



Mentoring Investigation Report

Developing online Professional Learning Networks to support Languages teachers in International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programmes

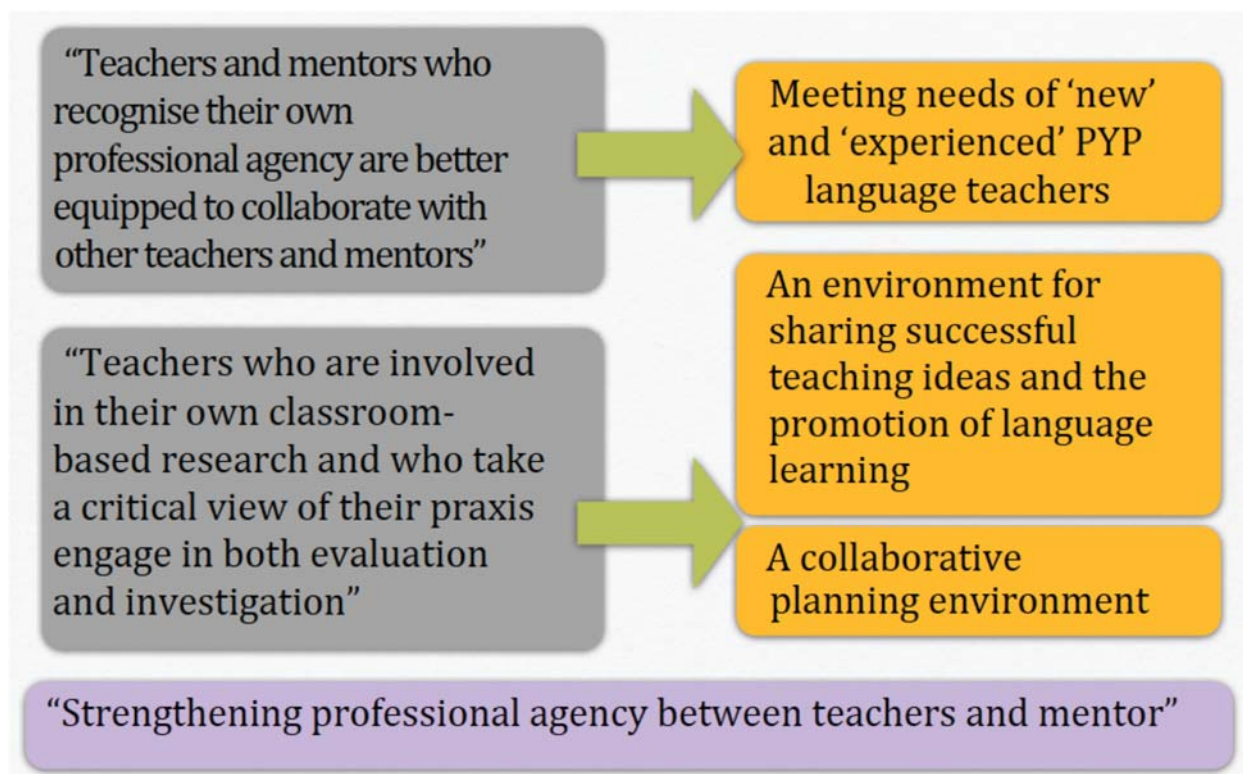
Background information <p>Mentor teacher(s) name: <i>Naoko Nishikawa</i></p> <p>Mentee teacher(s) name: <i>Primary Years Programme (PYP) language teachers group</i></p> <p>School: <i>St Leonard's College, VIC</i></p> <p>Language: <i>Japanese</i></p> <p>Year level: <i>Primary</i></p>
Context <p>The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) is an educational programme managed by the International Baccalaureate (IB) for students aged 3 to 11. The subject areas of the PYP are language, social studies, mathematics, science and technology, arts, and personal, social and physical education. Students are required to learn a second language during the programme.</p> <p>(See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IB_Primary_Years_Programme)</p> <p>Specialist teachers at PYP schools meet after school every term. The maximum number of teachers from different parts of Victoria attending for the language group was around 30 with a minimum number of five. Languages taught in this group are: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Indonesian, Italian and Japanese.</p> <p>As a participant and leader of this group, I am concerned that the meetings may not be as productive as they could be and could be used to promote mentoring relationships better.</p>
Issues <p>The PYP meetings present some issues for attending teachers. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of PYP languages teachers who are new to PYP has been increasing, especially at Government schools, so there are teachers with a range of experience with PYP• PYP language teachers have been struggling with the use of the PYP planner• PYP language teachers encounter dilemmas in delivering inquiry-based teaching and the language skill based teaching at the same time• Specialist teachers feel isolated in their planning, especially in schools with few languages teachers• A number of experienced PYP language teachers stopped attending the PYP specialist meetings due to repetitive sessions such as 'introduction of your school, your programme, number of teaching minutes, whether there are opportunities to plan collaboratively with classroom teachers and usage of target language, etc...'• After going through these above mentioned conversations, time to discuss or share ideas about teaching under PYP ran out, and were consequently not productive for more experienced teachers, yet it was these

teachers who were most needed by the newer members

- It is difficult to meet the needs of both 'experienced' and 'new to PYP' teachers

Project goals

Project goals were to address professional agency, collaboration and mentoring among members of the PYP language teachers group, to work towards a more effective meeting strategy and to find ways in which participants might share their knowledge and help each other, while still feeling the meetings were worthwhile for everyone.



I decided to offer my expertise in the area of ICT skills to set up ways for meaningful communication within the group and to facilitate connections with schools with Japan.

In addition to this, I decided to investigate how we could use the PYP planner to incorporate inquiry-based learning in language teaching.

I also intended to use things that I share at the meetings or online in my own teaching.

Goals of the project were therefore elaborated as follows:

1. Co-mentoring through online forum: teachers of PYP languages will share and offer their experience and knowledge about language teaching, intercultural teaching and learning

2. Assisting teachers to be familiar with Web 2.0 tools and other ICT tools through usage of the online forum

3. Enhancing knowledge of PYP language teaching by using the PYP learner profile, transdisciplinary skills and 'Central Idea' for each unit of inquiry

4. Effective use of time: PYP schools are usually widespread in Victoria and Australia. It is not easy for us to attend meetings that start after school. By setting a discussion board/forum page, teachers can talk on site and share the actual materials off site at the meeting

Design

The investigation project was designed to pursue the above goals through the following steps:

1. Programme investigation (investigating teacher needs for online forum, developing the forum structure for communication)
2. Checking the usage of the online forum
3. Evaluation of the practical use of the online forum
4. Feedback from online forum participants
5. Re-shaping the forum structure
6. On-going monitoring (making sure that this forum will be sustainable after the programme)

Implementation

Development of a wikispace for an online forum

I developed a wikispace for the PYP group, which the group uses for discussions. Below are some examples of the pages of the wikispace:

PYP Languages Wikispaces

July 2012



PYP Languages #pyplanguages

- Wiki Home
- Projects
- Recent Changes
- Pages and Files
- Members
- Manage Wiki
- Search Wiki

Home
Advocacy ideas
IB PYP News
Idea & Question Wall
New to PYP
Projects
PYP meeting updates
Scope and Sequence
Units of Inquiry

Language teaching in action
PYP Languages

PrimaryEdTech 16
Ways The
Environment
Matters in STEM
Education
bit.ly/QhCC4j
#edtech #eduit

home

Edit 0 0 16 ...

Welcome to PYP Language teachers' Page!

Follow @pyplanguages

PYP Languages App will be coming soon!



This page is for language teachers who are teaching at IB PYP schools.
PYP Languages page will be used among PYP language teachers in Victoria, Australia as a trial, however, of course teachers from around the world are more than welcome to join our group!

On-going project

Please join the following projects.

[Generic Planner 1](#) - current themes are 'Transport', 'Food' and 'Family' - let's put our good ideas together!

[Language Specific Project](#)

*Languages are listed based on the list of PYP school languages in Victoria, Australia.

Please go to the [Idea & Question Wall](#) for other themes and language groups request!

New to PYP school? Got stuck?

Please visit the [New to PYP](#).

Sample questions and answers are there.

Could experienced PYP language teachers, please share your knowledge with us.

Translations are also welcome!

PYP Languages Wikispaces

Online collaborative planning



PYP Languages #pyplanguages

- Wiki Home
- Projects
- Recent Changes
- Pages and Files
- Members
- Manage Wiki
- Search Wiki

Home
Advocacy ideas
IB PYP News
Idea & Question Wall
New to PYP
Projects
PYP meeting updates
Scope and Sequence
Units of Inquiry

Language teaching in action
PYP Languages

peacegalaxy
Teaching eTibet - an.
Language which
accesses precious
Buddhist
philosophical
treasures from

Projects

Create Project

Archive Delete

Filter by Status

Active

<input type="checkbox"/>	Name	Created	Created By	Events	Permissions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Generic Planner 1 General Topics	Jun 24, 2012 10:44 pm	nao_nish	0	Public to Wiki
<input type="checkbox"/>	Language Specific Projects Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Hebrew, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish	Jun 24, 2012 10:53 pm	nao_nish	0	Public to Wiki

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PYP Languages Wikispaces

Casual way of making communications

The screenshot shows the 'Idea & Question Wall' on the PYP Languages Wikispaces. The page has a blue header with the PYP Languages logo and the hashtag #pyplanguages. On the left, there is a sidebar with navigation links: Wiki Home, Projects, Recent Changes, Pages and Files, Members, Manage Wiki, and a Search Wiki box. Below this, there are links to Home, Advocacy Ideas, IB PYP News, Idea & Question Wall, New to PYP, Projects, PYP meeting updates, Scope and Sequence, and Units of Inquiry. The main content area is titled 'Idea & Question Wall' and contains a discussion wall with several posts. The posts are in a yellow box with a globe icon and the title 'PYP Languages Discussion Wall'. The posts are as follows:

- "Naoko" says** (1 month ago): Welcome all! Please post some requests and suggestions for this page.
- "Melissa" says** (2 months ago): Fantastic idea Naoko. I am more than happy to share my planning with others. I love working with the PYP through an inquiry based program.
- "Naoko" says** (about 1 month ago): Thank you Melissa and B Dressler! I hope we start the sharing pages soooooon!
- "Anonymous" says** (25 days ago): Hi, I'm Linda Yeh from Firbank Sandy House, nice to see PYP teachers here.
- "B Dressler" says** (3 months ago): Thanks, Naoko, for setting up this wiki. It's a fantastic place to share our learning. I look forward to the discussion!
- "Naoko" says** (24 days ago): Hi Linda. Thank you again for your IT support! Great have you on our team :-)

Development of a Twitter account

I also developed a Twitter account in which the group communicated throughout the project in an instant messaging process. Many tweets were responded to by members of the group and teaching ideas were shared in this way. Below are some pages from the Twitter account:

PYP Languages Twitter account

The screenshot shows the Twitter profile page for the PYP Languages account (@pyplanguages). The profile picture is the PYP Languages logo. The bio reads: "PYP language teachers twitter page. ICT, cultural ideas, lesson ideas sharing good websites and apps." The location is "Melbourne, Victoria, Australia" and the website is "https://pyplanguages.wikispaces.com/home". The account has 5 tweets, 23 following, and 8 followers. The tweets section shows four tweets:

- pyplanguages @pyplanguages** (20m): PYP languages app will be coming soon. Stay tuned members! Expand
- pyplanguages @pyplanguages** (31 Aug): @LindaLyeh, NiHao! It was great getting help from you. As I announced the pyplanguages page had been fixed. Please try to download docs. View conversation
- pyplanguages @pyplanguages** (31 Aug): @lindaningchen, It's good that my 10 week Chinese is still in my head and I can understand what it says there :-). View conversation
- pyplanguages @pyplanguages** (31 Aug): Hi PYPlanguages teachers. Wikispace documents settings have been fixed and u can now access to all projects! @naokokko_chan #pyp @LindaLyeh Expand

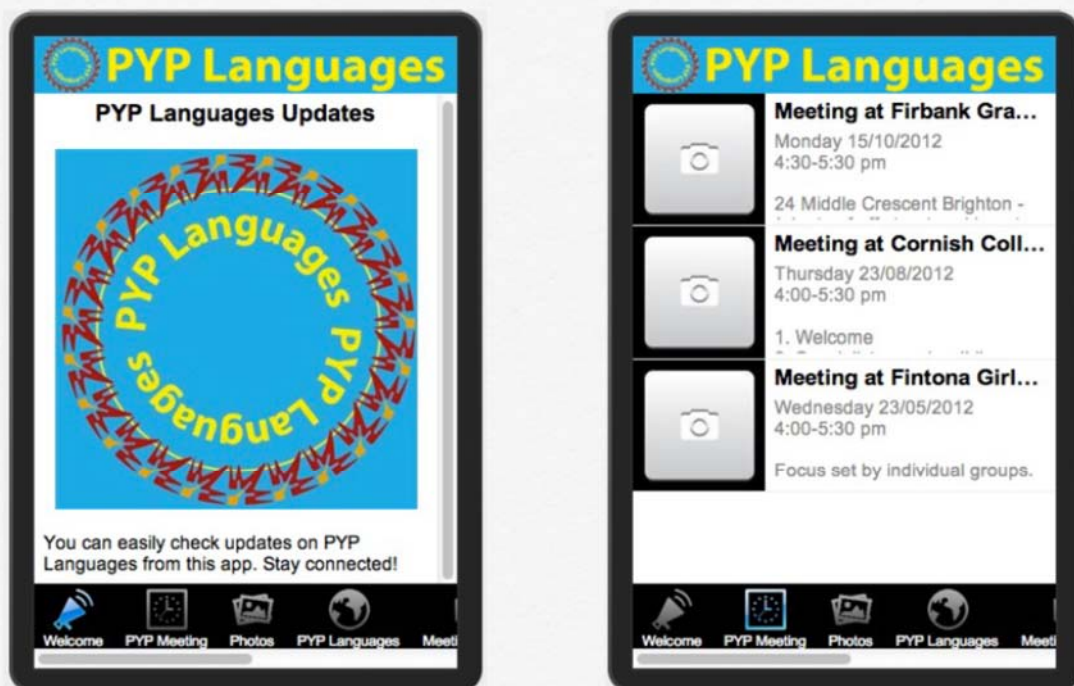
PYP Languages Twitter account



Development of an iPad app

I also developed an iPad app to provide a really quick way for teachers to access ideas from the group and to stay connected. Below are some images from the app.

PYP Languages iPad/iPhone app



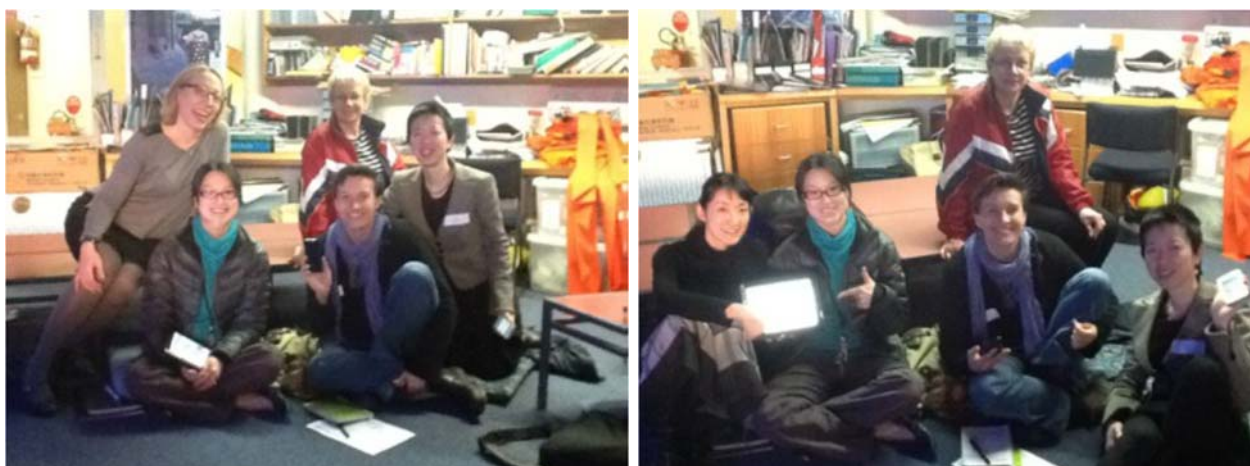
PYP Languages iPad/iPhone app



I also plan to run a professional learning session for the PYP teachers on using the wiki space forum, Twitter account and iPad/iPhone app.

In the short time of the project, most participants found the forum wiki and Twitter were useful for exchange of ideas and to keep in contact with other teachers. Some comments made by teachers at the new PYP meetings were:

- It's hard to keep updated unless you make an effort and take time to check websites
- iPad is working really well in teaching
- I want to know how many minutes other schools teach languages and other basic things about teaching at PYP schools



Teachers in the PYP group working with the iPad app

Findings

- Depending on the venue and time of year, numbers of teachers attending the PYP sessions varies, so the additional online connection modes make participation and observation easier
- Unless teachers are confident in using technology, they are hesitant to join online forums or to use similar tools. This is why I have planned the additional PL session, to introduce more teachers to these technologies.
- Language teachers want to upgrade their ICT skills
- The PYP coordinator is keen to support the language online group and to extend the function of the Wikispaces developed in this project to the IB website
- I was able to learn better ways of using the PYP planner through online communication and using the planner in the Wikispace.

Evaluation: where to from here?

The project has been successful in beginning to address the goals identified and to include more teachers more productively in the PYP languages group. I will continue with the following:

- attend the PYP specialist language meetings and continue my role as facilitator of this group in an ongoing mentoring role
- support the language teachers in the group in using ICT
- update the materials in the Wikispace, Twitter account and for the iPad/iPhone app
- plan online collaborative planning days/sessions for the group
- participate in PYP professional learning opportunities
- use the PYP planner more often and share my planning with the other PYP language teachers.