

Rationale

Why is connection significant? Why should we foster and develop it at this age?

We know that social and emotional connections are powerful protective factors in life. We don't always spend time learning or developing connections and this task is a small contribution to helping Year 6 students learn what connections and supports they already have and how they can be developed. Making new friends and building new connections is an important part of the high school transition.

Connections provide support in so many ways. Being aware of building and maintaining connections is a skill and a disposition. Understanding connections between people, places and things is integral to learning.

We are all stronger together. Dream Seeds® (as part of Youthrive Victoria) is an advocate of the strength of 'combined brain power' and Korra Kerthaba – working together to solve problems. (Language shared by Wathaurong, 2014)

Definition

A connection is a relationship between two things, people or groups. It is something linked in some way. (From the Dream Seeds workshop, we describe it as joining with others, working together, building resources together.)

Analogy? Dozens of connections in life – ask students to brainstorm as many connections as they can. Could be human/social or learning related (include here – science, history) or physical or abstract (internet connection, neighbours)

Integrating connection into your classroom

- 1. Questioning** – have a 'questioning disposition'- what connections can we make here? How is that person connected to another one; or a community; or more broadly. What connections does that person have? Even news snippets are good – politician, aides, news reporters, interpreters etc.
- 2. Teachable moments**
 - Personal connections - *each new introduction to someone ask students to think: How can I connect with this person? What do I need to do to help the person feel included? What connections do we have? (similar interests?)*
 - Learning about new concepts- *how does this idea, concept, information connect with what I know already? How does it extend what I know? How can I connect it with other ideas?*

3. Creating a culture of connection

What do I need to do to connect well with people? Social skills, communication skills, sharing, listening etc.

What connections do I need to help me with this challenge? (Who to ask to work with me, what information to seek, who to ask for help?)

Is it better for me to work on my own on this task? Or will I learn more/better if I collaborate with someone? Why?

4. Curriculum opportunities

Endless opportunities to build insights into how we are stronger together and how our learning can be enhanced by sharing with other people. e.g. in group tasks; presentations etc.

Table of connections in the Victorian Curriculum

Understanding how things connect can help us learn and make sense of the world. It is useful to cultivate a disposition of looking for connections in all topics and learning areas: such as words/meanings; scientific concepts like the water cycle; maths such as fractions as decimals; as well as social connections, friendships, collaborative tasks. Below are areas within the curriculum where this can be achieved.

Learning Area/Capability	Content Description	Code
Maths	Make connections between equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages	(VCMNA217)
English	Make connections between own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts	(VCELT365)
	Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information and ideas, comparing content from a variety of textual sources including media and digital texts - making connections between the text and own experience or other texts - making connections between information in print and images	(VCELY347)

Geography	Australia's connections with other countries and how these change people and places	(VCGGK098)
	Describe and explain interconnections within places and between places, and the effects of these interconnections	(VCGGC087)Geography is all about interconnections
Science	Collaboratively and individually plan and conduct a range of investigation types, including fieldwork and experiments, ensuring safety and ethical guidelines are followed	(VCSIS108)
Health/PE	Investigate the role of preventive health in promoting and maintaining health, safety and wellbeing for individuals and their communities	(VCHPEP112)
	proposing and implementing actions and protective behaviours that promote safe participation in physical activities (CA, GS, HBPA, S)	
	understanding the importance of social support and a sense of belonging in promoting mental health and wellbeing (MH, RS)	
Health/PE	Explore how participation in outdoor activities supports personal and community health and wellbeing and creates connections to the natural and built environment	(VCHPEP113)
Aboriginal Culture and Language	Explore connections between identity and cultural values and beliefs and the expression of these connections in Aboriginal languages	(VCLVU171)
Digital Technologies	Examine the main components of common digital systems, and how such digital systems may connect together to form networks to transmit data	(VCDTDS026)
Meta-cognition	Investigate thinking processes using visual models and language strategies	(VCCCTM029)

	drawing mind maps for different purposes, such as classifications or to identify connections	
Intercultural Capability	<p>Analyse how aspects of their own and others lifestyle, behaviour, attitudes and beliefs can be culturally influenced</p> <p>comparing differences in a range of countries, such in legal driving or voting age, laws around alcohol consumption or school leaving age, and discussing these in relation to adolescent – adulthood rights of passages</p> <p>Identifying cultural connections between Australia and countries in the Asia region and the activities that facilitate these connections, such as travel, student exchange, storytelling formats, music and dance</p>	(VICCCB009)

5. Keeping the connection conversation going

Reflecting on personal wellbeing – check in at the end of a day – how am I feeling?

Learning: What have I learnt today? How did it connect to things I knew? What was new?

Social: Who did I spend time with? How did that go? Do I need to change anything? (e.g. playing with a different group of people, joining a new team).

Prepared by Dr Maryann Brown, July 2020