Alphington Primary School situated in the riverside pocket of Alphington, has a cohort of 380 students that includes high achievers, mixed ability and special needs students.

With the support and encouragement of Principal, Cheryl McGuigan, the opportunity arose to develop an Integrated Art and Language program enabling students and staff to learn in a way that enriches their delivery of the target language, Italian and Italian culture and art in a richer for the Visual Arts program.

Key movements in art and culture including the Roman era, the Renaissance, Italian Modernism and Italian Melbourne are three themes that are taught over a two-year cycle. In the first year, students explore 'Roma e Romani' (Italian Romans) and 'Il Rinascimento' and in the second year explore 'Medioevo Italiano', L'Arte e Cultura', and 'Gli Italiani a Melbourne: Adriano, l'archeologo culturale e le sue immagini'.

Visual stimuli displayed in the learning space includes a large timeline featuring events, artworks and cultural elements from the Roman era to the Renaissance. It is a resource constantly updated with information by students as they learn evolved.

The thematic approach is enhanced through the use of artefacts from Italy and Australia that encourage discussion about time, space and distance. A large map depicts world colonization of the Roman Empire through the reigns of different Emperors. This inspires discussion of power, invention and geographical regions. A three-meters car board can be transformed into 'Tigers' Column' by the year three students, further enriching the 'Italian' environment.

Utilizing a flexible learning space
A grant from the previous state government in 2010 allowed the school to build a junior library facility with open and flexible learning spaces. The new learning spaces provide an ideal location for a new and different way of delivering these two specialist disciplines.

Group rotation and fixed student transition is supported by a visual task board. Students move around and between spaces, housed in a library, to engage in different activities. In each space, students share a workbook 'quaderno' across subjects to ensure documentation is always linked. Italian/Culture/Art. Nothing is lost in transition (or translation) across these areas. Students are autonomous to move between spaces and make choices about their learning.

Children are greeted in Italian by all three team members, and given instructions in both languages. The space is filled with signage in the target language. Verbal Italian instructions have become an enjoyable language practice, involving children and parents, resulting in students using more Italian.

Forgetting Language
Work in the target language complements and reflects the activity in Art. Senior students write procedural texts annotating the artwork they create, such as 'Roman sculpture (sculture romane)' and poetry in the target language. Verbal Italian instructions have become an enjoyable language practice, involving children and parents, resulting in students using more Italian.

For Discussion
In our school where are we succeeding with integration of learning areas? Where are the opportunities to build collaboration to create a richer learning environment for our students?