

“Wonky Carrots Are Welcome!” Using Co-Designed Success Criteria in Experiential Learning Tasks With Grade 4 Girls to Combat Perfectionist Mindsets and Expand Understanding of Success

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Abstract

In a world dominated by the illusion of perfection, particularly in the social media domain, it could be argued that now more than ever, this generation of girls needs to explore the difference between healthy striving and perfectionism. Schools and teachers must actively engage their students in redefining and reshaping the conversation about success, discrediting the unrealistic notion that academic achievement is synonymous with flawless, perfect results. This action research project investigated whether perfectionist mindsets towards learning could be altered and influenced at a young age to help girls recognise the complex, multifaceted nature of success. Unexpectedly, reflecting upon the growth of a humble, wonky garden carrot became a valuable allegory for exploring perfectionism in both learning and life. By inviting 9-year-old girls to co-design success criteria and assessment continuums based upon experiential learning tasks in the kitchen and garden, this research project revealed some effective techniques to combat perfectionist mindsets and enhance girls’ appreciation for the diverse construct surrounding the term success. Three key themes emerged from the data analysis suggesting the positive impact this project had on:

- combatting perfectionist attitudes and fixed mindsets (Dweck, 2013) towards learning
- affirming girl-centred pedagogical approaches to learning design
- fostering opportunities to evaluate formative assessment practices.

Glossary

Perfectionist mindset: The notion and attitude that things must look good (based on aesthetic beauty) to be considered perfect or finished.

Success: A positive sense of learning achievement.

Co-designed: Co-constructed and created in tandem with the students.

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“The perfect is the enemy of the good.” – Voltaire (1770)

Teaching in an all-girls school setting, my colleagues and I often notice perfectionism affecting learning in some pernicious ways. Just like the wisdom of the philosopher Voltaire, aiming for perfection can sometimes have significant pitfalls. One of these downsides seems to be the tendency for girls to permeate “fixed mindset” views towards intelligence (Dweck, 2013). These views place an unhealthy emphasis on the aesthetics of learning by often only valuing perfect, final products.

A current strategic school goal at Ruyton is to continue to develop unique learning programs that build competencies, values, and skills for our students to thrive in their futures. In Year 4, Ruyton Junior School girls enjoy the immersive experience of a signature learning program known as “South House” (named after the purpose-built location in which it is based). The bespoke curriculum, while still covering the core academic learning areas, provides students with a unique environment, including a garden and kitchen. This sphere is one of many areas in our school where we dedicate curriculum design that fosters key competencies beyond the “core-curriculum” required to succeed as future global citizens. This seemed an ideal setting to investigate how I might magnify pedagogy that supports strength-based views of success whilst minimising perfectionist notions of progress.

Research Question

How can the process of co-designing success criteria in experiential learning tasks combat perfectionist mindsets and expand Grade 4 girls' understanding and perceptions of success?

Literature Review

It is widely reported that girls from a young age are socialised to become perfectionists, whilst boys are generally encouraged to live boldly and bravely (Damour, 2020; Saujani, 2016; Simmons, 2018). Research suggests that girls are often more likely than boys to link academic performance with their sense of self-worth; therefore, if results at school are deemed less than perfect, anxiety is heightened, and self-esteem can wane (Al Zahrani, 2019; Green, 2021). Many argue that girls are facing double standards and mixed messages about what it means to achieve success scholastically and socially in the 21st Century. (Carey, 2015; Green, 2021; Guthrie, 2020; Hoyle, 2021; Mofield et al., 2019).

In the classroom context, fixation on perfection and fear of failure can lead to students avoiding risk-taking behaviours in their learning. This behaviour is often reported as more pervasive in the psyche of girls. (Carey, 2015; Green, 2021; Hoyle, 2021). Learners who are used to experiencing high levels of success are of notable significance. They may suddenly be crippled by self-doubt and anxiety the first time they experience a setback or mistake in the learning process, thereby halting progress. This was highlighted in Carol Dweck’s work on Growth Mindset Theory (2013) and

supported by others (Duckworth et al., 2007; Mofield & Peters, 2019; Simmons, 2018; Stannard, 2019). Dweck contends that educators need to support students to normalise mistakes and to recognise that they are integral to the learning process; additionally, to embrace challenges and view errors as welcome opportunities for growth.

One technique to promote the importance of the stages of the learning process is to make the outcomes more explicit by breaking them down into descriptive attributes. Separating the learning task components and clarifying the expectations of the learning goals will make the steps to success more visible for learners (Black & Wiliam, 2010; Hattie & Donoghue, 2016; Nottingham & Nottingham, 2017). This method employs “success criteria” to outline the task.

Teachers often assess the learning using a rubric or continuum incorporating the success criteria descriptors. Smith and Lowe (2021) build on this strategy, suggesting that a highly effective way to engage students in reflecting on their progress is to involve them directly in designing assessment rubrics and success criteria. In the absence of providing input, students may tend to ignore the feedback provided by the teacher. Morton et al. (2021), along with the research of Hattie and Donoghue (2016) and Smith and Lowe (2021), claim that inviting students to participate in creating success criteria in tandem with the teacher generates a deeper understanding for students of the learning stage they are at, and where they need to go next to progress. Research has shown that girls benefit from this scaffolded structure in the class environment, as it promotes learner agency and highlights the purpose and goals in each stage of the learning task (Kuriloff et al., 2017).

Fostering learning competencies (Milligan et al., 2022) that move beyond the core academic curriculum are increasingly recognised as necessary for a well-rounded education. This rhetoric has become progressively heightened in much of the pedagogical research following post Covid-19 school experiences. Watterson and Zhao’s (2020) research on teaching during the pandemic implores educators to use this unique experience as a catalyst to rethink curriculum design, while educational institutions are exploring multiple methods to galvanise and equip learners for their increasingly uncertain future employment pathways.

Experiential learning is generally accepted as conducive to the development of real-world capabilities and dispositions necessary for a prosperous 21st-century lifestyle (Swennen, 2020). Stannard (2017) and Younger (2018) assert that girls prosper from lessons that involve hands-on, interactive, collaborative design where they can take risks, discuss their thinking and link learning to meaningful, real-world application. Curriculum that includes this in the learning design framework, therefore, can help girls to thrive (Stannard, 2019; Younger, 2018).

There is a gap in the literature in reference to using experiential learning tasks and co-designed success criteria to combat perfectionist attitudes of girls and their understanding of success. This research aimed to ascertain whether this method can effectively empower girls to measure their learning achievements and life competencies in a more holistic manner. Using success criteria for a specific learning task, combined with the understanding that experiential learning enables girls to

flourish through healthy striving, pointed to a positive and impactful outcome. It was the potential of this combination that inspired my action research project.

Methodology

As part of ongoing professional development, it is important to participate in opportunities whereby one is regularly encouraged to become a reflective practitioner. One of the ways to achieve such reflective learning is to engage in practitioner-based research and, in particular, action research. Mertler (2020) articulates how reflective practice might be realised by teachers in the classroom by examining one's experience to modify, adapt, improve and shape teaching and learning initiatives. Mertler goes on to present these opportunities in the four stages of his action research model: planning, acting, developing, and reflecting.

An action research methodology acknowledges constructivist foundations, whereby knowledge and experience are constructed by individuals or groups and are context and situation dependent. Because my research was focused on addressing a need within my classroom, my research was undertaken in the classroom environment to explore and understand the impact of my action on my students' learning, and, by association, my pedagogy.

Grounded in a methodology focused on the analysis of human experiences in context, my research project used qualitative research methods to collect and manage the research data and was small-scale in scope.

Research Context

Ruyton Girls' School is an independent, non-denominational, K-12 girls' day school in Melbourne, Australia, with approximately 920 students aged 3-18 years-old. Committed to educating and empowering girls to live their lives boldly, with impact and purpose, Ruyton is recognised widely as a high-performing academic school. The participants for this action research project were 22 Year 4 girls, aged between nine and ten years old, who formed part of the cohort of 44 students that I was teaching in 2022. These 22 students and their parents provided informed, voluntary, written consent to participate in this project. I excluded names in this report to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Although my research focused on only half of the cohort of 44 pupils, the remaining girls received the same experience and were not denied any benefits because of my inquiry. To ensure equity and ethics were upheld, all students enrolled in Year 4 and the teaching staff engaged in the main aspects of this research project, notably co-designing success criteria and completing reflection tasks as they formed part of our experiential curriculum design. However, I did not collect data on the non-participants.

I collected the research data during ten 50-minute lessons spread over four terms of the 2022 academic. The lessons occurred in a class subject called "Collaborative Learning Investigations" (C.L.I); our Junior School inquiry-based integrated studies model that combines humanities and sciences under a conceptual learning framework. The Year 4 Signature Program at Ruyton had recently undergone a review (in 2021), in which one of the recommendations was to consider ways to

actively and regularly engage students in providing feedback in what was working for them in their learning as a means of strengthening programs, so I considered this when planning the action phase of my project. I wanted to create a series of lessons that would actively involve the students in reflecting on their learning process, particularly the informal assessment mechanisms used to track pupil progress.

The Action

“The day is coming, when a single carrot, freshly observed, will set off a revolution.”

Cézanne (1898)

The first stage of the research project began with two lessons focused on exploring and defining the term “success” using the “Make Meaning” thinking routine (Ritchhart & Perkins, 2008). First, individually and then in small groups, the girls discussed and recorded their ideas on what successful behaviours and attributes look like in the world. In the subsequent lesson, we explored the term “success” in the context of the kitchen garden.

The next stage involved asking the students to drill down into the term “success” within the context of growing successful garden produce, specifically carrots. After researching and planting our carrots, the girls made individual and group predictions about what attributes the “successful” carrots would have once harvested. These predicted attributes formed an initial checklist of the class carrot success criteria. The students drew pictures and wrote descriptions of these attributes and characteristics.

Once harvested, the girls collaborated to sort the 75 carrots into the success criteria categories based on visual and tactile judgements. Then they answered questions to reflect on the initial predictions and subsequent findings. We repeated this process, but this time the sorting experience involved taste testing the previously sorted “successful” and “unsuccessful” carrots while the girls wore blindfolds, so that they did not judge them based on visual aesthetics. The girls used the attributes from carrots deemed successful from these sorting tasks to reflect upon and revise their initial checklists that had formed the carrot success criteria.

Based on the girls’ feedback from the above processes, we reviewed the success criteria and adapted the initial category names to reflect our discoveries. In the final lessons of the intervention, I piloted using these category names within success criteria for English non-fiction writing tasks based on the format that the girls had co-designed. Then, the girls gave feedback on the entire process and reflected upon their initial definitions of success and any changes observed over time. Girls also shared perspectives on what they found challenging and enjoyable overall about their learning.

Data Collection

I collected data through predominantly qualitative techniques and followed a flexible route. To increase credibility and rigour, I employed data triangulation techniques and collected a variety of data. Including multiple types of data collection methods enhances the reliability of the research

methods, potential findings, and results, as data can be cross-examined for corroboration (Mertler, 2020). Therefore, in my project, I gathered the following data:

- Student self-reflection recordings
- Semi-structured questionnaires
- Student work samples
- Teacher field notes and observations
- Semi-structured student interviews and focus groups

I began collecting initial data through the student responses to the lessons exploring the term “success” in different contexts. Students recorded their answers on an online platform, Seesaw, whereby they could write, take photos or record audio or video. I used these data to create a baseline for determining early perceptions of success in the garden and investigated whether some attributes and characteristics portrayed perfectionist ideals.

I gathered student reflections and work samples after critical phases of the project, such as on the sorting and success criteria processes and any behaviours that denoted a shift in thinking around notions of success. Girls also filled in questionnaires at these critical phases to share their thinking. I interviewed small student focus groups mid-way through the intervention and at the end of the project, asking the girls what they might do similarly and differently next time. In analysing these data, I noted any changes in student attitudes and behaviours related to using the success criteria. I also looked for evidence of whether the girls could apply their learning from the experiential context to the more traditional academic subject of English.

Data Analysis

Following action research best practice guidelines (Mertler, 2020), I immersed myself in the data to look for patterns, trends, and themes. I used inductive analysis (reducing the amount of data into purposeful and meaningful groups) to organise the qualitative data. I then used a thematic coding scheme (Mertler, 2020) to condense these data further and to assist me with identifying themes. Thematic coding involved categorising student data into groups of patterns and recurring trends regarding:

- (i) any change in initial student ideas of the term “success,”
- (ii) co-construction of success criteria and
- (iii) the use of “girl-focused” pedagogies (as defined by Kuriloff et al., 2017):
 - a) experiential learning,
 - b) collaboration,
 - c) clear expectations,
 - d) routines, and
 - e) connections to “real life.”

I based the above categories on Kuriloff et al.’s research (2017) into best practice for facilitating powerful learning experiences for girls. Their research identifies engagement in hands-on learning tasks,

increased collaboration, and the effective use of scaffolds to enhance girls' abilities to track learning progress. I analysed student work samples, questionnaire responses, and audio transcripts to determine if the intervention fostered a more diverse view of learning success. I also transcribed observations and interviews into Word documents and grouped them into themes of reflections on attitudes, approaches, and assessment. Through this analysis, I could identify examples of change and appreciation of diversity in student and teacher language and behaviours. To ensure consistency and trustworthiness, I cross-referenced data from my observation field notes with student questionnaires, work samples, and interviews for similarities and anomalies.

Discussion of Findings

Altered Attitudes: Student Reflection on Success Assessment Criteria Challenged Girls'

Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Definitions of Learning Success

A key theme that emerged when analysing and contrasting baseline data with end-of-project data (particularly in student work samples, responses and questionnaires) was an adaptation to the girls' initial understandings of the components of learning success. There was an apparent shift in many girls' mindsets to what is valued as successful. This was predominantly revealed in their feedback and subsequent modification of the success criteria language. From the commencement of the project, contrasted to the end, there was a transference from using deficit-based language to describe key attributes and success continuums (product/finite-driven vocabulary) into strength-based language that focused on the value and stages of the process within the learning journey.

My analysis of early individual and group questionnaires and vegetable-sorting tasks showed that much of the student's language and terms used to define success centred on perfectionist notions, fixed mindset ideals (Dweck, 2013), and stereotypes. For instance, in the individual and group responses to their initial definitions of success, themes emerged around competition/winning, finality/end product, perseverance/longevity, and pride. In addition to words, the girls used many images and symbols to depict success – drawings of clenched fists and strong arms, smiley faces, ticks/check marks, trophies/medals, stars, and finish lines. These examples echo much of Dweck's research (2013) into fixed mindset attitudes toward learning success.

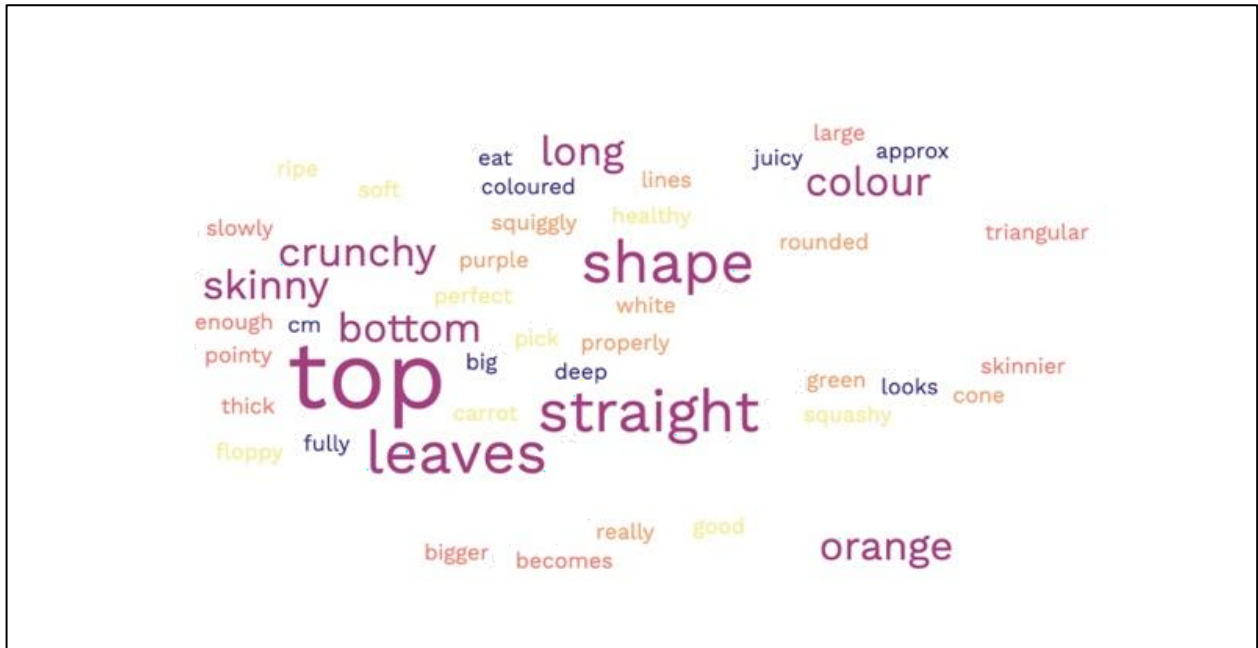
Evidence of a fixed mindset is revealed in Student Group C's work samples, where they defined success as "Noun - to accomplish or achieve a goal, e.g., "She was successful in her career," and Student Group F, "The end results of hard work and determination. It is a synonym for victory." Group G observed, "To accomplish your goal in a way that pleases you, e.g., to finish everything in a test and be proud of yourself, would be a success." These descriptions appear to support the research conclusions by Damour (2020), Saujani (2016), and Simmons (2018) that girls from a young age are socialised to become perfectionists and that this directly impacts girls' views of self-worth and success (Hoyle, 2021).

Perfectionism and fixed mindset beliefs emerged again as aesthetic attributes were prioritised by the girls as the primary indicators for success when harvesting the class garden carrots. The

predominant language used to predict “successful carrots” and when initially sorting the carrots into categories for the success criteria, described appearance. For example, carrots were deemed a success based on their shape, size, colour, and overall presentation. When analysing work samples of students’ pre-harvest predictions about the carrots, the terms regarding aesthetics recurred (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1

Descriptions of Successful Carrot Attributes



Note: The larger the word, the higher the frequency of its use.

Unsuccessful carrots were also described by their aesthetic appearance using adjectives negatively, such as “wonky, weird, dirty, squishy, twirly, pale, ugly, small, odd, different.” (See Fig. 2).

These examples could be described as a deficit model/view of success – externally judged, polarised, finite, high stakes, and focused on the end product. However, once the girls taste-tested the carrots, their classification and assessment of the success of the carrots began to show signs of change in what was valued and deemed worthy. This change is evident in the work samples and teaching observations from two classification events: pre- and post-taste tests. In the first carrot sort, more than half the carrots were placed in the “Unsuccessful” category, whereas in post-taste testing, only 23 out of 75 carrots were deemed unsuccessful by all groups. This difference suggests an early shift in student perception from fixed- to growth-mindset (Dweck, 2013) views of success.

and questionnaires, a clear theme of students recognising the need for a strength-based, growth-mindset-driven continuum for learning assessment became clear. This was evident in the student-revised sorting continuum.

When prompted to reflect upon the initial sorting categories for the carrots (Appendix 2), most students shared the challenges they found with these descriptions. They recognised their limitations as opaque and, therefore, difficult to achieve, highlighting failure or discrepancies in the assessment mechanism.

In the student survey regarding the first carrot success criteria sorting task, six girls mentioned the sorting category names (see Appendix 2) as a significant barrier to organising and agreeing upon the success of the garden vegetables. These four categories were raised again as an issue when girls discussed what they noticed about the attributes within each category or what they would do differently next time. When asked what they would change next time, more than half of the students suggested renaming the sorting categories to create a more strength-based continuum.

The frustration with the limiting, deficit-based, names for the initial assessment categories was highlighted in the student responses. For example, Student Q explained, “We should make more categories such as unique or promising,” while Student O noted, “I found it challenging to put any in the unsuccessful category.” Student C echoed these sentiments, saying, “The categories were really confusing because what *is* exceeding success?” Student C mentioned this frustration again during her focus group interview: “Exceeding success is like being perfect, but no one is ever perfect in the world because you can’t be perfect!” This notion was reiterated in subsequent group discussions, where Student A highlighted the vague nature of the descriptions: “Beyond/exceeding success is like getting 101 out of 100 on a test which you can’t get.” These responses also showed recognition from the students that assessment of “success” is often subjective.

This shift in vocabulary also appeared in the data analysis of work sample videos and focus group interviews when the girls shared their ideas on how to change the four limiting categories. The girls articulated that they wanted the language to reflect more positive, strength-based criteria for growth (see Appendix 3 – Revised Student-designed strength-based categories for sorting continuum).

Engaging in co-designing and reflecting on the success criteria provoked a shift in the girls’ thinking from using deficit, finite-based, fixed-mindset language around the concept of “success” (which can often lead to perfectionism and anxiety) towards a strength-based model of language for learning. This model emphasises the importance and complexity of the learning process rather than solely focusing on the final product.

Student Engagement and Feedback Affirmed the Value of ‘Girl-Centric’ Pedagogical Approaches

From the data analysis that concentrated on “girl-focused” pedagogies (as defined by Kuriloff et al., 2017), three approaches promoted as beneficial for girls emerged as trends in supporting the positive learning engagement of my students. These approaches were:

a) employing ample experiential learning within the curriculum, linked to ‘real - life’ experiences

b) communicating clear expectations of learning using scaffolds as a guide

c) creating opportunities for genuine collaboration

Through intentional curriculum design, I fostered approaches within the project lessons that aimed to amplify the use of these pedagogies listed above. I did this by including experiential learning practices, employing scaffolds (in this case, success criteria) showing clear task expectations, and providing scope for student agency and peer collaboration. (Kuriloff et al., 2017; Morris, 2020; Swennen, 2020; Walker & Rocconi, 2021).

Student work samples, teacher observations, and student questionnaires revealed positive feedback regarding the hands-on environment (experiential learning), the use of the success criteria and cooperative group tasks, confirming they were of benefit to the girls’ learning. The tactile experience promoted student motivation and engagement, and the growing garden proved a powerful metaphor for debunking perfectionist notions of success as well as tracking phases of the girls’ learning journey.

After analysing the student questionnaires to determine what they enjoyed most, and what they found most interesting, the value of hands-on, collaborative learning design emerged as integral to student engagement. Notably, 16 of the 22 girls referenced this theme in their questionnaire responses. For example, Student I expressed her appreciation of experiential learning by stating, "It was fun to see if our hard work in the garden has paid off." Student Q also expressed her enjoyment of the experiment, "I enjoyed the blind taste testing, trying to guess which ones were store-bought and which ones were homegrown." Opportunities to collaborate with peers also seemed salient to the girls, reflected in student work samples, questionnaires, interview responses, and teaching observations.

Also worth mentioning, it seemed that using the metaphor of the growing garden became a powerful analogy in aiding girls in understanding their value and that of their own learning journey. Student B poignantly explains, "Growing carrots takes time like everything else, but sometimes they don’t turn out the way you expected – like your learning. But from that, you can mingle with it, find different ways and the beauty in the misshapes – like your learning." The unexpected, diverse shapes and sizes of the class-grown carrots also challenged aesthetic notions of perfectionism. Student H articulated this clearly "I have really enjoyed learning about both wonky carrots and perfect. They were an invaluable message to me. This was basically a metaphor for teaching us that we were perfect just the way we are, and just because we looked different, that did not matter because we are all unique."

Research states that scaffolds, such as success criteria checklists, provide clear expectations for achievement in the learning journey and help pupils track their progress and next steps toward success. (Black & Wiliam, 2010; Kuriloff et al., 2017; Nottingham & Nottingham, 2017; Smith & Lowe, 2021). Kuriloff et al. (2017) emphasise that girls learn effectively when given clear

expectations and structures to achieve the goals of their learning task. The data analysis from the questionnaires, field notes, and work samples confirmed the use of scaffolds as a beneficial learning and self-assessment tool for these girls. The vegetable success criteria template was adapted from deficit-based categories to a strength-based continuum, which we subsequently transferred and applied to academic learning tasks. We then began to pilot the adapted continuum in English lessons when exploring the structure of the genre of Informational Texts. (See Appendix 4 – Information Report Success Criteria – English Writing Tasks.)

The girls shared their insights about using this co-created self-assessment tool in student questionnaires and focus group interviews. Student A stated, “I think the carrot-growing process is really like learning because it shows the different stages of an idea or a piece of writing.” She also said, “The categories can help us compare our learning and our work with different criteria.” When asked how the criteria can help their learning, many students shared its transference to academic subjects. Student D also explained how it helped with self-assessment and checking off the stages of success within a task, saying, “We can tick the things that we are able to do.” Almost all girls (21/22) acknowledged that this was an effective tool to help them identify which stage of their learning they were at and where they needed to go next. From my observations, I noted how success criteria made the components of the writing task genre explicit. I saw an improvement in the girls written content – they included more of each textual element within their compositions. It also helped me give the girls instant, transparent feedback on what they had done well and where they needed to move next.

Structuring curriculum design incorporating research-based, “girl-centric” approaches, specifically co-designing scaffolds, peer collaboration and experiential learning, was affirmed from this data as a valuable framework for learning.

Conclusions

By exploring how we might contest perfectionist ideals using the medium of experiential learning in the class garden, I have discovered some methods to enhance girls’ appreciation for the complex, multifaceted nature of a “successful” learning journey. To stress that engaging with the purpose and thinking required from the learning experience is much more important than a perfect-looking final product, single grade, or outcome.

Teachers who would like to investigate different strategies in their schools could consider the following:

- Implement success criteria and modelled exemplars into regular class curriculum design to support and scaffold learners towards their individual or task-specific goals and use these to support student self-assessment and reflection.
- Incorporate “favourite mistake” assemblies or reflection opportunities into regular school routine that focus on the learning that occurred because of the ‘mistake’ experience.
- Explore using success criteria as a feedback mechanism for continuous reporting tasks.

- Embed hands-on, real-life learning experiences into all academic subjects and curricula. design to enhance and amplify best practices in pedagogy for girls and develop essential life competencies, dispositions, and capabilities.
- Use hands-on/experiential learning experiences as a supportive medium and analogy for risk-taking and comparisons to academic subjects.
- Create more occasions for peer group tasks and reflection as collaborative learning opportunities and the chance to attempt tasks repeatedly seemed to improve student engagement and motivation.
- Consider doing a mini school audit into assessment mechanisms and reporting language – investigate if they appear deficit-based or strength-based, and what message this may be purporting as to what is “valued.”
- Cultivate opportunities for girls to redefine and reshape the conversation around what “successful learning” looks like and help them articulate the mindset and attributes that link with that.
- Employ co-creation of success criteria with staff to cultivate a culture of thinking and learning that goes beyond the classroom.

Reflection

At the commencement of this research, I could never have predicted that growing a few vegetables with girls and reflecting on this process would lead to a mini-learning revolution regarding exploring perfectionism. From participating in this project, I realised there are no simple programmes or teaching tools we can roll out into schools as a “quick fix” answer to students who display perfectionist behaviours/tendencies. Instead, fostering growth mindsets and combatting perfection begins with changing how we teach rather than what we teach. Teachers need to be living, breathing, acting examples of imperfection, highlighting our mistakes, and sharing what we have learned from them, emphasising the learning process and not the final product. Just like the carrots, high-quality learning can be seen and measured in all sorts of ways. It is the twists and turns of the learning process that matter the most.

This process and understanding have certainly been a challenge for me, as I realised what a perfectionist I am as I embarked on this journey. As an active, reflective practitioner, I plan to continue to evaluate my learning behaviours. In 2023, new initiatives like core competencies and learner profiles are gaining traction and demand our attention. I encourage the wider school community to share in this transformative learning journey and to engage with and apply these insights to their own context. In doing so, it may help our girls to go forth and flourish in the world as the responsible, caring, successful global citizens and lifelong learners we wish them to be.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Student Reflections Highlighting Non-Aesthetic Attributes as Successful

When asked what was most important to share about her experiences in this task, Student P said, “Think about this ... carrots may look bad on the outside but they can still taste good!” and Student N: “We compared the carrots by taste on a scale of bitter to sweet. If it was bitter, it would either be in Unsuccessful or OK/Adequate. If it was sweet, it would either be in Successful or Exceeding Success depending on how strong the flavour was.” Student E also outlined similar thinking from her group: “What my group did to sort the carrots was putting the carrots that were open and not edible in Unsuccessful. The extremely small ones in OK/Adequate and the twisty big ones in Successful and Exceeding Success. We did this because it doesn’t matter if it’s curled, it’s just about how it tastes.”

Appendix 2

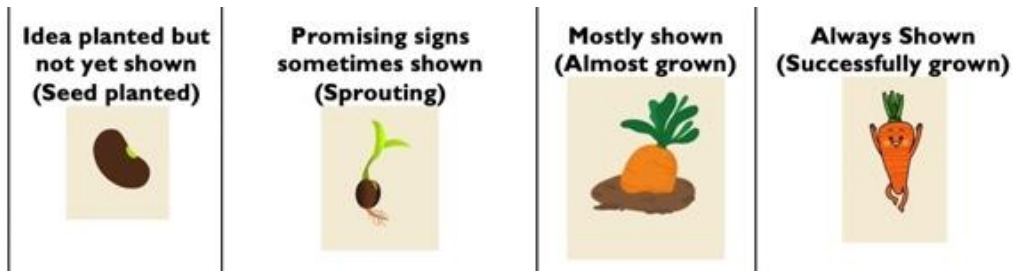
Image of Initial Vegetable Sorting Criteria Showing Categories of Unsuccessful, OK/Adequate, Successful and Exceeding Success



Appendix 3

Student Designed “Strength-Based” Categories for Sorting Continuum





Taking on student feedback, the categories for carrots were changed from deficit-based categories– (Unsuccessful, OK/Adequate, Successful and Exceeding) to a strength-based continuum (Idea planted, Promising/Sprouting signs, Mostly grown/shown, Successfully shown/grown).



Appendix 4

Information Report Success Criteria Sample – (English Writing Task)

Information Report Success Criteria

Criteria	Idea planted but not yet shown (Seed planted)	Promising signs sometimes shown (Sprouting)	Mostly shown (Almost grown)	Always Shown (Successfully grown)
Information report				
Organisation: Clear title that informs the reader what this report is about				
Introduction in first paragraph that defines the topic or makes a statement that interests the reader to make them read on				
Information organised into paragraphs with a topic sentence				
Diagrams, dates, photos, charts, tables, glossary, or fact boxes add key information				
Language: Uses formal language Present tense used (except historical which uses past tense).				
Written in the third person (he, she, it, they) (not using I or we)				
Key words or technical vocabulary is used				
Uses extra details and examples to explain the facts				