

object

DESIGN EMERGENCY



Creating a generation of design thinkers

**A LEARNING PROGRAM BY
OBJECT: AUSTRALIAN DESIGN CENTRE**



LEARNING IS THE KEY TO A BETTER FUTURE

Object believes in the power of design to effect positive change. Through our school learning programs we aim to equip children with 'design thinking' skills and show them how design can improve their everyday lives. Design thinking is a methodology that uses creativity to identify issues and create positive solutions to them. Learning design thinking skills also creates opportunities to achieve outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

WHAT IS *DESIGN EMERGENCY*?

Design Emergency is an outreach learning program that introduces design and the methods of design thinking to primary and secondary schools. *Design Emergency* uses real-life learning to develop higher-order thinking skills. It fosters a deep engagement with students' worlds by helping them to identify relevant issues. The program uses an optimistic human centred approach that engages students in empathetic research and it encourages them to grasp opportunities and take risks.

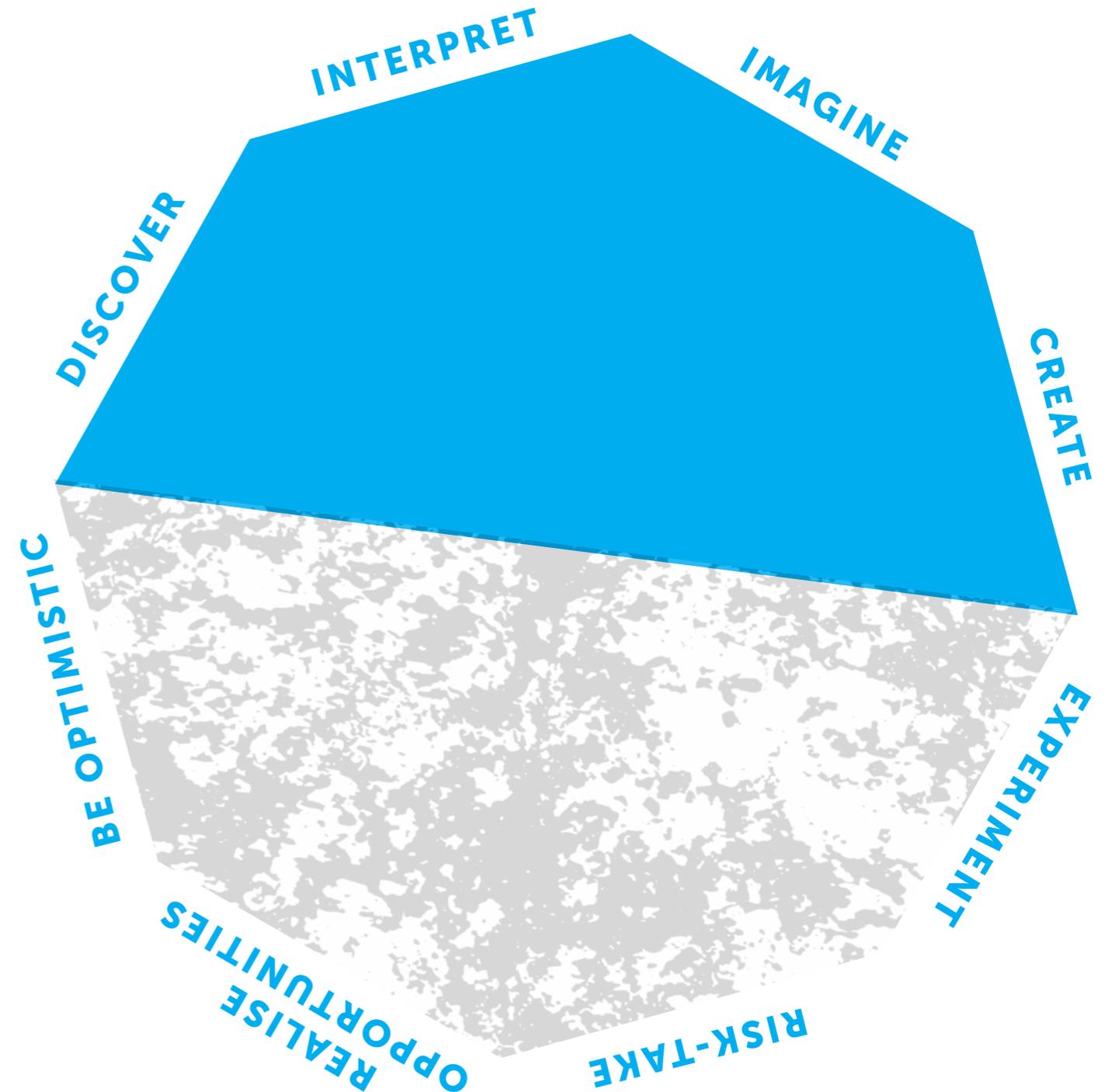
Professional designers work with students and teachers in the classroom to use design methodology to devise creative solutions to challenges they identify in their own lives. The aim is to engage students with creative thinking skills and apply those skills to issues relevant to them.

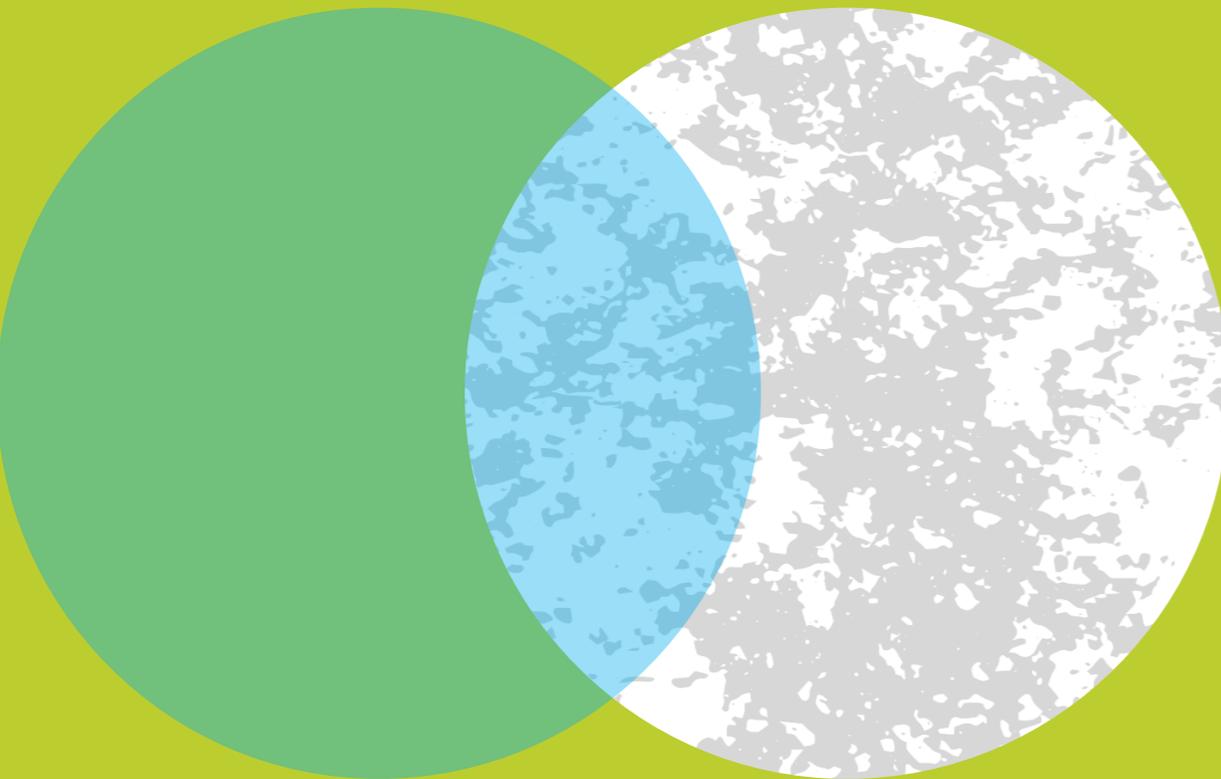
Designers bring with them a deep understanding of design methodology developed through their own work. They also provide an opportunity for students to explore career paths and imagine the life of a designer.

Design Emergency gives students an understanding of what design is; how it relates to the lives of individuals, their community and the larger world. Learning design-thinking skills creates opportunities to achieve outcomes in literacy and numeracy.



DESIGN EMERGENCY VIDEO





CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH DESIGNERS

To ensure the *Design Emergency* program is authentic, interesting and motivating it is important that students connect to the world of design and designers. This can be achieved through studio visits and students working with designers at school or via digital means. This would be supported by content that would include stories around design.

MEET THE DESIGNERS

ZOE BARBER



Zoë has been with Canvas Group for six years, contributing to an extensive branding, print and interactive portfolio. Some highlights include the MCA's Bardayal 'Lofty' Nadjamerrek AO microsite (recently voted People's Champ in the 2011 Pixel Awards), award-winning book designs for Oxford University Press and working with Object on their very first iPad magazine. If you look at Object's magazine number 60 you will see how Zoe has integrated voice-overs with images and stories.

canvasgroup.com.au

MICHAEL ALVISSE



Michael trained as an architect and later became a furniture and industrial designer establishing a design firm with Marc Schamburg. Schamburg and Alvisse championed the cause for environmentally responsible design. Michael and Marc created an amazing piece of furniture that is like a giant puzzle. It takes three people to put it together and represents the need for collaboration in everyday life. Michael is committed to education and has been involved in a number of school programs with Object including Design Emergency in the classroom.

safurniture.com.au

LIANE ROSSLER



Liane was co founder, designer and director of Dinosaur Designs 1985-2010.

She is currently involved in numerous collaborations, exhibitions and projects including Supercyclers, a design project focused on clever and beautiful reuse of waste shown Milan Design Week, 2012.

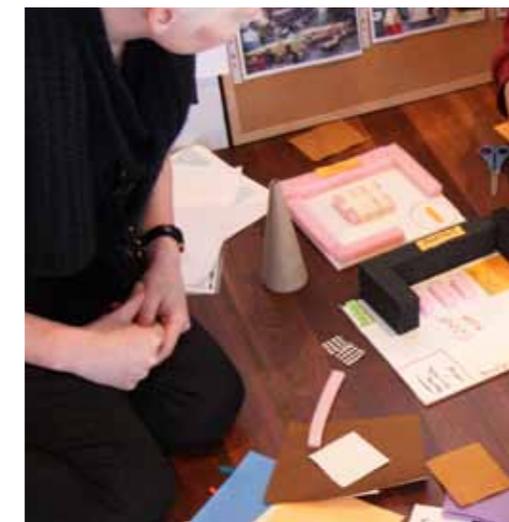
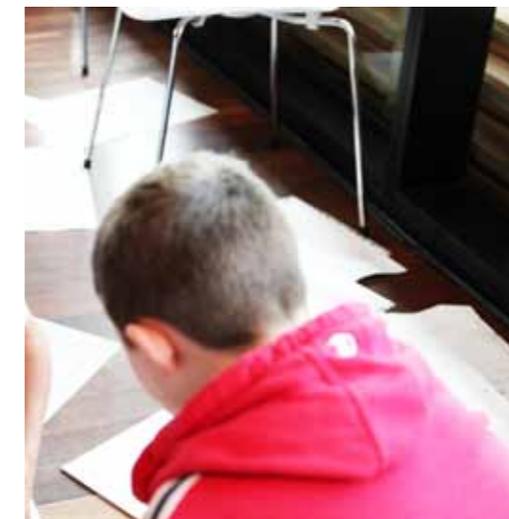
lianerossler.com

A DAY IN THE *DESIGN* EMERGENCY CLASSROOM

A typical day in the *Design Emergency* classroom might see students working with a real-life designer, collaborating on a number of activities to identify an **issue** relevant to them “*the sports equipment is messy, broken, dirty and not used*” and set a **design goal** “*When we are using the sports equipment we would like to have fun, improve skills and play with friends*”.

They then discuss, share, and observe everything they can collectively discover presenting the issue in a creative way using collages, videos, sketches, quotes, interviews and notes to visually display all of their findings. As a group they will investigate and discuss their findings and come up with the **design emergency, for example** “*How can Year 6 design the sports room experience so that students are responsible for the care and organization of the equipment and can easily retrieve and return it in good order?*”

Using a number of design techniques including ‘developing personas’, ‘creating to discover’, ‘using metaphors’ and ‘crowdsourcing’ they develop some ideas to prototype and test, finally arriving at a solution to pitch to the group. Sessions are fun, interactive, collaborative and above all, relevant to the students themselves. Students arrive at solutions that work for them.





*They've got a really good idea
of the process of design and
different types of design.*

TAMMY HILL, TEACHER

DESIGN EMERGENCY IN-SCHOOL PILOTS

In 2011 Object piloted four variations of *Design Emergency* in four schools in NSW.

How might we design the sports room experience so that students are responsible for the care and organization of the equipment?

At **Bourke Street Public (Surry Hills, Sydney)** the Object Learning Coordinator with designer Michael Alvisse, worked through the full *Design Emergency* program over a seven-week period. They worked with a composite class grade 4-6 to find a problem that was relevant to the day-to-day experience of their whole school. Students worked to find solutions to the issues surrounding their sports room and after doing some empathetic research, they discovered that the real problem was around ownership. Using a metaphor of a retail experience they redesigned the organisation and working of the sports equipment room to allow students the opportunity to play with accessible and well looked after equipment.

How might we have equal access to the sports equipment in the school?

At **St Mary's Public School (St Mary's)**, the Learning Coordinator spent time training the class teacher to conduct *Design Emergency* with their class and they shared the running of the program over 5 weeks. Designer Michael Alvisse spent a day with the students helping them set their goals for the challenge and share his design practice with the students. Using 'design thinking' they developed and prototyped a solution whereby they labelled all of the equipment and divided it equally into containers labelled for each class. Students then took responsibility for loaning the equipment out at break times and collecting and sorting it back into the appropriate container at the end of the break.

How can we make Wellington a better place for kids?

At **Wellington Public School (North-West NSW)**, the Learning Coordinator delivered *Design Emergency* over an intensive two days – *Design Emergency* in a nutshell. The students in Years 4-6 focused on their community and what they thought was needed in Wellington for kids. The program highlighted the already existing opportunities to be found in the town and encouraged students to create solutions around these.

How might we create greater opportunity for everyone to use the laptops?

At **St Rose Catholic Primary School (Collaroy)**, Object's Learning Coordinator spent the majority of the time training the teacher who facilitated the session exclusively with the class. A designer visited the school for a morning, helping the students set their goals by discussing the findings that emerged from their discoveries. He was able to share his experience as a designer.



DESIGN EMERGENCY PILOT AT VIVID FESTIVAL

In May 2012, Object trialed another delivery method as part of the Vivid Ideas festival. Forty students attended from five diverse Sydney schools for an intensive Design Emergency atop the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Each school worked with a highly respected designer and a tertiary design student, combining the 'Discovery' research undertaken beforehand in their school with a streamlined *Design Emergency* program. Over five hours, the students delved into issues identified by them, using empathy and research to devise achievable solutions. At the end of the day the students presented their issues, their methodology, their outcomes and prototyped models to the greater group.

object.com.au/news-reviews/object-eye/entry/design_emergency_live_from_vivid_sydney/

PILOT OUTCOMES

The past 18 months of developing and piloting *Design Emergency* has delivered various outcomes:

FEEDBACK AND INPUT

The most important aspect of the pilots has been learning how to improve the program. Our plan for 'next steps' respond to this feedback, which includes the need for teacher training; creation of different modes and platforms of delivery (in particular digital/online); increased incorporation of current teaching methodology; and more direct contact with designers.

DEMONSTRATED NEED

The success of the pilots has provided us with evidence for the need and demand in the community for such a program.

DIRECT RESULTS FOR PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Teachers have reported many students showing a greater engagement in learning; schools have gained 'real solutions' to issues at their school.

RANGE OF DELIVERY MODELS

Rather than one style of program, the pilots have helped us test different models of delivery and experiment with the format.

TEACHER NETWORK

Object has developed a network of *Design Emergency* teachers who are keen and committed to developing it further and continuing participation in the program.

RESOURCES AND WEBSITE

We have created a manual and website comprising of teachers' notes and student resources that will eventually act as a stand-alone resource after teacher training.

A photograph of a teacher with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark top, holding up a piece of paper with a child's drawing. The drawing is a hand-drawn sketch of a house with a tiled roof, a chimney, and a garden. To the right of the house, there is a cloud-like shape containing the word 'Safe!' in pink. Below that, there is a cloud-like shape containing a drawing of a family of four (mother, father, and two children) with the word 'Family' written above them. At the bottom of the drawing, there are palm trees and the word 'Beach' written in pink. The teacher is pointing at the drawing with her right hand. In the background, another person is partially visible, looking at a laptop. The scene is set in a classroom or meeting room.

The students enjoyed the discussion and decision making process. Meeting and working with a designer was also a highlight for students. Being able to have their proposal put into place was also powerful for students involved.

GAYLE MCLISTER, TEACHER

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

In order to achieve 'a generation of design thinkers', our main goal for *Design Emergency* is to expand the reach of the program through greater school participation across Australia.

Our 'blue-sky' dream is to see every child equipped with design thinking skills, in the same way that they are taught to read and write.

WHAT WE NEED TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS

FUNDING

Object is seeking support for our 'next steps', to take *Design Emergency* to the next stage in its development

PARTNERS

As a small non-profit organisation Object always looks for partners to collaborate with, to achieve our shared goals



NEXT STEPS

PILOTS

In the short term, Object needs to conduct more pilots to test the models in more schools, document the background research, and increase the curriculum links.

In the medium-term Object will run national pilots through *CUSP: designing for the next decade* creative program.

DIGITAL STRATEGY

Develop a digital strategy that would take advantage of the National Broadband Network by connecting schools with designers and schools with each other via video conferencing and other ideas for digital integration and leveraging. Address the need for different modes and platforms of delivery including online modules for teacher training.

Teacher training is imperative to the success of the *Design Emergency*. It will allow for the dissemination of the program and encourage teachers to use design thinking in their programming and school administration.

We plan to run teacher training workshops introducing teachers to design thinking methodology and taking them through the *Design Emergency* program and how it can be run in their school.

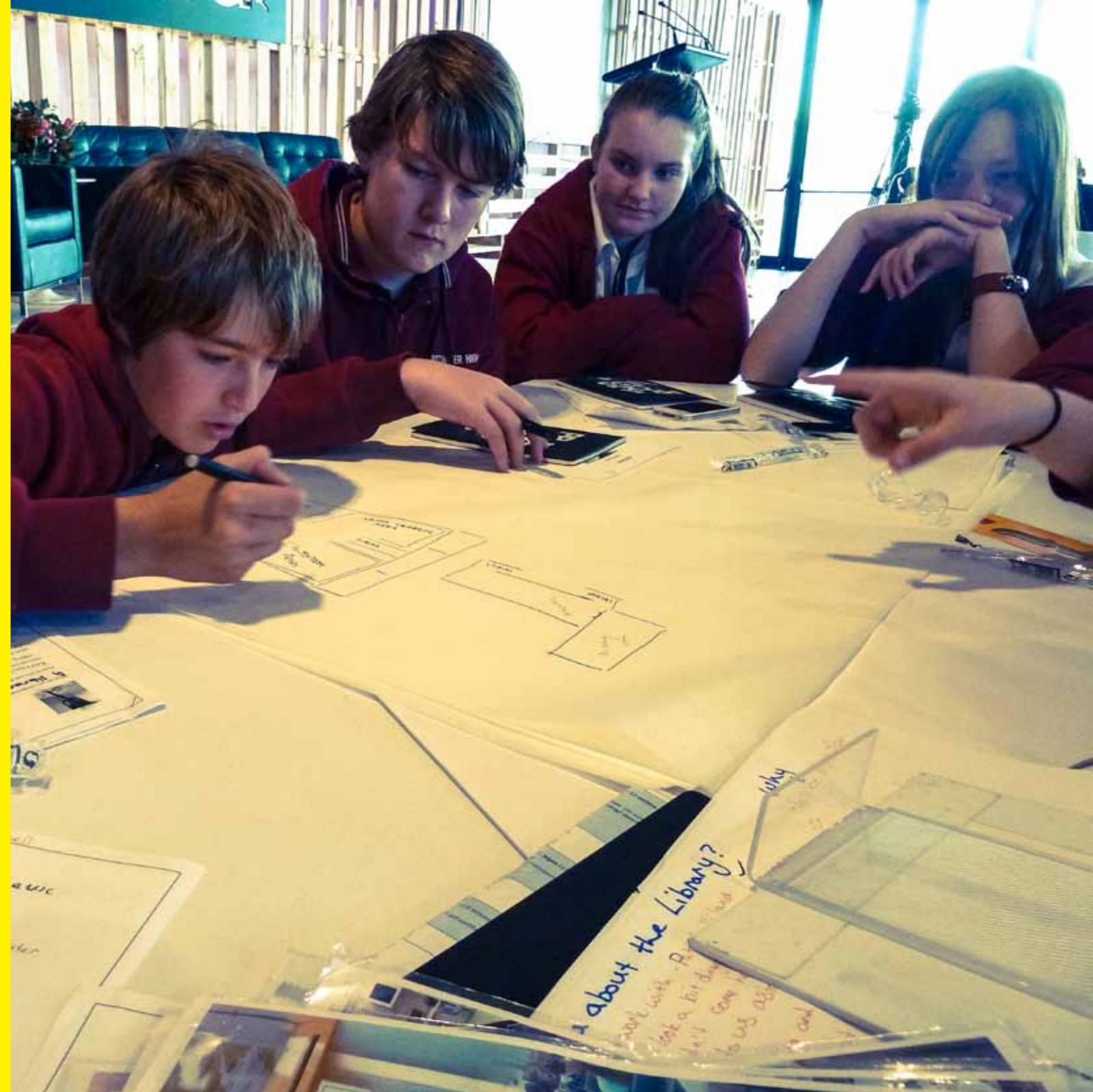
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We plan to run teacher training workshops, introducing teachers to design thinking methodology, taking them through the *Design Emergency* program and showing how it can be run in their school.

KEEPING CURRENT

In any program that incorporates design, education and technology, it is critical to keep up to date with ongoing developments; maintaining relevance and interest. Also it is important to incorporate what is learnt from teachers and students as they participate in *Design Emergency* to continue to improve the program.



Educating for unpredictability. We don't know what the world will look like in the next five years. Children have extraordinary capabilities for innovation. Kids will take a chance and if they don't know they'll have a go. If you're not prepared to be wrong you won't come up with anything original. Education systems focus on mistakes - sucking out the creativity. We get educated out of our creativity. Creativity is as important in education as literacy and we should treat it with the same status. **SIR KEN ROBINSON**