

Infinity Learning Maps case study

A teacher supports her students to become active learners

Annan, B., & Wootton, M., 2017

<http://infinitylearn.org/>

Introduction

Infinity Learning Maps are a novel way for students to understand the web of interactions surrounding their learning with support from their teachers and parents. A brief definition of the approach is outlined in the box below.

The approach provides a tool for teachers to support students to draw a picture of how they see the interactions surrounding their learning. *Infinity Learning Maps* are a practical in-road into the science of learning-how-to-learn. Teachers then support students to analyse their web of interactions to decide if they need to make any changes to their learning situations. The process of drawing, analysing and making changes to current learning situations tends to lift student confidence and achievement and cause teachers and parents to rethink their respective support roles. For more detail about the process and use of Infinity Learning Maps go to <http://bit.ly/InfinityOnlineResource>

The Infinity Learning Maps approach is not a stand-alone programme. School leaders, teachers and students typically integrate the approach into regular cycles of leadership, teaching and learning. This case is about a teacher Kelly Layton who built Infinity Learning Maps into her everyday teaching and learning routines.

About Kelly

Kelly Layton is a teacher at Konini Primary School in Wainuiomata, an outer suburb of Wellington in New Zealand (NZ). She was a leader of many teachers in a cluster of three schools that were collaborating to develop more active learners in their schools.

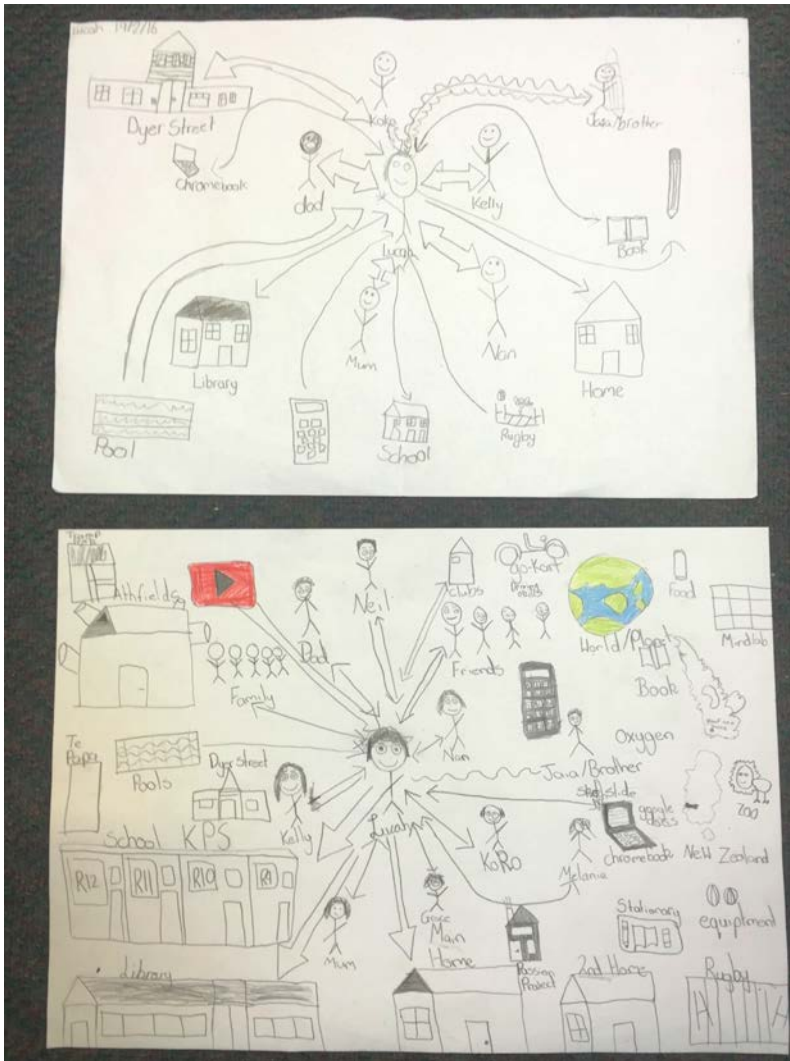


Kelly is not the sort of teacher that holds back when she believes that new ideas might be useful to her students. In the case of the Infinity Learning Maps, she experienced the value of the mapping activities in a national research trial in 2015 and then modelled active learning in the way she went about integrating the activities into her class routines. Kelly used the Infinity Learning Maps in the following three ways;

- for the students to monitor their development as active learners at two to three points throughout the year,
- for students to use as a planning and reflection tool to develop their “Passion Projects”, and,
- for students generate rich conversations with parents and teachers at three-way Learning Conversations.

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Active Learning

Kelly and the students identified from their Infinity Learning Maps that, overall, the students were passive in their learning and had limited connections to support them with their learning. She developed a set of active learner traits with the teachers of the Year 5 and 6 students (9-11 year olds), as part of a professional learning and development session. (See link to active learner traits <http://bit.ly/2idQlpR>) Student, family and whānau [extended family] voice about the active learner traits, was collected at the end of term three and analysed for themes from those groups.

The teachers of the Year 5 and 6 students created a “Passion Ignition Day” for the students to be exposed to many different areas of interest to support the students to decide what they would like to pursue as their “Passion Project.”

The chart below shows student reflections from the day. The students then chose their area of passion learning. This could include areas of learning interest agreed to during the passion ignite day or other learning interests that the students thought about outside of that day. Whatever their passion learning topic was, became their focus of planning, learning and reflections every Monday for a term. Reflection by teachers and students has identified the student passion project presentations as the next step moving forward.

What was new? What was fun?	What people did you learn with?	What places did you learn?	What tools did you use?
Freestyle Planting - telling what vegetables we have in our garden Got to eat Played with puppies Learning how diseases spread Decorating cupcakes Lisa teaching us about different shapes of the clouds Drawing - animated characters Made monster bookmarks Checking the oil, checking water Got to use a microscope and magnifying glass Meeting people Looking at silver ferns and spores Hip Hop Engines get up to 157 degrees	Ma'ao Kerry & Brianna Krissie and Amber Addy, Erica and Nicole Matt from SPCA Kara from Mallaghan Institute Lisa - Metservice Mitchell Adrienne Jimmy Leon Scott	R11 R5 R12 Garden area R10 Library Porch R13 ICT room/suite Carpark R7 R9 deck	Chromebooks Body Radio/music Gloves, pot plants, potting mix Chocolate, icing, piping bags, cupcakes, toppings, spoons Treats, clicker, leads, puppies Pictures to simulate disease and immune systems Data projector Brain, screen, two bottles <u>connected together</u> . Makes a tornado. Pencil, templates, paper Pins, tape, buttons, cotton, needle, felt Gloves, wrench, Microscope, magnifying glass, fern leaves, fern spores Temperature gauge - tells you the temperature

Impact of Active Learners strategy

In Kelly's class, there was a significant impact on the students' National Standards data in reading. Mid-year 2016 assessment showed 37% of students 'At' or 'Above' National Standards in reading. By the end of the 2016 school year, 77% of students were 'At' or 'Above' National Standards in reading.

Wootton, the Infinity facilitator, collated comments from students and parents in small group conversations about their passion learning projects. The comments indicated that students had become more active and connected in their learning.

Parents:

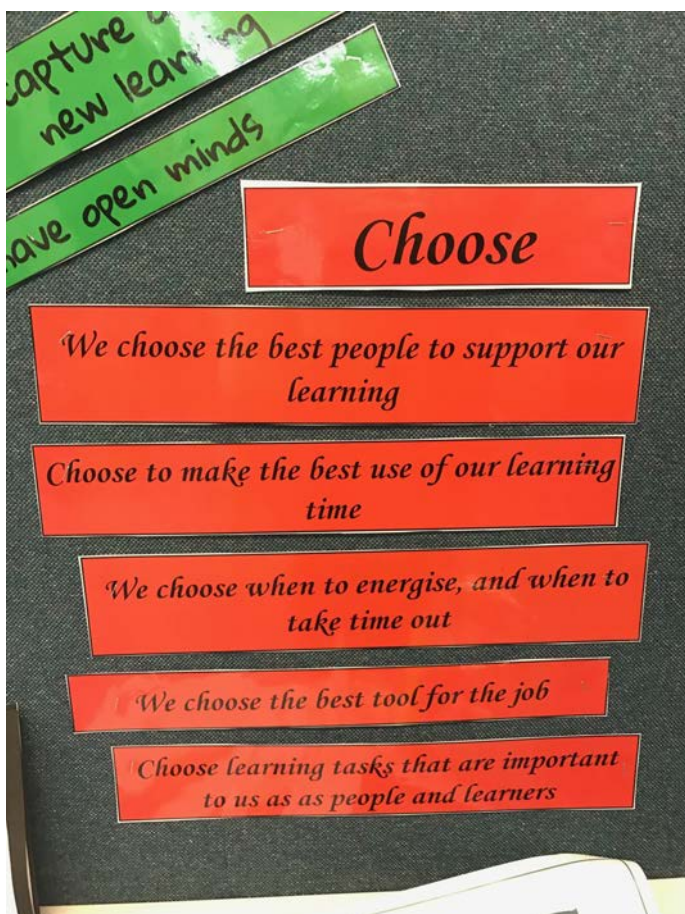
- *wanted to know about the active learning traits and the language to talk with their children at home about their learning.*
- *felt the passion learning was stretching her child more in her learning.*
- *felt their children had grown in confidence.*

Students preferred passion learning for the following reasons:

- *we get to pick our own passion,*
- *we get to learn about what we want to and email, call experts and visit places*
- *we mix with different classes, different kids.*
- *we are learning what **we** want to learn on Monday, in the rest of the week we learn what we **need** to learn- so we are not learning what we already know.*
- *I like that we do the traits with passion learning. Learn new things, different traits, learn what you want to learn.*
- *learn about other people's passion too - I want to come back to school and share my learning*

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Concluding comment

Passion learning projects can easily skim across the surface of learning. Or they can delve deeply into the science of learning-how-to-learn. This case study exemplifies the latter deep learning experience. Exemplary teacher practice by Kelly Layton created clear links between the Infinity Learning Maps, the students' passion learning projects and a set of learning-how-to-learn dispositions. She not only made those links clear for her own understanding, she also supported her students to see and understand the links. Those supports meant that Kelly's students could see the relevance of active learning to their personal circumstances.

Acknowledgements

The authors want to acknowledge Kelly Layton's energy and capability to take sound educational ideas, creatively adapt them for her students and then check for positive impact. Kelly Layton thoroughly enjoys teaching children to the point of it being a passion ahead of a day job. She is also a master in creating classroom coherence. Her integration of the Infinity Learning Maps into the student's daily learning routines energised rather than overburdened her students. They also energised her as a teacher as she discovered new ways to activate her students. Kelly's actions were not in isolation. She was closely connected to her students, families and whānau (extended families) and also to other teachers, school leaders and students in her desire to learn and grow as a teacher. We acknowledge the leaders and boards of trustees of those schools in Wainuiomata which have supported the active learning strategy.

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