



## Early Years: Children are Connected with and Contribute to Their World

(Submitted by Caroline Ruth Ilbrey, 2017, while serving as Preschool Coordinator/Teacher at Australian Independent (International) School Kemang, Jakarta)

<b>Tool(s) used:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability Compass</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose of using tool:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesizing Thinking</li> <li>• Guiding Discussion</li> </ul> <p><b>Overview:</b></p> <p>AIS Jakarta has made a strong commitment to all the students becoming Global Citizens and to incorporate the 17 Sustainable Goals and Service Learning into the explicit and hidden school curriculum. We want the whole school, students, teachers and parents alike, to see and make connections, between ourselves and the world around us, and to become actively involved in concomitant actions both at home, within the community and at school. It's an exciting development in education and one which an International School such as AIS is readily embracing. As the Preschool Coordinator, my role is to encourage and facilitate the introduction of the programme and to ensure its successful implementation within the Preschool.</p> <p>To quote the inspiring preface from our Global Citizenship Award booklet: A global citizen is a person who takes action and is responsible for making the world a better place by taking care of people and our Earth for a sustainable future.</p>
<b>Context of lesson/case study:</b>	Preschool classroom
<b>Participants (# and description):</b>	Group of Preschool students ages 4 & 5
<b>Topic, Theme, or Key Understanding of unit/project:</b>	<p>Preschool implements the Australian EYLF based on the tenets of Being, Belonging and Becoming. The Sustainability Compass was a great way for the children to experience the EYLF Learning Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world. Section 1 of this Outcome states that children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation. The mini-unit on Water was part of our Term 2 Unit of Inquiry, Growing and Changing. The children have been learning about growth and change within themselves and the living world around them. We have been discussing why we need to drink water and having lots of water breaks throughout the day, but especially after outdoor play. The children are required to bring their own water bottles to school, which they can refill throughout the day from one of two Preschool water dispensers. In the later stages of the UoI there was a focus on seeds, plants and trees. They have been growing a variety of seeds and observing the changes as well as learning the conditions their plants need to thrive. We have made extra pots to compare the effects of clean and dirty water, lots of water and no water at all. We measured the growth of our plants and discussed the effects of water on them. They could observe the effects: some drowned</p>





	<p>from too much water, some did not have enough to grow and became dry and spindly, the plant with dirty water did not grow well. The children were most concerned about the health of the plants and did their best to give an appropriate amount of water everyday. A pipette helped with this, though some did suffer from over enthusiastic watering. For the sustainability section of the unit, I wanted the children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broaden their understanding of the world in which they live by finding out where their water comes from as well as in other places around the world.</li> <li>• Build on their own social experiences to explore other ways of being, by thinking of how they can save water in their own daily lives, both at home and at school.</li> <li>• Demonstrate a sense of belonging and comfort in their environments, by thinking of ways to look after our classroom without wasting water, such as by using their water bottles and using them when they go out as well as at school.</li> <li>• Contribute to fair decision-making about matters that affect them, by thinking of ways to save water when they are washing their hands, cleaning the paint pots, washing the tables in class and brushing their teeth at home such as turning off the tap when they are putting on soap/brushing teeth, counting to ten and then turning off the tap when they are cleaning the paint pots, having a bowl inside the sink to use when they are washing the tables to rinse the cloth with.</li> </ul>
<b>Length of unit/project:</b>	UoI 10 weeks, mini-project on water 2 weeks
<b>Resources/materials &amp; setting required:</b>	Laminated Sustainability Compass images, printed images and cut out pictures from magazines
<p><b>Lesson Plan/Description of the Project:</b></p> <p><b>Activity 1: Introducing the Sustainability Compass</b></p> <p>The children enjoyed looking at the images asked lots of questions about them. Using the images, together we simplified Nature, Society, Economy and Wellbeing into words the children understood and could remember as well as coming up with simple explanations for the categories. We came up with these definitions:</p> <p>Nature – beautiful scenery</p> <p>Society – family, friends and people</p> <p>Economy – money, jobs and shopping</p> <p>Wellbeing- being happy and healthy</p> <p><b>Activity 2: COLLECTING WATER IMAGES</b></p> <p>The children were invited to find pictures featuring water in old magazines and to cut them out. After that, we shared the content of our pictures and thought about how the ways we were connected with them.</p> <p>Examples included:</p> <p>“I’ve got a water bottle. It’s purple.”</p> <p>“I go to Bali to the beach.”</p>	





“I’ve got a swimming pool at my house”

### Activity 3: SORTING WATER IMAGES ONTO COMPASS

We sat in a circle and I laid down the big sheets of paper. We added the printed images of the categories and went through what they meant. I had the big pile of images with me. I explained that we were going to sort the images into groups and that the pictures would go where we all agreed they would go, and that there was no wrong answer, but we had to think about it carefully and say why if we could. I put a laminated image of a water bubble in the middle and many exclaimed “Water!”. For the first few images, so that there was at least one image per category, we discussed together where the pictures could go. For the picture of the water bottle, there were two possibles and luckily I had two similar images.

“That goes with being healthy as we drink water every day so it goes on pink.”

“Mummy buys me a new water bottle at the shops so it goes with money.”

Then I handed out one image at a time to each child in the group. They shared why they were putting their image on a particular colour and participated in helping their friends to choose the best colour to put it on.

“This one goes on pink because the mummy and daddy are smiling at each other and they are happy.”

We had one contentious image, of a woman gazing at scenery from a pool, and the girl who had it was adamant it should go on green because she was looking at the forest in front of her. Another disagree and pointed out that it was a swimming pool which other people use too, but agreed with her when she said no the big thing was the beautiful scenery.

The children did get a little distracted by counting how many pictures were on each piece of paper, so I made sure they were pretty even. I introduced some images of children playing in dirty water in Jakarta and some responded by saying they would not like to play in that. I introduced another image of children collecting water from a river and carrying it in buckets on their heads. The children were struck by this image and expressed concern that the buckets must be really heavy.

### Activity 4: MAKING POSTERS & SHARING

Now that each large piece of paper had about 5 images on, they were divided into groups to stick on the images to make posters. Once the posters were ready, we shared our posters in a gallery walk. The children pointed out images which they made connections with eg. “I’m going swimming after school”

### Activity 5: REFLECTION, VIDEOS, SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION & SERVICE LEARNING

- I will scribe their thoughts and feelings on the posters and bring their ideas into greater focus.
- We will watch an age appropriate video on conserving water.
- I will encourage the children to make connections with how they use water and introduce washing hands and the amount of water lost by running the tap. Hopefully they will suggest that we should turn off the tap while they are rubbing in soap. The recent ‘turn the tap off while brushing teeth’ TV adverts by Colgate will be shown and used as a way to make connections with children around the world and as an idea of what the children can do themselves at home.

### Reflection

#### Plusses (Things that went well):

- I was really pleased about how the children responded to the sustainability compass tool, as even those





who do not speak English were able to participate and become engaged. They brought insight and thought to the activities and were engaged.

- The images and categories enabled the children to come up with a wide variety of responses and thoughts on the subject of water beyond their first ideas.
- Simplifying the technical words was effective.
- Breaking down the unit into a series of activities enabled me to build, modify, reflect and evaluate.

### Challenges (Things I would change):

- Laminate the large pieces of card so that they could be used as an interactive too.
- The images which represented practices beyond their own, understandably limited and protected experiences, were difficult to fully comprehend (the students at AIS are all from wealthy families) although we made a good start . Eg. The children playing in the filthy water, since they only ever play in clean water, such as in their own swimming pools or at the beach.
- The children became a bit competitive if one group had more images on than theirs, so I had to quickly sit on some of the images (!)

### Suggestions for other practitioners and educators:

As the children are aged four and five, with many EAL learners, I modified the technical words and did not use the terms North, South, East and West as they do not yet know or understand Compass points. I found images that clearly visualised the four categories and printed and laminated them in A4 size with matching borders corresponding to the four points. I had big sheets of card paper, in the four colours, to stick the water pictures onto. Using a familiar, broad theme helped the children to categorise and make connections with themselves and others.

### Evidence and Resources:





