

# Greater digital insight through challenge

Luca Cetta

Students from three Eyre Peninsula schools are among those across the state enhancing their digital skills as part of the Commissioner's Digital Challenge.

The challenge is a free online resource teaching children important digital skills for the jobs of the future.

Lock Area School, Ungarra Primary School and Penong Primary School have taken up the challenge in 2023.

Lock School Community Library has also registered to offer the challenge activities to library users.

The challenge involves three categories that can be entered - Learn to Speak Robot (digital thinking), Space to Dream (design thinking) and Zoom Out (systems thinking).

Technologies teacher Casey Rivett-Smith is overseeing the challenge at Lock Area School and said having coordinated it at other sites prior to this year, she was keen to give Lock students the same opportunity to get involved.

Students from reception through to year 8 are engaged in the challenge.

"There are three different segments to the challenge, targeting development of computational, design and systems thinking - in primary technologies lessons, we have been utilising computational and system thinking activities from the challenge to support knowledge and skill development," she said.

"The design segment of the challenge uses a five-step approach to build their capacity to understand people's needs and come up with effective solutions to meet those needs.

"For the design task, students across reception to year 8 have been working to develop designs of toys or gadgets for on Mars and creating 3D versions of their ideas using Maker's Empire software."

She said Lock students were showing strong interest and engagement with STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) opportunities.



Ungarra Primary School student Hazel Telfer undertaking a task as part of the challenge.

**PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

"This challenge gives them the opportunity to develop new skills and understanding, but also the chance to showcase their creativity," Ms Rivett-Smith said.

"The feedback from students throughout activities this year has been incredibly positive, particularly in regard to design thinking

and 3D modelling aspects of the challenge.

"As a whole site, opportunities for engagement with technologies are well-received."

She said students had, throughout the year, embraced utilising digital technology and building awareness of key components in digital systems.

Ungarra Primary School principal Rory Hunt said the school's 28 students were "loving" taking part in the challenge.

The school participated in the Space to Dream challenge last year and is undertaking the other two challenges this year.

He said they were "really engaging" with the challenge and associated lessons.

"It is getting them thinking a bit deeper about coding and systems," he said.

"All students from reception to year 6 are involved in the challenge and they are very good with technology."

Mr Hunt said the students would get plenty out of being part of the challenge.

"They will get a consolidation of their learning on coding and are thinking deeper about how computer programs work," he said.

"The students are learning about different coding commands entrenched in systems."

Penong Primary School acting principal Cindy Ettridge said the school decided to enter to give its students a chance to participate in a statewide challenge.

"We want to encourage them to engage with the abundance of quality digital learning material that is available online and help them master some digital tools whilst gaining confidence in their digital skills," she said.

Year 3 to 7 students are taking part in the challenge as part of their digital technology lessons this term.

Ms Ettridge said they had completed Zoom Out and were working on Learn to Speak Robot.

"We are hoping the students will develop confidence in digital skills so that they can use these in future endeavours in ways not even yet imagined," she said.

Challenge entries close on Friday, September 29.

There will be rewards for the top-rated South Australian student entries, including the first prize of a 3D printer being awarded to the winning school for Space to Dream.