



# How can affinity spaces enhance creativity in Year 8 boys?

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# The Southport School



Founded in 1901, The Southport School is an Anglican day and boarding school for boys from Prep (Reception) to Year 12.

The School's student population is close to 1400 of which 800 are in the Senior School and 310 are boarders.

The vision of the School is to be acknowledged as a world-class day and boarding school for boys as it aims to create a balanced and holistic learning community.



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# The nexus between theory and practice

"An affinity space is a place ... where people affiliate with others based primarily on shared activities, interests and goals ..." (James Paul Gee 2004)



Theorist and practitioner Jen Scott Curwood explores how technology promotes critical engagement with literature. (2013)



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# Affinity Spaces ...?



... creating a sense of belonging and ownership

... motivating students to engage with literature

... developing the confidence to 'make'

... We re-shaped the initial action research proposal



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# The Action...

*Lord of the Flies* – we discussed themes as a group  
then encouraged autonomous learning

Guiding framework for creativity ...

- \* how does the activity of 'making' inspire and engage young learners?
- \* how does 'making' encourage micro-networking?
- \* how does 'space' and 'place' encourage learning?



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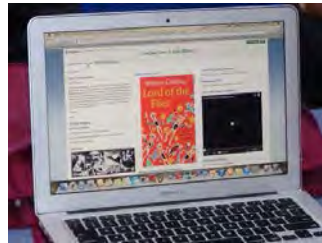
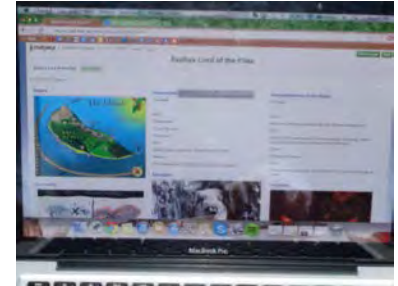
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[Maker Culture.mp4](#)



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# The Process ...

- Contacted parents of boys for consent
- Set aside eight lessons (library reading) over eight weeks
- Explained the purpose and the process to boys
- Surveyed boys regarding their understanding of creativity and space
- Introduced the novel *Lord of the Flies*
- Activities: Lego construction, drawing, poetry reading and writing, art gallery visit, interviewing the author, online forums, group discussions and activities, personal reflection
- Students: discussed, shared, 'made', presented, interviewed and filmed



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# The Conclusions ...

- Maker Space is about community, engagement and networking
  - Engagement is connected with learning
- Blending digital and traditional learning spaces creates dynamic learning opportunities
  - Positive affinity spaces generate creativity and risk-taking
- Making encourages the sharing of ideas
  - Micro-networks contribute to team building



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# The Achievements...

- Understanding the value of making in boys' education
- Creating dynamic and flexible learning environments for boys
- Challenging Faculties to embrace 'tinkering' in their classrooms
- This Action Research project has dovetailed with the cultural and pedagogical paradigm shift within the context of The Southport School



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‘It’s the making, not the marking, that counts ...’



‘There is no standard to creativity ...’