


INTERNATIONAL LEARNING

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“It is not possible to live in the past but having the past live in you is. You can’t live in the future, but the future is shaped by how you live in the present.”

- Rachel Perkins

QUALITY LEARNING DEFINITION

At Aoba, quality learning is a holistic process that sustains a learning climate to foster Global Leadership capability in all our learners.

Global Leaders are socially responsible citizens with a heightened awareness of diverse intercultural perspectives. They use critical and creative thinking to develop innovative solutions to the problems they encounter. Global Leaders have an entrepreneurial disposition that drives social action and positive change in the world. Our learning climate is defined by a set of interacting principles, systems and practices.

We develop an intercultural mindset by actively engaging with different cultural perspectives and values, seeking commonalities and celebrating differences. We believe knowledge is socially constructed. This requires collaboration, best achieved in a comfortable and challenging learning environment for all school community members. Our approach to learning begins with a focus on learner wellbeing and safety. We aim to enhance learner agency, efficacy, and confidence through inquiry-based team learning.

We use the concept of extended abstraction as a whole-school reference point when evaluating and measuring learning. Extended abstraction is a way of thinking that helps us make meaning of our lives. It requires analysis, reasoning, and ingenuity. It enables learners to reimagine problems and design innovative solutions. We consider extended abstraction as a critical outcome of high-quality learning. Thus, we expect our community of learners, from Kindergarten to school leadership, to engage critical and creative thinking in their daily lives.

Quality learning at Aoba is a result of the learning climate we have established since 2014. It consists of aligned systems and practices that are described in this document for your reference.

(Aoba Faculty, 2019)



LEARNING CLIMATE PRINCIPLES

The 'learning climate' at Aoba embodies our school community's culture. With a focus on child safety and well-being at the heart of all learning, we strive to create a positive and supportive learning climate. Our attitude towards child safety and well-being sets the foundation to build Global Leadership capability. Adopting an intercultural learning perspective our learning climate is characterised by learner agency, collaboration and inquiry. The quality of our school climate is measured by the level of meaningful and empowering learning experiences that build efficacy and confidence in all.

International Learning for Global Leadership Capability

To be an effective 'Global Leader,' all our learners need to be competent and capable. Competencies are knowledge and skills that a learner acquires. Capability, when developed in teams, is about the ability to collaboratively apply the knowledge and skills to solve problems and lead change in unfamiliar contexts. Developing capability, self-confidence and efficacy, learner involvement in decisions about their learning, learn to develop agency and increase motivation.

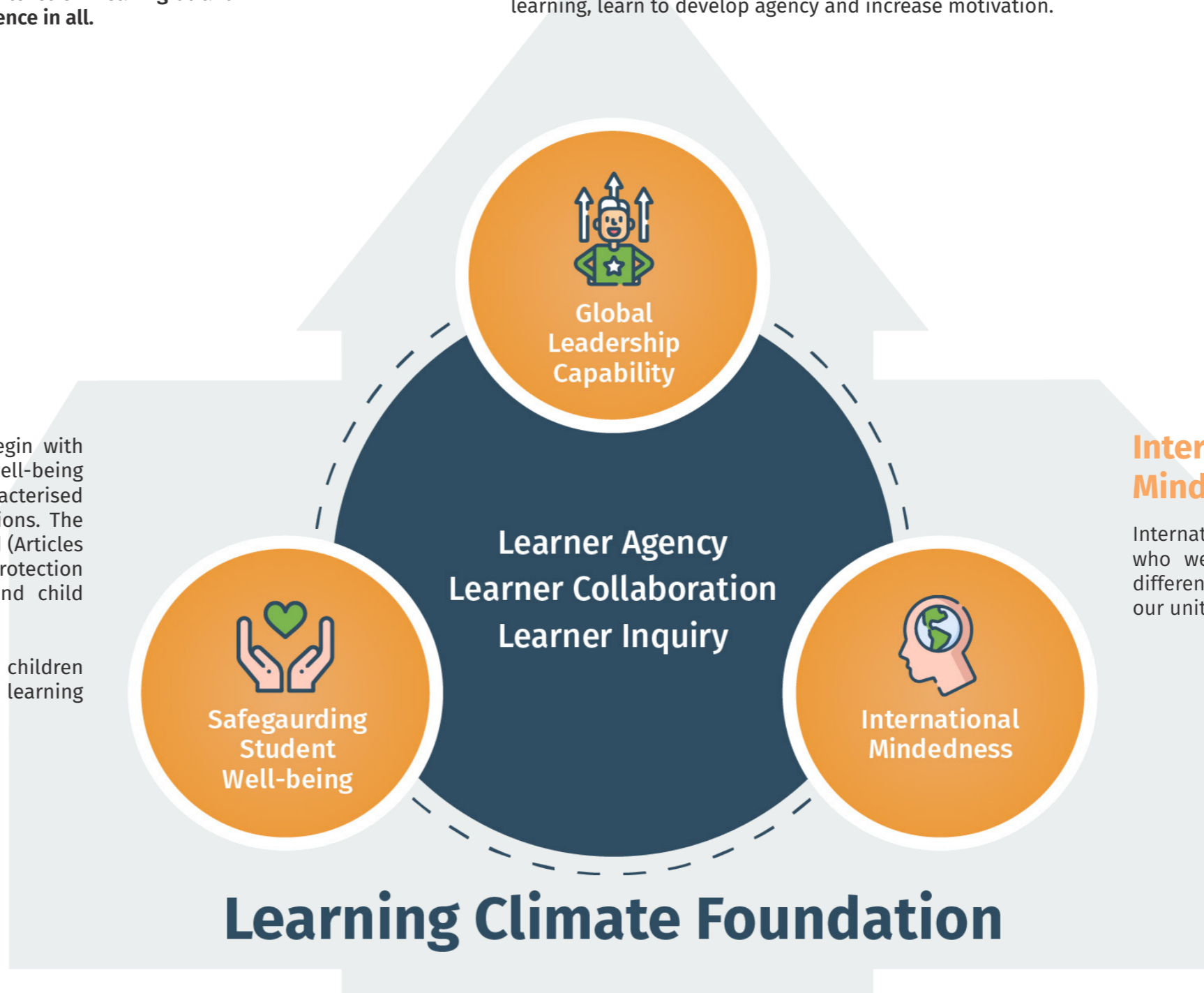
Safeguarding Student Wellbeing

The decisions we make about student learning begin with consideration for the learners' well-being. Learner well-being consists of a healthy state of mind and body. It is characterised by positive interpersonal interactions and connections. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 19 and 34), and the International Taskforce on Child Protection (ITFC) inform our policy on learner well-being and child protection.

Every adult has a responsibility to ensure our children experience a safe, supportive and empowering learning environment.

International Mindedness

International Mindedness is to learn who we are and respect cultural differences while acknowledging our unity as global citizens.



LEARNING CLIMATE PRINCIPLES

Distinctive Features



Intercultural Learning

Culture is defined in terms of the patterns of behaviour displayed by groups of people in a given place and time. At Aoba, intercultural learning plays an important part in developing Global Leaders. Adopting a developmental approach, our students advance through stages of learning that begins with developing self-awareness as a basis for understanding how to connect with others. Our students are encouraged to be open-minded, reflective and caring when engaging with new perspectives and different cultures.

Team-Centered Learning

Team-centred learning is sometimes contrasted with teacher-centred learning as a pedagogy or style of teaching and learning. Team-centred learning is based on the premise that students are capable of leading their learning, that their voice should not only be heard but respected in regards to their own education. In practice, this means meeting the team where they are developmentally, adjusting or differentiating teaching modes and learning engagements to match, based on their input, carefully monitoring progress, and communicating this with the students and families. Structured team learning has shown to improve individual achievement.



Learner Agency

Agency at Aoba refers to the power each student has to direct and take responsibility for their learning. The concepts of student autonomy, voice and power are intrinsically linked to defining the level of Agency our students experience while learning. Agency enables our students to direct and take responsibility for their learning. A high level of Agency is seen when students demonstrate interdependent and self-regulating behaviours related to their learning.

Inquiry Learning

Inquiry learning is a constructivist approach to acquiring, constructing and applying knowledge. At Aoba, inquiry learning follows a four-step critical thinking process that enables the students to develop the relevant research skills that inform problem-solving. In doing so our students develop capability, confidence and efficacy to create new understandings and concepts that can be applied in unfamiliar contexts.

Collaborative Learning

Collaboration at our school occurs through a structured team learning approach. In team learning, students and adults come together to achieve a goal by sharing their expertise, experience and ability. Learning in collaborative teams lead to improved individual academic achievement, greater capability to solve problems, increased efficacy and enhanced confidence.



MISSION VISION & CORE VALUES

OUR SCHOOL MISSION

A spirit of community shapes the Aoba experience. We are dedicated to developing global-minded, compassionate, collaborative students inspired to learn, take risks, and lead change in the world.

OUR SCHOOL VISION

We will continue to be a leading international school by providing students with a rigorous international education in a safe and supportive environment. We will ensure learners' needs are supported, their perspectives sought and respected, and their unique qualities valued and nurtured. Through a continued emphasis on educational excellence and innovation, each individual student will be provided with relevant resources and opportunities that will enable them to secure the best of what the future holds for them.

Our Core Values

Global Leadership

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Problem Solving

Wise Risk Taking

Effective Communication

Our Core Values guide our outlook about the what, why and how of learning at Aoba.

We value the concepts of Global Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Innovation to frame our approach to developing intercultural sensitivity, learner agency, collaborative team learning and intellectual capability. When applied holistically, our values lead us to socially responsible learning and action to lead to positive change in today's complex global society.

A Global Leader is someone who knows when to follow and when to lead.

Global Leadership is shaped by:

- a strong sense of social responsibility.
- a growth mindset that enables them to reimagine problems, design solutions and take action.
- a future-focused attitude with the ability to comprehend, analyze and reflect on multiple perspectives.
- team learning and an interdisciplinary approach to learning and problem-solving.

THE ROLE OF OUR CORE VALUES

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES



Global Leaders:

- Recognise the purpose, meaning and unity of connection.
- Act within an ethical framework
- Know the viewpoints of other and communicate with them in mind.
- Adopt openness to diverse cultural perspectives.
- Know what makes politics constructive.
- Find out why things are happening.
- Understand perspectives that influence relationships.
- Take care of personal well-being.
- Lead a balanced life.
- Solve problems in a positive manner.
- Think creatively and critically.
- Know when to lead and when to follow.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

Entrepreneurship involves positive engagement with people to apply 'socially responsible and inclusive' action for the betterment of others.

An innovation is simply a new idea that works. Society will always have problems and needs that must be addressed. This requires new ideas and solutions to be applied.

We believe entrepreneurship is a human process that is guided by social responsibility. The attributes of an entrepreneur guide how we organize learning opportunities for our students.

Entrepreneurs:

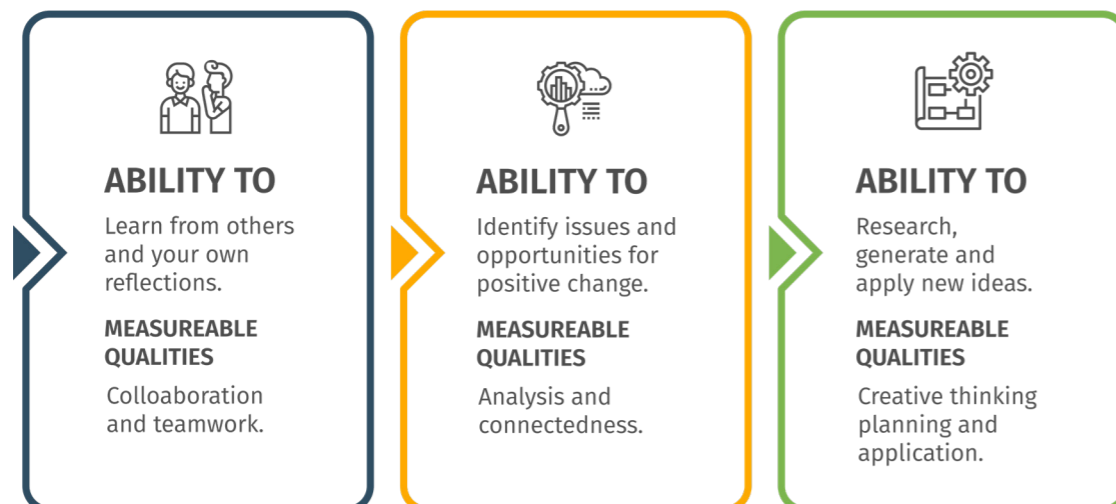
- Learn from others.
- Leverage the benefits of team membership.
- Believe in their own abilities and ideas.
- Use imagination, abstract thinking and creativity.
- Generate and apply new ideas.
- Show motivation, determination and initiative.

Innovators:

- View problems as opportunities.
- Are willing to take calculated risks.
- Use inquiry learning to guide critical and creative thinking processes.
- Give and take constructive criticism.
- Are catalysts for personal and organisational growth.
- Embrace failure and mistakes as a learning opportunity.
- Demonstrate resilience and determination in the face of adversity.

Entrepreneurs and innovators develop capabilities associated with active listening and communicating, researching, analysing, and evaluating to make wise judgements and decisions. An entrepreneur leads social actions and that lead to positive change.

Entrepreneurship & Innovation Capabilities



WISE RISK TAKERS

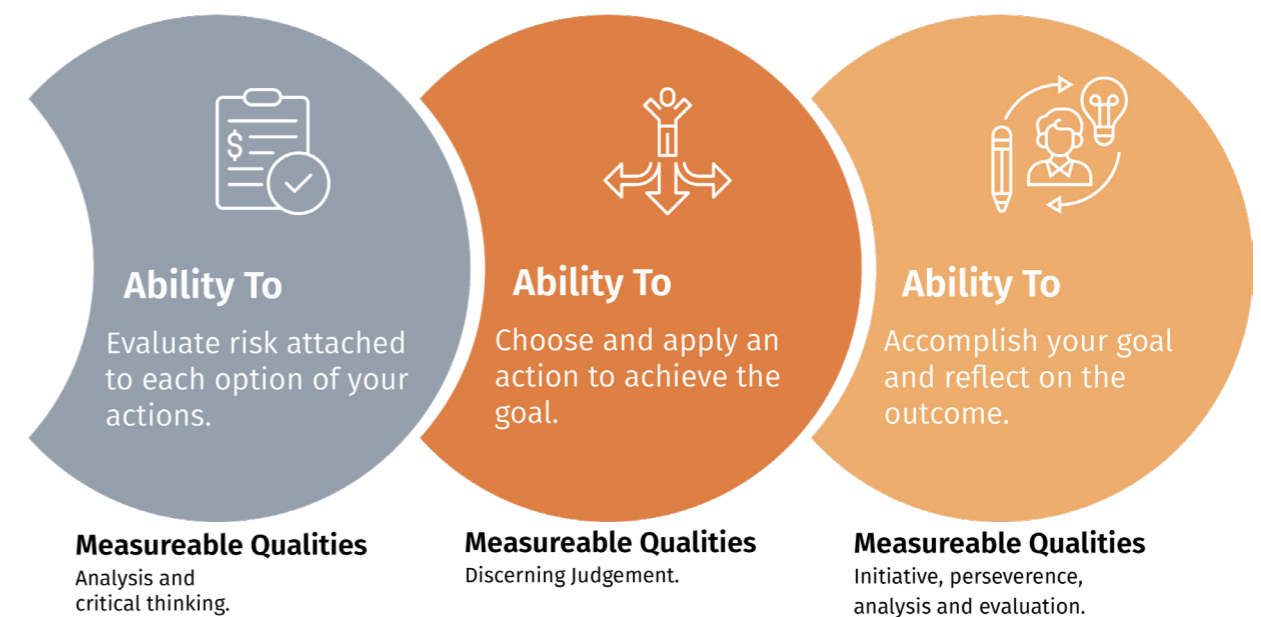
A wise risk-taker is someone who is prepared to do things and/or act differently to create something.

A wise risk-taker has the capability to make discerning and discretionary judgements. Risk is something we are able to evaluate to a reasonable extent. If we do not have the skill to evaluate then judgement is based on speculation and therefore is a gamble.

Risk Takers:

- Understand the potential and power of mistakes.
- Have a willingness to attempt something new and untested.
- See potential solutions by being mindful of possibilities and probabilities.

Wise Risk Taker Capabilities



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is the cornerstone of building partnerships, developing teamwork and sharing ideas. Effective communication facilitates positive relationships between people and helps formulate shared agreements that underpin positive change.

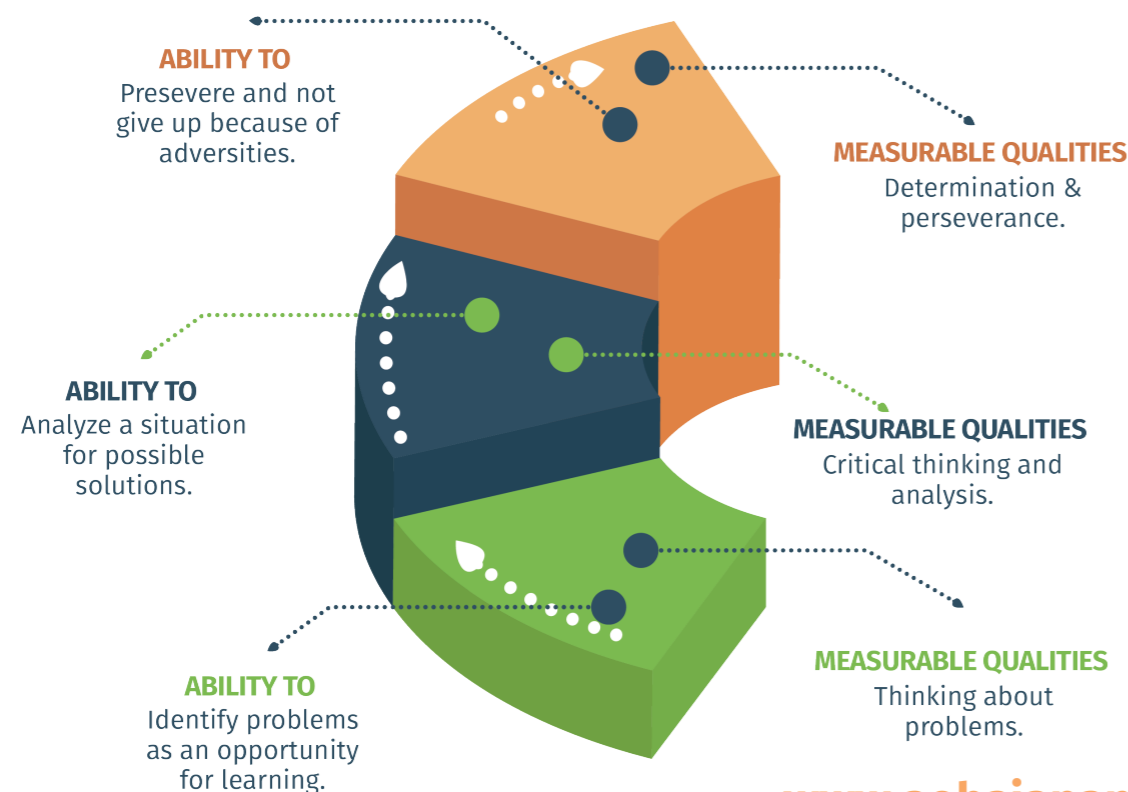
Effective Communicators:

- Are active and attentive listeners.
- Make clear their thoughts, opinions and ideas.
- Are able to think broadly and consider others' ideas and thoughts.
- Can interpret and appreciate a variety of communication styles.
- Understand their audience and is empathetic towards them.
- Understand the implications of what is communicated.
- Know how to communicate effectively.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION CAPABILITIES



PROBLEM SOLVING CAPABILITIES



POSITIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

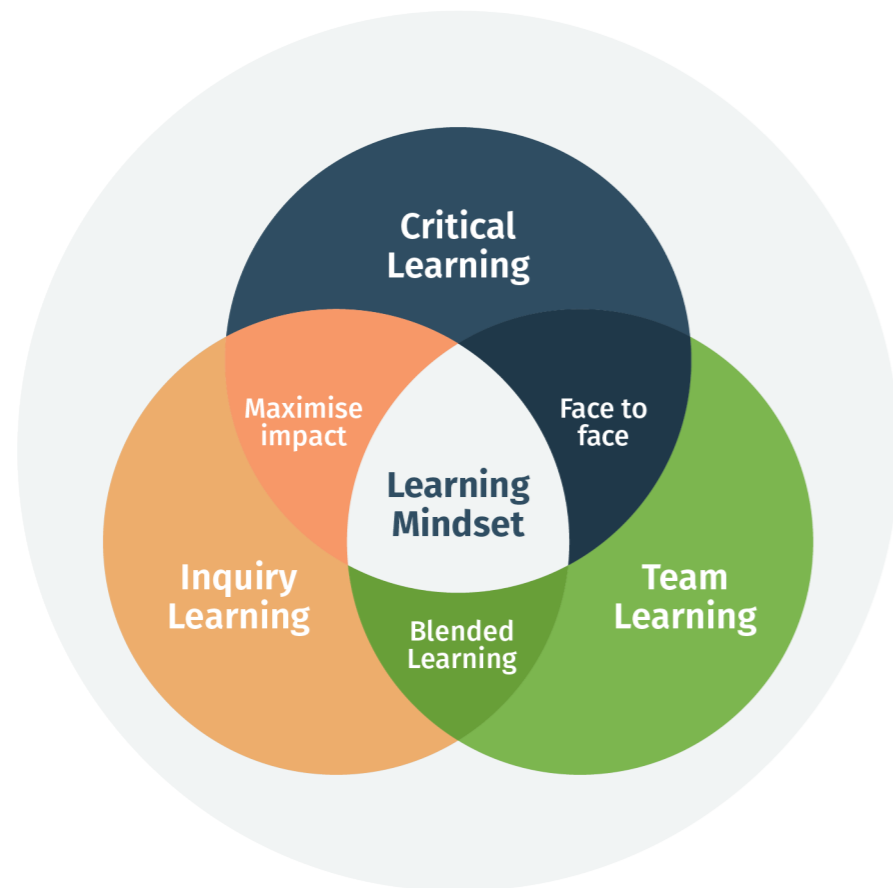
Positive problem solving at Aoba adopts a future's orientation. The way we solved problems in the past is unlikely to get the positive changes we look for in the future. Learning how to frame a problem, develop possible solutions and have the confidence and efficacy to apply innovations is a key to leading positive change in the world.

Problem Solvers:

- Are able to step back and analyze a situation.
- Can reframe the problem to look for multiple possible solutions.
- See problems as opportunities to make a positive change.
- Have the tenacity and resolution not give up when faced with adversities.

HOLISTIC LEARNING SYSTEM

Aoba Constructivist



Approach

Learning Mindset

The Aoba Learning climate and pedagogy approach is designed to improve student efficacy, collaborative skills, critical thinking and attitudes to learning. Once our mindsets were attuned to the concept of collaborative team learning it became easier to implement in our classrooms. We believe this ease of change is because team learning is aligned with the philosophies and expected practices of the IB. Team

and inquiry-based learning also reduces the traditional workload of teachers and actually increases the capacity to cover more curriculum content in depth. Collaborative team learning has been extensively trialled in schools worldwide over several decades and the research findings show a very positive effect on student attitudes especially self-efficacy.

Collaborative Blended Learning Model

As a 'Bring Your Own Device' (BOYD) school, we recognise technology has a powerful influence on student learning. At Aoba, we designed a Collaborative Blended Learning Model (CBLM) in partnership with Southern Cross University (Australia). The CBLM provides a reference for the traditional teacher to develop the capabilities to become a contemporary Blended Learning teacher. The CBLM guides teacher transformation

to improve practices and decision making through the use of technology. In the context of Blended Learning, our school uses technology to maximise face to face classroom interactions and generate and organise data to better understand our impact and inform decision making.

Maximising Face to Face Teaching

We see technology as a useful tool to maximise our 'face to face' interactions with students. Through a collaborative professional development process, our teachers have developed capabilities enabling them to confidently teach in a Blended Learning environment. Our students use technology to build skills, follow routines, identify relevant subject content, conduct analysis and communicate with team members and the teacher. Using technology this way frees up classroom time for the teacher to facilitate team learning and collaborative problem-solving.



Understanding Our Impact

Understanding our impact on learning progression and achievement has been enhanced due to the use of technology. We use student data to provide evidence of our impact on student learning. There is a direct interface between purposeful data and intelligent analysis to inform our decision-making related to student learning needs and the application of the school's strategic learning systems and programmes. Subsequently, such 'decisions' come to frame and inform what the teacher teams do next. From a whole school perspective, technology increases our capacity to conduct objective evaluations of our school's performance related to our vision, mission and guiding statements.

The Role of ICT

Information Technology infrastructure, resources, and support services are fundamental to creating a "Blended Learning Environment" within which both students and teachers are empowered to learn and collaborate in the context of our Collaborative Blended Learning Model. We use high-speed wireless networks, cloud-based collaborative software, student BYOD programs to support technology-enriched learning spaces that include interactive displays and robotics kits. These contemporary spaces contribute to a learning environment which facilitates interconnectedness of people, ideas, and data. Our learning spaces reflect the real-world conditions in which students will find themselves as they continue their academic and professional journeys beyond the school.

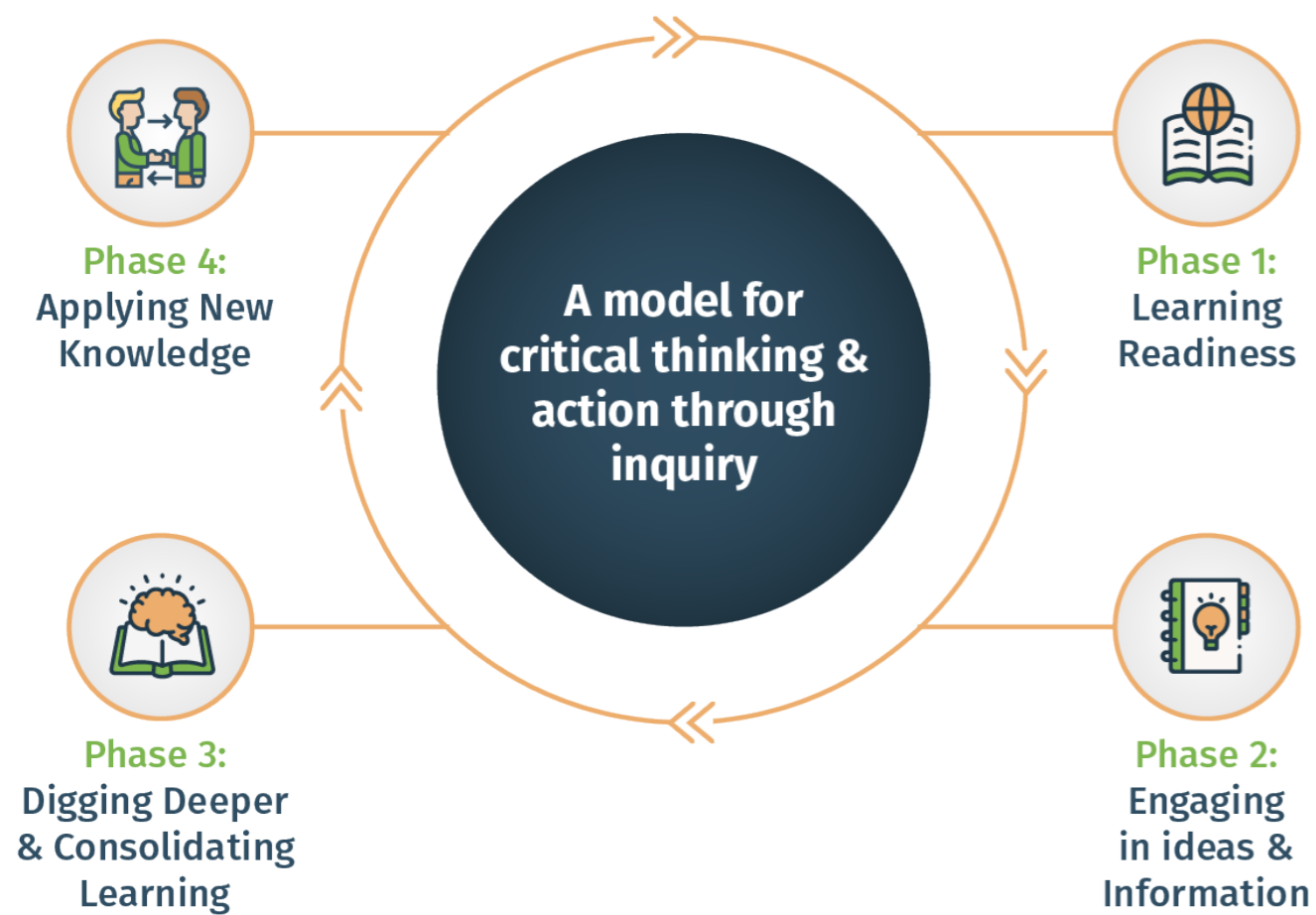


WHOLE SCHOOL PEDAGOGY

A coherent approach to learning

A-JIS Pedagogical Framework

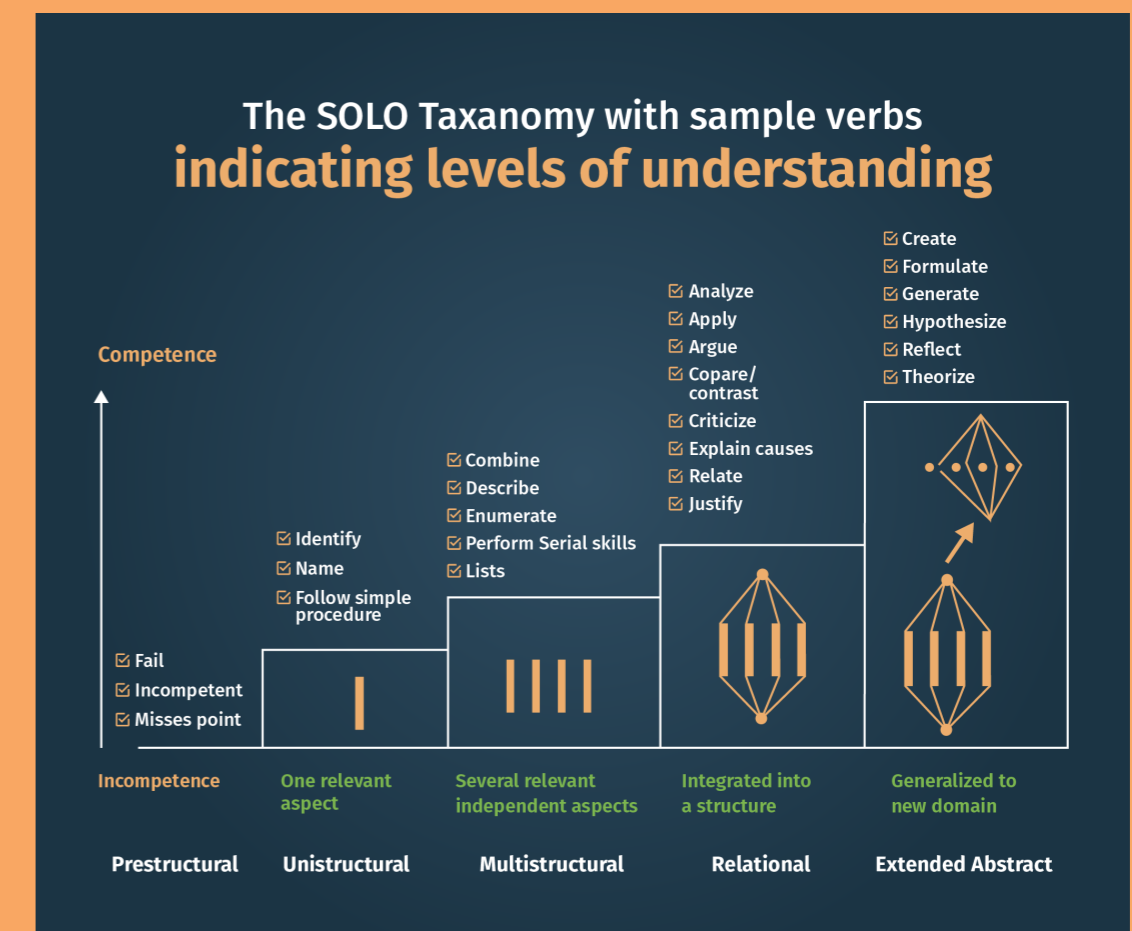
Inquiry Learning System



Based on the literature and our experiences we develop a Pedagogical Framework that is our definitive practical guide for teaching and learning. Through a series of four phases the learner experiences the process of critical thinking and action. This cycle of inquiry can take 60 seconds, 6 hours, 6 weeks or 6 years to complete. Once the learner understands the process they are better equipped to solve problems and lead change. Students from the Early Years gain the critical and creative thinking skills for life.

Learning Abstraction

We use the Structured Observed of Learning Outcomes (SOLO) taxonomy as our primary assessment tool from Kindergarten to Grade 12. SOLO taxonomy provides a systematic way of describing how a student's performance grows in structural complexity when mastering many tasks as they develop concepts and skills in general sequence.



Note. Biggs, J. B., & Collis, K. F. (2014). Evaluating the quality of learning: The SOLO taxonomy (Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome). Academic Press.



WHOLE SCHOOL PEDAGOGY

Team Learning

Dr. Paul Lowe worked at Aoba for over three years as a pedagogy specialist. During this time, in collaboration with the school's leadership team and the secondary teachers the pedagogical practices of the secondary section of the school was transformed from traditional textbook methods to powerful collaborative inquiry methods aimed at increasing student agency and collaboration. The result has been greater engagement in learning and an increase in efficacy.

We have shown that structured Team Learning improves individual achievement and collaboration skills. It supports greater learning cohesion and engagement; the development of student efficacy and wise risk taking; an increase in critical and creative thinking and problem solving capability. Team learning increases positive attitudes to learning in the classroom and open mindset.

One aim of introducing and applying team learning school wide is to help students and teachers enjoy working together more effectively and gain more rewards and improve outcomes both individually and as a learning team; increase self and collective efficacy and confidence, improve teacher professional capability and improve teacher professional satisfaction. Three main objectives are to make students feel more secure, achieve shared goals and encourage students to take responsibility. In this sense teaming learning is also aligned with our student social and emotional well being program.

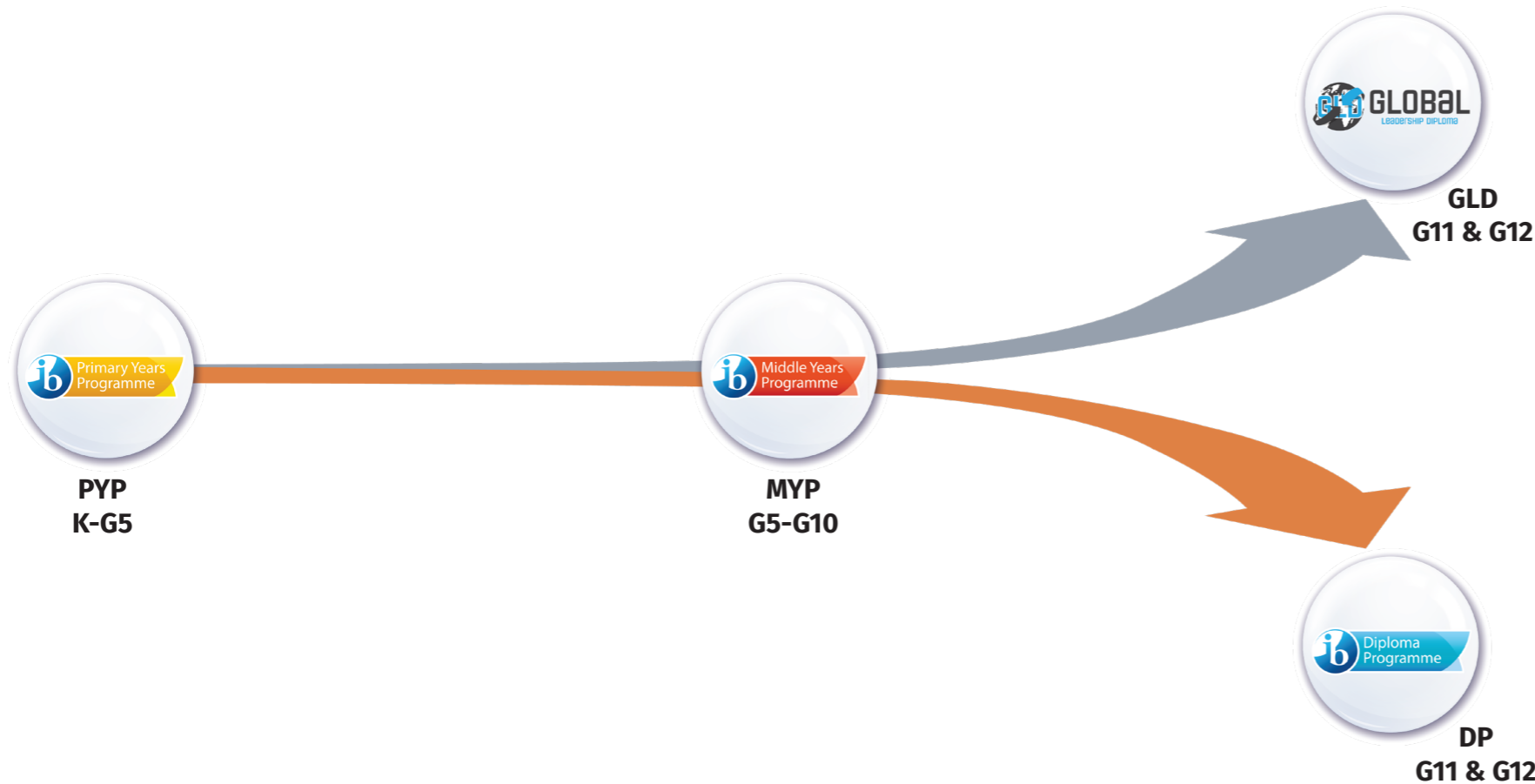
QUALITY LEARNING PROGRAMS



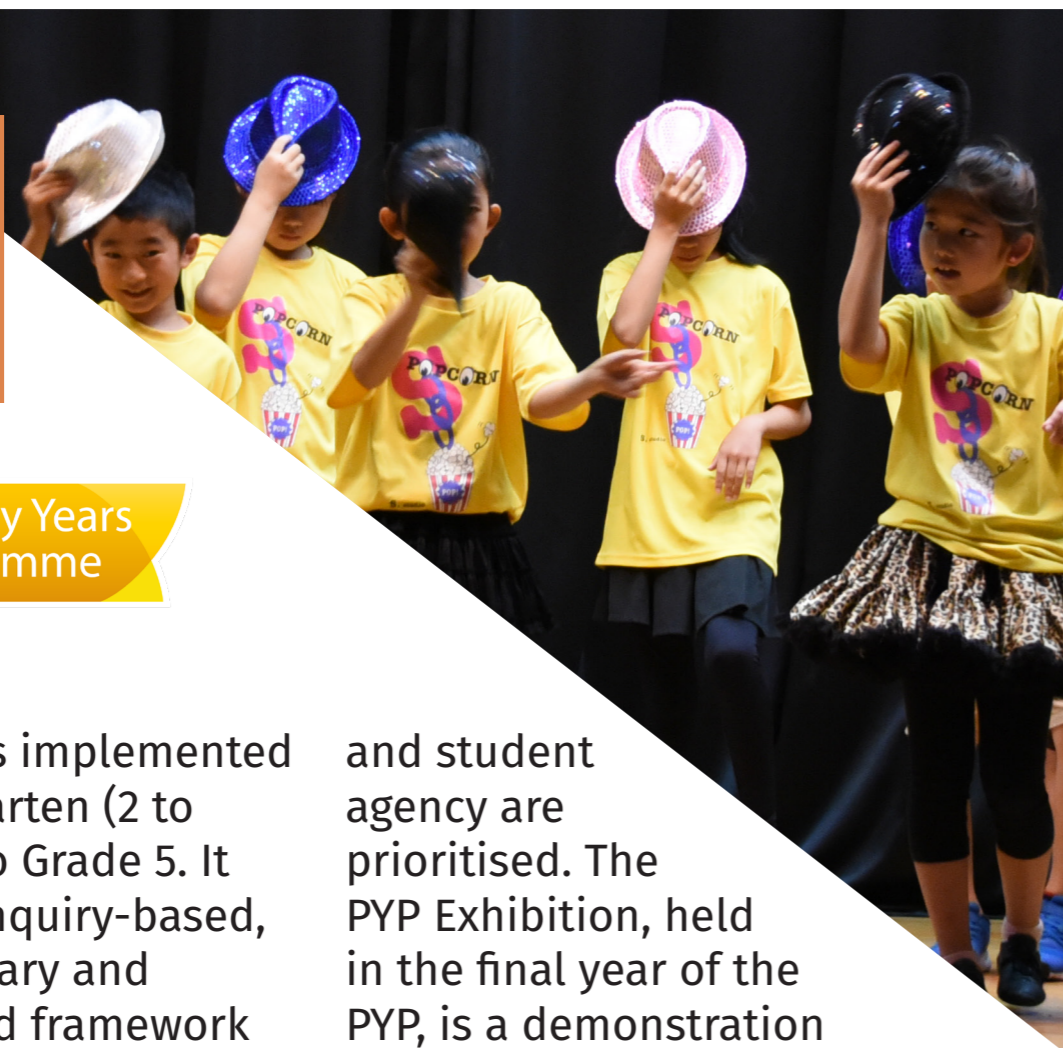
Foundation Programs

The International Baccalaureate's (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) and the Middle Years Programme (MYP) cater for students from 3 years old to 16 years old.

The Diploma Programme (DP) is for senior students. Complementing the DP is our Global Leadership Diploma (GLD) which caters to independent and self driven senior students who have a specific goal in mind.



Primary Years Programme (PYP)



The PYP is implemented from Kindergarten (2 to 6 year olds) to Grade 5. It provides an inquiry-based, transdisciplinary and concept-based framework to build the understandings, dispositions and skills needed for learning and to make wise decisions. The learner is at the center of their learning and emphasis is placed on nurturing the attributes of the Learner Profile.

Our Programme of Inquiry aims to provide a coherent continuum of learning in the various subject areas through which collaboration

and student agency are prioritised. The PYP Exhibition, held in the final year of the PYP, is a demonstration of the understandings, attitudes and skills acquired throughout the PYP as students engage in a collaborative inquiry process.

Middle Years Programme (MYP)



The MYP covers Grades 6-10, builds upon the foundation laid in the PYP, and extends students' skills and understanding in preparation for the DP or GLD. It is collaborative, with inquiry and assessment conducted in small teams, with each member of the team assigned specific roles.

The MYP is also transdisciplinary in nature with teachers required to teach more than one subject grouped into teams of four per grade level. This allows a highly collaborative team structure to develop. Teachers are assigned as 'case managers' to students in a 1:10 ratio so that they

can really get to know their students. Literacy and numeracy skills are established and reinforced with social emotional learning in an extended homeroom structure in which all teachers participate: at Aoba, every teacher truly is a literacy teacher.

For 2020, the MYP is punctuated by two culminating projects, the Community Project in Grade 8 and the Personal Project in Grade 10, through which students can demonstrate their development beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Diploma Programme (DP)



The DP is the capstone of the IB at Aoba. Students undertake a rigorous curriculum comprising courses in six different subject-group areas; there is some choice in each of the areas, and students must balance their load by choosing to take three of the six at a 'standard level' and three at a 'higher level'. In addition to the six core subjects, students also study the 'Theory of Knowledge' (TOK) and complete a robust Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS) programme. They must also write an Extended Essay (EE) as part of the DP. The DP

has a set of terminal exams after the second year that determine, in large part, whether the student is awarded the Diploma. Successful students find that strong performance in the DP opens doors to many elite universities worldwide.



Team presentation for TOK - "What can be seen as art and why?"

Global Leadership Diploma (GLD)



The GLD is designed to allow students to take perhaps the greatest ownership of their learning by designing their own customised learning pathways in Grades 11&12. This program allows students to pursue their passion while at the same time ensuring they maintain an academic profile that will allow them to enter tertiary institutions of their choice, whether that be university or specialised academies.

The program is characterised by both independent and collaborative learning,

industry internships, and explicit leadership training. GLD students may take as a part of their program a full range of DP classes as certificates, and can take both face to face and online courses as needed.

Support Programs



- **English as an Additional Language (EAL) Program**

In Grades 6-8, EAL is taught through the IB's Language Acquisition class, specifically, Phases 3-4 and 5-6. In addition, the EAL teachers push into other classes such as maths, science, and PHE to support the EAL learners as they engage in those other subjects. In Grades 9-10, EAL is limited to Phases 5-6. Placement is determined through a thorough assessment of the students' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Students may move between phases as they progress, between 3 or 4, or 5 and 6, in the year, but may only move between 4 and 5 after completing a year. When a student is beyond Phase 6 they are transitioned into Language & Literature.



- **Grades 6-10 Literacy Program**

The literacy program in the MYP has resulted in strong gains in scores for both the PAT and ISA tests for our students. Students read every morning in homeroom; they may choose the books they read, and they need not be written in English. Students meet with the 'case manager' teacher to discuss their reading; through this the teacher conducts comprehension checks, using the SOLO taxonomy as the measure. The students also conduct regular reading assessments using ReadWorks, an online, lexile-referenced resource. Lastly, the students self-assess, and compare this against teacher assessment, their writing skills, also using the SOLO framework. This is all completed monthly and the results are reported to their parents.



- **Student Protection Counselor**

In close collaboration with the school nurse, the part-time Psychologist provides counseling, support and resources to families involved in child protection cases stipulated under the Aoba-Japan International School Student Protection Guidelines. With the goal of minimizing negative socio-emotional impact on the student, the part-time counsellor will work together with all stakeholders to preserve student well-being and safety.



- **School Counselor**

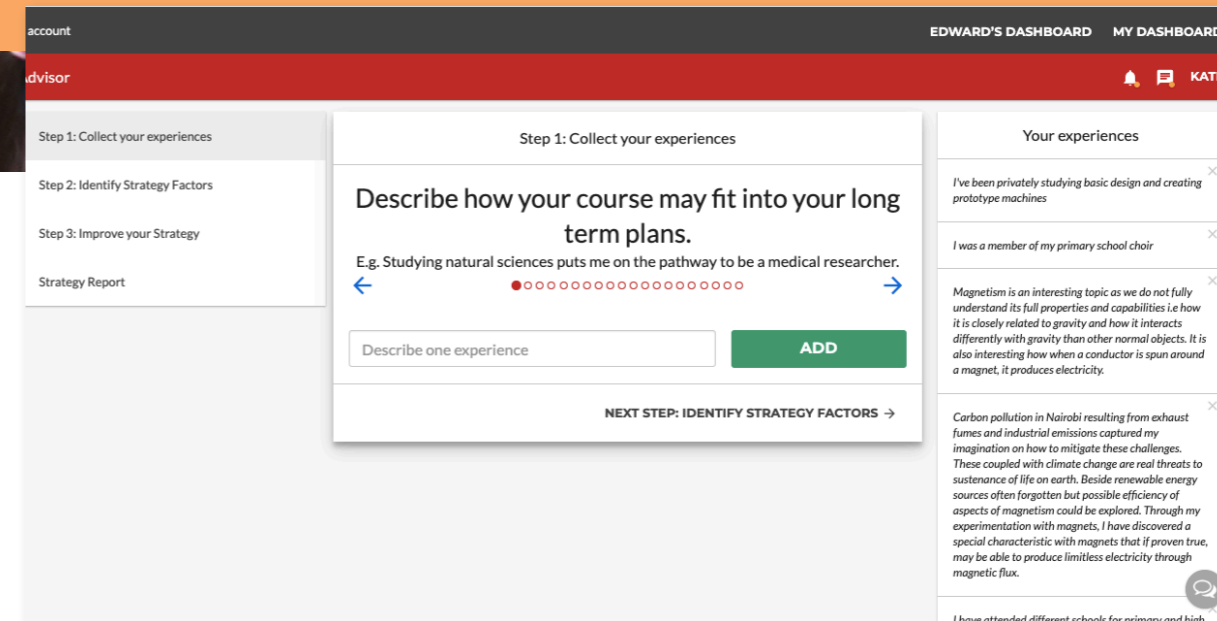
The school counsellor is an integral part of the social and emotional support network offered at Aoba. The counsellor works hand in hand with the principals, classroom teachers, school psychologist, and peers to defuse potential crises, engage the students in reflective discussions, and inform leadership decisions at the macro and micro level. The counsellor adopts a neutral, yet student advocate-based approach, and meets with parents as part of the support offered, as required.

• Social and Emotional Learning Program

Social and emotional Learning (SEL) was launched at Aoba this Academic Year 2019-2020, from the Early Years (Hikarigaoka & Meguro) to the Middle Years Program (Grades 6-8). The program aims to equip students with strategies and techniques to assist them to gain confidence, set and achieve positive goals, collaborate well, and navigate school life more effectively. The school is using the Second Step program that is rooted in social-emotional learning (SEL) that helps transform schools into supportive, successful learning environments uniquely equipped to encourage children to thrive. More than just a classroom curriculum, Second Step's holistic approach helps create a sense of safety, respect, and well-being in the school community.

• BridgeU

The Secondary School understands that it bears great responsibility in preparing the students for tertiary education, and part of that responsibility is helping parents and students navigate the often unforgiving waters of university applications. To assist the teachers in this task, the school subscribes to BridgeU, an online resource that offers a range of tools to help students and their families make informed, timely decisions, and to avoid making costly errors. Essentially, the platform begins by helping the students better understand who they are, who they want to become, and what it takes to get there. It then matches student performance against known university requirements, helping the student and parents understand whether acceptance is likely or not. Lastly, it provides scaffolding to guide the student through the application process.



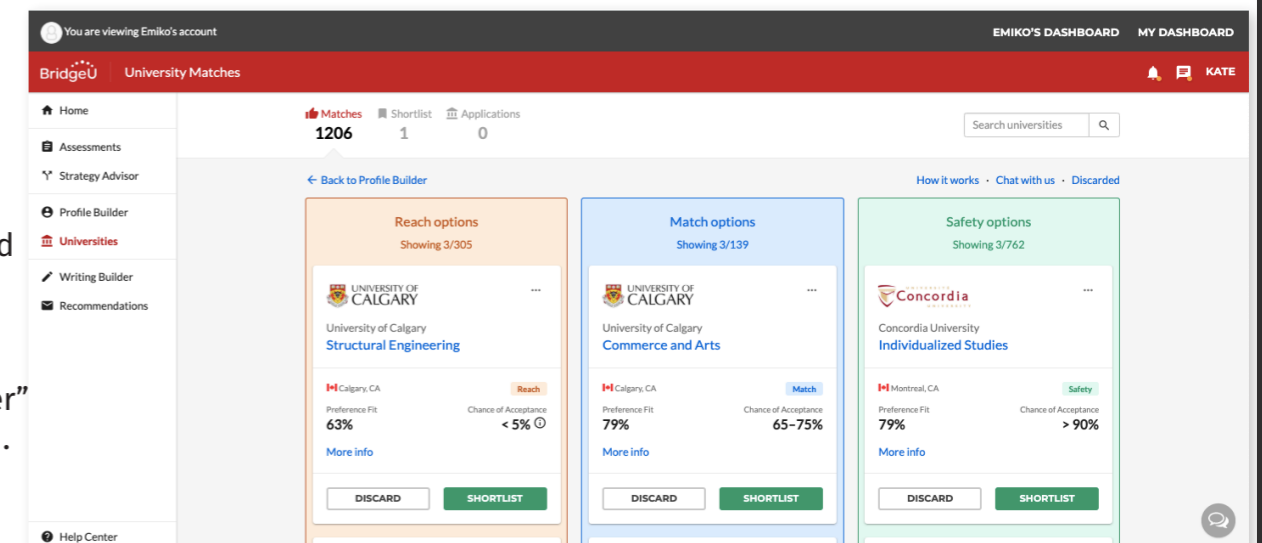
Student collecting their experiences for "Strategy Advisor".

Goals & Purpose

- Build student-to-student affiliation.
- Support Academic Readiness.
- Strengthen student-teacher relationships.
- Develop communication and social skills.
- Energize and re-engage.
- Reflect and recalibrate.
- Extend learning through themes.
 - Service learning.
 - Students mentoring students.
 - Partnerships with local organizations.



© CASEL 2017



University matches based on student's "Strategy Advisor" and "Profile Builder" data collected.

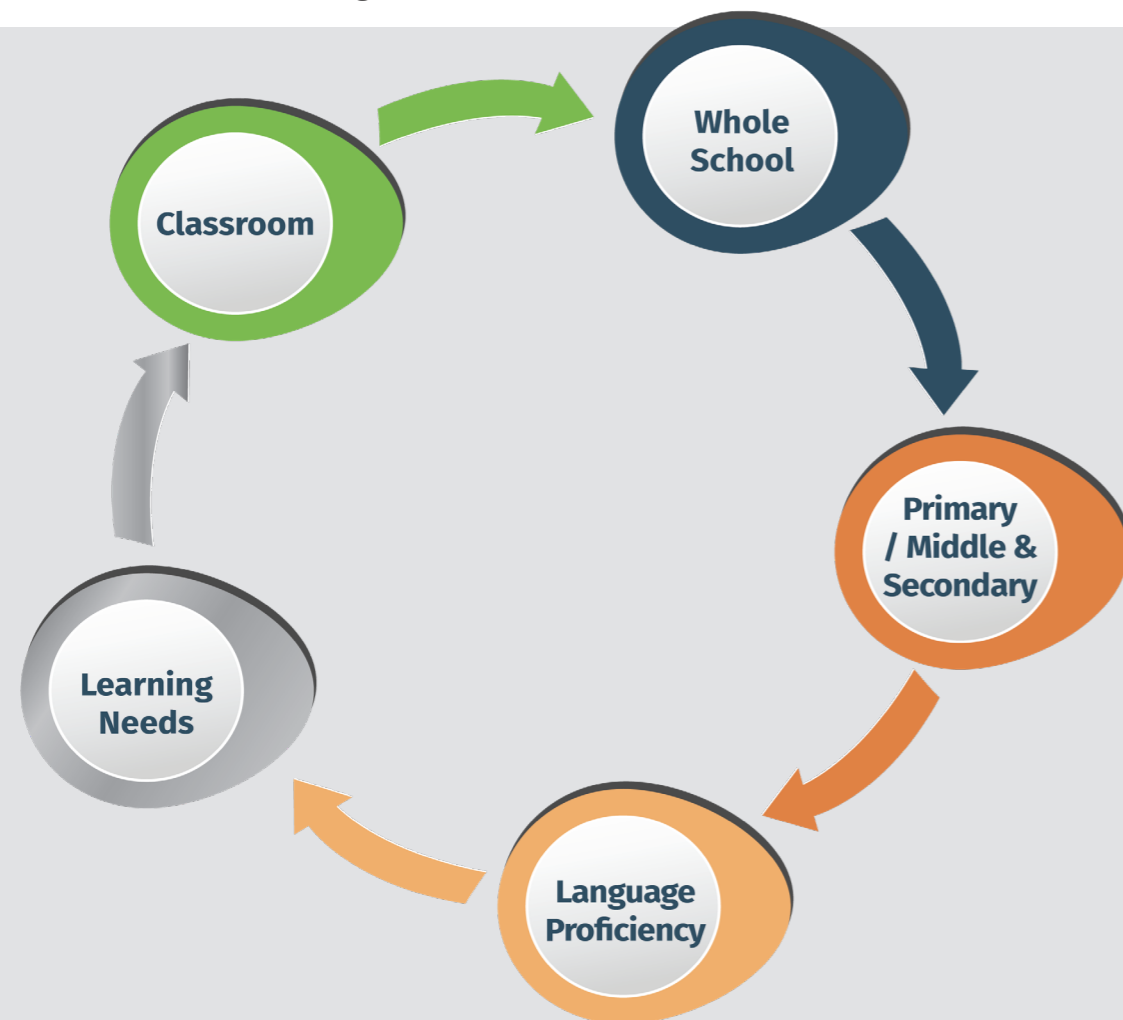
EVALUATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

A Holistic Approach

Assessment Beliefs

We believe evaluating the quality and extent of student achievement is reliant on the assessment tool's capacity to inform the learning process. Whether the assessment tool applied is diagnostic, norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, confirmative or cumulative, the results should be used to inform the student, teacher, parents and leaders what to do next. Throughout the

inquiry learning system, multiple forms of assessment take place. Taken as a whole, the results of the assessments provide a holistic picture of the learning climate and the effectiveness of program delivery and teaching practices in the school. We believe the valid and reliable evaluation is a fundamental part of inquiry learning not separate from it.



Whole School Evaluation

- ISA
- PATR & PATM
- TWI
- CLES
- CIS Community Surveys
- Professional Capital Survey
- SEL
- Classroom learning
- UoI

School Community Partnerships

- Parent/Student Conferences
- Reporting Communication
- Workshops School Events

After School Program

Our after school program's range from the performing arts, athletics and digital platforms. As a member of the international and local school networks in Japan; Aoba participates in a variety of athletic competitions, performing arts festivals and academic events, where our

students get the opportunity to represent our community. We believe our extra curricular activities allows our young learners to further develop their life skills that align with the school's core values.

Teacher Professional Learning

- Collaboration
- Primary Teacher teams, Secondary Teacher teams (Core teams)
- PD Programs
- Teachers as Researchers
- English in the Mainstream
- Blended Learning Project
- Self-Study as an Inquiry

Aoba-Japan International school upholds the CIS Code of Ethics, which is a set of shared moral principles guiding our conduct and professional practice.

We expect all members of our school community to:

- Fulfill the promises stated in our guiding statements, policies, contracts and promotional materials.
- Strive for excellence.
- Nurture a culture of care in which the education, safety and well-being of students and others are paramount.
- Comply with applicable laws and regulations.
- Respect the dignity and equality of all individuals, groups and cultures.
- Promote global citizenship.



AOBA-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

