

INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING AUSTRALIA

Learning with each other, from each other and about each other. ©

Intergenerational Learning Video Conferencing program - 8th September 2021

Topic: Overcoming challenges plus strategies for a positive mindset and wellbeing

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Last Wednesday (8th September), a group of Year 6 students from OLQP Primary School Greystanes and their teacher Miss Moses, were privileged to host another intergenerational learning video call. Participants included elders at SCC Greystanes, elders living alone in Sydney's eastern suburbs and Greystanes plus guests from Australia and New Zealand. A list of these guests has been included on the second past page of this document.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in Sydney, the teacher, each of the students and guests joined the video call from their homes. We commenced the video call with greetings, then the "Acknowledgement of Country".

Before the discussion started, students and elders shared some light-hearted jokes. The discussion topic of 'overcoming challenges plus strategies for a positive mindset and wellbeing' was based on the school's PDHPE curriculum and discussions with the Lifestyle Coordinator (Janine Parsons) at Southern Cross Care Greystanes. This was linked with [R.U.O.K. day](#) (9th September), which encourages everyone to start a conversation with people who are struggling in life.

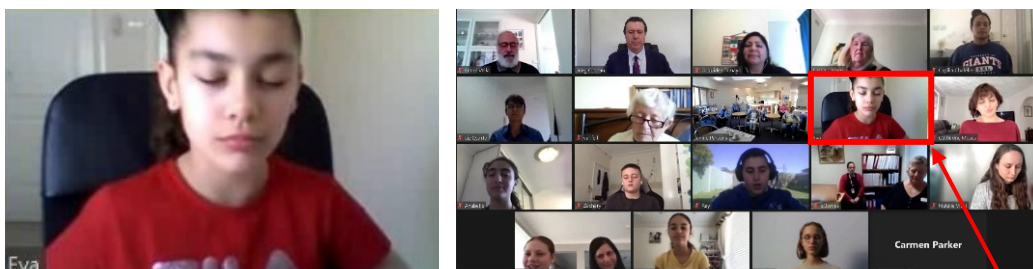
The Year 6 teacher, Cathy Moses had an excellent idea of integrating strategies from an R.U.O.K. matrix (by Empowering Learning Together) into questions the students could discuss with the elders and other guests in the video call. A copy of the matrix is at the end of this document.

Due to the R.U.O.K. day being celebrated the day after the video call, some practical strategies for students - and elders - about methods to maintain a positive mindset and wellbeing were integrated into their questions and conversations with the residents at SCC.

The residents also spoke about ways they have kept a positive mindset during challenging times. They were invited by each student, to do a task similar to what the students had presented during the video call.

Here are some examples:

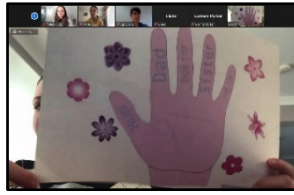
Eva spoke about breathing awareness to help her become calm so when she is sad, her brain is calm to help her think about positive things.



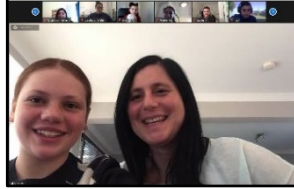
The image on the right shows Eva leading all persons in the video call, through a breathing awareness activity that she and other students learnt in class earlier this year.

This self-regulating activity has been used by these Year 6 students throughout 2021.

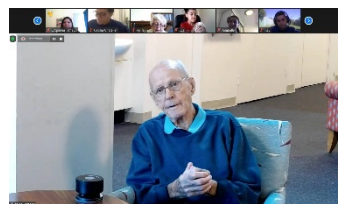
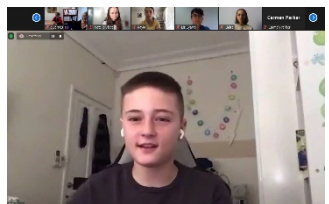
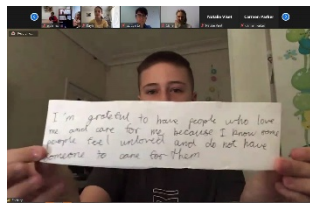
Scarlett created a list of five people that support her in challenging times. Scarlett's assessment task was to write these names on to a drawing of a hand. This was shown to all participants in the video call.



This image is Scarlett with her Mum at home during the video call.



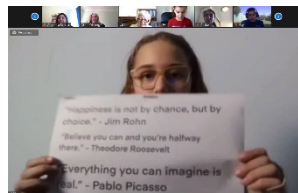
Zach's assessment task was to write a list containing five affirmation phrases. One example Zachary gave to Rex and the other participants was, "I'm grateful I ate some food today, because many people will not eat today".



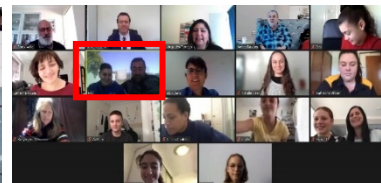
Kayla has a similar family situation to Margaret and Audrey (from Southern Cross Care) when they were young, because they were also responsible for the care of their younger brothers and sisters. Kayla's assessment task was to write an acrostic poem about her youngest sister. Kayla stated each word in the acrostic poem reminded her about the reasons she loves her sister, even when her behaviour is challenging.



Claire spoke to Helen and other guests about her assessment task. This required her to write three positive quotes. Claire chose quotes from Jim Rohn, Thomas Roosevelt and Pablo Picasso. Claire stated these quotes help her keep a positive mindset during challenging times.



Ray told Nick and guests about the good feelings he has when he tells jokes. Ray said this helps him keep positive when he has difficult moments. Nick and guests enjoyed laughing at Ray's jokes. Ray's father also joined the video call and spoke with Nick. (Refer to image in the red rectangle)



Anabelle chose to write positive words and phrases for her assessment task. Anabelle informed Betty and guests, that the words and phrases were placed into a jar titled 'warm and happy', to help remind her of reasons to remain positive when she was sad or facing a challenge.

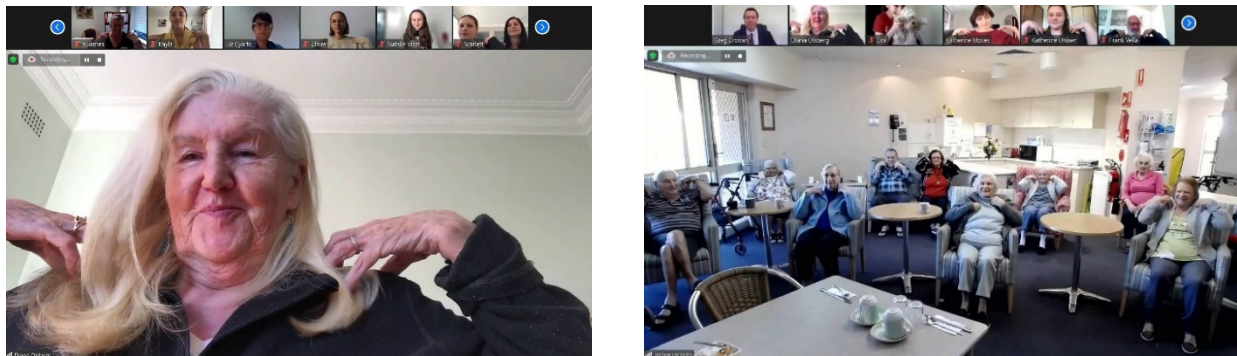


Simon Says Game – Time for Play!

This game was hosted by Miss Moses (in the yellow rectangle below), our friends at Southern Cross Care Janine and Norm (in the green rectangle), Diana Olsberg (in the orange rectangle) and Val Fell in the pink rectangle. Some of the requests by Miss Moses for the ‘Simon Says’ game were to make the ‘world’s worst pretend laugh’ and ‘try to sound like kookaburras’. These activities were also intended to be enjoyable group-based breathing exercises to help ‘regulate’ the physiology of participants by laughing with each other, enhancing the intake of oxygen-rich air, reducing stress, improving mood and benefitting from ‘feeling good’ due to the release of endorphins by the brain.



All participants trying to make the **world’s worst pretend laugh** as part of the “Simon Says’ game.



Diana hosted the Simon Says Game. Her challenge was asking everyone to rotate shoulders and arms.



Everyone tried to make **kookaburra sounds** as part of the “Simon Says’ game.



Val hosted the Simon Says Game with the request to stretch both arms forward. **All participants from ages 11 to 97**, appeared to enjoy these group-based activities ranging from motor skills to laughter.

The Role of Empathy

Through mutually meaningful discussions and playful activities, intergenerational learning programs are designed to foster empathy.

The outcomes include improved behaviour and learning, but only when the body 'senses it is safe'. This requires the body to be in a calm state physiologically and neurologically.

Empathy is a function of the pre-frontal cortex. It requires neural pathways from the brain stem to the cerebellum, limbic and cortex areas of the brain to be 'on-line'. This only occurs when the person can 'interpret' visual cues and/or verbal cues and/or senses of being safe. Well planned and purposeful intergenerational learning programs achieve the above outcomes.



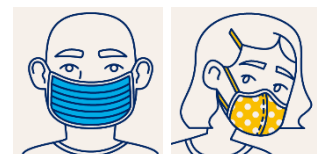
As part of the "Simon Says" game, all participants waved their hands.



Norm (far left) and Janine (Lifestyle Coordinator) hosted the Simon Says game. Norm's request was to touch the left ear. Janine's requests ranged from hands on head, to raising the left arm up in the air.

Face masks and blocking facial cues

Elders receiving care now have an additional challenge through COVID-19, due to not being able to see and interpret the facial expressions of healthcare staff. One may ask about the impact will this have on the mental health of many elders, especially those with various forms of cognitive decline. Video calls with students, community groups, family and friends retain the full view of the face. As displayed by the images in this document, meaningful communication in a multi-generational setting results in many positive benefits for mental health, physical health and the overall wellbeing of both age groups.



Some of our friends from Southern Cross Care, Greystanes during the video call last Wednesday.

The images below may challenge many to query if these residents were living in COVID-19 hotspots on the 8th September 2021 and had been in lockdown for months, without having family or friends visit for many months.

The intergenerational learning using video conferencing program is testament to the healing power of well planned, ongoing, face to face, positive relational interactions that are personally meaningful and have reciprocal value that benefits the wellbeing of all participants.

For the scientific evidence behind this statement, academic research and longitudinal studies in the fields of neuroscience, psychiatry, psychology, anthropology and paediatrics can be provided. Any school, community group and aged care organisation can get involved with this program.



Rex



Audrey



Betty



Norm



Denyse



Margaret



Helen




Nick

Our Guests and the Year 6 Teacher and Host, Catherine Moses



Top Row:

- Frank Vella – Secretary [Merrylands RSL Sub Branch](#). Frank joined us from his home.
- Cathy Moses - Year 6 Teacher at OLQP Primary School Greystanes and Intergenerational Learning Host. Cathy commenced this program in 2019 and has continued it every week (or fortnight pending the schedules of the school and aged care home) throughout 2020 and 2021. . . . and COVID-19.
- Orquidea Tamayo Mortera - [President New Zealand Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapy](#) & Programme Lead - Diversional Therapy, [Summerset Group \(Aged Care\)](#) New Zealand.  Orquidea kindly posted comments about the video call via LinkedIn: [LinkedIn Post by Orquidea](#)
- [Dr Liz Cyarto Senior Research Fellow Bolton Clarke](#), and Healthy Ageing Stream Leader, Health Promotion Division Company [National Ageing Research Institute](#)

Middle Row

- Dr. Diana Olsberg, Adjunct Professor of Sociology and Economics and one of the participants in the ABC TV program '[Old Peoples Home for 4 Year Olds](#)'. Diana joined the video call from her home.
- Cecilia (Liz) Chatelier, a Year 6 Teacher and Wellbeing Coordinator from St Mary Primary School Campus, at [Marist College North Sydney](#)
- Robyn Smart – Music Teacher at St Vincent's Primary School. The principal and staff at this school have planned to commence this Intergenerational Learning using Video Conferencing program.
- Catherine Ohlsen- Year 6 Teacher at OLQP Primary School Greystanes. Catherine has also been a host on the Intergenerational Learning using Video Conferencing program since March 2021.

Lowest Row

- [Val Fell](#) - Member of the Older Persons Reference Group and [Older Persons Advocacy Network](#). Val is 92, mid-way through her Degree in Dementia Care (UTAS) and joined us from home.
- Natalie Viset. Student studying post-graduate counselling course through Western Sydney University
- Linda Matthews (Chief Clinical Governance Officer) and Esther Barnes (Manager) from [James Milson Village](#) Milsons Point and Woolwich respectively.
- Carmen Parker - Montessori Lecturer and Director/ Teacher at [Children's House Montessori Faulconbridge](#)

Children from an Early Childhood Centre will participate in The Intergenerational Learning Video Call on the 15th September.

For more information about the Intergenerational Learning using Video Conferencing program and academic references to the statements in this document, contact the Program Director, Greg Cronan on 0433-387-209 (Int'l +61 433-387-209) or via email greg@intergenerational-learning.com.au

Intergenerational Learning Australia

Web: www.intergenerational-learning.com.au



This program is endorsed by and affiliated with the Intergenerational Practice Research Team, Queensland, Australia.

www.intergenerationalcare.org

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R U OK? Day

A matrix to help students and families celebrate R U OK? Day on September 9th no matter where they are!

This an Empowering Learning Together Resource

<p>Create a FlipGrid Video telling some jokes. Send it to a family member or friend to make them smile!</p>	<p>Draw a mindmap of your support network and people you can go to for support.</p>	<p>Make a poster to promote R U OK? Day. Put it up somewhere so others can see it.</p>	<p>Draw a chalk drawing on your driveway or nearby footpath to brighten up someone else's day!</p>
	<p>Make a Warm Fuzzies jar. Decorate the jar and add pieces of paper with things you love about each family member or your class mates.</p>	<p>Interview a grown up about R U OK? Day. Ask them for some ideas of what you could say to a friend who was not feeling ok.</p>	<p>Learn some breathing exercises to help you relax when you are feeling upset or worried.</p>
<p>Do some yoga with Cosmic Kids. Create some of your own moves.</p>	<p>Create a space just for you. Add your favourite books, activities, colouring in or drawing materials you like to explore and create with.</p>	<p>Create a 'happy dance' to your favourite song. Video it and share it with your teacher or a family member who lives far away.</p>	<p>Make some positive affirmation cards. I am grateful for... I am proud of... I feel calm when... My smile is...</p>
<p>Make a care package with a card, craft and/or little gift to give to a friend or family member to show you are thinking of them.</p>	<p>Take a walk in nature and collect some items that make you happy. Create a sensory nature table at home and add to it each day.</p>	<p>Cut out some pictures from a magazine and create a collage showing different emotions you have experienced.</p>	<p>Make a life size 'hug' and send it to someone special.</p> 

EMPOWERING
LEARNING TOGETHER

This activity can be freely used by educators or families.
Resource created by Empowering Learning Together

Source: [Empowering Learning Together - R U OK DAY? Matrix \(stemedmagazine.com\)](https://stemedmagazine.com)