The Role of Collaborative Skills in Enhancing Powerful Group Learning, and Understanding of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

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Why collaboration?

Why collaboration?

"… to do well in today's fast paced, highly social, ultra-competitive and globally connected world, our children need twenty-first-century skills."

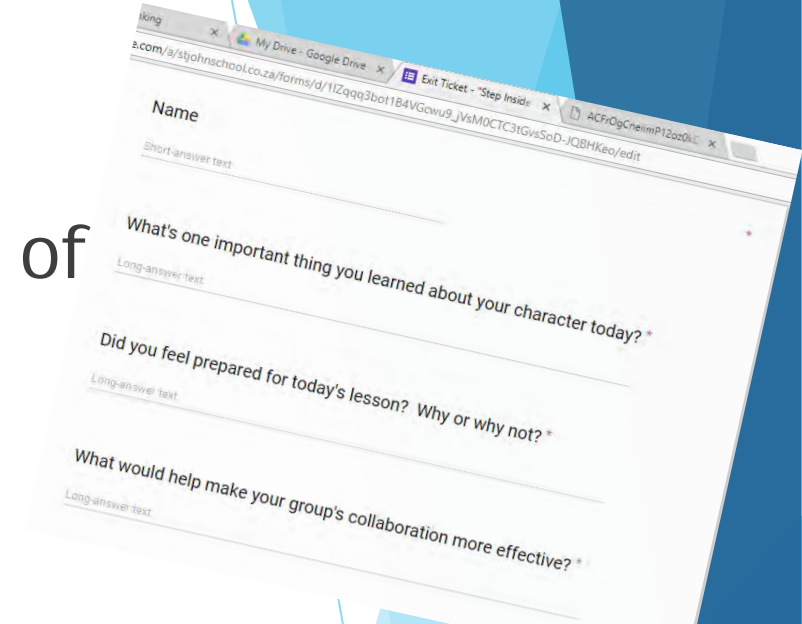Dr Shimi Kang (2015)

St John's Prep School's strategic focus…

- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- **COLLABORATION**

→ 21st Century Skills

The Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills (University of Melbourne)

Data Collection and Analysis

▶ Online surveys – pre-project, for the duration of the project and at its conclusion

▶ Exit tickets

▶ Self- and peer-assessment rubrics

▶ Written artefacts including notes, posters and journals

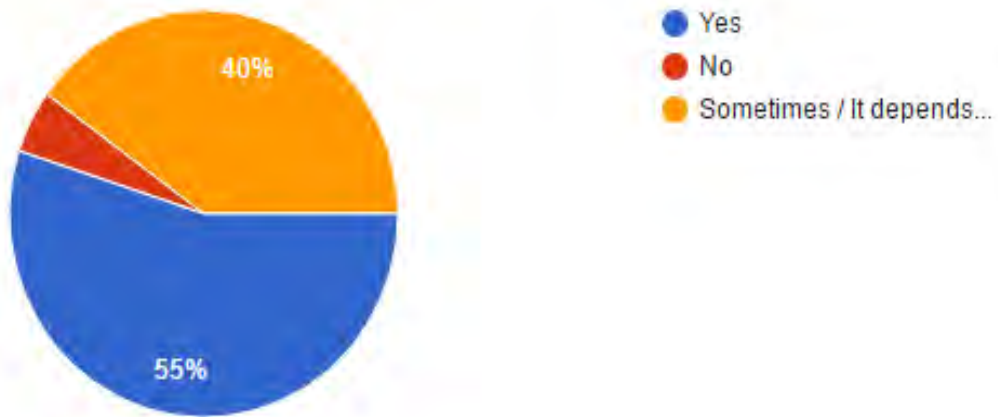▶ Photographs of work and group participation

▶ Video interviews

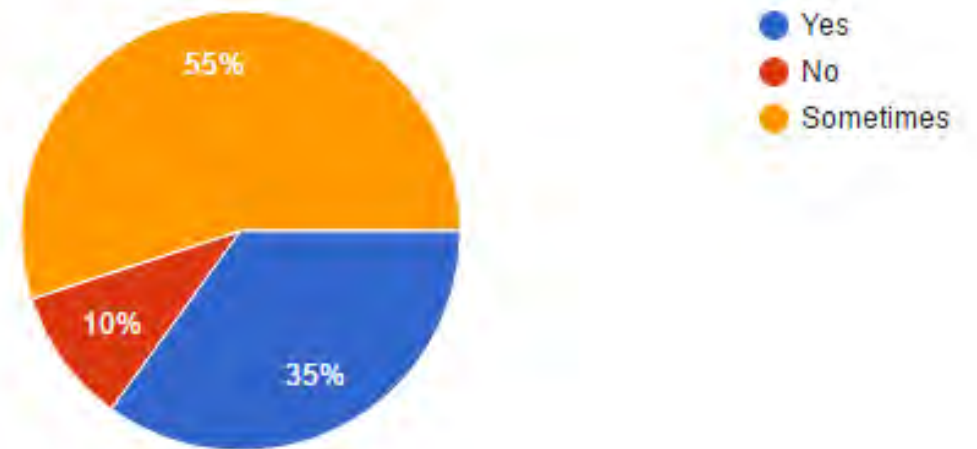# Pre-Project Survey
(22 respondents)

Do you enjoy working in groups?

Rate of success in accomplishing what was set

The most enjoyable aspects of group work:

The benefits of 'group thinking' & sharing ideas	10
Working with friends	4
Getting help from peers	2
The quality of work is enhanced	2
Finishing the task	1
The pressure is shared	1

The least enjoyable aspects of group work:

Not listening	7
Lack of agreement/difficulty reaching consensus	6
'off task' distractions	3
Uncooperative behaviour	3
Friendship issues/working with people "I do not like"	2
Not sharing the workload	1
People not bringing what they needed to bring	1
Shared mark – being penalised for others' work ethic	1

My Action Research Project…

How might the explicit teaching of collaboration skills in a study of *Macbeth* enhance powerful group learning and understanding for Year 7 boys?

My project's design...

STEP ONE

Designing a **group-worthy** task

Group-Worthy Tasks

Lotan, R.A. (2003). Creating caring schools. *Group-worthy tasks.* Retrieved May 13, 2016 from
http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/mar03/vol60/num06/Group-Worthy_Tasks.aspx

▶ The task is **open-ended**

▶ The task requires
complex problem solving

e.g. design an experiment, build a model, interpret a document, solve an authentic maths problem

▶ There are **multiple ways to show competence**

All boys can make use of their unique talents and strengths

Group-Worthy Tasks

Lotan, R.A. (2003). Creating caring schools. *Group-worthy tasks.* Retrieved May 13, 2016 from
http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/mar03/vol60/num06/Group-Worthy_Tasks.aspx

▶ The **content of the task is significant**

    A BIG IDEA is addressed

    Subject specific skills are used

    An essential question is explored

Teaching for Understanding
Inquiry-based learning

▶ The task **requires** group **interdependence** → You need your team members**!**

▶ The task **requires individual accountability** → e.g. submission of a written report upon completion of the project

▶ **Evaluation** criteria are **clear** and made **explicit**

My project's design...

STEP TWO

Explicitly teaching collaboration skills

"Effective groups are made not born."

Harvey and Daniels (2015)

How Proficient Collaborators Think and Act

©2009,2015 by Stephanie Harvey and Harvey "Smokey" Daniels, from *Comprehension and Collaboration*, Rev. ed. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

Image from https://media.licdn.com/mpr/mpr/p/2/005/057/186/3babe0c.jpg

How Proficient Collaborators Think and Act (adapted)

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES/ACTIONS	SOUNDS/LOOKS LIKE
Be responsible to the group	• Come prepared: work completed, materials and notes in hand • Record interesting ideas/questions/artefacts • Take initiative, help people get organised • Live by the group's calendar, work plan, and ground rules • Settle problems within the group • Acknowledge if you're unprepared, and take on some other work	➢ "Does everyone have their articles? Good, let's get going." ➢ "Let me show you this great website I found…" ➢ "I'm sorry, guys, I didn't get the reading done." ➢ "OK, then today I'll take the notes…"
Listen actively	• Make eye contact • Nod, confirm, look interested • Lean in, sit close together • Summarise or paraphrase • Use names • Take notes when helpful	➢ "Joe, pull you chair up closer." ➢ "I think I heard you say…" ➢ "So you think…" ➢ Asking follow up questions
Speak up	• Join in, speak often, be active • Connect your ideas with what others have said • Ask lead and follow-up questions • Use appropriate tone and voice level • Draw upon the notes, materials, or drawings you've brought	➢ "What you said reminded me of…" ➢ "Can I piggyback on this?" ➢ "What made you feel that way?" ➢ "Let me show you my work."

Share the air and encourage others	• Show friendliness and support • Take turns • Be aware of who's contributing; work to balance the airtime • Monitor yourself for dominating or shirking • Invite others to participate • Build upon and learn from others' ideas	➤ "Can you say more about that, Jack?" ➤ "We haven't heard from you in a while, Kgosi." ➤ "I better finish my point and let someone else talk." ➤ "That's a cool idea, Ryan."
Support your views and findings	• Explain and give examples • Refer to specific passages, evidence or artefacts • Connect or contrast your ideas to others' • Dig deeper into the text or topic; revisit important ideas	➤ "I think King Duncan was foolish because…" ➤ Right here on page 15, it says that…" ➤ "The person I interviewed said that…" ➤ "My thinking was a lot like Hamza's …"
Show tolerance and respect	• Receive others' ideas respectfully; no putdowns allowed • Try to restate opposing views • Use neutral language in disagreeing • Offer your different viewpoint; don't be steamrolled • Welcome and seek insight in divergent viewpoints	➤ "Wow, I thought of something totally different." ➤ "I can see your point, but what about …" ➤ "I'm glad you brought that up; I never would have seen it that wat."
Reflect and correct	• Do frequent reflections or "think-backs" on group processes • Identify specific behaviours that helped or hurt the discussion • Talk openly about problems • Make plans to try out new strategies and review effectiveness • Keep a written record of group processing	➤ "What went well today and where did we run into problems?" ➤ "We are not sharing the talk time evenly." ➤ "OK, so what will we do differently during our next meeting?"

My project's design

TIER ONE
Focus on a collaboration skill

TIER TWO
Utilise the collaboration skill in a group-worthy activity
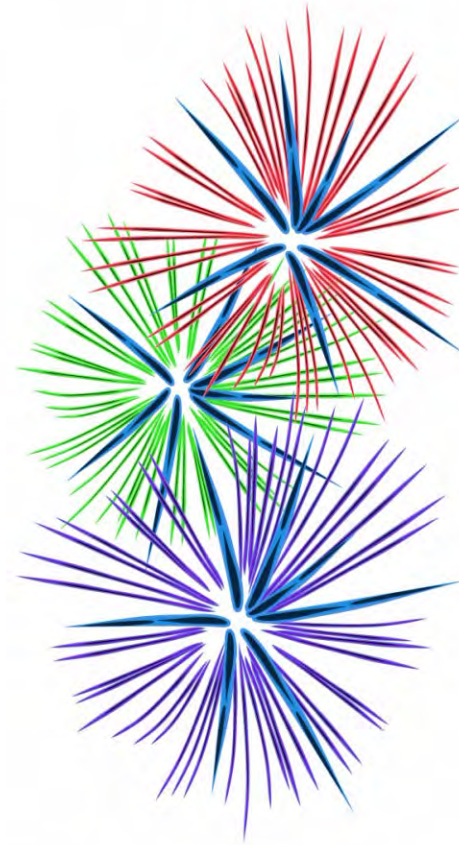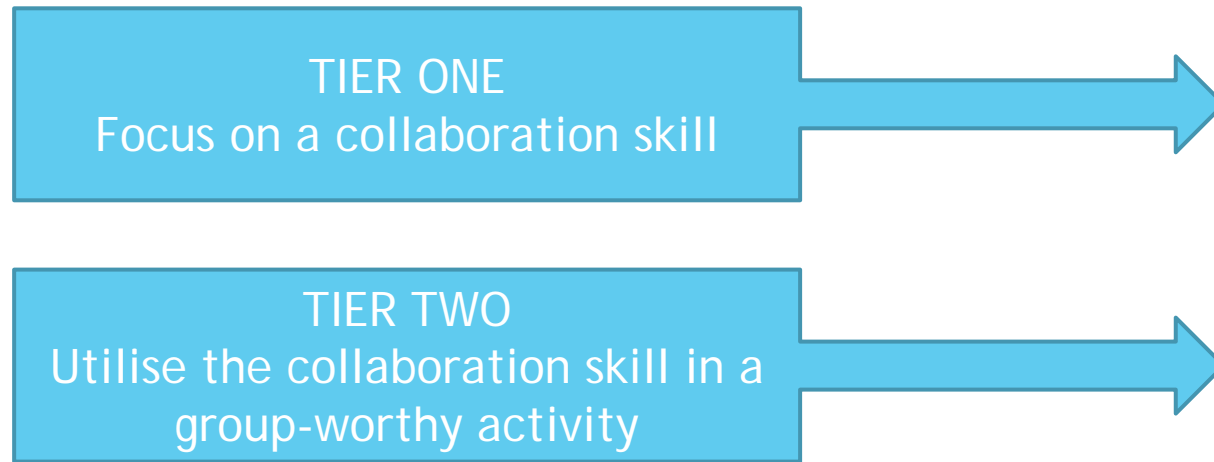
Pre-Project: Preparation

Boys were put into their groups.

They were required to download *Macbeth The Graphic Novel* onto their devices.

They were asked to read the novel and to share any questions or observations in a shared Google doc.

Activity One: Exploring the text

Discussing and exploring deep questions:

- To what extent does the supernatural motivate Macbeth's actions?

- How do humans deal with the conflicting elements in their personalities? (i.e. good vs evil)

- Is Lady Macbeth more responsible and a more evil character than Macbeth?

- Does Macbeth cause his own downfall?

- Does King Duncan deserve what he gets because he is too trusting?

Activity Two: Multiple Perspectives

Using the *Project Zero* MTV routine, *Step Inside*, boys explored the various characters and shared their thinking.

Three core questions guide students in this routine:

- What can the person or thing **perceive?**
- What might the person or thing **know about or believe?**
- What might the person or thing **care about?**

COLLABORATION SKILLS

Be responsible to the group

Listen actively

Speak up

Share the air & encourage others

Support your views and findings

Show tolerance and respect

Reflect and correct

http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/03_ThinkingRoutines/03g_CreativityRoutines/StepInside/StepInside_Routine.html

Activity Three: A Modern Perspective

COLLABORATION SKILLS
Be responsible to the group
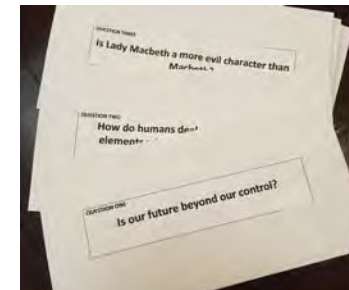Listen actively
Speak up
Share the air & encourage others
Support your views and findings
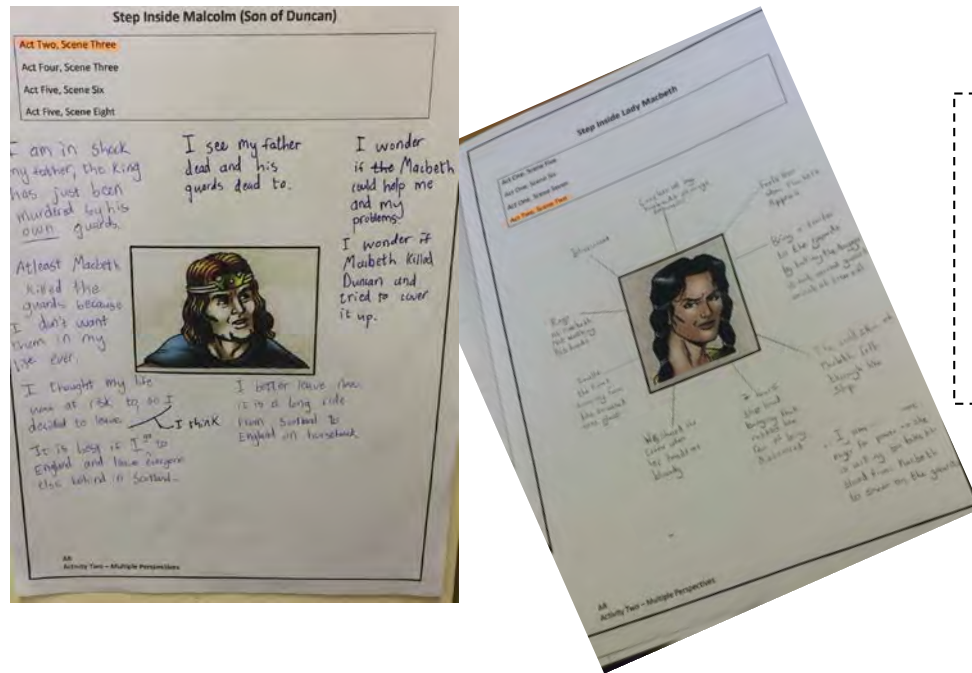Show tolerance and respect
Reflect and correct

Can wanting something too much lead us to do things against our nature?

"Overreaching ambition can lead to dire consequences"

AR Adventure
Activity Three

A Modern Perspective

Article One:

Five men to appear for the murder of DA councillor Johannes Baaitjies

SAfm news
@SAfmnews
✔ Follow

DA councillor, Hannes Beitjies shot and killed shortly after it emerged DA formed a coalition to unseat ANC in Northern Cape municipality.
5:10 PM - 18 Aug 2016 - Johannesburg, South Africa. South Africa
↩ ⟲ 377 ♥ 29

Johannes Baaitjies, 49, was killed just a day before he was sworn in as a member of the opposition-led Kgatelopele Municipality in Danielskuil.

Click on the link below to read the News24 article about this crime.

http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/five-men-to-appear-for-the-murder-of-da-councillor-johannes-baatjies-20161017

AR Adventure
Activity Three

A Modern Perspective

Article Two:

Indian couple accused of faking photo of summit at Mount Everest

Dinesh Rathod and his wife Tarakeshwari, who claim to be the first Indian couple to summit Mount Everest. Photograph: Facebook

Click on the link below to read the Guardian Newspaper article about this event.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/29/mount-everest-summit-india-couple-morphed-photos

AR Adventure
Activity Three

A Modern Perspective

Article Three:

Lance Armstrong: It's not like we just showed up to the Tour de France and won

Click on the link below to read the online article in *Cycling Weekly*.

http://www.cyclingweekly.co.uk/news/latest-news/lance-armstrong-its-not-like-we-just-showed-up-to-the-tour-de-france-and-won-214557

HALL OF FAME

The Final Project

MACBETH – FINAL PROJECT

INSTRUCTIONS

In your groups, you will produce a final project that reflects modern day ambition that has caused a downfall.

The content and setting must be relevant to your lives as young teenage boys.

Your group will decide what the actual product will be:

- dramatic role play e.g. a television news report or a short play;
- a movie trailer;
- an animated app e.g. Telegami or Puppet Pals etc.

When choosing what your final project will be, you must carefully consider the limited time available for preparation.

The final project must be ready by Thursday 3rd November 2016.

Ambition movie

The cheater

Scandals in the schoolyard — Plagiarism

THE STORY OF AMBITION

My findings were...

The need for a structured approach to planning a project that includes the establishment of ground rules.
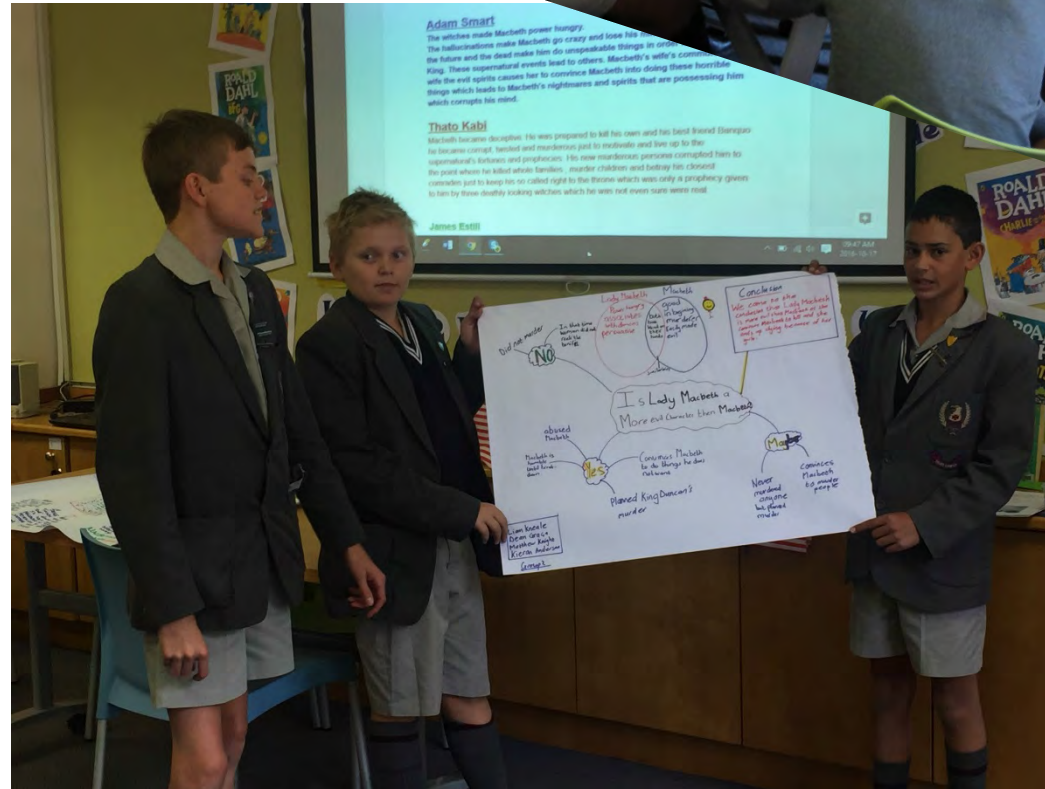
If we had no ground rules it would lead to more arguing and disagreeing which would lead us to falling behind.

I enjoyed being able to discuss my findings with my group and being able to produce a better project with my group.

My findings were…

The need for strategies for effective group communication: active listening; turn taking during discussions

If I didn't understand something I could refer to a group member to help me instead of trying to figure out one of Google's complicated explanations. If we all didn't understand something then we could all discuss it and probably come up with an amazing idea. I also loved the fact that I didn't have to do all the work.

My findings were…

The need for a deliberate focus on respectful interaction and responsibility towards the group

In summary…

"Off task behavior" was minimized; deadlines were met!

Group interactions were optimized through the use of specific collaboration skills so each group benefited from **group thinking**.

Powerful discussions were conducted and complex themes were explored with greater depth, focus and maturity.

The focus on collaboration helped us a lot because this time, we worked together instead of against each other.
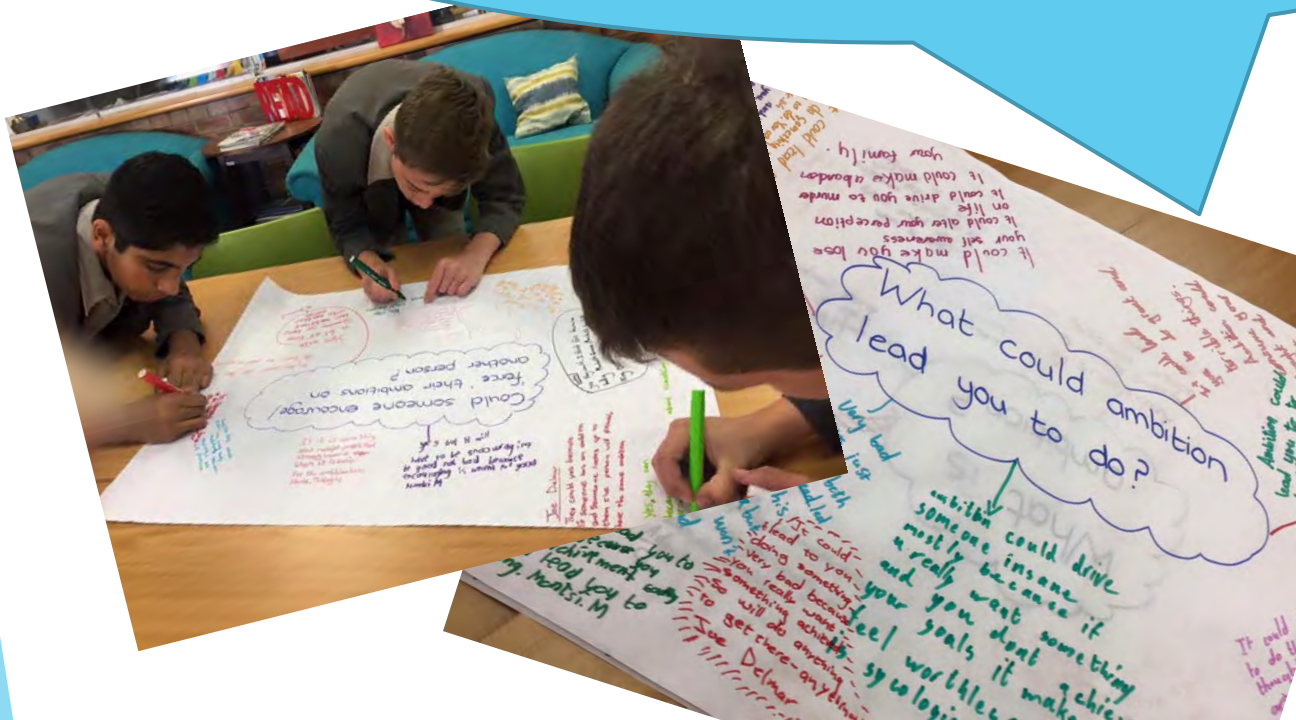
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