# DTiF – the Tasmanian experience

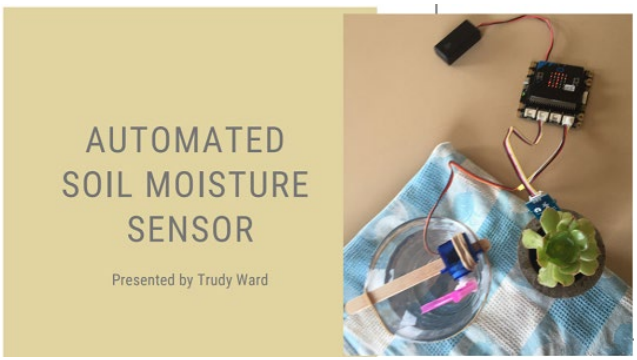
By Peter Lelong, April 2020

In early 2017, 12 schools were invited to take part in the first phase of the Digital Technologies in focus (DTiF) project. Two meetings were held in Tasmania, with leadership teams from the north and south of the state to introduce the project plan and to start planning action research. Among the Tasmanian schools were the two islands of King and Flinders schools, the remote west coast schools of Zeehan and Rosebery, and the most southerly school in Australia, at Dover.

Fast forward to March 2020, with all twelve having now completed their engagement in the DTiF project. Support will continue for the remainder of 2020 as the schools go on their journeys of implementation, assessment and reporting.

There have been many highlights from the three years, where individual teachers have been working with myself, ACARA's Tasmanian curriculum officer, and supported by the national DTiF team. In 2018 teachers, Cindy Thornton from Flinders Island District High School (DHS) and Trudy Ward from Clarendon Vale Primary School, enrolled in a Graduate Certificate in Digital Technologies with the University of Tasmania. Both completed their studies and had their work published on the Digital Technologies Hub.

Trudy Ward developed a lesson that challenged her students to problem-solve using micro:bits and sensors and create a self-watering garden at the school. The soil moisture sensor project integrated science understanding and computational thinking to build sustainable watering practices.




Cindy Thornton from Flinders Island DHS created a series of lessons, where students were challenged to create a program to automatically switch on an air conditioner.

On the West Coast of Tasmania, principals Sharon Woodberry at Zeehan Primary School and Jill Richardson at Rosebery District High School applied for and won a grant from Schools Plus, and put the funds towards purchasing resources for all four government schools on the west coast including the schools in Queenstown and Strahan. They have built a west-coast cluster focusing on developing the digital literacies in all students to enhance the

options for students in their remote communities.

Principal Tom Eastland from Dover is working with the Tasmania Department of Education architects and Professor Stephen Heppell to develop an innovative learning space for students in Years 11 and 12. As principal of Dover District School, Tom wishes to glean ideas from Professor Heppell on how to create engaging environments for students to support the teaching of Digital Technologies.

The two island schools, on Flinders and King, are progressing with the support and encouragement of staff to engage their students in computational, design and systems thinking. Both schools are making good use of the CSERMOOC lending library to bring resources into the classrooms across a range of year levels – something that these students may not otherwise have access to.

The University of Adelaide CSERMOOCs have been presented at staff meetings in all 12 schools as part of the expectation for involvement in the DTiF project, with some schools requiring all new teachers who come to the school to complete this online professional learning program. This has seen the building of teacher capacity to maintain and sustain the implementation of Digital Technologies at these schools.

The Herdsman Cove, Gagebrook, Clarendon Vale and East Derwent primary schools have all been participants in the 24 Carrot Garden program, sponsored by MONA, to encourage students to engage in growing their own food at school. The opportunity to introduce digital technologies through the use of micro:bits as moisture sensors and other Digital Technology resources, both plugged and unplugged, has been successfully implemented in a number of these schools.


Finally, St James Catholic College, with their Stephanie Alexander Garden have built a Digital Technologies program around the implementation of growing a range of produce at the school. The ability to integrate components of the Digital Technologies curriculum proved to be very helpful. The story of St James and their DTiF journey has been captured on the DTiF website.

The importance of leadership cannot be underestimated. It's leadership that has been one of the most critical factors in the success of the project in the 12 schools in Tasmania. Where school principals have an expectation that teachers implement the Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies, it happens. With the provision of ongoing support, both professional learning opportunities and access to resources, there has been an appreciation that the teaching of Digital Technologies offers important opportunities for the students and their future.