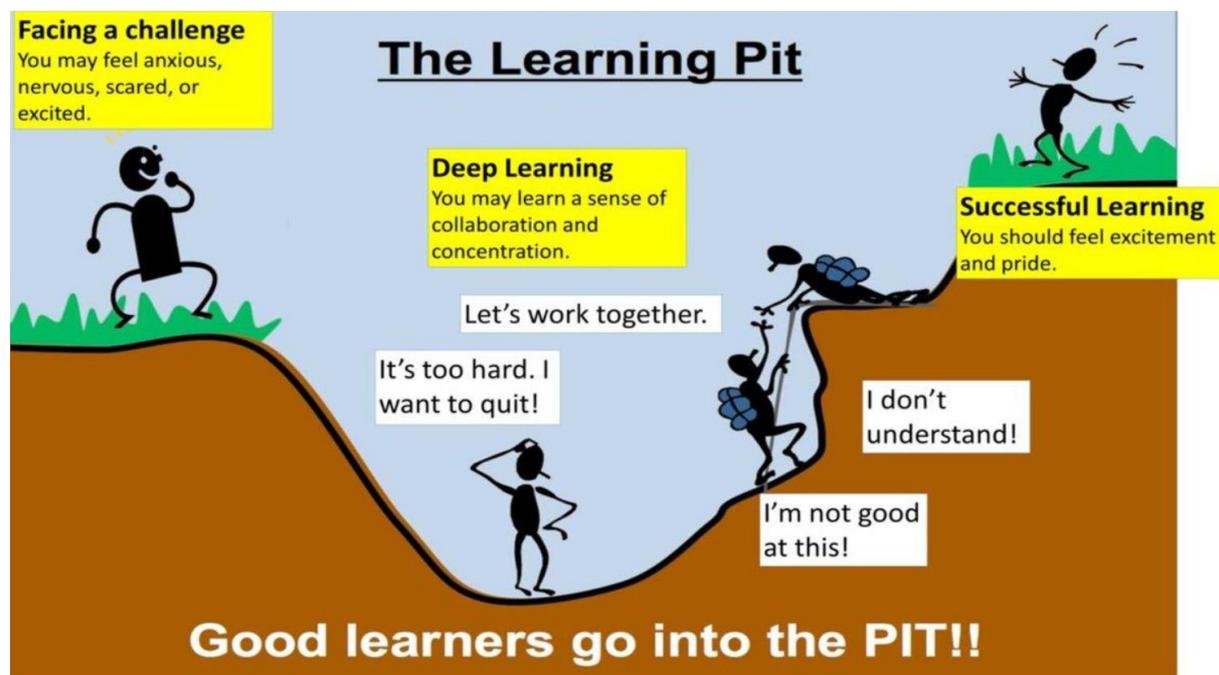


Dear Families,

After a fantastic break and cycling trip in the Flinders Ranges, it's great to be back at OGPS. I'm writing this from Camp Iluka with our Year Five kids, so I think I'm only sort-of back at work. Being at camp with our kids is work, and it isn't work at the same time. I love being on camp with our kids.

School camps are where all our social and emotional learning comes into play. It's such an amazing opportunity for our kids to use and develop their executive skills through a variety of planned activities and self-driven play. I love seeing our students problem-solve, run, laugh, help others and enjoy the outdoors.

I know the nights will bring homesickness and worry, but that's all part of growing up. I also know that there will be worried parents at home, thinking of their child and hoping they'll be alright. It's all part of growing up and it's also part of being a parent. It's these challenges in our lives that help us to develop and grow. It's when we get into the 'Learning Pit' (see below) that we develop our resilience and other executive skills.



As a parent, I have always looked for opportunities to challenge my children and push them out of their comfort zones. I'm often uncomfortable with some of the things that I encourage my kids at home to do, but I am now starting to see the benefits as they become adolescents. As a sixteen-year-old, Finn took himself to Swan Hill on a train over the recent holidays for a tennis tournament. Monty, who is now in year eight, spent a day in Melbourne with his friends. Over summer, Daisy went to Tasmania for two weeks; the first with a friend and the second on her own. Every time our kids venture off into the big, wide world, I worry. That's my job as a parent. I also know that my worry can't get in the way of them becoming independent. That's another job for me as a parent.

Thanks for all your continued support,  
Andy McNeilly  
Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator

