

## Refereed Conference Paper

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### Title

Bringing the real world into the classroom – strategies to motivate learning.

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### Abstract

This paper reports on an ongoing case study exploring strategies that motivate learning. The researcher has developed a framework of *real world* learning elements drawn from a combination of learning theories including sociocultural theory, constructivism and authentic learning. Three innovative strategies implemented by the researcher in various learning contexts are described and reasons for their success considered in light of the *real world* learning framework. The strategies include a professional development strategy undertaken with teachers to promote reading in their classrooms; a strategy planned to support tertiary International Students with speaking English, and a strategy used with pre-service teachers as part of their undergraduate study of Children's Literature.

### Keywords

Strategies, motivate learning, real world learning elements, sociocultural theory, constructivism, authentic learning, professional development, tertiary international students, pre-service teachers, children's literature.

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## **Bringing the real world into the classroom – strategies to motivate learning.**

### **Introduction**

With over twenty years experience in a variety of roles in education, including teacher, literacy consultant and academic, identifying ideal conditions to foster real learning has long been a quest for me. I have watched with interest how seemingly effortlessly and effectively, we go about everyday life and during these day to day experiences are often immersed in real learning and the purposeful applying of that learning in our homes, workplaces and daily activities. I have watched the absorption and animation my friends and I displayed in our book club discussions and compared it to the fragmented teacher-centred approaches to reading I have often seen in classrooms, where students seem totally disengaged from the book or task. At university I observed the steadfast intent to communicate when International Students are involved in informal but purposeful conversation in corridors, in comparison to their isolated study of English by text book or audio instruction. I watched and listened to the nature of discussion when people gather in cafés - the attention paid to one another, the questioning, swapping of information, reflecting and responding that frequently takes place around a table. How could this natural motivation and engagement with learning in *real world* contexts be captured and replicated in classroom environments whether in school or tertiary contexts?

These questions led to the analysis of my observations of *real world* learning in relation to theories of learning and the development of a framework of *real world learning* elements. The framework is discussed here and exemplified by a description of three *real world learning* strategies incorporating these elements.

### **Real World Learning**

The term *real world* learning refers to the types of meaningful interaction and purposeful experiences that occur in everyday social contexts. Meaningful interaction in *real world* learning frequently involves articulating thoughts, collaborating with peers, actively constructing meaning by relating new learning or ideas to past experiences or knowledge, and seeking assistance or expert guidance.

Purposeful experiences are usually underpinned by some compelling reason for undertaking the learning. The learner becomes motivated, drives the learning in the direction that most effectively guides towards success, initiates a change of direction when needed and calls on resources that solve the immediate question or problem. The 'assessment' of the success of the learning is determined by whether the reasons for undertaking the learning were satisfactorily fulfilled.

These 'ways' of going about learning in the real world are reflected in theoretical literature that acknowledges the complex, sociocultural nature of learning. *Real world* learning encompasses learner action, thought and communication processes attributable to learning theories that embrace constructivism and sociocultural perspectives of learning.

Constructivism places emphasis on the learner and the way in which the learner actively combines experiences or concepts with prior knowledge to *construct* new knowledge (vonGlaserfeld, 1995). Constructivism stresses the importance of the learning process over product and the potentially deeper understanding and learning constructed through the process. The significance of the social interaction surrounding this construction of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978) led to sociocultural constructivist views of learning that recognise language is fundamental to thinking and an individual's learning and meaning making occurs in the social interactions within which the individual is engaged (Gee, 1990; Wells, 1999). Sociocultural constructivists believe that learning occurs through interaction in a social milieu (Rushton, Eitelgeorge & Zickafoose, 2003).

Much has been written about the social nature of learning and the importance of social interaction. Sociocultural learning theories promote collaborative classrooms (Nevin, Smith & Udvari-Solner, 1994), cooperative learning (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994) and communities of learners (Marshall 1999) to build positive relationships. The value of developing positive relationships in the classroom and its contribution to successful learning is well recognized but the social rewards can go beyond academic achievement and prepare students for successful living: 'the ability of all students to learn to work cooperatively with others is the keystone to building and maintaining stable marriages, families, careers and friendships' (Johnson & Johnson, 1994 p.43). Wellbeing in society reflects the levels of functional, cooperative relationships within its various layers and structures. Providing contexts which develop positive relationships and promote harmony and justice potentially benefit our world at large.

*Real world* learning is also a process of constructing meaningful representations. It involves making sense of one's experiential world through authentic learning. *Authentic learning* refers to teaching and learning processes that encompass real-world problems and simulations closely resembling the field of study (Nicaise, Gibney & Crane, 2000). Characteristics of authentic learning include providing authentic contexts and tasks with real world relevance. Learning should be embedded in social practice with opportunities to examine content and tasks from a variety of perspectives and roles. Students collaboratively construct knowledge through activities that encourage metacognition, self-analysis, self-regulation, and self-awareness and contain opportunities for articulation and reflection. In authentic learning contexts, teachers take on the role of coach and facilitator, use scaffolding techniques to help students perform beyond the limits of their ability and integrate assessment with learning tasks (Murphy, 1997; Herrington & Oliver, 2000, McKenzie, Morgan, Cochrane, Watson & Roberts, 2002).

Motivation is a key aspect of *real world* learning. Motivation to learn something is often driven by a need or purpose but also influenced by self determination and the social learning environment. Motivation is generated by the need to feel competent, autonomous and well thought of by others (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Self determination describes the degree of autonomy felt by a learner and involves goal setting, self monitoring and having some control over actions, thoughts and feelings – it is a powerful determinant of lifelong learning and motivation (McLean, 2003). The lack of engagement many students experience in traditional classroom environments accounts for the growing interest in theories of motivation (Bandura, 1997) for successful learning and engagement (Cambourne, 1999).

When students are actively engaged and take responsibility for their learning, a sense of empowerment can occur (Rushton et al, 2003). The theory of flow, (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) which describes the state of being completely focussed or steadfastly intent on a task has important implications for motivating learning and complements constructivist principles. Conditions that encourage flow include clear goals, a sense of control, a balance between ability level and challenge, opportunity for deep thought and concentration, and direct feedback. Educational authorities in the United States and Australia have included aspects of these conditions in policy frameworks depicting effective pedagogy (Newmann, 1996; QSRLS, 2001; NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003). Conditions

include intellectual quality (deep thought and concentration), supportive learning environments (feedback) with students' self-regulation (clear goals, sense of control) and connectedness (balancing ability level and challenge). Additionally, real-life contexts or problems are included as significant to meaningful learning (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003).

The *real world* learning framework proposed here comprises seven elements deriving from a combination of the various learning theories discussed above. Blending constructivist principles with a sociocultural perspective and characteristics from authentic learning, flow and motivational theory into a framework of seven elements provides a manageable scaffold for creating meaningful and engaging classroom learning strategies.

The framework identifies seven elements that can be used to design *real world* learning strategies to encourage motivation and successful learning. Each element is a descriptor synthesising conditions or characteristics drawn from one or more of the various learning theories discussed. The elements identified are: autonomy, achievement, purpose, motivation, social reciprocity, knowledge construction and empathy. Table 1 lists the elements and describes features that reflect learning in the real world.

**Table 1: Framework of *real world* learning elements**

<b><i>Real World Learning Element</i></b>	<b><i>Features of the element</i></b>
Autonomy	The learner has a degree of choice in the directions and way of learning. There is appropriate scope for mediating and controlling learning. The learner sets goals and manages their learning direction. The learner has responsibility for some or all decision making in relation to the learning task. There is opportunity for self analysis and reflection.
Achievement	The teacher models, scaffolds, coaches and facilitates learning. The learner has access to expertise in the field. There is an appropriate balance between the ability level of the learner and the challenge of the task. The teacher scaffolds learning by guided participation and 'bridging' learning (Rogoff, 1990) to provide an increasing level of difficulty of tasks and learning challenge. Errors provide opportunities for new insights into learning.
Purpose	Learning is contextualised with concepts interrelated and links made within and across subject areas. There is a reason for undertaking tasks – something hangs on the balance of achieving the learning or completing the task. Assessment is integral to the learning task.
Motivation	The learning environment, tasks and resources are authentic. They include realistic complexities, problem solving and simulate real life

<b><i>Real World Learning Element</i></b>	<b><i>Features of the element</i></b>
	experience. Narrative is used to engage student interest and understanding.
Reciprocity	Collaborative and cooperative learning is encouraged. Learning processes include articulating thoughts, sustained discussion, negotiation, sharing experience and reflection with others. Respect for others' viewpoints and the valuing of diverse social and cultural backgrounds is expected.
Knowledge construction	Knowledge is actively constructed not passively reproduced. Prior knowledge is built upon and connections are articulated to new knowledge. Metacognition, deep understanding, problem solving and higher order thinking skills are emphasised and valued.
Empathy	Cultural knowledge of diverse social groups is incorporated in the content of learning tasks. Multiple perspectives and viewpoints are presented and explored. Appreciation for diversity and inclusivity is valued and encouraged.

This initial foray into defining *real world* learning should be viewed as exploratory and organic. The list of elements and features are proposed here as descriptive and not finite. There is no particular priority and given the complex nature of learning, overlap inevitably occurs and is expected. Further exploration of *real world* learning concepts and strategies will possibly lead to the identification of new elements and certainly to adding more features for existing elements.

The elements provide a framework from which *real world* learning strategies can be developed. Combining characteristics of sociocultural constructivist learning principles, authentic learning, flow and motivational theory to identify a *real world* learning framework allows the development of strategies conducive to engaging and preparing students for successful *real world* living. The following strategies provide examples of ways in which *real world* learning can be brought to classroom and tertiary learning contexts to motivate and encourage successful learning.

### **Real World Learning Strategies**

The *real world* learning strategies described here were designed to foster innovation and encourage motivated, cooperative learning. The strategies were purposefully developed for three different learning contexts. The first, *Literature & Latté*, is a professional development project designed for use with teachers. The project involves meeting with a group of teachers in a café to establish a book club and guide the teachers towards transferring the *real world* features of a book club to their classrooms. The second strategy is a project called *Tea 'n Talk* which supports International Students with their English speaking skills during their studies at university. The students engage in authentic conversation in a simulated everyday social context. The third strategy adapts the book club concept from *Literature & Latté* for use with undergraduate pre-service teaching students. A tutorial book club session, called *Linking Literature*, is implemented as part of a children's literature course.

The strategies are described here in more detail with tables summarising how features of the strategies reflect the elements of *real world* learning. The descriptions include the purpose of the strategy - its aim and intended audience, followed by a description of the format of the strategy. The format describes how the strategy was actually undertaken with a particular group and the outcomes from its implementation. The way in which the strategy incorporates elements of the *real world* learning framework are then provided in tabular form.

### **Strategy 1 : Literature & Latté**

#### **Purpose**

*Literature & Latté* is a professional development strategy that can be used by a literacy consultant or professional development leader. It involves teachers meeting in a café to explore what avid adult readers do in book clubs and how that can be replicated in their primary classrooms. The strategy begins with a narrative by the leader to contextualize the benefits of book clubs in classrooms.

#### **Format**

A group of primary teachers met with a literacy consultant in a local café after school who led their professional development sessions.

The literacy consultant began the first session by discussing the importance of literature in her own life. She told of an increasing awareness that the sharing of literature that took place in various book clubs to which she belonged, added a richer dimension not only to her understandings and insights from reading but provided new perspectives and relevance to her life overall.

She recounted her own experiences in book clubs and explained that initial, informal explorations of literature soon led to more formal methods with friends to allow the shared reading to take place in a more regular, organized way. She described how they began to research what books were recommended by experts, how they kept lists of those that interested them, how they planned and prioritized their selections, how they recorded their responses at the time of reading in order to recall them when they met for regular sharing sessions and how they began to keep commonplace books and record 'touchstones' (Arnold, 1958).

The literacy consultant told the group of teachers that she observed all of this with growing professional interest. She became aware of how much they looked forward to these events. She knew they certainly enjoyed the social aspect of meeting in a café and enjoying coffee and cake together but she noticed how focused and intent her friends were when the book club discussions took place. She noticed that the discussions involved making connections between their reading and their own lives. The reading responses and the sharing resonated across aspects of their lives not just at the time of the book club meeting but reverberated throughout their days as they went about their lives – often resulting in impromptu phonecalls between them to make additional comments such as 'it just occurred to me that....' and 'I've just realized...'. She noticed that they were becoming more and more enthusiastic with their reading, they were choosing more difficult books and developing an increasing literary awareness. They began reading Proust, Shakespeare sonnets and challenging modern classics by writers such as Annie Proulx.

She asked the teachers to consider if this is how lifelong reading is encouraged. She pointed out how differently the shared book discussions were between her book club friends to that often observed in classrooms. Never did her

friends ask questions of each other of the type known as 'reading comprehension'. She was never asked questions such as 'In what type of house did first little pig live?' or 'What word did Charlotte weave the second time for Wilbur?'. Instead they talked about what puzzled them, or grabbed their attention, or added meaning to their lives.

She added that sharing literature allowed her friends to:

laugh, cry, whinge, nod in agreement, ponder life and develop an awareness of the universality of the human condition, wonder, cheer, love, hate, puzzle, explore relationships, go to places they'd never been, be in situations they're not likely to be in, compare their own lives with the situations they were reading in texts.

She also added that their own relationships strengthened and grew from sharing these insights and relating them to their personal lives. New pools of shared meanings and understandings developed. They also drew on their own early reading experiences to explain their interpretations of their new reading. This helped them to learn more about each other as readers and people.

Stemming from this narrative, the literacy consultant and teachers began to compile a list of strategies readers use in real book clubs. The list included:

- They make notes and share aspects of the book that strike or impact on them in some way
- They share the responses in a comfortable, collaborative way
- They make interpretations
- They retrace moments of realisations or epiphanies and explore what triggers them
- They read excerpts aloud to each other to provide examples for their responses
- They look forward and backwards in the text to make connections
- They have different interpretations
- These different interpretations sometimes lead to changing opinions – even swapping their opinions
- The joint deconstruction leads to new, shared understandings
- The discussion expands to incorporate increasing literary vocabulary and knowledge.

The literacy consultant then asked the group to consider how these strategies could be transferred to their own classrooms to motivate their students to read. She suggested they meet regularly and establish their own book club to explore and identify what they do as adults in a real book club and collaboratively devise ways of transferring the processes to their classrooms to encourage lifelong reading. Using Meek's (1988) argument that what happens to us as young readers determines whether we become lifelong readers, the literacy consultant begins the teachers' book club by getting the teachers to complete a literary ontogenesis – an autobiography of how they themselves learnt to read. Meek describes this as our literary ontogenesis. Understanding authorship, audience, illustration and iconic interpretation are part of the ontogenesis of literary competences (p.10).

Over a period of time, the teachers participate in book club strategies that include:

- Literary ontogenesis compilation and sharing
- Research interesting, recommended books (awards, reviews, bookshop guides)
- Make reading selections
- Plan a reading schedule
- Read
- Note responses
- Share responses in a comfortable, social situation
- Value others' responses.

Under the literacy consultant’s guidance, the teachers set up student book clubs in their classrooms – called *Literature & Lemonade*, replicating the strategies they were implementing in their own book club. The teachers continued meeting as an adult book club in cafés, and incorporated children’s literature in their reading selections. This also provided a useful forum for discussing and planning their classroom book club strategies.

**Outcomes of the strategy**

The following comments from two teachers involved in the professional development highlight successful outcomes from the strategy:

*‘Literature & Latté was a positive learning experience. Our classroom has become more cooperative and more literate...promoting reading for pleasure and many students feeling their speed in reading and discussion skills had improved. So in spite of there being less teacher direction – learning outcomes were being achieved (so I didn’t need to be anxious)...many aspects of the project have intrinsically become part of our classroom practices’*

*‘I found reading became a process for enjoyment and sharing – the boys gained a greater understanding of the books they read and were able to identify literary aspects of the book by sharing thoughts...they didn’t see it as a ‘school’ task.’*

**Links to real world learning elements**

The following table outlines the relationship between features of the *Literature & Latté* strategy and the *real world* learning framework:

**Table 2: Real World Learning features - Literature & Latté**

<p><b>Real World Learning</b></p>	<p><b>Literature &amp; Latté</b></p> <p><b>Teachers in professional development sessions and/or students in classroom book club experience or are engaged in:</b></p>
<p><b>Autonomy</b></p> <p>The learner has a degree of choice in the directions and way of learning. There is appropriate scope for mediating and controlling learning. The learner sets goals and manages their learning direction. The learner has responsibility for some or all decision making in relation to the learning task. There is opportunity for self analysis and reflection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of texts</li> <li>• Determining reading schedule</li> <li>• Setting goals for reading</li> <li>• Self analysis of response to texts</li> <li>• Reflection – verbal and written</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achievement</b></p> <p>The teacher models, scaffolds, coaches and facilitates learning. The learner has access to expertise in the field. There is an appropriate balance between the ability level of the learner and the challenge of the task. participation and ‘bridging’ learning (Rogoff, 1990) to provide an increasing level of difficulty of tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy consultant/professional development leader’s explanation of book club concepts</li> <li>• Guided participation with setting up classroom book clubs – teachers and students have opportunities to ask questions to bridge their current knowledge with new learning</li> <li>• Access to expertise from literary critics and</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Real World Learning</i></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Literature &amp; Latté</i></b></p> <p><b>Teachers in professional development sessions and/or students in classroom book club experience or are engaged in:</b></p>
<p>and learning challenge. Errors provide opportunities for new insights into learning.</p>	<p>reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to literary theory</li> </ul>
<p><b>Purpose</b> Learning is contextualised with concepts interrelated and links made within and across subject areas. There is a reason for undertaking tasks – something hangs on the balance of achieving the learning or completing the task. Assessment is integral to the learning task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contextualizing of book club concept by Literacy consultant/professional development leader</li> <li>• Transfer of professional development experience to school classroom strategy</li> <li>• Contextualised, cross-disciplinary themes from literature</li> <li>• Responsibility to group to ensure reading goals and schedules are met</li> </ul>
<p><b>Motivation</b> The learning environment, tasks and resources are authentic. They include realistic complexities, problem solving and simulate real life experience. Narrative is used to engage student interest and understanding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real world context – teachers meet in cafes, students simulate a café environment in classroom</li> <li>• Problem solving – group consensus, literary complexities</li> <li>• Use of narrative to engage teachers in book club concept by Literacy Consultant/professional development leader</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reciprocity</b> Collaborative and cooperative learning is encouraged. Learning processes include articulating thoughts, sustained discussion, negotiation, sharing experience and reflection with others. Respect for others' viewpoints and the valuing of diverse social and cultural backgrounds is expected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group learning in a collaborative forum</li> <li>• Literary ontogenesis – shared reflection</li> <li>• Weekly shared activities, response and reflection</li> <li>• Designing and developing a collaborative classroom strategy for student bookclubs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Knowledge Construction</b> Knowledge is actively constructed not passively reproduced. Prior knowledge is built upon and connections are articulated to new knowledge. Metacognition, deep understanding, problem solving and higher order thinking skills are emphasised and valued.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compiling a literary ontogenesis - requires analyzing current reading practice in light of past experience and sharing reflections</li> <li>• New literary knowledge provides content for shared discussion and deeper understanding</li> <li>• Use of journals for deep concentration and reflection</li> <li>• Analysis and synthesis of literary elements, theory and response to texts</li> <li>• Consideration of ways to transfer book club concept to classroom strategy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Empathy</b> Cultural knowledge of diverse social groups is incorporated in the content of learning tasks. Multiple perspectives and viewpoints are presented and explored. Appreciation for diversity and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality literature - frequently portrays multiple perspectives and diversity</li> <li>• Literature that builds cultural knowledge</li> <li>• Appreciation for diversity of learners</li> </ul>

<b><i>Real World Learning</i></b>	<b><i>Literature &amp; Latté</i></b>
	<b>Teachers in professional development sessions and/or students in classroom book club experience or are engaged in:</b>
inclusivity is valued and encouraged.	

## Strategy 2 : Tea ‘n Talk

### Purpose

*Tea ‘n Talk* is the colloquial title given to a strategy that supports International tertiary students experiencing difficulty with English. The project aims to increase students’ confidence and language skills by providing a forum for students to participate in English conversation in a relaxed, friendly setting.

### Format

A group of twelve International Students, nominated for their difficulties with speaking English, were invited to participate in theme-based, guided conversations in an informal setting with morning tea provided. The sessions took place sitting around a table simulating an everyday social context conducive to authentic conversation. A range of nationalities participated in *Tea ‘n Talk* including Vietnamese, Chinese, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and Australian.

The project was supervised by a Senior Lecturer and three fluent English-speaking students were employed as Conversation Guides to facilitate and encourage the participation of the International Students in conversation.

A series of six weekly sessions were planned with theme-based conversations focusing on a range of open-ended topics which included Entertainment, Food, Travel and Celebrations. The session format also provided opportunities for students to practise conversational English using greetings and partaking in the sharing of food and drink. Each forty five minute session comprised a warm up activity to form small groups, the sharing of morning tea, a themed conversation and a concluding question that brought the whole group together again for closure. A budget allocation was provided to cover catering, administration and employment costs for the Conversation Guides and an on-campus meeting room was used for the venue.

The mix of nationalities led to a rich sharing of cultural beliefs and practices. The warm up activities consisted of a game or sharing photos or resources related to the conversation theme. These icebreakers provided a fun, informal introduction to each session which relaxed the students. The Conversation Guides were prepared for the themed conversation with open ended questions and conversation starters to sustain discussion in the small groups. The strategy was planned to provide a forum for the students to practise the skills they learn in their formal instruction, not to provide formal English instruction or to replace any of the formal instruction programs in which the International Students were involved.

The students completed questionnaires at the end of the program and all indicated increased confidence from participating in the strategy. In addition to confidence building, *Tea ‘n Talk* helped to build relationships and promoted cultural understanding amongst the students. In response to what they gained from *Tea ‘n Talk*, comments included:

- Meeting new people from different backgrounds

- I met new friends
- Shared with friends about difficulties in learning
- I have enjoyed Western way of being friendly
- It provided opportunity for me to chat in more relaxed context.

The Conversation Guides strongly contributed to the success of the project with their enthusiasm and willingness to critically reflect on each session and improve facilitation. They also gained from the project as the following excerpts from their reflections demonstrate:

- I have gained an increased patience and urge to help make International Students to feel comfortable, so as to help them feel confident when using English.
- The final session was extremely fulfilling and satisfying in the sense that everyone was so relaxed and comfortable with each other. The hard work paid off and we all left with a little sadness for its completion.
- I gained respect for all international students and realised how difficult their time at university in another country must be. I gained some skills that will assist me in teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) and I met some really great people. It was rewarding when the students would say hello in passing and when they would come to you with a question. It felt good being able to make the transition that little easier.

### **Outcomes of the strategy**

It is apparent that many International Students need support with both language skills and opportunities to socialise with other students. Questionnaire responses to the questions “What did you find beneficial about Tea ‘n Talk?” suggests positive outcomes that include:

- Building up confidence levels in starting a talk with anyone in *Tea ‘n Talk* made me build up my initiation in starting a conversation with anyone I meet.
- I like the different topics, they are interesting.
- Be more aware of different culture/Know more friends/My confidence in talking with friends has been increased.

The personal and social benefits the students attribute to *Tea ‘n Talk* suggest the project provides:

- a forum for developing sensitivity, understanding and respect for cultural diversity
- a safe haven for making mistakes with language learning
- an opportunity to form relationships and friendships with peers.

A final word from one of the International Students, sums up the success of this project :

*I liked this concept and more such should be put up in future as well.*

### **Links to real world learning elements**

The following table outlines the relationship between features of the *Tea ‘n Talk* strategy and the *real world* learning framework:

**Table 3: Real World Learning features - Tea ‘n Talk**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Real World Learning</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tea 'n Talk</b></p> <p><b>International Students and Conversation Guides experience or are engaged in:</b></p>
<p><b>Autonomy</b></p> <p>The learner has a degree of choice in the directions and way of learning. There is appropriate scope for mediating and controlling learning. The learner sets goals and manages their learning direction. The learner has responsibility for some or all decision making in relation to the learning task. There is opportunity for self analysis and reflection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversation Guides develop themed conversation program</li> <li>• International Students control the pace contribute at their level of ability</li> <li>• Open-ended, themed conversations allow scope for self determining level of involvement by International Students</li> <li>• Reflection – verbal and written</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achievement</b></p> <p>The teacher models, scaffolds, coaches and facilitates learning.</p> <p>The learner has access to expertise in the field. There is an appropriate balance between the ability level of the learner and the challenge of the task. participation and 'bridging' learning (Rogoff, 1990) to provide an increasing level of difficulty of tasks and learning challenge.</p> <p>Errors provide opportunities for new insights into learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversation guides model and scaffold English conversation</li> <li>• International students receive expert 'live' guidance in English conversation</li> <li>• International Students are encouraged to view their language errors as opportunities to learn and practice</li> <li>• Warm up activities ease International Students into new knowledge of English</li> <li>• International students are informed of the conversation theme prior to each session allowing them to prepare for any challenges they may perceive</li> </ul>
<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Learning is contextualised with concepts interrelated and links made within and across subject areas. There is a reason for undertaking tasks – something hangs on the balance of achieving the learning or completing the task. Assessment is integral to the learning task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful, real conversation takes place in sharing food and beverages and with a themed conversation</li> <li>• Contextualised, cross-disciplinary themes are used for conversation</li> <li>• International Students need to improve their English language skills to succeed with their study</li> </ul>
<p><b>Motivation</b></p> <p>The learning environment, tasks and resources are authentic. They include realistic complexities, problem solving and simulate real life experience. Narrative is used to engage student interest and understanding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real world context – students meet around a table and share morning tea in a realistic setting conducive to conversation</li> <li>• Language support provided in informal, collegial forum</li> <li>• Open-ended conversation themes based on universal topics allow all students to contribute and engage personal interest</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reciprocity</b></p> <p>Collaborative and cooperative learning is encouraged. Learning processes include articulating thoughts, sustained discussion, negotiation, sharing experience and reflection with</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group learning in a collaborative forum</li> <li>• Small group discussion</li> <li>• Guided dialogue and collaborative conversation</li> <li>• Valuing different points of view and cultural</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Real World Learning</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tea 'n Talk</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>International Students and Conversation Guides experience or are engaged in:</b></p>
<p>others. Respect for others' viewpoints and the valuing of diverse social and cultural backgrounds is expected.</p>	<p>beliefs</p>
<p><b>Knowledge Construction</b>            Knowledge is actively constructed not passively reproduced. Prior knowledge is built upon and connections are articulated to new knowledge. Metacognition, deep understanding, problem solving and higher order thinking skills are emphasised and valued.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared construction of conversation</li> <li>• Building on existing knowledge and skills to increase knowledge of English conversation</li> <li>• Non-threatening forum in which to ask questions and solve problems</li> </ul>
<p><b>Empathy</b>            Cultural knowledge of diverse social groups is incorporated in the content of learning tasks. Multiple perspectives and viewpoints are presented and explored. Appreciation for diversity and inclusivity is valued and encouraged.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse nationalities in group enable sharing of cultural values, beliefs and attitudes</li> <li>• Builds cultural knowledge</li> <li>• Sustained conversation provides opportunities to learn and appreciate diversity</li> </ul>

### Strategy 3 : Linking Literature

#### Purpose

*Linking Literature* is an innovative strategy designed for use with pre-service teachers requiring the formation of book club groups in tutorials. The book club session of the tutorial is called *Linking Literature*. The goals of *Linking Literature* are to provide opportunities for tertiary students to cooperatively learn, share ideas and reflect on children's literature.

#### Format

Drawing on the format and procedures of *Literature & Latté* this strategy was used with pre-service teachers in their first year of study at university. As part of their Children's Literature course, the students were asked to form groups of four during the third week of their first semester to set up book clubs. The *Linking Literature* book club formed part of their course assessment – students were required to compile a book club journal with evidence of their leadership preparation and reflections.

The strategy was contextualized for the students by explaining to them that by collaboratively selecting and reading, sharing experiences and responses we grow together as learners, gaining insights and knowledge as we discover the joy of reading literature. Book clubs provide a purposeful forum for this growth to occur.

During the first two weeks of lectures and tutorials the students were prepared for the book clubs by the introduction of cooperative learning strategies, literary elements and activities to respond to texts. Several cooperative discussion strategies were modeled, and both lectures and tutorials focussed on literary theory and book club concepts using several *real world* texts.

Linking Literature required students to:

- Form small groups of about 4 students
- Develop a roster so that each student takes turns to lead the group for two sessions
- Write and share their reading histories (literary ontogenesis)
- Cooperatively select 3 novels and 6 picture books to read during weeks 3 to 10 of semester
- Collaboratively plan a common reading schedule with the group
- Read and make notes of responses
- Share responses in a comfortable, collaborative session in which personal connections, experiences, open-ended questions and reflections are welcomed
- Incorporate growing literary knowledge into the weekly discussion sessions and record in journals to gain deeper levels of understanding
- Maintain a *Linking Literature* journal that records thoughts, responses, discussions and preparation for sessions as leader.

The students enthusiastically formed their book clubs, researched and made their reading choices. They planned their reading schedule and prepared for leading and contributing to the book club sessions. The weekly book club leaders went to great lengths to prepare effective discussion activities for their literature choices. The recursive nature of the book club discussions encouraged deep thinking and greater understanding. Students became very focused and engaged in their tasks. Student responses to the *Linking Literature* book clubs indicate they developed increased knowledge of literary theory, motivation for reading generally and an insight into the quality of children's literature available.

### **Outcomes of the strategy**

The following comment from a mature age student is a typical example of student reflections of Linking Literature and provides evidence of the power of book clubs to not only enthuse students about literature but to build positive, collaborative relationships:

*The book club experience has given me the opportunity to step back and look at the big picture in a way that no other experience has done in my life before. I have worked in the legal industry for the past 15 or so years, and have often encountered people that I have had conflict with, or just have not liked. This experience has taught me the importance and value of listening to others' point of view, and seeing things from their side before making judgments. I will cherish this experience for that reason if nothing else....I feel that I have not only grown personally from this experience, but that I have also developed a better understanding of the importance of providing quality literature to children. Through quality literature, children can learn so much about themselves and the world they live in. As a group we discussed and looked at different ways in which literature can be used. Not only to build comprehension and a love of reading, but we also learnt that there are endless ways that books can be used as a link to other parts of the curriculum. It is with sadness that this journey ends for me. After discussing it with other members of the group we have agreed to continue meeting to discuss other subjects and units that we are studying over the course of this degree. Being a book club member has shown me the importance of sharing ideas, and gaining different perspectives in order to build a greater understanding of things that I find challenging. We have also discussed the idea of keeping a commonplace book, and have agreed to share our thoughts and feelings through this medium now and into the future. For me, the book club was a wonderful opportunity to share ideas, where I felt safe and secure in doing so. At no time did I feel that I was being judged by the others, and I believe that this enabled me to*

express my opinion in an open and heartfelt way. I will not only treasure the knowledge that I have gained over these past few weeks, but will also treasure the newly formed friendships that I have gained through this shared experience.

### Links to real world learning elements

The following table outlines the relationship between features of the *Linking Literature* strategy and the *real world* learning framework:

**Table 4: Real World Learning features - Linking Literature**

<b>Real World Learning</b>	<b>Linking Literature</b> <b>Pre-service teaching students experience or are engaged in:</b>
<p><b>Autonomy</b></p> <p>The learner has a degree of choice in the directions and way of learning. There is appropriate scope for mediating and controlling learning. The learner sets goals and manages their learning direction. The learner has responsibility for some or all decision making in relation to the learning task. There is opportunity for self analysis and reflection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choosing group members with whom to form a book club</li> <li>• Selection of texts</li> <li>• Determining reading schedule</li> <li>• Setting goals for reading</li> <li>• Designing activities for responding to texts</li> <li>• Leading two bookclub sessions</li> <li>• Self analysis of response to texts</li> <li>• Reflection – verbal and written</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achievement</b></p> <p>The teacher models, scaffolds, coaches and facilitates learning. The learner has access to expertise in the field. There is an appropriate balance between the ability level of the learner and the challenge of the task. participation and 'bridging' learning (Rogoff, 1990) to provide an increasing level of difficulty of tasks and learning challenge. Errors provide opportunities for new insights into learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modelling of cooperative learning strategies</li> <li>• Explanation of book club concepts</li> <li>• Guided participation with setting up classroom book clubs –students have opportunities to ask questions to bridge their current knowledge with new learning about literary elements and theory</li> <li>• Scaffolding of collaborative and literary strategies</li> <li>• Access to expertise from literary critics and reviews</li> <li>• Access to literary theory</li> </ul>
<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p>Learning is contextualised with concepts interrelated and links made within and across subject areas. There is a reason for undertaking tasks – something hangs on the balance of achieving the learning or completing the task. Assessment is integral to the learning task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contextualizing of book club concept by lecturer</li> <li>• Simulation of <i>real world</i> book clubs</li> <li>• Contextualised, cross-disciplinary themes from literature</li> <li>• Responsibility to group to ensure reading goals and schedules are met</li> <li>• Rotating leadership responsibility for group organization</li> <li>• Authentic assessment tasks integrated into book clubs (book club journal)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Motivation</b></p> <p>The learning environment, tasks and resources are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real world context –students simulate real life</li> </ul>

<p align="center"><b>Real World Learning</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Linking Literature</b></p> <p><b>Pre-service teaching students experience or are engaged in:</b></p>
<p>authentic. They include realistic complexities, problem solving and simulate real life experience. Narrative is used to engage student interest and understanding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• book clubs in tutorials</li> <li>• Problem solving – group consensus, literary complexities</li> <li>• Use of authentic book club tasks and resources</li> <li>• Use of narrative to engage students in book club concept by lecturer</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reciprocity</b> Collaborative and cooperative learning is encouraged. Learning processes include articulating thoughts, sustained discussion, negotiation, sharing experience and reflection with others. Respect for others' viewpoints and the valuing of diverse social and cultural backgrounds is expected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group learning in a collaborative forum</li> <li>• Literary ontogenesis – shared reflection</li> <li>• Weekly shared activities, response and reflection</li> <li>• Collaborative participation in response to texts</li> <li>• Building relationships with peers in new educational forum</li> </ul>
<p><b>Knowledge Construction</b> Knowledge is actively constructed not passively reproduced. Prior knowledge is built upon and connections are articulated to new knowledge. Metacognition, deep understanding, problem solving and higher order thinking skills are emphasised and valued.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research of recommended children's literature</li> <li>• Literary ontogenesis requires analyzing current reading practice in light of past experience and sharing reflections</li> <li>• New literary knowledge provides content for shared discussion and deeper understanding</li> <li>• Use of journals for deep concentration and reflection</li> <li>• Analysis and synthesis of literary elements, theory and response to texts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Empathy</b> Cultural knowledge of diverse social groups is incorporated in the content of learning tasks. Multiple perspectives and viewpoints are presented and explored. Appreciation for diversity and inclusivity is valued and encouraged.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality literature - frequently portrays multiple perspectives and diversity</li> <li>• Literature that builds cultural knowledge</li> <li>• Appreciation for diversity of learners</li> <li>• Modelling and value of inclusivity</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

Each of these strategies revealed the power of incorporating features of *real world* learning and interaction. Although the strategies took place across three different learning contexts, the inclusion of *real world* learning elements resulted in enhanced collaboration, meaning making and empowered learners.

The *real world* learning framework is synthesized from sociocultural constructivist learning theory. The framework draws on characteristics derived from cooperative learning, authentic learning, flow theory and reflects effective pedagogic policies underpinned by sociocultural constructivist perspectives.

The *real world* learning framework comprises seven elements for designing learning strategies. The *real world* learning strategies described in this paper incorporated the seven elements of autonomy, achievement, purpose, motivation, reciprocity, knowledge construction and empathy. Each strategy included features that allowed the learners to experience a sense of *autonomy* by providing choice and scope for self determination about the direction of their learning. Learners experienced *achievement* by guiding new learning and ensuring concepts and skills were kept open-ended and scaffolded to cater to learners' ability levels. A *purpose* for learning was achieved by contextualizing new knowledge and building in reasons for undertaking the learning. Where assessment was required, it was integrated into the strategy in an authentic way. The learning environments were set up to simulate real life settings and incorporate authentic ways of communicating to *motivate* learning. The learners in each strategy interacted constructively and collaboratively – opportunities for *reciprocity* were a significant feature of all components of the strategies. The learners actively *constructed knowledge* by building on their existing knowledge - learning tasks were designed to encourage higher order thinking skills and sustained conversation to develop deeper understanding. *Empathy* for others was fostered by incorporating and valuing diverse social and cultural knowledge and perspectives. The *real world* learning strategies actively engaged the learners and led to positive responses from the learners in each context indicating successful learning had occurred.

The three strategies are provided here as model formats educators may consider tailoring for their particular learning context. The format descriptions, underpinned by *real world* learning elements allow educators to plan purposeful, motivating contexts that enrich and empower learners, encourage cooperative learning, and help to build positive relationships.

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