difficult to deal with... the process is taking a long time so I think that’s where we’ve struggled with it....
Parent connection: Respond to the following:
Paste advert onto your tablet. Reflect individually on group advertisement. What do you remember about advertisements when you were young? Critique your child’s ad against criteria on the rubric.

Teacher: The home task was not well received at all by the children as in they didn’t follow it up. They had to be asked over and over again. Originally we thought of uploading their own adverts to the blogs, but were too large so they took them home on a USB. But it was not a very good response at all.

Parents on Blogging: Clarification of purposes and adolescent reluctance

Parent 1: My son was a little hesitant to show me – I don’t know whether he was a touch embarrassed
Parent 2: Yeah. I think a blog can get into diary territory too.
Parent 3: They’ve got rules around what they can put in there.
Parent 1: I don’t mean the actual content but the psychology of it...
Parent 2: One of the blog entries my son had to write about was ‘what is it that you’re thinking at the moment?’ and he said to me ‘don’t read that because I don’t know what I’m thinking’.
Parent 4: I must admit, I’m not sure of the blogs. I’m loving the homework in terms of the interactivity of that but I’m not sure on the blog.
Parent 1: There’s so many possible purposes for the blogs and we’re not really clear yet on what they are. Like there’s sharing work but there’s sharing work with peers and with parents, and they’re two different purposes. Then there’s reminding and asking for information or things, reflecting on how they went or how they could do it better; and then critiquing other people, and at the moment it’s all kind of blending in.
Students on critical feedback when blogging

Researcher: How are you using the blogs?
Student 3: As we went on we started to use it more; say if we needed a cardboard box we’d ask and someone might respond and bring it to school.

Researcher: How is that different from asking someone face-to-face in class?
Student 2: If you’re at school and you ask them, you have to wait longer.

Researcher: Did you find that your peers were they more critical than your teachers?
Student 1: That one was more like asking [for something] than being critical.

Researcher: So how do you feel about being critical on the class blogs?
Student 1: You don’t want to be too mean about it so, it’s hard...

Researcher: And did your parents get involved in that kind of critiquing?
Student 4: There’s a parent code for your parents to go on it but we don’t know how to use it.

Student 5: My mum just looked at it this morning and she said ‘oh, so that’s how it works’

Researcher: Do you mean how the blog works?
Student 4: Yeah, how the blog works... she wrote as me because I didn’t really know how to like let her, she just wrote ‘from [student’s] mum’ at the end.

Parents: Creative decision-making and reputational risk

Parent 1: Last time they knew they were creating dioramas; this time it’s who knows what?
Parent 2: There’s benefits but there’s issues with too much choice.
Parent 3: You see them just get so lost, I’ve watched my daughter take 25 minutes...

Parent 2: Spent choosing
Parent 3: And getting upset thinking ‘if I do that, I can’t....or what if?’
Parent 1: And with this if their product doesn’t sell, the kids will need to handle that
Parent 2: The frustration?
Parent 3: The humiliation?
Parent 1: Yeah because that could be an issue. Buy your kid’s own thing – but it might turn in to tears – of course it could be a learning thing that even though they’ve created something, somebody else might not appreciate it

Parent 2: It’s very personal too
Parent 3: It’s risky
Parent 1: And they don’t realise it yet.
Parent 4: Or maybe they do and that’s why it’s hard... there’s consequences
Parent 3: They’ve got to hold tight because that’s his decision... there’s a big lead up to it...
Parent 1: If nothing else, they learn that creativity takes courage basically and so that’s another value base.
Parent reflection: Student independence and parent support

Parent 1: I think the important thing is the balance of the two; I think they've got it spot on. There is so much they can do on their own but even though it's easier sometimes when they can do all of it on their own, it's so rewarding and I've become much more connected to her learning through

Parent 2: I’m changing my ways too – Tuesday nights is for me not to be busy. Researcher: So you want to plan...

Parent 2: Tuesday night’s like, ‘let’s hope nothing happens’. Tuesday night’s generally the big homework night so I can be in the kitchen pottering around cooking but I’m right there and whoever calls me up and you know, I can duck in to the next one...

Parent 3: It was easier [before] for me... I cook dinner and my son goes off and does his homework compared to now....he used to go and do it at his table up the front whereas now he does it on the bench while I’m cooking. Just little things like that – it is more time consuming I guess, but I think it’s more rewarding....for both of us

Parent 4: I have three different sections of the house calling out ‘mum, mum, mum’ and I – homework drives me nuts some nights.....
Spotlight Task 3: Readers’ Theatre

Jacinta Year 5/6
Sacred Heart Primary School, Diamond Creek

School research question: How can we connect students, parents and the community to work collaboratively through the use of digital literacies to improve student outcomes?

Context: Students write or use existing scripts and rehearse and perform through a Readers’ Theatre approach.

Literacy purpose of spotlight task: To develop students’ knowledge of dramatic performance and capacities to perform for an audience.

Parental connection: No parent connection for this task.
Classroom Task

Readers’ Theatre lesson plan

Tuning In: Reflection on types of performance - plays, advertisements, speaking to an audience.

What do we need to remember?

Sample student responses

- Confidence
- Practice
- Team work
Tuning in: What are some plus, minus and interesting things about performing (PMI)?

Discuss in pairs and then record.

Appendix F: Sacred Heart Primary School
Spotlight Task 3
Model of Readers’ Theatre: teachers performing to students

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4Tlo-xd1al

Readers’ Theatre Assessment Rubric

Students access rubric from school server through tablet devices. Consider criteria in pairs.
Readers’ Theatre Assessment Rubric
Students rate performances of the teachers in the Readers’ Theatre

Decide on ratings in each category for the performance of each character.

Highlight, underline or make bold your assessments.

What would be your suggestions to improve the performance?

Sample 1: Student developed Readers’ Theatre scripts
Courtney and Friends

Narrator: Courtney is strutting around the school. A few nerdy girls approach her, she flicks her collar up and struts to of friends dominantly.
Courtney: “HEY GIRLS.”

Narrator: Her friends give her a dirty look and walk away. Courtney arrives and sits in her expensive seat, next to her best friend, Amanda. Amanda immediately gets up and sits on the floor anything to get away from her. The whole day was filled with awkwardness and was lonely.

Narrator: The next day Courtney decided to confront Amanda. It was bitter as anything.
Courtney: “What’s your problem?”
Amanda: “What’s it to you?”
Courtney: “You’re not worth my precious time anyway.”(mumbles under breath) Amanda: “What precious time?” “like your busy!”

Narrator: The next day Courtney assumed that everything would be back to normal, it was not. When she got to school Amanda was spreading nasty rumors about Courtney. Courtney was mortified, the whole day was horrible, but when she got home it got worse. Online it said on Amanda’s blog, “Courtney looked so bad today, totally ratchet.” Courtney immediately reported Amanda’s comment to her teacher, she didn’t do much. It was time to take matters into her own hands.
Courtney and Friends (continued)

Courtney: “Why are you posting nasty things about me on your blog.”
Amanda: “Because you are bullying my friends.”
Courtney: “You’re bullying me so you’re no better.”
Narrator: “Both of the girls felt guilty now, but they both refused to show it. All of a sudden Shanuss came running into the argument.
Shanuss: “You are both as bad as each other, you used to be best friends, just stop being mean and treat others like you would want to be treated, it’s a simple as that.”
Narrator: Courtney and Amanda both thought about this and apologised. They went back to being best friends!
Amanda: Sorry hun, can we be best friends again?

Sample 2: Student developed Readers’ Theatre script
The Wizard Of Sloth
(extract)

(Scene 1)
Narrator – One day in Potato Town, volcano smoke raged through the air. A siren went off and everyone hid under shelter. But two people didn’t hear the siren.
Alahandroh – “The ground feels very shaky today.” “The clouds are very grey.”
Okyo – “And the people have left”
Narrator – Suddenly, out of nowhere lava rushes through the town. Destroying everything in its way. 2 boys named Alahandroh and Okyo tried to run but the lava was too fast, they were then crushed with lava.
(End scene)

(Scene 2)
Narrator – 1 minute went by with no sound or movement. Then they got up. In front of them they saw a completely different world. With blue turtles and pink porpoises. Suddenly they hear a voice they turn around to see a green potato.
Green Potato – “The names Dug, you seem a little lost, where you from?”
Narrator – Alahandroh and Okyo were struck with awe as Dug continued to speak.
Green Potato – I used to be a adventurer like you, then I took an arrow to the knee.
Green Potato – “Hellooo, do you speak the English?”
Okyo – “Oh sorry, we are a little in shock, how are you speaking right now and why are you green? You are just a potato.”
Preparation of scripts for performance:
Highlighting characters, preparing cue cards

Rehearsal of play readings mindful of assessment criteria
(verbatim delivery including volume, clarity, expression and turn taking; movement; use of props; and audience engagement)
Performance for peers: Peer assessment using rubric
Filmed for self-assessment

Class discussion and group reflection on how each performance might be improved using rubric elements:
- Audience engagement
- Voice projection
- Use of props
- Use of visible and dramatic gestures
- Clarity of narrative and delivery

Parent connection: Teacher comment

We’ve been really struggling with the home connection and that’s probably been, probably the negative out of the whole course...

The parents don’t necessarily think it’s important or they don’t feel the need to be on top of everything. The kids are happy and doing what they’re meant to be doing so therefore it doesn’t really matter. They’re happy – they’re good. Everything’s great... and the kids aren’t pushing it either.
Spotlight Task 1

Amy Year 8
Padua College

School research question: How can online assessment and feedback practice provide parents and students with detailed and constructive comments about student ability and progress?

Spotlight Task 1:
Investigation into Evolution of English Language

Context: Year 8 Cross Curricula English/History Unit

Literacy purpose of the unit: To investigate the evolution of the English Language

Spotlight Lesson – Discussion & reflection on listening assessment task: How has the English Language evolved over time?

Parental connection: Challenge to engage parents as ‘resources’ for learning
Prior to Spotlight Lesson 1

Students watched Episode 1 of *Adventures in English* to answer the key question: *How has the English Language evolved over time?*
Unit Viewing & Listening Task

• Students watched Episode 1 of *Adventures in English*
• Completed Speaking and Listening Task — answering questions about development English language as they watched documentary.

Viewing & Listening Assessment Tasks

Answer comprehension questions relating to information presented in the documentary
What was challenging/interesting about this listening/viewing task?

Ben’s Online Reflective Journal

Eliza’s Handwritten Reflective Journal:
What was challenging/interesting about this listening/viewing task?
Focus Lesson: Reflecting on Feedback

- Amy returns scored Listening Task
- Students reflect on their listening skills & locating relevant information from documentary
- Discussion of key listening skills:
  - Sustaining focused attention
  - Being clear about questions & relevant information
  - Making useful notes when information is delivered quickly

Class Discussion Tasks

Appendix G: Padua College
Spotlight Task 1
Individual Response and Group Discussion
How is language shaped by SOCIETY, CULTURE and TIME?

Individual Writing:
Come up with an answer and justify your response in 5 minutes of individual writing in your English book. There is no right or wrong. I want your opinion and why you are thinking the way you do.

Discuss in a group.

Home Task: Discuss with Parents

• What is language?
• What does language do?
• How and why does language change?
• What do we do with language?
• How do we learn language?

Eliza’s Home Task Response
### Eliza and Her Mum Reflecting on Home Task

| Researcher: So what was your Mum’s response about how language is shaped by culture? | Eliza: She says that language is about like how we act and how we say things, so yeah.... |
| Researcher: And you? What did you think? | Eliza: My result for the language listening viewing task was 84%, so yeah... |
| Researcher: So you got a lot from the documentary, you’re a very good note-taker | Eliza: Oh I’m not. I’m pretty good at listening. I’m not like the best, but I can pick up things |
| Researcher: Did the task involve ICT at all? | Parent: I can’t remember whether we did use any ICT. We thought about it but I don’t think we did. We thought about just typing in to Google: ‘language’ or something like that you know, or ‘origins of’ or something like that and I think Eliza said ‘No, I think it’s just meant to come from us’, so we didn’t. |

### Students’ Responses to Home Task

| Researcher: The task you did with your parents, was that different to the sort of homework you usually do in English? | Student: mm, yeah. Different |
| Researcher: How was it different? | Student: Because they’ve got a completely different opinion to us ’cos they’re older, they’re more mature and they’ve seen more of the world than us. They know. Technology wasn’t as out there as it is today, so they’ve got completely different opinions on technology, language and all that speaking. |
| Researcher: So you don’t generally ask them their opinion. What do you usually do? | Student: We just do it ourselves – if we need help, we just ask them but usually it’s just our work... like if we’re stumped on a question, we’d talk about it – talk through it – things like that. |
Parent Response To Home Learning Task

Researcher: What did you think about this as a learning task then?
Parent: I think it’s good when they’re challenged in things they wouldn’t ordinarily think of – things that they might take for granted.
Researcher: So what do you think the purpose of the task was then?
Parent: I suppose just to broaden their understanding and their knowledge of language and why and how we use it.
Researcher: And was it fun?
Parent: I wouldn’t describe it as particularly fun – I would describe it as...well it wasn’t unpleasant (laughs) – it’s not something that, you know in the daily grind of the week – and it certainly didn’t take a long time or anything. It wasn’t laborious or horrible or anything like that, it was just a task that she had to get done. We didn’t sort of think about any other way than something that she had to get done.

Next Inquiry: How has the English language evolved over time?
Final Oral Presentation Task

Assessment Task: Create an oral presentation which presents a point of view in response to the question: Explain what you think is the most significant influence on the development of the English language.

Check List for Oral Presentation

1. Selecting a Topic
   - Thorough understanding of the text, themes and ideas - research
   - Clearly address all aspects of the topic

2. Planning and Writing your speech
   - Purpose of the talk speech
   - Assessment criteria checked
   - Original material - own words
   - Breadth range of persuasive strategies used
   - Clearly established here
   - Introduction: powerful opening statement, body - well structured, based on main argument/Information
   - Conclusion: strong ending, wraps up main points, finishes up a powerful note
   - Edited and proofread speech

3. Preparing your Presentation
   - Supplementary materials - visual aids, PowerPoint, etc
   - Core content - key points only
   - Familiar with material - covering the entire speech
   - Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse!
   - Practice/performance for others
   - Timing - 3-5 minutes
   - Not leading from PowerPoint
   - Out points and images only on PowerPoint

Appendix G: Padua College
Spotlight Task 1
School research question: How can online assessment and feedback practice provide parents and students with detailed and constructive comments about student ability and progress?
Spotlight Task 2:  
Comparative Study: *Rapunzel’s Revenge, Tangled* and Grimm’s *Rapunzel*

**Context:** Year 8 English Literature Unit

**Literacy purpose of the unit:** To investigate and compare a selection of multimodal narratives

**Purposes of spotlight task** – Literature Circles: Group discussion & class compilation of comparative data grid comparing characterisation, themes, setting and plot across 3 versions of Rapunzel story

**Parental connection:** Challenge to engage parents informally as ‘resources’ for learning

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**Prior to Spotlight Task: Building on the Known

*How has the telling of fairy stories changed over time?*
Activating Prior Knowledge: *What do we know about fairy tales?*

Watching Episodes of *Once Upon A Time*  
What are the traditional gender roles in fairy tales?

Text to Text - From *Shrek* to *Cinderella*
Comparing Fairy Tales: Reading & Viewing Data Grid

Sleeping Beauty Transformations and Adaptations Data Grid

Students read or viewed different versions of selected fairy tales and compared characters, themes, plot, settings, challenges & resolutions.

Appendix H: Padua College
Spotlight Task 2
Feedback on Eliza’s *Sleeping Beauty* Data Grid

Reading Group Activity: What are the recognisable images in Grimms’ *Rapunzel*?
Group Task: Exploring Fairy Tale Elements

- Groups were allocated 1 fairy tale element each to find evidence of across the three versions:
  - Rapunzel’s hair
  - The Tower
  - The Prince
  - The Wall
  - Rapunzel’s Mother
  - The Witch
  - The Garden

Connections between Rapunzel, Tangled and Rapunzel’s Revenge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rapunzel’s Revenge</th>
<th>Tangled</th>
<th>Rapunzel’s Revenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rapunzel’s hair</td>
<td>Tower</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tower</td>
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<td>The Witch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prince</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Garden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spotlight Lesson: *Rapunzel's Revenge*

**Literature Circles**

- Students read the novel over 4 English classes.
- They worked in literature circle groups, taking up different roles in each lesson.
- Some students used colour coded post-it-notes to annotate the novel for each role.

**Spotlight Task: *Rapunzel's Revenge* Literature Circle Discussions**

- Discussion Director
- Illuminator
- Connector
- Word Watcher
- Summariser

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Appendix H: Padua College
Spotlight Task 2
Create your own illustration of an image from the *Rapunzel* story

Students searched for recognisable images of ‘original Rapunzel’ on their iPad before drawing illustrations such as towers and cascading hair.
Comparison of plot in *Rapunzel’s Revenge* and *Tangled*

• For each common fairy tale element describe 1 or 2 events that appear in *Rapunzel’s Revenge*, and *Tangled*.

• Whole class discussion and compilation of responses on IWB. Students use different coloured pens: green = RR, purple = Tangled.

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Students Using the Interactive White Board

The hero is prohibited to enter a certain place, but they violate this order.

The villain causes harm to family members of the victim
After Spotlight Task:
Exploring Gender Roles in *Rapunzel’s Revenge*

After Spotlight Lesson: *Rapunzel’s Revenge* Assessment Task – Imaginative Writing

Extracts from Eliza’s Version of Sleeping Beauty

**PRINCESS NEVARA AND THE POISON APPLE**

Once upon a time,

There was a Princess born, her name was Nevara.

On the day of her birth, the King decided to hold a celebration in honour of his daughter.

Three lamps were made, each on the roof and were to give Nevara gifts.

The first lamp, Basin granted Nevara the gift of beauty, her lips will be as red as blood, her hair as black as midnight and her skin as fair as snow.

On the second lamp, the king granted the gift of kindness, a virtue of words with a smile of her own.

On the third lamp, the king granted the gift of intelligence, a mind of its own.

Nevara shook her head. “Oh no, I am not in need of food like peasants are. You take it. I am perfectly healthy.”

“I cannot take it from a beautiful young girl like you.” The woman refused.

Nevara paused, slightly amused. “I am afraid I must insist, after all, you are before beauty right? In fact, I’m going to stand here until you sell it, for I am not as fast as you.”

The lady seemed to have finally admitted defeat, for she took a small bite out of it.

With an igniting smile, the woman sat to the ground, slowly she began to grow taller. The hood of the cloak fell off, revealing a face, a face that was getting younger and younger. Until finally, Queen Antronimela was lying on the ground, spanning reaching her body.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Reflections on <em>Rapunzel's Revenge</em> &amp; <em>Tangled</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher: What did you think of having to compare the same story but in 3 different versions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1: It was quite interesting to find out how different they would tell the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2: It was kind of hard finding textual evidence for the movie <em>Tangled</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3: I thought it was interesting because we haven't really done a task like that in, like in year 7 or year 8 so far, so it was interesting to do something new in English again?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher: How was it different?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3: We haven't done a comparison of two different stories.</td>
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<td>Researcher: Why was <em>Tangled</em> more fun than <em>Rapunzel's Revenge</em>? Why did you like it better?</td>
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<td>Student 1: Because I've seen it so much.</td>
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<td>Student 2: I think it seemed a better type of media for me. I just prefer probably watching movies than reading books.</td>
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<td>Researcher: So was the graphic novel form enjoyable?</td>
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<td>Student 1: Yeah graphic novels are good.</td>
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<td>Researcher: What did you like about it?</td>
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<td>Student 2: It was just easier to read.</td>
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<td>Student 3: Pictures.....</td>
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<td>Researcher: Are graphic novels something that you'd read</td>
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<td>Student 1: Yeah, I probably would, in a different style.</td>
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<td>Student 4: No, not for me.</td>
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Spotlight Task 3

Amy Year 8
Padua College

Spotlight Task 3:

*Black Snake: The Daring of Ned Kelly*

**Context:** Year 8 English Literature/ Australian History Unit

**Literacy Focus of the Unit:** Literary and Historical Analysis of *Black Snake: The Daring of Ned Kelly*, investigating the story of Ned Kelly through analysis of fiction and non-fictional accounts.

**Purposes of Spotlight Task:** To interrogate the myths surrounding the Ned Kelly story and problematize the notion of historical ‘truth’ through discussion of language and character portrayal.

**Parental connection:** Challenge to engage parents informally as ‘resources’ for learning.
Black Snake: The Daring of Ned Kelly
by Carole Wilkinson

- Students read set chapters for homework & completed novel response activities in class.
- An excerpt from the current chapter was read aloud by Amy during each lesson for close analysis and discussion.
- The Learning Support Centre prepared summaries of all class novels for students with additional literacy needs.

Black Snake Novel Activities Chapters 1 - 4

Complete the following questions and activities as we work through the text:

Wild Catered Boy
1. Read the imagined account of Jacob Baker and his interaction with the Kelly family. Describe the social and cultural attitudes towards the Kellys, or someone with an Irish background. Use descriptive words or phrases that support your view.
2. Describe the causes of conflict between families and societies. What are the differences between the two groups of land owners?

Home Business
1. Read the imagined account from James Goods, succinctly in detail, the attitude towards the Police.
2. The resulting prison sentences for the theft of the gold and the receiving of stolen goods were they fair or unjust? Justify your opinion with reference to the text.
3. Name and Cattle thieves - what were some of the tricks of the trade to hide evidence? (criminal)

One Stray Bullet
1. Based on the different accounts of the events, what do you think happened? Explain your reasons.
2. A £10 reward was offered for information leading to the capture of either Fred or Dan Kelly. Collect a piece of 44 paper and create an interrogator wanted poster.

Ending of Society
1. Why does Wilkinson include Rose Kennedy’s imagined account in this chapter? What is the impact upon the reader of this narrative?
2. Sketch a time line of the events - from the Kellys’ escape departing to find the Glang to the outlaws declaration under the Henry Apprehension Act.
Previous Chapter Activities: *One Stray Bullet*

- Based on the different account of the night described in this chapter, what do you think happened? Explain your reasons.

- Why does Wilkinson include Rose Kennedy’s imagined account in this chapter?

- Make a timeline of events from the Police departing to find the Gang to the outlaw declaration under the Felons Apprehension Act.
Spotlight Task Intentions

• To interrogate the myths surrounding the Ned Kelly story and problematize the notion of historical ‘truth’

• To encourage students to ‘go deeper’ into the text by asking: How does the language work to persuade readers to share a particular perspective on the Kellys?

• To ensure all students can access and understand the meanings and richness of the text.

Silent Reading

• Lesson begins with 10 minutes silent reading

• Some students reading class novel: Black Snake: the Daring of Ned Kelly
  – An account of the Ned Kelly story from perspectives of multiple witnesses

• 50% students reading on tablets or netbooks

• Many students reading books of choice eg.,
  – Diary of a Wimpy Kid
  – Divergent
Amy reads a selection from the chapter: *A Perfect Plan*. In each lesson an excerpt from the novel was read aloud by Amy for close discussion. She believed that this reading aloud was important to engage students in the text and also modelled expressive reading which invited deeper analysis and understanding of themes.

Amy read an excerpt from this chapter, a fictional text written from Fanny Shaw’s perspective.

Students were asked to locate adjectival phrases and words creating a positive image of the Kelly Gang.
A Perfect Plan

1. The imagined excerpt from Fanny Shaw paints a positive picture of the Kelly Gang. List all the descriptive words or phrases that build this positive image.

2. Draw a picture of either Ned or Dan Kelly as they appear in the chapter. You can find information about Ned on pages 71-72 and Dan on pages 66-67.

3. What steps did Ned employ to change people’s opinions of the Kelly Gang?

Student response to questions 1 and 3.

List the descriptive words/phrases that build a positive impression of the Kelly Gang
Kelly Gang Wanted Poster

A £100 reward was offered for information leading to the capture of either Ned or Dan Kelly. Create a **Wanted Poster** for Dan or Ned Kelly, as described in the chapter.

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**Student Reflections:**

**Reading Critically - Drawing using evidence**

| Student 1 | We had to draw a picture of either Dan or Ned Kelly and there were sections in the book where we had to read how Carol Wilkinson described them. |
| Student 2 | It was interesting to see how they dressed when they were outlaws, it was different. |
| Researcher | It’s like there was a stereotyped expectation of how they dressed. |
| Student 2 | Yeah and then they were in suits and … |
| Student 3 | He was really well dressed. That came as a bit of a shock to me. |
| Student 1 | [Reading from the text?] “He was wearing grey tweed trousers and a vest and a crisp clean shirt and a black jacket with a white handkerchief from his breast pocket and he wore a white hat.” |
| Student 3 | I wonder if that’s accurate? |
| Student 1 | That was one of the fictional accounts… |
| Researcher | That was fictional. So how do you know what’s fictional and what’s based on actual, original historical documents? Does it tell you? |
| Student 3 | Yeah, the fiction parts are usually there at the start of the new chapter. So if there’s going to be a new chapter, the fictional account comes first, then it moves on to fact. |
Jerilderie letter soundscape


Amy played an audio reenactment of the Jerilderie robbery, available from the State Library of Victoria and projected the Jerilderie letters on the Interactive White Board.

More detailed novel analysis

• Disappearing Outlaws:
  – The reward for information leading to the capture of the Kelly Gang had grown to £8000. Yet no-one turned in the Gang in the 18 months they were in hiding. Explain why the Kelly Gang had such strong support in the community.

• Taken Alive:
  – Summarise the events of the Kelly Gang’s last stand.
Ned Kelly State Library Presentation

Ned Kelly Tour

Amy reminded students to visit a Ned Kelly Exhibition, *Contesting Kelly*, at the State Library of Victoria while they were in Melbourne for their Urban Discovery Camp. They were expected to use information gained in their persuasive essay.

Future *Black Snake* Activities

**Persuasive Writing Assessment Task**

Is Ned Kelly Australia’s most maligned hero or just a despised villain? Discuss in relation to the text *Black Snake* and evidence collected at the *Contesting Kelly* presentation.

Appendix I: Padua College
Spotlight Task 3
Student Reflections: Reading Critically

Student 1: Before I read it I thought he was just a basic bank robber...
Student 2: Yeah, that’s what I thought too
Student 1: Now that I know why he was doing it, because he was doing it for people and to save his family, I’m kind of on his side instead of the opposite.
Researcher: Do you think Carol Wilkinson’s trying to persuade you of that?
Student 1: She’s trying to raise the question of ‘Do you side with him?’ or ‘Do you side with the police?’
Student 3: I think they’re trying to confuse you of which side is better ‘cos some people in the book say yeah he’s evil, he’s killed people, then others say yeah, he’s good – he did it for a good cause.
Researcher: You’ve used that word ‘confuse’ - I think that’s a really good word to use because then you have to be critical about what you’re reading to try and work out what your opinion is. Have you found that?
Student 3: I’m reading some of the fictional accounts – even though they’re not kind of .... i have to think about it as if it was real, how it would be or how he would be?
Student 2: Yeah in the story, in the part where she’s [the author] saying from the Police’s perspective and the good person’s perspective, she’s probably saying it because like, the Police are not always right. Like, they do put a lot of innocent people in jail sometimes as well – they just get it over and done with, ‘cos they just don’t want to deal with it because there’s just so much crime going on.

Students Rethinking Ned Kelly

Student 1: I think it’s cool to learning about Ned Kelly and how he became such an outlaw and he’s such an Australian icon.
Researcher: Did you know much about Ned Kelly before you read it?
Student 2: I just saw him as a bank robber.
Student 3: Ned Kelly’s quite an unusual thing, he’s a hero but he’s also a criminal so...
Student 4: Everyone has different views so...
Researcher: Which is probably one thing that makes him very interesting ....
Student 2: and why he’s still around in books and stuff
Student 1: That’s what makes him so famous I think because he’s so controversial, ‘cos you don’t....some sides say that he’s good and then others....some things that he does...
Researcher: So has this book made you think about him differently?
Students 1, 2, 3: Yep, yep, yep
Students Reflecting on Real Life Heroes

Student 1: I find the various accounts quite interesting, ‘cos they tell you what happened in their eyes, instead of Ned Kelly’s. Like, instead of this just being all about what Ned Kelly did, the author showed us, made up her own accounts from the viewpoint of a few other people who were there.

Researcher: So does the fact that these events actually happened have some impact on your level of interest in it?

Student 2: Yeah ‘cos it shows you people can be heroes, even if they’re not in fairy tales. They can be like people in fairy tale, but it’s real life, it’s reality.

Students Reflecting on Parental Involvement

Researcher: So is there something in this book, even though it might not be a set homework task to discuss it at home, is there something that your parents would be interested in? Have you talked to them about this latest unit of work on Ned Kelly?

Student 1: I’ve talked to my mum a bit about it, you know, what we’re doing in Ned Kelly...

Student 2: I think my mum would like it because she likes true crime and things, so I think she would like it.

Researcher: Have you talked to her about it as yet?

Student 2: No. She tries to convince me to read but I usually don’t.

Student 3: I haven’t really talked to my mum but I [don’t think she’d be..?] interested. She’s more into fiction like I am. I think my dad, if I showed it to him, he’d probably be interested. He likes those type of facts but he doesn’t really.... it’s more mum that gets involved in my schoolwork.

Student 4: My dad probably would – my mum probably wouldn’t care less.

Researcher: But you haven’t talked about it?

Student 4: ....She’s got heaps of work to do. Mum’s looking after my younger brother all the time, and doing all the washing and all that so yeah, mum does all the housework. She’s too busy and by the end of the day, she’s too tired to talk and she just wants to get dinner finished and sit down, and get us to bed so she can have some quiet time.