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Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way.

Edward de Bono

See also page 19.

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When the theme for the 2011-12 ECIS conferences was selected, I did not imagine the extent to which our school leaders would be asked to be courageous.

In recent weeks, we have witnessed earthquakes, tsunamis, and nuclear challenges in Japan; political unrest and change in Tunisia and Egypt; Bahrain, Oman and Syria are in the news for demonstrations; the world community has come together to protect the citizens of Libya. In all of these locations there are international schools where the leaders are coping with evolving situations and trying to maintain some sort of normalcy and school for their students. They are making the difficult decisions and finding the courage to do so.

Throughout my years as an administrator, I have been involved in evacuations and various crises. I am a believer in planning and having backup plans for the backup plan. However, when I spoke with many of our colleagues in these recent events, I realized that even the backup to the backup would not have been effective. The school leaders all had plans, but many of these plans were challenged because the communications system was not working, or there was an assumption that there would be more time to react, or that there was only one and not multiple events.

As one school leader stated, “Speed in decision-making was absolutely critical for us. We had to change the plan within minutes.” He recommends less detailed plans and ones that allow for improvisation. Another leader noted the role of the media and the misinformation that was being communicated. All leaders emphasized the importance of communicating with faculty, students and parents via any possible way. While cell phones were not working, it seemed that social media networks were and that is how many school leaders communicated.

Long distance learning is a way that many schools are keeping in contact with their students following the event. Several schools throughout the world are members of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). For those ECIS schools that do not have their own VLE set up, ECIS has established a group to assist in this endeavour. To learn more about this initiative, please contact ECIS.

We must remember that courageous leadership is needed in many situations, be it financial or, as one of our leaders found, the cloning of her school website. Teachers all over the world were being encouraged to apply to her school via the website and send money for nonexistent positions. This leader has spent countless hours working with police and communicating to these individuals (at last count over 100) who have been affected by this scam. Yes, candour was a skill that this leader needed.

As Michael Thompson, ECIS keynote speaker at Istanbul, reminded us: courageous leadership is evident in ways, ranging from telling a student his father has died, to the threat of a suicide bomber, to firing a popular teacher, to handling a financial crisis, and the list goes on. Michael shared research from Klein and Napier that list the factors that leaders need to have which are:

- Candour: that allows one to risk criticism, humiliation and attack by saying what one is really thinking.
- Purpose: the courage to pursue lofty goals.
- Will: inspiring optimism, spirit and promise.
- Rigor: the courage to invent disciplines and empower people.
- Risk: the courage to trust and invest in relationships and give power to others.

I would like to thank all of our keynote speakers and workshop leaders for helping to create one of our best conferences to date. As many of us explored the concept of Courageous Leadership over the three days, we came away with a new appreciation for our school leaders and a new understanding of what it takes to be courageous.

Dr Thompson’s C S Lewis quote was especially fitting:

Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point.

Jean K Vahey is Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of ECIS.
Creating teachable moments from global disasters

Kevin Larkin explains why recent events were ‘too important not to discuss with the children’

With a succession of recent natural disasters in Australia, New Zealand and Japan, it is important for young people to learn about and reflect on what has happened. But when international events are accompanied by tragic humanitarian crises, what is the best way for children to explore them?

Students are likely to be interested in such events, and none more so than those studying in international schools. Getting young people to engage in learning can be the key to successful teaching, so it is no surprise that teachers might look to global events to create teachable moments.

In order to harness student interest in what is going on in Japan, teachers at ACS Hillingdon International School in Middlesex, UK, decided to undertake a special three day interdisciplinary unit. Students were encouraged to explore the question, ‘what happens when the unexpected happens?’ in the context of the natural disaster in Japan.

Middle school teachers at ACS Hillingdon, which offers the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme, set aside time to investigate different aspects of the Japan crisis. Twelve student-led groups were formed and each one produced a collaborative piece of work on a relevant theme.

Topics covered ranged from the political and economic effects of the disaster; arguments for and against nuclear power; and the geological reasons for earthquakes and tsunamis. One group produced a book of poetry that will be sent to an affected school in Japan. Another explored fundraising ideas to raise money for the humanitarian relief.

With teachers taking a back seat, the unit allowed the Grade 6 to 8 students to work in teams, develop investigative skills and learn about a particular topic of their choice. Casey Faulkall summed up the views of the
The Future of Learning

Graeme Scott goes back to school

In August I attended a learning institute at Harvard University Graduate School of Education – a kind of cerebral summer camp for educators of all descriptions. The title of the institute, ‘The Future of Learning’, was inspiring enough, but the list of speakers and presenters was the clincher – this was an event not to be missed.

There is something about Harvard as a location that opens the mind. When we examine the best conditions for learning in our classrooms, we often talk about ‘relaxed alertness’ – a high challenge low stress environment. Well this was it, for adults.

The institute focused on three key areas and their impact on the future of learning. These were globalization; the digital revolution; and neuroscience. There were many presenters, all of the highest reputation and quality, but only some mentioned here.

Howard Gardner’s Five Minds for the Future featured prominently throughout the week and is currently driving a number of initiatives here at The International School of The Hague. David Perkins shared with us the sorts of knowledge, skills and thinking that we need to consider for current and future learners. Each morning, the key ideas of the previous day were expertly synthesized by the educational chair of the institute, Veronica Boix Mansilla.

Summarizing the outcomes of a whole week of intensive study with some of the education world’s greatest thinkers in one brief magazine article is not, one would think, the best of ideas. However, the aim of this piece is neither really to inform nor to entertain. Rather, it is to prompt one or two (or hopefully more) readers to Google or bing or even (let’s be radically retro), search in a library for some of the implications it has for our children and our schools.

First up was a session on globalisation. The human element of globalization was highlighted by Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, Courtney Sale Ross University Professor of Globalization and Education. Schools in general have been slow to adjust to the human migration associated with globalization, many failing to engage immigrant children. One school to succeed, where many others have failed, is Tensta Gymnasium in Sweden.

This school, with a high immigrant intake, had been struggling with falling roles and student disengagement. However, a programme of collaboration with a twinned school in New York sparked a range of changes, including an integrated curriculum, changes to student nutrition and learning spaces and an infusion of new technologies.

The combination of these developments resulted in dramatically increased student engagement and, subsequently, a school that was in demand as the first choice of many students, both immigrant and native Swedish. The school is now viewed as an example of excellent practice and is visited by delegations from all over the world.

The digital revolution was perhaps the most eagerly anticipated topic to be discussed. One of the parents here at ISH recently complained to me that her child spends too much time at home on his gaming device (insert any one of five or six brands and types here) and that he cannot focus. What she really meant is that he is probably more focused when gaming than at any other time during his hours at home.

The school as a place of learning is under threat unless it engages students more and adapts to the ways in which our children learn most effectively. The appeal of gaming was discussed at length and ways in which our

teachers when she said: “After the recent succession of natural disasters around the world, these workshops seemed very timely. The students worked extremely hard and produced brilliant work.”

Those who attend international schools in particular can be shaken when such tragedies occur. Students might be seeing the events in their homeland and it is in such times that international school communities will want to pull together and discuss the subject fittingly. As an international school, it is not just enough to have international children. We have to take opportunities to put international mindedness at the centre of what we do.

As Moyo Ogunbanjo, 14, summed it up: “I thought that the whole experience was rewarding. Being able to help and participate in the fundraising group was really good because there were lots of ideas created by us that helped raise awareness about this global issue. It has taught me about how the world cares about these problems, and how we can come together to help others in need.”

Taking students off timetable and connecting learning to a global event – good or bad – can be far more engaging for young people than talking about them in a traditional classroom setting. Approaching important educational topics through an interdisciplinary approach related to what is going on in the world right now can stimulate young minds.

And with students and staff from all over the world, the subject was indeed ‘too important not to discuss with the children’.

Kevin Larkin is middle school principal at ACS Hillingdon International School.
The IPC has grown up

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For the past five years, the team behind the IPC has been asked to develop a programme that builds upon the proven strengths and practice of the IPC for the first three years of secondary school, while considering both the developmental changes of students and the organisational structure of secondary schools.

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teaching can harness this appeal were suggested. One particular learning tool already in use in many schools is Scratch, which was demonstrated by Mitch Resnick from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Scratch is a programming language that can be used by children to create digital artwork, animations and interactive stories. It is an extremely versatile tool and, at the time of writing, over 1.3 million Scratch projects are currently being shared through an online learning community.

We are now witnessing that most beautiful of experiences, children coaching other children – but online, so with no distance or language barriers. According to Allan Collins, Professor Emeritus, Learning Sciences at Northwestern University, we are witnessing the shift from uniform schooling (post industrial revolution) to customization, from teacher control to learner control and from ‘just in case’ learning to ‘just in time’ learning.

Technology can be our ally in making learning highly interactive and learner-controlled, thus enabling a smooth transition from school to workplace. Whilst using the child-like excitement generated by so many innovative learning tools to advance our practice, we also need to be aware that we are partners in inequality. Such technology does not come free of charge and the financial restrictions many schools work within only emphasize these differences. Furthermore, children participating in virtual environments with no ‘real life’ consequences can throw up ethical dilemmas that we as educators need to be aware of.

The final hot topic of the week used the very latest research in the field of mind, brain and education (MBE) to inform delegates and to pose some key questions. Mary Helen Immordino-Yang and David Rose, in discussion with Howard Gardner, shared some fascinating information on how the brain works as a goal-driven device and how different emotions affect the mind. Mary Helen Immordino-Yang recently conducted a set of intriguing studies where certain emotions were triggered and the amount of brain activation mapped using functional magnetic resonance imaging (FMRI). For example, a group of adults was exposed to a number of inspirational stories of human achievement, often detailing one person’s fight against the odds and how they triumphed. The admiration these virtuous stories engendered resulted in increased activation in areas of the brain linked to memory retrieval.

These studies may well have profound implications for student motivation. Now that neuroimaging techniques are more sophisticated (and less invasive), we are able to learn more about the way children’s experiences in and out of school affect their biology. This has important consequences for the ways we present children with learning opportunities.

One of the most striking concepts put forward during this session related to dyslexic children and their struggle with traditional reading activities. If we can convince our children and ourselves that it is text/print and not the child themselves that has the disability and the limitations, and provide other ways to access reading, then perhaps this one that generated most discussion afterwards and many delegates I spoke with were determined to make the field of MBE an area for further study in their schools.

So, I bought the Harvard t-shirts and the Harvard mugs and took the complimentary Harvard pens and pencils, and a very chic Harvard shopping bag for my wife, so more than that. This was not an institute that provided a ‘Top Ten Tips for Teachers’ approach. But it did change the way many of us viewed the uncertain and exciting future of learning, energizing us and enabling us to embrace this challenge with more confidence and heaps of enthusiasm.

*Graeme Scott is Primary Principal at The International School of The Hague.*
Connecting global issues
Jim Reese, Clayton Lewis and Carole Geneix ask: how do we put the international in international school?

In other words, when do learners in our charge have the opportunity to explore global issues and develop a truly international mindset? In this two-part article, we will share some of the ways we at the Washington International School (WIS) have been trying to put the focus of all we do on developing global competencies and the broad-mindedness that international schools value – a significant part of what is often called a 21st century skill set.

As educators in an international school, we are quite aware of the complacency that can set in when we see all around us students and families from far-flung places; when many of us speak at least two languages and cross cultures with ease; when we teach and learn in a curricular program, such as the International Baccalaureate, that puts international-mindedness at its center. It’s a given that international schools ‘do’ internationalism well, right?

We believe we need to move beyond assuming that broad-mindedness and a willingness to tackle the complexity of the world at large just happen naturally in such an environment.

At WIS, from an exciting new digital media endeavor to international service learning trips, from a student-organized Global Issues Network conference to a Global Issues Film Festival, and from interdisciplinary projects on pressing global issues to the use of thinking routines to deepen learning, we are seeking ways to navigate this challenging terrain.

None of this progress could be made without a serious investment in teachers and professional development. Like most other schools, we are integrating technology into our teaching and learning, but we view 21st century competencies in a much broader sense. We are partnering with a number of renowned organizations, such as the Asia Society, Project Zero at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, and of course the International Baccalaureate, to meet the changing needs of our student population.

At the forefront is a focus on meaningful reflective inquiry, on the part of students and teachers. We have learning groups, made up of teachers, meeting regularly to explore and share ways to make thinking visible and to cross disciplinary boundaries and pursue interdisciplinary learning. We share our learning on GoogleDocs and in teacher-led workshops on professional days. We send teachers to summer institutes and conferences affiliated with Project Zero and Asia Society – possibly the best professional development they’ve ever experienced.

Of course these opportunities would not be worth their while if we did not see benefits for our students. We
are exploring innovative ways to document our students’ learning, as well as our own, and to use technology to keep track of that learning. A peer observation program encourages teachers to be more reflective and to learn from colleagues. Through a shared online curriculum mapping program and greater attention to cross-divisional and cross-departmental meetings, we are attempting to introduce more interdisciplinary units into the curriculum.

**Student News Action Network**
Beyond the written curriculum, we have started an exciting new online journalism venture called the Student News Action Network, or SNAN (http://www.studentnewsaction.net).

Building on a strong print journalism tradition in our school, we launched SNAN last fall as a model online news source, written for and by students. We have bureaux in host schools on nearly every continent, with the list of student contributors growing every month.

In addition, we work in collaboration with TakingITGlobal to move the concept of the school newspaper beyond school walls and the confines of print media, allowing students to work collaboratively on a global level to create an interactive, multimedia-rich student-driven online newspaper.

SNAN brings together a wide variety of students in an online peer-driven environment to address issues of local and global significance, such as poverty, the environment, and human rights, in a creative and constructive format that culminates in meaningful efforts to make a positive impact on the world.

Contributors bring their unique voices to the discussion, representing their regions and their cultural histories. The action component distinguishes the network from a conventional journalism outlet. Our members are not just reporters; they are also seriously engaged in work that seeks to effect local change with global impact.

SNAN is a forward-looking project that seeks to make use of innovative technologies to enhance digital storytelling and create and maintain global networks. Members are encouraged to use the full range of online and multimedia tools, including movie-making, podcasting and photography. The network is managed as much as possible by students collaborating in their schools and online.

Adult mentors provide guidance and editorial expertise, but students are encouraged to take ownership of the site by setting priorities and directing editorial content. SNAN seeks to be a globally relevant news source, with meaningful reporting of the highest quality from students worldwide. To that end, we are actively seeking members interested in confronting critical global issues through journalism.

There are two levels of membership: bureau schools and contributor schools. A bureau school acts as a regional hub, receiving contributions from an active class or club of students at its school, and managing content from contributor schools in its area. Committed to upholding the highest standards of journalistic quality, it should grow the network in its region by recruiting contributor schools.

A contributor school may consist of as few as one or two motivated students and at least one faculty advisor. Students can submit content on an occasional basis, as time permits, and do not have editorial responsibilities that extend beyond the creation of their own work and their responses to the work of others. Contributors could potentially grow into bureaus.

**Global Issues Film Festival**
The Global Issues Film Festival (GIFF), another well-received endeavor at WIS, was started in the 2009-10 school year by a team of experts in the field of education.

*At the Project Zero conference held at Washington International School, Howard Gardner answers questions from the audience.*
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and media. GIFF showcases student-made movies on such topics as global climate change, hunger, international finance or pandemics. Students from pre-kindergarten to Grade 12 can participate and submit movies made in class or independently, whether it be animation, a public service announcement, a documentary or a narrative and the event is multilingual. Thanks to new technology, the impact of a student movie can be long-lasting; as with the internet, film can easily reach an international audience.

Filmmaking enables students to fine-tune their 21st century skills and develop a culture of learning through digital media, which they will certainly use on a daily basis in their future academic and professional lives. Furthermore, it encourages an interdisciplinary approach to learning and is a great way for students to think and work creatively.

Last but not least, a movie is not a solitary experience, whether one makes it or views it. It is indeed very compelling for students not only to work collaboratively, but to share their work with others, sometimes at the other end of the world.

Nearly 100 students from Washington International School were part of teams that submitted entries to last year’s festival and around 250 people attended. The movie-makers themselves introduced the films, followed by the screening and an awards ceremony. The jury was composed of professionals in the fields of media, global issues advocacy and education.

Last year’s Jury and Audience Award winner was Artbeat, an excellent short film crafted by a team of Grade 7 students which explored the importance of the arts in school curricula. Artbeat was shown at a Harvard Project Zero conference last November and a teacher asked for the link so she could show it to her school district in New Jersey, which had fired all art and music teachers due to budget cuts.

One of our grade 11 students made a captivating animated movie, Faces of Hunger, using a simple Facebook application. The movie won national recognition and the student has now been offered his own video blog on the internet news site Huffington Post. Another interesting movie, The Trees, made by Pre-K and Grade 2 students under adult supervision, demonstrates that a deep understanding and passion for a global issue is not the exclusive domain of older students. Anyone can enjoy these films and a selection of others in competition last year by going to the Global Issues Film Festival website at http://www.giff.wis.edu

Our next Global Issues Film Festival was due to be held at Washington International School in May 2011. For a report on the event, please contact festival coordinator Carole Geneix at geneix@wis.edu

Jim Reese is curriculum and staff coordinator, secondary school. Clayton Lewis is Head of school and founder of the Global Issues Network. Carole Geneix is upper school French teacher and coordinator of the Global Issues Film Festival all at Washington International School, US.

In the next article in this two-part series, teachers at WIS will explore ways they are attempting to make learning relevant by bringing the world into their classroom and providing opportunities for students to connect with others hoping to make a positive impact on the world.
Coaching in the context of international schools

In the first of two articles, Andrea Charman considers the purposes and practicalities

How things change! Some of you may remember experiencing ‘coaching’ during your secondary school days. In my case it was in Latin; I needed a Latin O Level to get the university place to which I aspired. I had not shown much interest in the subject so coaching was the panacea! A one-to-one cramming programme did the job – I learnt most of the texts by heart – and passed Latin with flying colours.

What did I remember of my Latin a year later? What did the experience add to my capacity for personal learning? Interesting questions yet the point here is my experience was then badged as coaching!

Today, ‘coaching’ is about unlocking potential in order to maximise performance, about bringing out the best in people. It is not about telling, teaching, or instructing – a somewhat different type of coaching from my school experience.

What is more, it offers a very different proposition. No longer about telling or providing ‘content’ or expertise, coaching today is about taking responsibility for personal learning. The emphasis is squarely on self-direction anchored in a philosophy of choice. It is up to you! It is an action-based model that starts ‘on the ground’ with real issues, not ‘in the sky’ with conceptual ideas. (See figure 1)

Figure 1
Coaching – a four level action-based development model.

We have moved beyond the era of command and control when those in authority ‘told’ – usually from a position of intellectual superiority – and others followed or, in many cases, simply obeyed. This ‘shift’ applies to teachers and students alike. We cannot ignore the fast-growing appreciation of the power and value of effective individualised support in the form of coaching and of collaborative forms of learning that focus action outcomes around real workplace issues.

Many schools have therefore introduced some form of coaching framework that can support the development of a coaching culture with its associated workplace learning focus. Put simply, a coaching approach fosters teacher collaboration while enabling people to find their own way forward – personal solutions – by taking ownership of the choices they make as a result of the coaching process. This builds a school’s social capital contributing to its overall resources to successfully undertake and deliver on its core business.

The uses of coaching

In today’s multiple stakeholder international school environment, with its high levels of complexity, successful influencing becomes critical to success in all we do. The language of coaching is fundamental to effective influencing.

Skills in Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Transactional Analysis (TA) are non-negotiable to success. Since telling is essentially out, we are looking here at success in leading, managing and developing staff which in turn will lead to success in achieving optimum student learning outcomes as a similar approach is mirrored in the classroom.

Good classroom practice demands both imparting knowledge and engaging learners in personal and collaborative discovery, in shared learning experiences, and in the personal ownership of learning.

The link between teachers’ learning and students’ learning acts as the main lever for the development of coaching in schools. The majority of the school day, for both teachers and students, is spent in lessons. What goes on in the classroom is complex but we can safely say it is influenced by the quality of relationships that exist, the planning, the learning environment, and the motivations of all participants.

Coaching can be fine tuned to support specific teacher concerns and development needs in this context. A book-ended series of six personalised coaching conversations can provide the development space necessary for an individual professional to step up to what will constitute success. It can transform that individual’s life!
So how can a school begin to infuse a coaching culture, and what kind of coaching can we anticipate?

In schools that have well-established cultures of coaching, staff do not only see coaching as an entitlement – a key element of their continuing professional development – but they are clear about their responsibilities as professional learners. They are also clear about how their coaching culture impacts student learning outcomes.

A key imperative is to send the message that coaching is not a deficit but an effectiveness model. It is not a form of punishment! It respects confidentiality, not to be confused with performance management formalities. Coaching should not be an additional initiative but rather an intrinsic element of the school improvement and development strategy that already exists.

Starting from scratch requires creating appropriate structures, systems, processes and tools and dedicating resources to them, plus embedding its language in all interactions. In both scenarios, we have found it invaluable to use a mapping tool to both review what forms of coaching relationships already exist in a given school, and to outline what the school wants to establish or progress. What follows below to serve as an illustration is an extract from a very simple tool comprised of three key questions.

Sample Mapping Tool Extract

1. How is coaching built into the school development plan?
   - A member of the senior leadership team/the HR manager is responsible for the administration of the school’s coaching programme with lead coaches in place.
   - A steering (or lead coach) group comprising managers/specialists from various levels within the school has ownership of the whole school coaching programme; it provides a published structure and set of clear processes together with a portfolio of templates.
   - There is a clear coach-coachee matching process in place.
   - It is a key component of the induction programme for new staff.

2. How are coaching relationships built into management and leadership activity?
   - Included in job descriptions.
   - Included in performance management arrangements, job progression and school-wide succession planning.
   - There is clarity around coaching’s confidentiality contract.
   - Time allocated for x number of one-to-one sessions at defined levels and within certain areas of responsibility.
   - Peer coaching relationships are built into the timetable.
   - Central to the work of the team, department, school leadership.

3. How is coaching built into teaching, learning and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)?
   - Central to CPD policies; within the core timetable and directed time.
   - Time allocated for peer observations and feedback.
   - A policy for leading teachers or advanced skills teachers (ASTs) to provide observation, feedback and both one-to-one coaching.
   - A formal coaching programme evaluation system is in place.
   - Teachers are given regular opportunities to participate in Coaching Circles or Action Learning Sets or Teacher Learning Communities TLCs.
   - It is regularly used to support students.

Action implications to building coaching in your school

So, once the mapping or school ‘coaching audit’ is in place and a decision is made to proceed one way or another, or to progress an existing structure, what happens next? This question will be addressed in the second part of this article, Coaching in Practice

Reference


Andrea Charman is managing partner of EquiLearn Ltd and is an accredited coach with over 30 years’ experience in both the practice of coaching and the training and development of coaches.
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Finding new worlds

The following three articles by Dr Richard Harwood, together with those to appear in the next issue, aim to discuss areas of current scientific interest. That interest is either of general significance – our attitudes too cloning research, for instance – or, more specifically, a question relating to the delivery of the science curriculum. Overall the topics discussed cover areas where science relates to broader areas of human thoughts and concern.

‘Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the Western Spiral Arm of the Galaxy lies a small unregarded yellow sun. Orbiting this at a distance of roughly 92 million miles is an utterly insignificant little blue-green planet whose ape-descended life forms are so amazingly primitive that they still think that digital watches are a pretty neat idea.’

So begins Douglas Adams in The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy, placing the Earth in a different, comedic, context from our normal view. However, the blue-green aspect of the profile of the ‘blue marble’ is still emphasised; indicating the ‘goldilocks phenomenon’ of a planet whose temperature ‘is just right’ compared with its neighbours. As a consequence water can exist in all three physical states simultaneously on the planet, but particularly as a liquid, and life as we know it can be sustained.

The search for planets in different solar systems, and indeed life elsewhere in the universe, has continued through recent history – from the SETI project messages beamed into space to various ground-based astronomical searches to NASA’s current Kepler planet-hunting spacecraft mission.

There is now clear evidence for substantial numbers of three types of planets outside our solar system (exoplanets): gas giants, hot-super-Earths in short period orbits, and ice giants. The challenge is to find terrestrial planets, those whose size is half to twice that of our Earth, and particularly those in the habitable zone of their stars where liquid water might exist on the planet’s surface.

Astronomical observations had, over several years, suggested a possible group of potentially habitable planets orbiting the red dwarf star Gliese 581; 20 light years away from Earth and so among the 100 closest stars to us. The latest observations suggest that there may be a system of six orbiting planets associated with this host star. Attention had focussed on the inner four planets, but the earlier suggestions have since been ruled out as they are too hot or too cold to be habitable. However, in September last year, the planet Gliese 581g was identified which lies squarely in the region where life can thrive. With a mass three to four times that of Earth, astronomers believe it is a rocky planet with sufficient gravity to retain an atmosphere.

The early months of 2011 have brought considerable excitement with the findings from NASA’s Kepler mission (http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/kepler/main/index.html) identifying a solar system of at least six planets orbiting a Sun-like star (Kepler-11). Lying at a distance of 2000 light years away in the plane of the Milky Way, this discovery considerably extends the perimeter of our knowledge and these findings are the clearest indication yet of the existence of a planetary system similar to our own.

The Kepler-11 system is more compact than our solar system. The five inner planets, called Kepler 11b, c, d, e and f, range in size from about two to 14 times the mass of Earth. All take fewer than 50 days to orbit their star and are closely packed together within a distance equivalent to the orbit of Venus; with most orbiting closer to the star than Mercury is to Earth.

A sixth planet, Kepler-11g, is larger and farther out. As a consequence of their close orbits, the inner Kepler-11 planets are estimated to have temperatures around 400°C (752°F), too hot for any known form of life. However, the compactness of the system suggests to astronomers the tantalising possibility that there may be a seventh Earth-
like planet circling Kepler-11, but the system needs to be observed for longer to detect such a possibility.

The current findings are based on eight months’ data collected by the space probe and observations will continue. The Kepler craft has detectors which measure the tiny decrease in a star’s brightness that occurs when a planet crosses in front of it. The length and degree to which the brightness is reduced indicates the size of the planet and its distance from the star. The spacecraft’s field of view covers about 1/400th of the sky and the findings so far are based on observations of more than 156,000 stars in that field of view.

The release of the current findings certainly raised a media-storm of interest – impinging as it does on our sense of place in the universe. It even prompted a rather superb cartoon in The Times based on William Blake’s painting of creation – and leaving aside the reference to the UK Chancellor’s financial planning!

Kepler’s discovery is a humbling milestone in the journey of space exploration; a giant step for science, but potentially an even bigger one for mankind.
Making people is wrong (?)

From Frankenstein to cloning, the idea of creating human life has always caused alarm. The notion of ‘playing God’ has generally been deprecated and used to combat both the outlandish, which is fair, and the more realistic and achievable scientific goals involved in stem cell research and human embryology.

Such discussion is immensely topical, as illustrated by the recent screening in the UK of the BBC’s prestigious Horizon programme. Here, in the concluding section of the programme entitled ‘Are we still Evolving?’, the issue of ‘designer babies’ is raised – not as some far-off science fiction possibility but as a very real option only held back by cultural pressure. Humankind is presented as entering a novel phase in biological development whereby a species can actively influence its own evolutionary development.

The presenter, Dr Alice Roberts, rounds off the programme with a visit to the Fertility Institutes in Los Angeles and an interview with Dr Jeffrey Steinberg. The interview describes how the selection of embryos allows parents to select the gender of their baby and screen for genetic diseases. The possibility of using this approach to the selection of eye and hair colour is already an actual possibility, though not practised.

As our knowledge of the genetic association of other traits is extended, so the possibility of the further choices that may become open to parents grows. In this way developments in gene technology could bring in a new chapter in the evolutionary history of our species – one in which we have the means to write aspects of our own genetic future.

Discussion of the possibilities raised by these technological developments – and the hopes and fears raised – needs to be couched in a rational view of the nature of man. In that context the publication of Unnatural: the heretical idea of making people by Philip Ball, published by Bodley Head, is timely and highly intriguing.

Unnatural is an entertaining and thorough history of the depiction of artificial life in popular culture and an argument against how much of the discussion of modern cloning and stem cell technology is conditioned by emotive views generated by these fictional creations. Why is it not possible to have a proper informed debate about cloning and embryo research without it degenerating into tabloid headlines about mini-Frankensteins and test-tube babies?

Frankenstein: the Modern Prometheus is an interesting focal point in this history of ideas. This novel, by Mary Shelley, was written in retreat during the summer of 1816 as the world was locked in a long cold ‘volcanic winter’ caused by the eruption of Tambora.

Infused with some elements of the Gothic novel and the Romantic movement, the novel is also a warning against the ‘over-reaching’ of modern man and the Industrial Revolution, alluded to in the novel’s subtitle, ‘The Modern Prometheus’. The story has had an influence across literature and popular culture and spawned a complete genre of horror stories and films (most notably Boris Karloff’s portrayal of the ‘creature’).

Shelley’s novel may well itself have been done a disservice and vulgarised by some of the film and dramatic versions portrayed over the years. The serious philosophical and moral intent of the novel is currently brought to life in a new production at London’s Olivier Theatre. This new production of Frankenstein, stageplay written by Nick Dear and produced by Danny Boyle, comes anew to the wonder and fear generated in the novel by taking the Creature’s point of view.

All of the enumerated efforts to create artificial people are more or less fanciful, but they have taken deep root in western culture. They all express fears about the allegedly treacherous, Faustian nature of technology, and raise the question as to whether any artificially created person can be truly human. Legends of people-making are tainted by suspicions of impiety and hubris, and they are regarded as the ultimate ‘unnatural’ act – a moral judgement that has its origins in religious thought.

Frankenstein’s monster and the mass-produced test-tube babies in Orwell’s Brave New World.

Johnny Lee Miller and Benedict Cumberbatch play Frankenstein and the Creature in the new production at the Olivier Theatre. Photo: Geraint Lewis Photography.
The need for students to carry out hands-on practical work in school science lessons is self-evident to many and yet there are various pressures that can work against the useful implementation of a constructive programme of practical work in real schools. Some of these problems are embodied in the following comments made by teachers about practical work:

“Practical work is time consuming for both students and teachers.”

“Practical work requires laboratories which are well equipped.”

“It is more important that students are drilled in the basic facts, rather than spending time playing at doing practical work.”

“My students do not see the point of doing practical work; they want something more concrete – teacher demonstrations are sufficient.”

Practical work does require planning by the teacher. It also consumes a lot of the students’ time. However, the benefits of doing relevant, well-planned practical work far outweigh the disadvantages. Sophisticated equipment may help, but basic apparatus gives plenty of scope for interesting and challenging practical work. In many parts of the world practical work is becoming more accessible to schools; and indeed becoming more environmentally friendly and justifiable.

The UNESCO microscience initiative

In connection with these latter points regarding expense and environmental impact, the UNESCO initiative to promote ‘microscience’ is particularly relevant. Details relating to this project, its scope and the countries that have become involved can be found at the following internet sites:


The importance of this project in general, and to chemistry in particular, can be seen by the fact that it has led to several governments, including that of Malaysia, for instance, producing collections of microscale experiments that fulfil their national curriculum goals, for example:

http://www.unesco.org/science/doc/Microscale_Chemistry_Malaysian_Adaptation.pdf

The advantages of microscale range from a significant reduction in costs to the increased environmental applicability of the approach. This particular approach to microscale – involving the use of ‘comboplates’ and other specific pieces of apparatus, including the ‘combostill’ – originated in South Africa, but has now spread to be available in the UK and internationally.

The reduced amounts of materials needed for this type of practical work mean that some experiments, usually only carried out as teacher demonstrations, can now be safely carried out by students. One such example is the classic ‘smoke ring’ experiment showing the diffusion of gas molecules – ammonia and hydrogen chloride molecules drifting together to produce a white smoke ring as they meet in a sealed tube. Details of this experiment can be found on the Teachers Resource CD for IGCSE Chemistry (by Richard Harwood & Ian Lodge, Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Although the scope of the UNESCO resources is largely focussed on chemistry, including environmental testing, and the biochemical aspects of biology, there is a section of microelectricity experiments for physics. Other sources do provide microscale experimental protocols (http://edulab.co.uk/, for instance) for all the sciences and for all teaching levels, from primary through to IB diploma and A level. The study of enzyme reactions involving colour changes can be carried out using micro-quantities.

Experiments with gases

The Royal Society of Chemistry in the UK has published a collection of microscale experiments based on very simple apparatus, including conducting experiments using...
Some microscale experiments are also included in the RSC's 'Practical Chemistry' collection of experiment protocols (http://www.rsc.org/Education/Teachers/Resources/Practicals.asp).

Similarly, the Science in School on-line journal, volume 16, contains an article by Greek teachers using very simple apparatus to carry out several useful experiments (http://www.scienceinschool.org/).

A really excellent range of gas phase experiments has been developed by Bruce Mattson and his team which allow previously difficult experiments to be carried out safely in a school situation: http://mattson.creighton.edu/Microscale_Gas_Chemistry.html

Included here are experiments that would be dangerously explosive if carried out on a more normal scale and these techniques allow the handling of toxic gases outside a fume cupboard. Alan Goodwin has also developed techniques using small disposable syringes to carry out some very spectacular gas experiments (http://www.scitutors.org.uk/article.php?id=114).

The recent issue of the School Science Review (March 2011) is devoted to small-scale science and provides some very insightful articles on the range of techniques and experiments available. Dr Mike Wooster of Edu-Lab Ltd provided useful comment on some microscale experiments discussed here (see also his article 'Microscale Chemistry' in the journal Education in Chemistry, March 2007).

Microscale science provides opportunity for

innovative approaches to experimental work in school science and the push from schools in Europe, Africa, the Far East and the USA should encourage us to look closely at the methods involved and what they have to offer.

Dr Richard Harwood is education consultant, Scientific & International Education.

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Gases can be generated using disposable syringes – here acid from the smaller syringe is added to the metal and the hydrogen collected in the larger syringe.

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People and Places

If your school has news of interest why not send a brief report, and good pictures, to the Editor at CarolineEllwood@ecis.org

So Play It Now

It's time to change the record! Six enterprising students at the International School of Verdala in Malta have launched a business to recycle old retro discs (also known as 'records' to those over 25!) into practical, durable and inexpensive novelties.

Whilst keeping a green approach, the business spins old vinyl records into stylish bowls appealing to all ages, starting from only €3 per item, with charities benefitting from the profits. For further information contact us on: spin.verdala@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page for Spin – A Young Enterprise Company.
Fieldwork Education launches the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC)

Officially launched at the ECIS Conference last year, the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC) is the result of demand from schools, including several ECIS member schools, for a solution to the curriculum and learning dilemma that many feel hits children when they move into secondary education.

Following initial requests from schools, Fieldwork Education spent five years researching the way 11 to 14 year-old children learn in order to develop a curriculum that would meet their needs.

Alison Lipp, curriculum coordinator at the American International School of Rotterdam, one of the first schools to have taken on the IMYC, said: “It really addresses what 11 to 14 age students need. It actually attempts to put theory into practice and openly considers the challenges that schools face when trying to bridge this gap. The IMYC shows real understanding of the unique philosophy and approach to learning that students at this developmental level require.”

A focus on learning

According to Fieldwork Education, the IMYC is a curriculum that focuses foremost on student learning, inspiring and engaging them throughout an often precarious learning and developmental period. Martin Skelton, Managing Director of Fieldwork Education, who has led the development of the IMYC, explains: “The IMYC encourages students to be independent in their learning. It relates directly to them and their lives now. It draws on current media techniques, involves active skills-based learning, and promotes self-reflection and the chance for students to make sense of their learning. This is achieved through a range of themes to which subjects contribute interdependently providing a coherent and relevant learning experience.”

Each theme, known in the IMYC as a ‘Big Idea’, provides a six-week learning unit for every year group from 11 to 14, focusing on a complex conceptual idea that is considered challenging but within the grasp of young teenagers and is addressed via a range of learning goals within discreet subjects. The IMYC Big Ideas include such themes as adaptability, discovery, balance and creativity.

The learning process

The IMYC reflects the same learning process introduced in Fieldwork’s International Primary Curriculum with an Entry Point, Knowledge Harvest and then a series of Learning Tasks that meet a range of Learning Goals for subjects, personal dispositions and international-mindedness. Where the learning process does extend beyond the IPC is the introduction of Reflective Journaling throughout the unit, encouraging personal consideration and a development of understanding of the Big Idea.

A Media Project completes the unit. This provides students with the chance to turn their understanding of the Big Idea into a collaborative production represented through one of a variety of media platforms, such as a short video, a podcast, web-based document, magazine feature, etc.

The reality for schools

For schools concerned about any dramatic changes necessary for implementation, Martin Skelton says that’s not a requirement: “The focus of the IMYC is definitely on the students,” he says. “But we’ve also worked really hard to make this a realistic possibility for schools. That means that we’re not asking anyone to change their structure or the way they organise themselves. We are simply asking teachers to collaborate and make connections across the year and we’ve produced the IMYC as a toolkit to help teachers through every step of this process.”

Within the IMYC toolkit are 30 thematic Big Idea units (ten to choose from for each of the three years) all written by teachers who are specialists in teaching 11 to 14 year-olds; a teacher’s support file; access to an online route planner to ensure that learning goals are covered during the selection of units; an assessment for learning programme linked directly to the units; and a membership programme that will connect IMYC member schools and provide professional development and web-based support.

“For schools wanting to create the best possible experience for 11-14 year-olds, the IMYC is a cost-effective solution to improving learning,” says Martin Skelton.

More information about the IMYC is available at www.internationalmiddleyearscurriculum.com or contact Fieldwork Education at +44(0)20-7531-9696.
Speaking for others
Claire Moore on the power of poetry

Engaging with 15 texts at an in-depth level over about a year-and-a-half is a rather daunting task, not least for the teacher. The first time I taught the Diploma A1 literature programme, I think I sweated it more than my students did – and I’m not sure that all my dedication to swotting up on critical essays actually made my class much fun to be in.

It was this aspect of the course I struggled most with: 'promote in students an enjoyment of, and lifelong interest in, literature'. Ironically enough, it is the one aim I thought and continue to think the most important: if you don’t enjoy literature, then you’re not likely to take a lifelong interest in it after you have passed your exams.

From a somewhat inauspicious start, I have experimented with both how to develop my students’ ability to express themselves and teach them an understanding of literary techniques, whilst ensuring they enjoy and understand what they are reading. It is a pretty sound maxim that we learn best when doing, so following that logic, my students should do what they are reading: write literature.

Along with teaching literary techniques and forms, I believe it is important to consider such questions as: who writes poetry? Why write poetry? What is poetry about? Often, looking at the canon of English literature, it would be easy to assume that poetry is written by dead white men or by those who come from a more privileged background.

However, through a literature course, hopefully students become aware that poetry and, indeed, all literature, is about the power to imagine, to transform another's life, about the possibility of viewing life through a different set of eyes. It is also about questioning the politics and ideologies of the world the writer lives in.

At the beginning of this year’s English literature course, we started with Robert Browning and thoroughly enjoyed his use of persona, reveling in the nastiness of the Duke or in the absence of repentance from Porphyria’s lover. My students became fascinated with Browning’s use of persona and dramatic monologue, often because it allowed for great richness of ambiguity: Browning’s questioning of Victorian sexual politics, personas from different centuries and sometimes different genders, readers from yet another time.

When speculating what Victorian ideologies had to do with a 15th-century monk, or a courtesan in l’ancien régime, it was this very richness considered from a writer’s perspective that allowed my student writers to recognise how illuminating the past can simultaneously point up current concerns.

From Browning we moved on to Carol Ann Duffy’s poems, again, concentrating on the use of dramatic monologue and persona. In Duffy’s poetry, we hit late 20th-century concerns with education, promoting a timely debate through her Education for Leisure on what literature should be taught in schools – Shakespeare, which was horribly misconstrued by the speaker in that poem, or the banning of that same poem by an English examining board: could there have been a better example of irony or the need to question not just what we read, but whether there should be an arbiter of what we read?

Following on from class and education politics, we moved to gender politics in Duffy’s Female Standing Nude and some of the poems in her World’s Wife collection, considering the idea of stories told originally from one vantage point but having a newly skewed perspective.

So what does this have to do with writing? Studying a range of poems provides students with the food for thought needed to write their own poems. Take a famous story or event in history and look at it from a different perspective: see through someone else’s eyes; speak with someone else’s voice. Live international mindedness by giving those who don’t usually have a voice the chance to be heard.

By re-writing well-known stories, students are able to question currently held ideologies and traditional perspectives and to come up with fresh ways of viewing the world. They learn to think critically about what they might have previously unquestionably held as true or as the status quo.

What does that have to do with understanding and appreciating literature? By writing their own poems, students use and experiment with the literary techniques they analyse. More than that, it gives students a critical perspective on how literary techniques can construct and convey meaning so that they become far more astute about the effect and meaning other writers create.

When analysing each others’ work too, students become more aware of their ability to interpret meaning differently to the author, allowing valuable insight into the idea that literature is not about what the author intended, but about a synthesis between the writer and reader.

By emulating the writers of literature, I would argue that students are able to recognise what I think of as the true genius of literature: the power to explore our shared humanity.

Claire Moore is curriculum and IB coordinator, St Gilgen International School, Austria.

See also page 66.
Some exciting findings and observations emerged when the representatives of 12 International Baccalaureate Career-related Certificate (IBCC) pilot schools from around the world held their final workshop in Dubai at the end of three years of developing the project.

Although a small pilot cohort, the inherent strengths of the IBCC were evident to all the schools taking part and enthusiasm for the course was greater than ever. The schools are all at various stages of implementing the IBCC and each of their school programmes are very different. One of the strengths of the IBCC is that it will be of interest to many different institutions and each course will probably be unique.

The IBCC offers students a new vocational pathway to school success. Many students who take up this option also gain exposure to the IB core values for the first time. The practical nature and enthusiasm of many IBCC students when given access to the IB core values, especially CAS, provides these pragmatic students with an opportunity to excel – which they seem to accept with open arms.

The IBCC offers valuable community collaboration while also making links with established vocational courses and new in-house curriculum developments. The first surprise was that, instead of entering work related opportunities following successful graduation from the IBCC, many more students than anticipated took up college courses and returned to an academic path.

The second surprise was that recognition of the IBCC has been broader and more rapid than had been anticipated by the pilot schools. There has been a wider group of parents and students responding than was expected and the IBCC has elicited considerable interest from a number of higher education establishments.

Indeed although at first many might have asked, ‘What can you do with an IBCC?’ it has turned out that many
institutions are actually looking for students with just this type of qualification and experience. In addition, and most unexpectedly, some students who would have taken the IB Diploma, because that is all there was in their school, chose instead the IBCC because it offers them real work experience and vocation-related study, preparing them for the world they wish to engage in rather than the academic world which up until now had been their only choice.

One curriculum, two pathways, the Diploma and the IBCC, allows students for whom three subjects at higher level and a research-based extended essay would have been too demanding, certificates alone insufficiently interesting, to engage with vocational work while still contributing to CAS activities and studying alongside their peers.

It combines learning through service and problem-solving with real experience outside school which may lead to or support job opportunities. In the pilot at Deira International School, every IBCC student was offered employment by the businesses that gave them work experience.

However, all of the students in the first year of the IBCC at DIS went on to higher education rather than into work as they had expected to do. This was an unexpected bonus from the IBCC and shows how the core philosophy of the IB can inspire students to value themselves.

From a school’s point of view, the IBCC allows students to remain with them and offer the inclusive education offered by the PYP and the MYP. The IBCC provides a much larger number of students access to the IB philosophy and core values until the age of 18.

The IBCC prevents us from losing sight of the original goal of retaining students in education and giving them the opportunity to engage in the higher levels of IB philosophy hitherto only available through a diploma or certificate course.

Some anecdotal evidence is emerging that in schools running the pilot IBCC course the inclusion of the IBCC students in the Diploma CAS programmes is having a positive effect on all the students. Indeed, pilot schools reported that students from the IB Diploma course benefit immensely from this influx of enthusiasm and the willingness of IBCC students to participate.

The CAS programme at Deira International School, for example, was so vibrant, that some students from other local non-IB schools asked to be allowed to volunteer for the activities. As many of these projects take place outside school premises and within the wider community, this is willingly accepted and the IBCC students have succeeded in taking CAS not only into the community but into other schools. This aspect of broadening the appeal of the IB was certainly not anticipated.

A questionnaire presented to the participating pilot schools revealed that the IBCC:

- re-engages students who had thought their education had come to an end;
- exposes students to an IB philosophy which would otherwise be denied them;
- leads to choices of more meaningful positions in the workforce and an alternative pathway to higher education;
- keeps open the inclusive education of the PYP and MYP;
- enriches the school environment for those students in the IB Diploma programme.

These are very positive initial outcomes and there is much to expect from the IBCC as it takes further shape in the pilot schools and explores yet other directions as new schools take it up.

John Bastable, founding Director, Deira International School, IBCC pilot school, is now the Principal of the International Community School, Amman, Jordan.
Integrating skills across different curricula
How Ann Lautrette arrived at IB English A1 via the British National Curriculum and Cambridge IGCSE

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is fast becoming the programme of choice in many international and national schools around the world. But the IB is a challenging and rigorous programme of study and the way schools prepare students for those challenges vary. Some schools choose to do this through the implementation of the IB Primary and Middle Years programmes.

However, a significant number of international schools that are aligned to a particular national system. British international schools often follow a version of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 (ages 11-13) and the Cambridge IGCSE programme at Key Stage 4 (14-16). How can such schools ensure continuity within this type of structure?

The National Curriculum, the IGCSE and the IBDP have different objectives, different curriculum content and assessment practices. Can we expect students and teachers to simply work to one framework and then switch effortlessly to another, and another? If each stage naturally requires a process of adaptation, wouldn’t there be some impact on the efficiency of learning? How then, can a school ensure seamless progression when the seams are so clear?

One method of achieving continuity in an English curriculum is by creating thematic links across all three curricula. Standardised assessment in each individual programme must remain in place, but a framework where texts and topics are linked through an overarching theme in each term or year allows for a greater understanding of the role of English and literature in our world.

For example, students in Year 7 focus on an awareness of culture in term one: students own culture; the culture of the host country; and other cultures within the school. Within this topic, students study both literary and non-literary texts connected to the theme. This moves into an appreciation of what it means to be a Third Culture Kid, and the advantages and concerns associated with that.

Such a thematic approach can continue throughout Key Stage 3. Assessment practices and objectives are in line with the National Curriculum, but Schemes of Learning explicitly address a given theme and students are introduced to a wide range of texts in any one unit.

Themes address critical issues, moving from culture to an understanding of internationalism and the local environment in Year 7. From the international environment, to human rights and prejudice in Year 8, and from media and political awareness to influences on language and literature in Year 9.

Writing is concerned with personal, local, national and international issues, so it seems logical that students should approach text from these perspectives. Also, given that in English A1 at IB level we expect students to understand such themes, it seems reasonable to embed awareness into our pre-IB curricula.

The IGCSE programmes for English language and literature place an emphasis on the development of specific reading and writing skills. The approach to teaching is often to focus on one skill or one text at a time. This creates a conflict when, at IB level, students are required to closely analyse and connect texts, with an understanding of themes which are often beyond their realm of experience.

It is possible to structure the IGCSE programmes thematically. To focus on ‘conflict’ for example and study Journey’s End by R C Sherriff, select the poetry from the anthology concerned with the conflict between humans and the environment, or within human relationships, and to select stimulus texts for language coursework or exam tasks which deal with the same theme. In this way students are able to continue to see the connections across texts that they have begun to appreciate at Key Stage 3. They are able to see that writers of both fiction and non-fiction are concerned with the issues that affect us and our world.

Another approach to ensure that continuity across different curricula is through the development of skills. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are a focus at all levels, but what about skills of carrying out research, of communication, presentation and evaluation? How do we carry out library and internet research or structure a research report? How do we plan effectively or work well in a group? And how do we self-assess or review our own learning?

Explicitly teaching these skills and then requiring the application of them in every scheme of learning ensures a mastery that can be carried through written assessment at Key Stage 3, IGCSE coursework and IB World Literature essays. Embedding communication and presentation skills from Year 7 or younger ensures...
greater success in speaking and listening tasks at Key Stage 3, oral work at IGCSE and the internally assessed orals at IB.

Similarly, close reading and analysis of text begins in Key Stage 3, is developed in IGCSE and becomes the focus of IB. If these skills are taught in the same way and with the same processes throughout secondary school, then changes in curricula are less destabilizing and cause less interruption to learning.

An innovative approach to teaching IGCSE language and literature would be to combine these with the new IGCSE Global Perspectives course in a fully integrated English programme. Global Perspectives seeks to instill an understanding of critical international issues and asks students to consider a variety of views on such issues. And literature, of course, offers a viewpoint.

The Global Perspectives course places an emphasis on research and, given that literary study is a process through the close analysis of text, it seems that any focus on research skills can only aid students in both their IGCSE literature and language courses and prepare them for the rigours of IB English A1.

Given that teachers often bemoan the fact that IB A1 students tend, initially, to search for the ‘right’ response to literature, an understanding of different perspectives developed at IGCSE level would better prepare students for this aspect of literary study. To revisit the example of ‘conflict’ as a theme developed earlier, ‘conflict and peace’ can be selected as a topic area for one Global Perspectives research report.

The three IGCSE curricula could be mapped onto one another, with non-literary and literary texts providing a wide range of perspectives on the theme of conflict. This would lead to responses to text exercises for IGCSE Language, the development of coursework or exam responses for IGCSE literature and the production of a research report on this theme for Global Perspectives.

Integrating Global Perspectives into the language and literature courses seems to offer a number of possibilities for bridging the skills gap between IGCSE and IB English A1, but the research and team work skills required must be addressed in curriculum planning at Key Stage 3. The thematic approach to the teaching of English allows English courses to stay within the realms of a national curriculum, but to ensure the continuity of skills and approaches from the first year of secondary through to graduation from the IB Diploma Programme.

It also ensures that students develop not only skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, but also the additional skills required for an understanding of the world. Placing a greater emphasis on research into critical issues and the consideration of different perspectives ensures that our students do become the internationally-minded inquirers we intend them to be.

Ann Lautrette is an English teacher and assistant faculty head of English at the British International School, Jakarta.

How strange is a stranger?

E T Ranger speculates

The English ‘stranger’ and the French ‘étranger’ both come from the same root, but they have diverged intriguingly in meaning. What they have in common is ‘not like us’ but, while the English word emphasises norms, the French one contrasts nations.

It was a Frenchman, the philosopher-mathematician Blaise Pascal, who wrote in 1670 about the arbitrariness of human values: ‘A strange justice that is bounded by a river! Truth on this side of the Pyrenées, error on the other side.’ But do we all see ‘abroad’ in the same way?

The way we look at the world seems to vary according to our experience. The veteran international school teacher, seasoned in three or four continents, and with a global Christmas card list, is surely immunised – or perhaps hardened – to new societies with unexpected expectations.

Bicultural homes, we know, produce flexible people, and diasporic communities like Armenians, Jews, or NRIs (non-resident Indians) shift effortlessly between national settings. Could this also apply to people who have grown up hearing adults talk about personal experiences in other countries?

I recently came across some fascinating statistics. A paper published by the UN (Dumont and Lemaître, 2006) compares the proportions of national populations who are living abroad. Taking the figures from OECD country nationals living in OECD countries, which appears to cover roughly one half of expatriations from these countries, very different proportions of the population seem to live abroad at any one time.

There are several ways of calculating this, and absolute numbers will have changed since then, but what matters is the relative numbers and the accumulating traditions. Some countries have less familiarity with expatriation: for Japan and the USA the figure is 0.5%. But Germany has 4.5%, Portugal 14%, New Zealand 16%, and Ireland an amazing 24% outside their homeland at a given moment. In a lifetime the majority will have first-hand experience of living abroad.

Continued overleaf
How could this affect the international school experience? The philosopher of psychology Rom Harré, himself a much-travelled New Zealander, wrote cheekily about his current home (1998, p. 179):

It is curious that at this time when life in the United States displays more cultural uniformity than it has done since the war between the states there has appeared a stream of writings about the predicaments of those who have to adapt to a variety of cultural roles. Writings such as these must make strange reading for polyglot Europeans or Indians, moving freely about their respective complex social worlds.’

Yet our responsibility is to respond to the needs that people feel, not that we think they ought to feel. If we are dealing with the welfare of children, their feelings are their reality. ‘Grit your teeth and get on with it’; ‘If you don’t cry you will store up unexpressed grief’; or ‘Group hug, everyone!’ will be right for some, but certainly not for all!

We need professional development to help ourselves and our new colleagues to become as effective as possible in post. We construct thoughtful transition programmes to help children move in and move on. We do these things because we feel that we would benefit from them. How often do we check that we have matched the programme to their needs, and what else could we provide that would be more appropriate for them?

For example, in some countries the international school is a route for the children of the ruling group to distance themselves from the national community and enter the developed world economy. They are practising separateness. Yet in western Europe most families will readily identify with the school, the host country, and still feel membership of their home country while embracing supranational togetherness.

One test is the attitude towards the United Nations: the communitarians see its virtues, and individualists see its vices. This is a conflict between priorities: some people strive for communal goals, others for achievement. Do we respond equally to their aims; and should we?

Attitudes will also affect the teachers’ ability to relocate. For families – the families of students or of teachers – that have themselves lived in several countries, the world is already plural. But for those who are recruited from ‘home’ to work abroad, the way we see things is widely variable.

When, at home, we are watching a foreign news on TV, do we see it as fact or fiction? We know that in the movies there is always a hero with perfect teeth, someone will say “it’s gonna be all right”, and all problems will be solved in the final reel. But if our cousin Rachel is emailing us from the trouble spot we know that there are real people, with real problems, and that our role is not necessarily as hero. In turn, this is reflected in our attitudes as we apply for jobs abroad. Are we going there to solve problems, to expand our experience, or to spend more time in places where we usually holiday?

The truth is that we are a mixture of all these backgrounds and attitudes, and we can see them in most staffrooms. The same is true of the school’s families. But if learning is at the heart of the school, and engagement between teachers and students is at the heart of learning, are we able to offer those essential sympathetic links to all the kinds of students that we admit? If not, what do we do intend to do about it?

Reference:
Students at The British School of Brussels (BSB) are taking geography lesson beyond the textbook with an innovative new approach to charity – and learning. It starts with a chapter in a secondary school geography book and it ends with a borehole. In between there are tribal dancing, customised water bottles, lawyers and a group of passionate students. The lesson learned: the road from Brussels, Belgium and Bolgatanga, Ghana runs two ways.

John Knight, assistant head at The British School of Brussels, was teaching a lesson on development and poverty from a textbook that used a remote Ghanaian village as an example. As he was explaining the development gap and the difficulty villagers faced in moving away from poverty he could tell the students were struggling to make the connection, perhaps because the cultural differences were just too far removed.

Soon after, John came across the Urban Development and Education Foundation (UD-EF), a charity which by coincidence happened to be working in Bolgatanga – the exact location featured in the book. “From here, the conversation and ideas just began rolling,” John says.

In June 2010, John and two colleagues visited Ghana to meet elders, the tribal chief, teachers and local students. They returned to BSB with some inspirational ideas to share on the teaching of sustainable development to their students.

“What the schools in Ghana needed was clean water, chairs, teacher training and computers,” says John. “We knew we wanted to do more than just send a cheque. We wanted this to be a partnership where we both extend our knowledge and learn from each other. The question now was ‘how best to do this?’ That’s where the students became involved.

Students were keen to take on the challenge to create a lesson beyond the textbook. As with any lesson, this too needed a plan – a business plan. “We wanted to do more than sell cakes to generate income” says John. “We want to create change through a meaningful and reciprocal learning experience.”

Students from the school’s charities committee opted to create The Best of Both as a registered charity. “We started contacting lawyers,” explains Shrey Virani, BSB
Student. “We found one lawyer who will work pro bono, but first we have to file the appropriate paperwork. At BSB, we have a theme of respect,” says Debo Adedeji, another BSB student on the team. “For me, this project is the essence of that theme. We want to share knowledge and understand each others cultures better – to give and receive.”

Knowing that the students in Ghana needed clean, accessible water, the BSB students decided to raise money for a borehole by selling recyclable water bottles. “One of our fundraising plans involves branding our own Best of Both Worlds water bottles and selling them here at school and in the local community,” says Shenil Shah, also a BSB team member. “We’re currently in negotiations with a supplier and working with the school’s catering personnel.”

Like any good business plan, Best of Both Worlds has a vision for continued growth. The students are already developing a plan to institutionalise the partnership, expand the programme to other international schools and develop a gap year exchange programme.

“Once the borehole is finished, we will look at raising funds to purchase some IT equipment, which will allow us to connect directly with their students, allowing our partnership to flow both ways,” says Tim Edwards of BSB’s charities committee. “It’s only onwards and upwards from here.”

Paul Eckhardt put it: “Volunteering with Habitat for Humanity clearly gives students the opportunity to experience the strong ideals the American School of Milan strives for: to become inquirers, communicators, open-minded, caring, risk takers, and reflective.”

You can still join Habitat for Humanity’s Serve and Learn Build in Romania between 13-20 August, 2011. Contact us at gv.europe@habitat.org or check more information on http://www.habitat.org/eca/global_village.
Supporting writing development for EAL students

Heather Card explores how teachers in two schools approach the writing development of students learning in a language other than their mother tongue.

Southbank International School (SIS) and William Davis Primary School are two London schools with a high proportion of students whose mother tongue is not English. (In the context of this article, these students will be referred to as EAL students.) SIS follows the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IBPYP), and William Davis Primary School follows the International Primary Curriculum (IPC). Both schools also use the First Steps 2nd Edition Writing resource.

When supporting EAL students’ writing development, there are some key points to consider:

It is well recognised that while students may develop oral social language relatively quickly, their development of written academic language will take much longer.

There are many opportunities for transfer of knowledge from one language to another, as well as possible interference between languages, in terms of grammatical structures and orthography.

For older students beginning to learn in a new language, their conceptual understanding will outstrip their ability to express themselves in writing.

Cultural background will be a strong determining factor in terms of the prior knowledge that students bring to their writing.

When creating opportunities for students to write, it is vital that they are given the maximum opportunity to draw upon the linguistic and conceptual knowledge that they already have, and that they are adequately supported in their writing development.
supported through scaffolding to put their ideas together in written form. The First Steps 2nd Edition Writing resource provides a range of techniques to support students throughout the processes of writing.

Both the IBPYP and the IPC provide a curriculum context for creating shared experiences that provide the stimulus for genuine, purposeful writing. At SIS, writing instruction is embedded within the units of inquiry. A yearly plan that links social purposes and text forms with the units ensures progression and continuity across the school.

As part of their inquiry into people’s beliefs, Grade 4 students visited different places of worship. In a lesson that I observed, students were planning and drafting a recount of one of the visits. They showed a clear understanding of relevant details to include in relation to the purpose of informing the reader of what had been learned on the visit and were supported by the use of a planning framework, which helped them to organise the information under key headings. Once they had developed a first draft, they paired up to provide constructive feedback, while the teacher held conferences with individual students.

Similarly, at William Davis Primary School, the IPC units provide the context within which students develop and apply their writing skills. Year 4 students had been studying a history unit on ancient Egyptians. A range of activities in the early stages of the unit had supported the students in developing the specific vocabulary that they would need, and displays in the classroom provided an ongoing reference.

The students reflected on the information that they had already gathered, before continuing their research, noting key points of information on a particular aspect of the topic. Working in small groups provided a supportive and collaborative learning environment.

Understanding students’ linguistic and cultural background is also crucial in order to allow them to draw effectively upon their prior knowledge and experience. Both schools place great importance on encouraging the involvement of families in a collaborative approach to students’ development wherever possible.

In reflecting on assessment practices with EAL students, it may be helpful to consider:

- How information about students’ writing development is gathered.
- What sort of information is gathered.
- The extent to which EAL students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and understanding.

Gathering information within the context of everyday, meaningful writing events, where students are supported with appropriate scaffolds, will be most effective in supporting students’ writing development. The First Steps writing resource provides teachers with information about student development and appropriate teaching emphases across four aspects of writing: use of texts; contextual understanding; conventions and processes; and strategies.

Information should be gathered in each of these aspects, and throughout the writing processes. A strong emphasis only on the conventions of writing and on the finished product will provide an incomplete picture of writing development, and may lead to an underestimation of what EAL students can bring to their writing.

For EAL students, especially those who are already literate in another language, the focus for specific support is likely to be in the aspect of conventions. At SIS, specialist teachers plan together with class teachers to offer tailored support for students.

In a specialist lesson that I observed, a group of Grade 4 students were developing their understanding of pronouns through a range of practical, investigative activities. They were challenged to identify familiar pronouns through stories and songs and to create sentences with pronouns. They were also encouraged to make connections drawing upon prior knowledge from their own languages.

In a Year 2 class literacy lesson at William Davis Primary School, the students were supported to explore representation of characters in a literary text, through oral work and drama. Small groups were supported by the teacher in developing ideas and related vocabulary. They created a range of tableaux, generating further discussion of the key characters and then worked in pairs to select a character and create appropriate speech bubbles, drawing upon the previous discussion.

Students who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue face particular challenges. However, they also bring with them a wealth of linguistic and cultural experience. Assessment and teaching need to be tailored to the needs of these students, allowing them to draw upon this experience to support their learning and enrich their writing.

Heather Card is a consultant with the UK office of STEPS Professional Development. Previously to this, she worked for nine years at the International School of Milan as language coordinator and PYP coordinator.
More than 580 delegates and 56 exhibitors return to Istanbul for a successful ECIS Spring Conference

Greeting speakers and delegates

Keynote speakers

Dr Michael G Thompson, author and psychologist.

Wendy Luhabe, Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg.

Dr Kyung Hee Kim, an associate professor of educational psychology at The College of William and Mary in Virginia.
At the workshop sessions...

...and on to the gala dinner, all thanks to Sodexo
AMONG THE ECIS COMMITTEE CHAIRS: Arnim Bieber, chair of the ECIS Board of Trustees, with Barry Freckmann of the International School of Prague, who is in his first year as chair of the business/finance committee; Henrietta Stjernvall (centre), American International School of Vienna, in her third year as chair of the ECIS board governance/trustees’ committee; and Robert Taylor (right), International Preparatory School, Portugal, in his second year as chair of the ECIS Heads committee.

A BIG THANK YOU

Among the award winners

SISG Master Class: Adele Hodgson presents a certificate to Michael Wylie, an ECIS Individual Member from Australia; to David Thomas, ACS Cobham International School, UK; to Dahi Al-Fadhli, American Creativity Academy, Kuwait; Leslie Albiston, International School of Toulouse; Simon Head, Al Sawah Schools, Oman; Eliana Zola, American School of Milan; Henrietta Stjernvall, American International School of Vienna; Charles Wilkinson and Florabela Lopes, ESCO-LA – English School Community of Luanda, Angola; and Wealth Jane Obibi, Cedar Court British International School, Nigeria.

ECIS Board Trustee Beth Pfannl introduces Tim Smith from the International Award for Young People.

Jean Vahey, Executive Director of ECIS, presents certificates of appreciation for being subject committee host schools to Detlev Siebrecht, Frankfurt International School; Neil McWilliam, International School of Düsseldorf; and Jorgen Hovven, Amman Baccalaureate School.

Mary Langford presents a certificate to Walid Abu-Shakra (centre) and Norm Dean of the American International School of Egypt for being an ITC host school.

Arnim Bieber, chair of the ECIS Board of Trustees, with Heather Kent and Melinda Crowley (right) who, for many years have been responsible for the smooth running of ECIS conferences and who will shortly be leaving the organisation.
Implementing inquiry in India

Lesley Snowball puts it into practice in Mumbai

Inquiry-based learning is acknowledged as the most significant pedagogical focus for the 21st century. This was evident when 120 teachers and leaders from 33 schools gathered recently in Mumbai and Bengaluru in India for a day of free professional development. The event was sponsored by Pearson Education to celebrate the launch of their Putting it into Practice Primary Inquirer series, of differentiated materials specifically designed for inquiry-based schools, teachers and students.

Participating schools covered a range of curriculum models including the Primary Years Programme, Edexcel, Cambridge International Primary Programme, International Primary Curriculum and the Indian National Curriculum framework, all united by their commitment to developing a more inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning.

Led by Lesley and Kenneth Snowball, directors of Putting it into Practice and authors of the Primary Inquirer series of materials, the workshops focused on the practical aspects of implementing inquiry in the classroom, starting with an activity that introduced participants to each other through ‘five modes of finding out’:

- Perception – looking, listening, touching, tasting, smelling;
- Prior knowledge – recalling both specific and general knowledge;
- Evaluation – making judgements and forming opinions;
- Empirical inquiry – pursuing a purposeful process of firsthand investigating and experimenting;
- Theoretical inquiry – reading and listening to information from third parties.

A jigsaw graphic then described nine key components of effective inquiry and participants were invited to use it as a tool for reflecting on their own practice as well as that of their school overall, using a ‘traffic light’ system to indicate which components they have developed well and which need attention:

- Differentiation – Inquiry is an ideal vehicle for differentiating because if inquiry is truly student-orientated, students will differentiate themselves, choosing investigations, formats and tools that suit their level of intellectual and linguistic capacity.
- Teacher questions – Formulating questions that create a framework to guide the inquiry process is a skill to be constantly developed and refined by teachers. Good inquiry questions are provocative, substantial and open-ended, stimulating investigation and generating multiple perspectives and lines of sustained inquiry.
- Open-ended investigation – Students are often too focused on finding one answer and finishing quickly. Effective inquiry develops their capacity for sustained inquiry that pursues multiple answers.
- Student questions – Students need to be taught how to

Some of the 120 teachers and leaders from 33 schools gathered recently in Mumbai and Bengaluru in India for a day of free professional development.
formulate good inquiry questions and, once formulated, teachers must value them by giving them precedence within the inquiry process, assigning substantial time to their investigation and building them into assessment criteria.

Student initiative – Student-led inquiry must go beyond just formulating good questions. Students should also be planning and carrying out their own investigations, organising, interpreting and presenting their findings. Teachers must be judicious in their timing of support, not jumping in too soon in order to allow students the opportunity to use their own initiative.

Process-focus – One of the major outcomes of an inquiry-based approach is that students become better inquirers. This requires teachers to focus on the skills students need for the process of inquiry and not just on end products such as posters and presentations.

Inquiry skills – Effective inquirers need a complex range of skills to observe and investigate, to record, interpret and present data, and to evaluate and reflect on their processes and findings. These skills need to be explicitly developed – modelled, practised and refined – so that students are better inquirers when they finish a unit than they were when they began.

Teacher facilitator – Teachers cannot ‘do’ inquiry for students. Although this may seem too obvious a statement, in practice, inquiry is often done by the teacher rather than by the students, even in schools with authorised inquiry-based programmes. By contrast, effective teacher facilitators ensure that student ideas are paramount, not just as a theoretical exercise, for example, by gathering a few student questions, but by genuinely valuing students’ thinking, scaffolded with the skills, resources and motivation that students need to do inquiry for themselves.

Authentic assessment – Assessment in an inquiry-based programme involves evaluating prior knowledge and skills; formative assessment throughout the unit focusing on how students are investigating as well as on what is being learned; and summative assessment at the end of the unit to evaluate levels of understanding, both of unit specific ideas and their application to broader, underlying key concepts.

An important point for inquiry-based teachers to remember is that students should be improving as inquirers throughout their time in the class/grade. This means that teachers need to understand the skills involved in being an inquirer and help students develop and refine these skills.

In our workshop this was a key focus and, after setting the scene with a brief theoretical overview of inquiry, participants were guided through a thorough, practical analysis of the inquiry process skills using a rubric designed to help assess and support students in becoming better inquirers.

In addition to diagnosing skill levels and goals for individual students, school teams considered continuity of skills’ development across grade levels. Participants were then guided through a condensed unit of inquiry, culminating in designing and carrying out their own personalised mini-inquiry into the properties of materials.

The workshops described were planned to coincide with the launch of the Pearson Putting it into Practice Primary Inquirer Series, differentiated materials published specifically for inquiry-based schools. Forming the hub of the system, the materials are a perfect complement to any curriculum that encourages and supports inquiry-based pedagogy.

Designed as time-saving springboards to help busy teachers plan units of inquiry, the materials provide a base for collaborative planning across and between year levels and subject areas, offering a full support base for teachers new to inquiry and supplementary frameworks and formats for experienced teachers. Adding value in this way helps all teachers to optimise their potential and provide a significant and challenging teaching environment.

The workshops were facilitated by Pearson’s distribution partners, Parlay in Mumbai and Overleaf in Bangalore, and generous farewell prize draws gave
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The focus on inquiry-based learning seems to be fundamentally linked to a growing focus on internationalism. Independent schools are springing up throughout the sub-continent and many are using international curriculum frameworks and pursuing international accreditation. Even those using the Indian National Curriculum often make adaptations to ensure a more international orientation.

In fact, ‘the roots of international education can be traced back to the sub-continent, and the work of, among others, Rabindranath Tagore in the early 1900s, who is credited as one of the earliest educators to emphasise the importance of multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-cultural learning.

‘His experimental school, university and global cultural centre, Visva-Bharati, was envisioned as a meeting ground of cultures that emphasised that the beauty created by artists, the secrets of the universe discovered by scientists and the problems of existence solved by philosophers, were not merely for some particular race to which they belonged, but for all mankind. In terms of curriculum, he advocated emphasising generic aspects of social and cultural development and innovations that had integrated individuals of diverse backgrounds, rather than the specifics of national histories, achievements and dominance (Snowball, 2009).’

With this auspicious background, little wonder then that India is wholeheartedly embracing inquiry-based learning as a means of enhancing its international focus and, as indicated by the 33 schools represented in the workshops, its implementation is being taken very seriously.

Dr Lesley Snowball is director of Putting in into Practice, international educational consultants. snowballk@compuserve.com
Surrounded by the portraits of pashas and sultans, I met Anne Akay and her family in the living room of the president of Bilkent University. Anne's husband was joining the university but Anne's future was in question. What would she do?

Home schooling defined Anne's perspective as a teacher. Her children, gifted in many ways, were the product of her teaching. With what I would later discover as characteristic determination, Anne had chosen home schooling as the method to provide her children with a solid educational foundation. However, on the night that I met Anne, she was considering changing all that she knew.

In my role as head of the English department, we discussed her English degree and her teaching experiences. With her husband's move to Turkey, Anne knew that her home schooling days were over. Her children would attend Bilkent University's preparatory school: a private school for the best and the brightest of Ankara. Not only would this be a change to her own method of teaching, it would also be a change to her own method of learning.

Anne came to Bilkent and started teaching high school English one semester before her husband arrived. Alone, she and her children faced the changes that culture shock and a new school bring to a family. Almost immediately, Anne demonstrated the drive needed to become a successful international teacher. She embraced her new courses and classrooms full of unknown students. Suddenly she had 50 papers to correct instead of two; she had mid-term report cards to prepare. She had different learning styles present in her classrooms.

Following departmental meetings and professional discussions, I suggested to Anne that she consider enrolling in the ECIS International Teacher Certificate program. After examining the program, she recognized the professional development potential available to her and embraced the idea. She said that since her life had taken an international turn, she needed to be an international teacher. She saw that the ITC program of five reflective standards would be a way to become the internationally-minded teacher she wanted to be. She asked me to be her mentor for the program.

The work ahead of her was not easy. Anne had to reinvent and reevaluate herself as a teacher. Beginning her ITC work with Standard 2 helped her to focus on the teaching methodology she needed in order to make the transition from a home schooling professional to an international teacher.

Working through each of the five standards she was able to make the necessary adjustments and develop strategies for future teaching and learning opportunities. She attended conferences and networked with the other ITC teachers via the online discussion forum of the program where she was a frequent contributor. She began to think differently: like an international professional.

Standard 5 is the ‘capstone’ of the program and is tackled last. This standard requires the international
teachers to develop a set of goals that will ensure that their own professional growth is sustained beyond the ITC, and that their international-mindedness is translated to their own school.

Anne now had the responsibility of taking what she had learned about international teaching to make a difference at Bilkent. How could she help others to embrace the internationalism that she had found and encourage them to see their teaching in a more international fashion?

The teacher is expected to develop a strategic plan to ensure the continued application of international-mindedness in teaching practice.

Concurrent with Ann's transition from a home school teacher to an international teacher, BLIS underwent a transition. Therefore Anne's plan justifiably included encouraging her colleagues to develop the internationally-minded mission of Bilkent Laboratory & International School. Given that BLIS is composed predominantly of Turkish students, it is particularly challenging to promote this mission. Anne's plan included meeting colleagues to discuss how international-mindedness was encouraged in their classrooms.

Her initial proposal included professional day workshops and teacher room chats to engage teachers in a dialogue about internationalism, together with individual discussions with her colleagues.

These individual meetings across subject areas were productive and gave Anne different perspectives resulting in a working document to promote the mission of BLIS. She restructured her classroom practices; she questions to inspire; and she offers her students a culturally sensitive and diverse perspective. What started with a conversation in a living room has culminated, through hard work and commitment, to Anne's certification as an ECIS international teacher.

Melanie Sweetz is the Head of ESL at Bilkent LIS and is also chair of the ECIS Spouses Committee. She was Anne Akay's mentor for the ITC program.
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Focus on ECIS committees

The lifeblood of ECIS, says Mary Langford

ECIS is unique as an international educational membership organisation in that it has an extensive professional committee structure that underpins its activities and strategic thinking. Currently there are 25 subject committees, and seven administrative committees.

These committees bring important expertise and perspective to many aspects of ECIS life. They are the practitioners at the chalk face that the Executive Director and the ECIS Board can draw upon for information and suggestions for the latest thinking as well as the current challenges that affect these particular areas of school and academic life. Some of these areas are:

**ECIS April and November conferences**
The Executive Director invites each of the committees to recommend sessions and speakers for both the November and April conferences. As ECIS receives many conference proposals from independent experts, she will often refer these back to the committees for feedback and opinions.

ECIS is also making a more conscientious effort to plan the ECIS timetable to suit each committee's requirements, subject to it all fitting together! This important two-way dialogue helps to ensure that ECIS conferences are as relevant and current as possible in their content and structure!

The annual open business meetings are held at the main conferences and are led by the committees themselves. Subject committees meet at the November conference, and administrative committees meet at the April conference. These are effectively open job-alike meetings where educators with shared experience and concerns can discuss with committee members and other colleagues their ideas, concerns and practice. The committee chairs meet as a group once a year at their respective conferences to share their activities, offer supportive advice to each other and ECIS, and to explore areas of potential collaboration.

Many of the committees work closely with the ECIS conference organisers to offer one- or two-day pre-conferences prior to the November conference.

**Subject conferences**
Some of the ECIS committees have become noted for their cutting-edge subject-specific conferences, normally hosted in conjunction with an ECIS regular member school. Important professional development opportunities, they attract a large number of participants from around the globe.

Although any ECIS committee is welcome to propose such an event, the regular organisers are ESL/mother tongue, librarians, PE teachers, community service and service learning, ICT, and early childhood. These represent a tremendous professional and collaborative commitment on the part of the committee members and their host school colleagues, who provide so much important back-up and generous support, and attract up to several hundred participants and often reach capacity.
Focus on ECIS subject committees

Special programmes
Occasionally ECIS is approached by outside organisations with partnership initiatives where ECIS member schools can avail themselves of some form of training or involvement in a project. ECIS normally consults the relevant committee/s before embarking on these initiatives.

Examples are an opportunity for schools to participate in an international global ozone measurement project, and a pilot programme that the special educational needs committee has been running with Dyslexia International. Again, committee expertise is sought and appreciated to ensure quality control and suitability, which are ECIS hallmarks.

ECIS committee iSkoodle sites
Each ECIS committee has its own moodle-based website for 24/7 international communication and exchange through discussion fora and also for hosting resources useful to educators interested in that committee’s area. Anyone may join these sites, and for many teachers they are a ‘lifeline of information’. The ICT and librarians committees are two groups who make excellent use of this facility.

How do ECIS committees work?
Over the years, committees have adapted to keep up with educational trends, or changed their names and their focus. Recently, the water committee was merged with the environmental committee. ‘Development’ became ‘advancement’ to keep up with the common understood parlance in that industry.

ICT (information and communication technology) became information technology/multi-media/online learning to better reflect the 21st-century role of IT in our schools and pedagogical practice. The newest committee is professional learning and action research, introduced this year by Jean Vahey, partly in response to a 2009 membership survey asking ECIS to consider new and creative ways of delivering professional development for teachers and administrators alike.

ECIS committees normally consist of approximately five members from ECIS regular member schools. The subject committees are largely made up of teachers, though sometimes interested administrators become involved, and there are a few exceptional cases where committee members are drawn from the affiliate and supporting membership categories. The administrative committees are normally made up of a similar number of senior management staff from member schools.

Members are either recruited by the committees themselves, or names may be recommended by ECIS Heads, board members, the Executive Director who meets many teachers and administrators in the course of her travels, the deputy executive director who particularly focuses on educators who have successfully completed the various ECIS certificate programmes – the SSG, ILMP or ITC, or alternatively teachers just volunteer their interest.

ECIS encourages committees to strive to represent the rich diversity of the overall ECIS membership – with consideration to countries; sizes of school (small schools and large schools have different situations to address); curricula offered (US, IB, IPC, CIE, national); student body profile (large host country or high expat numbers) etc.

This way, the interests of all ECIS member schools are hopefully considered. Members serve two-year terms, and may be re-invited to serve up to a total of three terms. In every case, the school Head must approve the committee member’s application and agree to support that person so they can attend the annual conferences and any other committee meetings or conferences during the two-year term.

Given the turnover in international schools, the committees are sometimes in a state of flux, and while some committees are ‘oversubscribed’, others have vacancies at any given moment. ECIS and the committee chairs are always happy to hear from prospective members!

Ambassadors for ECIS
ECIS is truly blessed to have its rich network of diverse and experienced educators serving as our ambassadors. They are a powerful force and play an important role in ensuring that ECIS relevant, organic and cutting edge. They help ECIS live up to its mission to be ‘…the leading collaborative global network promoting and supporting the ideals and best practice of international education’.

Mary Langford is deputy executive director of ECIS.

Callie Roth Welstead suggests some best practices in service learning

Over the last two years the ECIS service learning and community service committee has been engaged in discussing best practices for service learning projects in international schools. What follows is a summary of our conclusions about what goes into the making of a successful service learning project – successful in terms of both learning and service.

The most fundamental task in the development of an effective service learning programme is for the school to have a clear idea of what the school’s objectives are for service learning and global issues. Incorporating these objectives into the school’s mission statement embeds this part of the school’s programme within the overall mission of the school.

Not every service learning project needs to be embedded into the school’s curriculum but the overall service learning programme should be an integral part of that curriculum in order to promote endurance and commit-
ment. That curriculum should have standards and benchmarks that link to global issues and service learning. The IB MYP provides these but schools not following that programme should consider creating their own.

Projects that take place far from the participating school are not necessarily superior to those that take place within a very short distance. While projects in remote locations do have a place in international education, much can be achieved through local links.

Commitment is critical to a successful programme. It takes time to set up an enduring service learning project. Students who begin this set-up process may not end up participating in the service learning events for which the project is being designed.

The project needs to become part of the school culture. It is not Mr Smith’s project or Amy’s project: it is the school’s project, providing an opportunity for students to participate during the time they spend at the school before handing it over to other students. While the project should be enduring in the sense that it endures within the school over a long period of time, it should also have an enduring impact on the community being served.

One of the more time-consuming aspects of the set-up process involves conducting a needs assessment. Sometimes what ‘we’ as internationals feel is needed ends up not being what the recipients of our service perceive as the need. Mark Cook, founder of Hope and Homes (http://www.hopeandhomes.org) often shares his profound moment of realisation when he pointed out the new orphanage he had built to one of the orphans.

The child looked up at him and said, “I don’t want to live in an orphanage. I want a family.” Those words changed the course of Mark’s organisation, which has revolutionized the care of orphaned children in places like Romania, but Mark is astute enough to point out that perhaps he should have spoken to the beneficiaries of his work before starting to build.

Schools are well advised to investigate thoroughly the needs of the target community before building the project. The school need not take on the task of needs assessment alone. Experts in the community or local and international NGOs, Habitat for Humanity, Oxfam, Facing the Future, the Jump Foundation and Peace Jam among them, can help with this part of the project.

Publications such as the Complete Guide to Service Learning by Cathryn Berger Kaye, or the recent compilation of examples of service learning projects and ideas from international schools around the world by the Central and Eastern European Schools Association, can also provide guidance. Students can and should be involved in this stage of the project; each project will, by its nature, pose its own boundaries on how much student involvement there can be in each phase of the project.

Lastly, every stage of the project should be documented. Reflection on the part of everyone involved is critical if the project is to evolve in a way that promotes all of the aforementioned qualities of a successful service learning project. While the learning/service continuum needs to be defined in terms of the school’s wider mission, David Harrison, a member of the committee reminds us, “It is about learning first. Service is the context in which this learning is taking place.”

Callie Roth Welstead is chair of the ECIS service learning and community service committee.

Ingrid Skirrow interviews

ECIS librarian

committee chair

John Royce and

committee member

Coralie Clark

What can you tell iS magazine about the beginnings of this particular committee and the ECIS librarians conferences?

Royce: The committee was born out of a meeting during the ECIS annual conference in Florence in 1976. It was the very first ECIS standing subject committee – librarians have always been trendsetters.

We communicated with interested parties for many years via the ECIS librarians’ listserv, now superseded by the ECIS iskoodle. When ECIS allowed committees to hold ‘special events’ every three years, the librarians knew there would be enough interest to sustain a full 2½ day conference. Subsequently, the first conference was in Munich in 1996, with the theme ‘Meeting the challenges’. This was followed by ‘Towards the year 2000’ (Waterloo 1999); ‘Reading between the lines’ (Budapest 2002); ‘Czech it out’ (Prague 2005); and ‘Going places’ (Berlin 2008).

This May the sixth triennial ECIS Librarians Conference, themed ‘at the crossroads’, was held in Istanbul and hosted by Enka Schools. More information is available at http://ecist.read2live.com/ECIS_Istanbul/Welcome.html

What procedures have ECIS put in place for how the subject committees work?

Royce: The committee consists of volunteers willing to share their expertise with others in the international school communities. That said, the committees are bound by ECIS regulations regarding committee
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membership, and guidelines for organising special events. Members serve up to three terms of two years each. Committee members are required to be members of ECIS schools and to have their Head's approval. More information about committees, membership, responsibilities etc is freely available on the ECIS website: http://www.ecis.org/page.cfm?p=320 and also at: http://edmundo.ecis.org/new/committees/subject/library.asp

How much of a role would you consider the ECIS isKoodle has had in furthering international school librarianship?
Royce: A hugely important role – especially given the difficulties of using IB's OCC forums (we get much correspondence re-IB library issues – it's flattering, but it's also sad). iskoodle is an active, vital forum – not too much that it overwhelms, but not so little as to be useless. It's all pertinent, relevant – none of the “Thanks” or “Me too”, well-meant, but meaningless postings that often clog up other listservs I've subscribed to. It's a vibrant community, out to help each other. To sign-up: http://moodle.ecis.org/

Do you have some statistics about membership of isKoodle and of attendance at conferences you could share with the readers?
Royce: We have 430 iSkoodle participants in the library and information services forum and, with the ICT forum, we are possibly the most active and best-subscribed to of the iSkoodle forums.

No statistics regarding attendance at the November conference are available, since participants are not asked to state their subject specialisms etc. With regard to the triennial Librarian conference, numbers have consistently risen:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Munich</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>180</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istanbul</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>215 (and still counting…)</td>
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</table>

That is really an impressive development over the years, especially considering how few international school librarians are actually out there. Do you have a list of the VIPs who have participated at past conferences?
Royce: Certainly – please see the table below. We have had a real mixture of speakers – some library academics and consultants who have had a great impact on theoretic and advocacy aspects of librarianship; but we also try to include authors, illustrators and practical application of librarianship in schools from active school librarians and teacher librarians.

How long have you been involved in the librarian committee?
Royce and Clark: We are both about to complete six years, both of us for the third time! Continuity and experience is important – especially when dealing with ECIS, and even more especially when it comes to conference organisation. Few other members of the committee serve six years – this tends to be a mobile profession. We need new members – do stand up!

How exactly does the committee decide on the content or theme of the conferences?
Royce: Guest speakers at our conferences are proposed through discussion within the committee, plus a certain amount of personal influence. As the event has expanded year on year, so it becomes more prestigious for speakers to be invited. We are especially pleased that this year Dr James Herring (one of our keynote speakers in 1999) is prepared to pay his own way as a participant in the 2011 conference.

Conference themes tend to be open-ended/generic, to be interpreted in any way or in no way at all (the aim after all is to share good practice).

Are there any particular recent trends in librarianship emerging as current professional development needs which the committee tries to include?
Royce: I would consider the following of growing importance:
- the impact of technology and the internet (a huge area covering umpteen (and more) different aspects of school librarianship. For instance ethical practice; plagiarism, referencing etc – in fact it is worth a whole article – I will think about it!); ebooks and pbooks (ie electronic books and paper books); international education, multicultural concerns; information literacy; the future of (school) libraries and library advocacy.

Table 1: Keynote speakers: ECIS Librarian's Conferences.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gwilym Huws</td>
<td>Pam Berger</td>
<td>Joyce Valenza</td>
<td>Michael Eisenberg</td>
<td>Ross Todd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gretel Schurer</td>
<td>James Herring</td>
<td>Anne Creany</td>
<td>Debbie Abilock</td>
<td>Theresa Breslin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marjorie Pappas</td>
<td>Sue Healey</td>
<td>Laurence Aholt</td>
<td>Toni Buzzeo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anne Riedling</td>
<td>Carolyn Markuson</td>
<td>Sharon Coatney</td>
<td>Linda Cornwell</td>
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<td></td>
<td>William Wharton</td>
<td>Vargie Johnson</td>
<td>Bali Rai</td>
<td>Patrick Jones</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Tulloch</td>
<td>Anne Fine</td>
<td>Margaret Read</td>
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<td>Michael Morpurgo</td>
<td>MacDonald</td>
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Who did you have lined up for this year's Istanbul 2011 – @ the crossroads conference in May?
Royce and Clark: We once again had some impressive names for the conference. We had two keynote speakers, Joyce Valenza and Doug Johnson, and Debbie Abilock delivered an endnote address. Valenza and Abilock gave pre-conference workshops. In addition, we invited two well-known authors, Alan Gibbons and Theresa Breslin.

Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview about the ongoing work of the library committee and the triennial librarian conferences?
Royce: We have always aimed to keep conference costs as low as possible. We are very aware that many schools think it unnecessary to provide PD for their librarians, or cannot afford to provide funding for librarian PD. We know that many librarians fund their attendance at our conferences out of their own pockets.

There are two more constraints on our budgeting: ECIS is a non-profit organisation and so does not want to make huge profits out of the subject conferences, but at the same time it is hoped that each subject conference will not make a loss. When we don’t know how many will sign up, the whole business of conference planning and organisation is something of a juggling act for the committee.

We began having pre-conference workshops in 2005 – the keynote speaker is invited to hold a one-day option-al workshop the day before the conference opens. These workshops have proven extremely popular, and are extremely good value. They are good value for participants, because the extra fee is relatively small, and they are good value for the conference, and because there are no transport costs as the workshop leader is already in the city! We have been able to subsidise the cost of the main conference out of profits from the pre-conference workshops.

Any last comments?
Royce and Clark: We have been well supported over the years by many private companies. It is impossible to name them all, but I would single out the support of three companies in particular: Books for Students (now Browns Books for Students, UK), Follett Software Inc, and Sirs/ Mandarin, USA. Their support has raised the profile and the effectiveness of the committee and of ordinary librarians in the schools over the last 25 years. They have added to the attractiveness of our conferences, and they have supported us in our day-to-day work. We owe them such a lot.

Royce: On a personal note, I would say thank you to ECIS and to the library community for the wonderful PD experiences I have enjoyed over the years. It has been a privilege to serve on the committee, an honour and a privilege, and especial honour to be chair of this committee. I have grown professionally, and so has the committee. I wish every success to those who follow – and sincerely hope they have even more enjoyment and even more success than I have gained over the years.

Ingrid Skirrow is a former teacher-librarian at Vienna International School and a keen attendee of the ECIS librarian conferences. ibaemlibrarians@gmail.com
John Royce is head librarian at Robert College, Istanbul, Turkey, and chair of the ECIS librarian committee. Coralie Clark is librarian at American International School, Budapest, Hungary.


John Mikton, new chair of the ICT subject committee, discusses changes and plans

Our committee has now launched a blog, which goes out on the first of each month, so that our members can keep in touch with the latest news, events, learning and resources. The response has been extremely positive. We are using Edublogs with WordPress. Pop by and have a look or even subscribe to our feed: http://ecisitcommittee.edublogs.org/

We are also in the planning stages of facilitating a full day IT focused pre-conference day for the November conference in Lisbon, Portugal. This full day of workshops, seminars, panel discussion and mentoring on ICT is open to all ECIS members. Hopefully this will become a regular event and replace our IT conference, which is hosted every two years by a member school.

We feel as a committee this will allow us to reach a more diverse audience of educators, and simplify things, as we will be able to collaborate with ECIS and the conference services. We will be sharing more information in our next month's blog and look forward to facilitating this new event.

A special thank you goes to Chad Fairey, associate head of Washington International School, for his tenure as chair and all the work and planning he undertook during his tenure. Our new committee comprises John Mikton, International School of Prague (new chair); Lil Abraham, American School of the Hague; Mariam Mathew, American School in London; Warren Apel International School of Amsterdam (new); Leah Trees Munich International School (new); and Alan Preis, Atlanta International School (new).
The ESL and mother tongue committee

In 1983 a group of teachers at the ECIS autumn conference in Rome saw the need for a committee to address the needs of second language learners, and the committee was born. The first subject-specific conference took place at the Vienna International School in 1987, with keynote speaker Professor Jim Cummins, who has possibly done more than any other researcher/writer to highlight the potential of SLLs, and the need for a recognition of their pedagogical needs.

Conferences followed over the years, with increasing numbers of participants – 500 at the 2008 venue in Geneva. This year the conference was held in Dusseldorf from 3-5th March on the theme ‘Promoting linguistic human rights in international schools: from theory to the classroom’.

The keynote speaker was Tove Skutnabb-Kangas with Robert Phillipson. Guest speakers included Maurice Carder, Elizabeth Coelho, Jim Cummins, Margaret Early, Rebecca Freeman-Field, Eithne Gallagher, Else Hamayan, Christine Helot, Sunny Man Chu Lau, and Constant Leung.

Maurice Carder, a former member of the ECIS ESL and mother tongue committee, reflects on the response of international education agencies to the needs of second language students (SLLs):

In 2005 the ESL Gazette reported that there was now a majority of SLLs in international schools worldwide. Some teachers have put their expertise and models into writing (Carder, 2007; Gallagher, 2008), and there are many well-qualified and experienced SL teachers.

It is therefore frustrating, to say the least, to find that far too many schools have either poor practice, or even ‘no practice,’ as regards their approaches to providing acceptable pedagogical instruction for SLLs. Reasons for this are probably to be found in the world at large: enough is known about the types of programmes schools could be providing, and the potential benefits for SLLs when they maintain fluency and literacy in their mother tongue, and develop literacy in their second language through content and language integrated learning (Wolff, 2003). Conversely, if SLLs are offered poor or non-existent programmes for their language needs their whole lives may be adversely affected.

Many international school directors are monolingual in English, and come from countries where SLLs are immigrants. Australia, Canada, the USA and England have reacted in different ways to educational provision for SLLs and political responses have often held sway (see Mohan, Leung and Davison, 2001; Crawford, 2000, and Carder, 2008, for the situation). Directors bring their national model to their schools, and one ESL department head remarked to me, on leaving her school, that she simply could not face educating another director about justification for the model she had built up.

Simply put, in international schools the clientele is an elite; to treat SLLs according to the models provided in national systems is thereby treating one section of the elite as if they are immigrants. Edwards (2004) comments that the UK has a record of poor support for language policies for non-English speakers: she writes that government policies aimed at minorities in England regularly appear grudging compared to those in Australia and Canada: national language policies ensure a high level of support in Canada and Australia; traditional antipathy and indifference in the UK and USA have resulted in a much lower level of support (op.cit, p.125).

Content-based teaching – where one or more areas of the curriculum are taught through the medium of the second language … The UK has shown far less enthusiasm for content teaching (2004:139).

Edwards (2009:7) also writes that ‘decisions about best practice are sometimes driven more by politics than the evidence of research.’ Edwards brings together the issues of racism hiding behind linguistic discrimination when she writes:

While it is no longer politically acceptable to express deep-seated fear and mistrust of minorities in direct terms, the same restrictions do not apply to opinions about language. It has become increasingly clear, however, that debates which on the surface focus on language are actually about culture, identity, power and control (2004:216).

Unease about language is almost always symptomatic of a larger unease… The issues in question, I would suggest, are much more likely to be such things as dominance, elitism, ethnicity, economic control, social status and group security (McArthur, 1986:87, 88, quoted by Baetens-Beardsmore, in Dewaele et al, eds., 2003).

A school's terminology will often reveal the origin of the SL model: EAL is now the term in England, and the term is spreading throughout European international schools. It is to be hoped the English treatment of SLLs is not also spreading (see Carder, 2009).

The IB has not followed through with a specific programme for SLLs in the MYP. I outlined the anomalies in its approach in a paper at the recent conference in Düsseldorf (http://edmundo.ecis.org/new/conference/esl/Document s/Carder2.pdf ).

At the 2008 Geneva conference the chair of the board of the CIS related how ESL was relegated to the back section of the Accreditation document; he went on to add that the ESL & MT committee was in effect wasting its time attempting to change the profile of good SLL programmes through conferences. The only way, he said, was to do it through boards of governors, none of whom was present at the conference.

It is apparent that these two agencies, the IB and the CIS, seem themselves to be constrained by policies and practices originating from national systems. Since international schools are independent, and each is dependent for policies on the views of the boards of governors, the only way for good pedagogical practice to be put into effect would be through the prescribed curriculum of the
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Focus on ECIS subject committees

IB, especially in the MYP, and the Accreditation requirements of the CIS.

However, in a follow-up discussion of matters relating to the IB MYP in Düsseldorf, teachers reported that their schools had been re-authorised by the IB even though fees were charged for ESL classes, a practice which is condemned in IB documents.

A further obstacle to improvements in programmes for SLLs is what I have called the ‘ESL conundrum’: good ESL teachers will work hard to improve SL programmes but may thereby be seen as ‘trouble-makers’ by monolingual administrators. This can lead to non-renewal of contracts and poor references.

It really is time that all those responsible for pedagogy and programme design in international schools made a leap into what I have conceptualised as the ‘international space’ of international schools, and institutionalise good practice without pain throughout the network. It can only be of benefit to the whole international community.

References


Eric Saline reports on a renaissance of the ECIS art subject committee

Art does not reproduce what we see, it makes us see.

Paul Klee

There were some suspicious characters made out of tape lurking about at the 2010 ECIS November Conference at the Acropolis in Nice, France. There were also quite a few conference delegates walking around with inky faces and hands, murmuring to each other about esoteric theories of art criticism or about a favourite character from art history.

What was going on? With record attendances at art committee events, this year marked the greatest impetus behind the art subject area felt in a long time. Before the actual conference even began, there were 30 art educators in Nice on Wednesday night, 17th November, preparing for a full day pre-conference institute, discussing how to integrate art history into the arts classroom regardless of the age-level or location on the planet.

Continued overleaf
To recruit the best teachers a school in the international community needs to maintain strong public relations. *is* magazine, the voice of ECIS, is now providing an important service by allowing schools’ profiles to be included.

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What's more, it took place at Le Fondation Maeght, one of the best sanctuaries for modernist-art in the world, situated in St Paul de Vence, the idyllic hillside village that overlooks the Mediterranean.

Once the event actually started it was incredible to contemplate how many cumulative hours of teaching-experience was represented by the 30 teachers, how many various approaches to incorporating art history into our curriculum there were present in the group.

The day began with a guided visit of the Fondation's collection by a professional guide, interspersed with moments filled with Belgian chocolates smuggled into the grounds by one of the event's co-organisers (thanks Alan, we needed that!).

Our lunchtime in St Paul provided a much-needed opportunity for the teachers to get to know one another and share ideas about art history, while also permitting us to sample some of the regional delicacies. In the afternoon, the group headed back to Le Fondation Maeght for two activities that could be used when visiting a gallery or museum with PYP, MYP or DP students.

Reinvigorated art teachers who attended have brought this new information back to their classrooms for the benefit of their students, ranging from locations like Venezuela, to Tunisia and Turkey.

During the ECIS conference, the number of art teachers attending events actually increased, bringing along even more ideas to the various presentations, including several hands-on workshops. Maria Scolieri, from IHGR in Gothenburg, Sweden, set the tone with a very contemporary presentation on how to teach figurative sculpture and site-specific art using tape.

Basically, this could be likened to mummifying a living person, using plastic wrap first, next covering the wrap in several layers of transparent packaging tape, then carefully using scissors to cut off the mould, so as to not cut clothes in the process.

Compared to the mess of plaster or *papier-mâché*, this process provides a relatively easy, inexpensive and amusing alternative to teaching sculpture in the IB art classroom. The real fun begins once the tape-sculptures make their way into the real world, drastically changing the meaning or use of the space where they are installed. This concept of site-specific art was fundamental to the workshop, and this is one of the best ways to introduce this tricky concept to burgeoning art students.

*Eric Saline is chair of the ECIS art subject committee.*
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Our ethos is welcoming and embracing. We inspire student enthusiasm, confidence, and independence and we welcome new students throughout the year. We seek to instil in all of our students an awareness and esteem of different cultures, beliefs, skills, values and personalities. As world citizens we celebrate both our shared humanity and cultural diversity. We are a co-educational community that includes students from over 55 nationalities, between the ages of 2½ to 18 years. We place a high emphasis upon the acquisition of languages and offer German, Spanish, French and Turkish. In addition to our foreign languages we also offer excellent support for English as a Second Language; students who join us with very limited English quickly reach the stage where they are fully able to access our curriculum.

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Sustainable International School Governance Program

The second module of the SISG for the current academic year – Financial Challenges and Opportunities – took place over a crisp and sunny winter weekend in March in London at the Royal Overseas League. In response to feedback from earlier SISG programmes, Module 2 this year was moved from February to March to enable more Heads to participate by avoiding the February recruitment season.

This strategy proved successful as participants consisted not only of board members but also Heads, business managers and development directors from Europe (Italy, Portugal, Germany, UK), Africa (Nigeria) and the USA (New York), representing a blend of international and national proprietary and not-for profit schools.

This diversity of types of school and governance models continues to be an attraction for participants who say they learn as much from each other’s experiences as they do from the workshop leaders.

The focus of this module was finance, with sessions focusing on crisis management; strategic financial planning and modelling for boards; the role of development and fundraising; and a new session on the data dashboard as an efficient way of environmental scanning that enables all stakeholders to access easily relevant contemporary data about the school’s current trends, enrolments and finances.

Sessions were led by popular SISG veterans Matthew Chuck, Adele Hodgson and Margaret Abbott who were joined this year by David Willows, Director of External Affairs at International School of Brussels.

One school board member summed up his impression of the governance training saying: “Once again, this was a very enriching weekend. This was an amazing opportunity to learn with top-class professionals in a friendly and informal environment. I appreciate all the information shared by the participants and, obviously, the speakers. I will be looking forward to the third module!”

The next module, focusing on the Sustainable International School Board, takes place in London in May, with speakers John Stopford (Professor Emeritus of London Business School) and Diana Maughan (Board of Directors, United World Colleges).

http://www.ecis-sisg.com is the website for details.

Mary Langford
The International Baccalaureate to recognise the ECIS ITC

At the opening session of the 2011 ECIS April Conference in Istanbul, ECIS Executive Director, Jean Vahey, and Siva Kumari, Chief Operating Officer of the International Baccalaureate Schools Division, jointly announced that the ITC has been recognised by the IB as the first non-university pathway to the IB Level 1 Teacher Award.

The IB Teacher Award is designed to meet the needs of teachers with little, or no, IB experience who want to strengthen their practical understanding of the IB curriculum as well as pedagogical and assessment issues related to the implementation of the IB programmes.

The ITC is a blended, standards-based 14-month online programme, with a three-day face-to-face institute, designed to equip teachers with the global mindset necessary for successful teaching in the 21st century. Teachers who enrol in the ITC as of summer 2011, and who are working in an authorised IB programme (PYP, MYP or DP), will be eligible (upon successful completion of the ITC and in accordance with certain criteria) to apply for the IB Level 1 Teacher Award.

The ITC is one of only five programmes in the world that offers teachers the IB Teacher Award Level one for the PYP, MYP or DP programmes. This recognition is the culmination of a two-year consultation and review between ECIS, University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) who are the independent assessors of the ITC, and the International Baccalaureate. The formal agreement was signed by Jean Vahey and IBO Director General Jeff Beard in early April.

The next ITC cohorts begin on 1 July 2011 when the ITC Cambridge and ITC Atlanta groups begin the Online Orientation Course. ITC Istanbul follows with a start date of 1 September 2011. Teachers who have already applied to start the programme in the summer may re-apply to signal their interest in the IB Level 1 Teacher Award option.

For more information, please see: http://www.internationalteachercertificate.com/ and http://www.ibo.org/programmes/pd/award/
International Leadership and Management Program in London

The International Leadership and Management Program (ILMP) held its annual residential in London from 23rd to 27th February, with a starting cohort of 27 school leaders from Africa, the Far and Middle East, Europe and the USA joining the 23 returning participants who were completing the year-long course that focuses on learning-led international school leadership. We were also joined by UK state school Heads drawn from schools offering the International Primary Curriculum (IPC).

The training team this year included Martin Skelton, Founding Director of both the International Primary Curriculum and the International Middle Years Curriculum and co-founder of Fieldwork Education, WCL Group, who delivered the keynote address. Other presenters included John West Burnham, Corinne Rosenberg, Pam Harper, Mike Parkhouse, Jim Laing, Mary Langford and Howard Marshall, Dr Mary Hayden from the University of Bath, and the ILMP e-tutors John Hawes and Dr Mary Margaret Magee, were there to meet and work face-to-face with their e-tutor groups from both cohorts. Paula Askew, from St Mary's University College, Twickenham, also came to observe some of the sessions.

One of the highlights of the ILMP residential each year is visits to local schools. We were fortunate to be welcomed this year by TASIS England and ACS International Egham, two ECIS member schools located in Surrey, just outside of London. The purpose of the school visits is to extend the leadership learning of the participants through authentic engagement with colleagues in the context of the host schools.

We were able to see distributive leadership in action: although TASIS school Head Michael McBrien was away recruiting, the rest of the TASIS senior management team stepped in to discuss their respective roles and the ways in which leadership is managed among the various functions, and the importance of sustaining the vision of the TASIS schools founder, Mary Crist Fleming. The opportunity to meet students who guided our small groups through the TASIS campus was particularly appreciated!

At ACS Egham, Jeremy Lewis, the new Head of School and a member of the ECIS school heads committee, was joined by Charlie Freer, the Managing Director of the ACS International schools, who described together the management structure that links the three ACS International Schools and which ensures that leadership policies and approaches are consistent and coherent across the organization. ECIS and Fieldwork Education, the co-sponsors of the ILMP, are grateful for both schools' generosity in hosting the visits.

This year's social function was hosted by Tobias Ellwood, Member of Parliament for Bournemouth East, in the Harcourt Room at the House of Commons, with stunning views of the Thames. Tobias attended international schools, graduating with an IB Diploma from Vienna International School; he very kindly addressed the group about his own experience of international education and the tremendous benefits it provided his career.

Tobias no doubt also keeps up with international school news coming from a family of teachers: his late brother, Jonathan, was a popular international school teacher; his sister, Totty Aris, has been deputy head at The International School of Dhaka in Bangladesh; and host Tobias Ellwood MP.

Host Tobias Ellwood MP.
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his mother Caroline has had a long career in international education and will be known to readers as the editor of *is* magazine and of the *International Schools Journal*. The ILMP group was indeed fortunate to visit the Palace of Westminster and grateful for Mr Ellwood’s hospitality. London proved to be a convenient and popular location, with participants using their limited free time to enjoy the restaurants, shops and to visit some of the London sites. The next ILMP will take place in Prague in March, 2012.

The ILMP, a partnership between Fieldwork Education, ECIS, and the National Association of Head Teachers, is designed for school leaders, as reflected by the London group that consisted of Heads and directors, principals, assistant principals, IB coordinators, IFC coordinators, PD directors, department leaders, and admissions directors. All interested parties are invited to learn more from the website www.internationalleadershipandmanagementprogram.com

Dr Mary Margaret Magee and Mary Langford.

The International Teacher Certificate moves to the Middle East

The first ITC institute in the Middle East, held in Cairo from 10th-12th March, included international school teachers from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, India, and the UAE and was hosted by the American International School of Egypt (one of the schools in the ESOL Group), whose staff attended to our every need and ensured that we were both safe and well-cared for.

Special thanks go to Norm Dean of ESOL Schools, Bill Delbrugge, the Head of School, and especially to Arthur Brown, assistant principal of the Middle School and our on-site host, for their thoughtful attention. We were also grateful for the personal concern and dutiful care of Walid Abushakra, Superintendent and CEO of ESOL Schools, who provided, among other kindnesses, a memorable evening out and dinner at Al Azhar Park.

On the third day of the institute we had a visit from Magda Mohy El Din, University of Cambridge International Examinations’ senior business development manager for the Middle East and Africa. Magda met the ITC teachers, stayed for part of the training and had a chance to see a bit of the ITC in action.

Training at the Cairo institute was provided by Corinne Rosenberg, Mary Langford and Dr Mary Margaret Magee, the ITC course leader. Mary delivered sessions about the language dimension (second language learners, mother tongue and bilingualism); and the transition and mobility issues that comprise part of the ITC syllabus.

Corinne led the group in deeper knowledge and understanding of the intercultural awareness that is at the heart of the ITC, including the habits of reflective practice that we hope become routine for all internationally-minded teachers. Mary Margaret covered the elements of the ITC – the five standards, the discussion forum, and so on — so that participants left the institute with a clear idea of next steps and an overview of their planning for the duration of their ITC year.

We were all very excited to be in Cairo at this important juncture in Egypt’s history and were able to visit Tahrir Square and other landmarks in the course of our stay. All felt perfectly safe — many thanks to our hosts! — and very grateful to visit Cairo at this time. Participants agreed that the current political events in the region serve to reinforce the importance of programmes, such as the ITC, that promote greater intercultural awareness and understanding.

ECIS and its partners, University of Cambridge International Examinations, look forward to further ITC connections in the region.

For more information on the next ITC Institutes in Cambridge (July), Atlanta (August) and Istanbul (October) please see www.interationalteachercertificate.com

Dr Mary Margaret Magee is the ITC course leader.
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Consumptionomics: Asia’s Role in Reshaping Capitalism and Saving the Planet
Chandran Nair

Do not be put off by the title, or think that the book is only for the economics teacher. This is an accessible, not even a very thick book, one which should be read by anybody interested in the environment and our future in a rapidly changing world.

Chandran Nair is a provocative missionary for a sustainable approach to development, not afraid to tackle the complex and to turn ideas upside down in his efforts to make the world aware of future environmental dangers if action is not taken soon. Using the rise of Asia as the ground of his thesis, he challenges a number of conventional arguments about consumption and growth.

‘Consumptionomics’ is Chandran Nair’s term for the consumer-led economic model that drives the engine of global capitalism. His thesis is that there is a chance that this model need not be followed by the developing economies of Asia.

Indeed, if Asians were to achieve consumption levels taken for granted by the west the results would be environmentally disastrous across the globe.

Far from the west’s needs and consumption in a scramble for diminishing resources being the controlling factor, ‘Asia has a central responsibility for determining the world’s fate,’ not least because climate change will affect Asia the most. But, as Chandran Nair, points out in his preface, ‘This is not a book about climate change. Nor is it a doomsday book … but it is a book about catastrophes … if the world, and particularly Asia, continues on its current trajectory.’

Asia is asked to consider abandoning a gospel of consumer-led growth modelled on the west and instead to turn its back on personal consumption because it is full of economic contradictions. Instead of encouraging people to move from the country to the cities, villages and smaller communities should be made more viable, with better health care, education and connections to the wider world.

‘An area that could be fruitfully explored is how consumption-driven capitalism has developed techniques to displace traditional outlooks, and whether these can be countered. One example would be the preference for owning over doing; previously children played a game, now they own a Play Station.’ (163)

It is Chandran Nair’s gift for presenting innovative ideas and unexpected solutions to environmental problems that makes this book not just a fascinating read (‘Terrifying but terrific’ was how one reviewer put it), but a hoard of useful issues and ideas for economics, politics and TOK teachers. It is also a significant point that, for international teachers, this is a book where the east looks at the west.

Some of us may also remember Chandran as a provocative speaker at the ECIS Administrator’s Conference in 2010, when he warned us about becoming elitist institutions, too tied to a consumer world.

‘Schools give a student certain valuable skills, but once they are taught these skills, they must be urged to do something with them. “The great aim of education is not knowledge, but action” said Herbert Spencer 100 years ago, and it is as true today as it was then.

‘Educators should be working to put this into practice by encouraging students to use the skills they develop in the classroom, by giving them a different yardstick with which to measure self-worth and achievement besides salary…’

Caroline Ellwood
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**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

For further information on events listed, please contact the person named.

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<td>May</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Living the Vision – Module 3</em></td>
<td>Mary Langford or <a href="http://www.ecis-sisg.com">www.ecis-sisg.com</a></td>
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<td>13-15</td>
<td>ECIS Librarians Committee</td>
<td>Enka School, Istanbul, Turkey</td>
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<td>John Royce: <a href="mailto:ecIST@read2live.com">ecIST@read2live.com</a></td>
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<td>27-29</td>
<td>International Teacher Certificate (ITC) Institute (Cambridge)</td>
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<td>International Teacher Certificate (ITC) Institute (Istanbul)</td>
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<td>16-20</td>
<td>Annual ECIS November Conference &amp; Exhibition</td>
<td>Lisbon, Portugal</td>
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<td>Events Manager, Michelle Clue,</td>
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<td>International Teacher Certificate (ITC) Institute (Havana)</td>
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<td>February/March</td>
<td>International Leadership and Management Program (ILMP) Residential Workshop</td>
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<td>16-18</td>
<td>ECIS Early Childhood Committee Conference</td>
<td>American Community Schools, Athens, Greece</td>
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<td>12-15</td>
<td>ECIS April Conference for Administrators, Board Members, Business/Finance Managers and Development Officers</td>
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# CELEBRATIONS 2011

**May**
1 **1st** Beltane, Wheel of the Year – Maypole Dances  
15 – 21 **Christian Aid**  
17 **Buddha Day, life and death of Guatama Buddha**  
23rd **Anniversary of Declaration of the Bab**  
26 **Zartosht-No-Diso, death of Zarathustra**  

**June**
6 **Tuen Ng, Dragon Boat Festival**  
8 – 9 **Shavuot, revelation of the Torah**  
16 **Martyrdom of Guru Arjan**  
21 **Midsummer Solstice**  
24 **Ratha Yatra, Dragon Chariot Festival**  
29 **The Prophet’s Night Journey and Ascension**  

**July**
9 **Martyrdom of the Bab**  
13 **Ratha Yatra, Chariot Festival – images of Krishna**  
15 **Dharma Day, Summer Festival**  
26 **Night of Forgiveness**  
26 **Asalha Puja, turning of the wheel of teaching**  

**August**
1 **Start of Ramadan, period of fasting**  
1 **Lammas, corn harvest**  
9 – 18 **Farvardigan, souls of departed entertained**  
13 – 16 **0-Bon, spirits of the dead welcomed home**  
13 **Raksha Bandham, Humanity Day**  
19 **No Ruz, Shenshai New Year's Day**  
23 **Ulaband, Chinese Ancestor Day**  
30 **Eid u Fitr, end of Ramadan**  

**September**
Sept – Oct
5 **Harvest Festivals**  
5 **New Year's Day**  
5 **Paryushan, purification**  
12 **Zhong Qui, Moon Festival**  
12 **Etheopian New Year's Day**  
18 **Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement**  
23 **Autumn Equinox**  
23 **Shibun No Hi, Harmony and balance**  
28 **Navaratri and Durgapuja, 'Nine Lights'**  
29 **Rosh Hashanah, Jewish New Year**  

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Full information about festivals from the major world religions can be found in Festivals in World Religions, price £21.50 from: The Shap Working Party c/o The National Society's RE Centre, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4AU, UK.
From students at St Gilgen International School, Austria

Untitled
The whole world looks on me as a traitor.
Because for them, I have taken the life of their saviour.
None of them will ever understand what it was like
To take the life of the most beloved person on earth.
Looking back though, I can see what it was all worth.
God came to me speaking of a nasty thing that had to be done.
I could feel the pain in his words when he mentioned the death of his son.
He explained that it was for the sake of Christianity.
He never mentioned the fact that it would drive me to insanity.

Jorge Eduardo Gomez

Priklopil
I secured her. Offered protection.
I felt more than simple affection.
I loved her. She was my sun, my Rose, my star.
She was the endlessly blue sky.
Of course I couldn’t let my sweetheart, She who is so beautiful, a true piece of art,
Be exposed to these criminals on the street.
So I offered protection, for she was so sweet.
Then- after years of happiness! - they took her with them.
They didn’t understand; they condemned.
Didn’t realise that I had saved her from the tough life outside.
I could not stand knowing this. My contentment died.
After I last touched her hand,
I decided to kill.
Myself.

Kerstin Farntrath

Thy words shall prevail
It’s as if my words have been stained by time
Don’t bestow thy belief
My vision, lost in translation
Thou art not who thou says thou art
My world turned into chaos
Believe thy words but don’t follow thy pledges
My creation blurred into dust
Thy faith shall take thou there
My world devastated by you
’Tis never too late to be forgiven.’

Luiza Cristina Madalozdo dos Santos

Lott’s wife
I wonder
Why we go,
Rushing away,
I have to know!
Leaving home,
Don’t ask!
Burning in flame
All I ever had.
I want it back
I forgot our cat!
Don’t turn...

Marieta Saktorova

I wonder
Why we go,
Rushing away,
I have to know!
Leaving home,
Don’t ask!
Burning in flame
All I ever had.
I want it back
I forgot our cat!
Don’t turn...

Marieta Saktorova

See also page 23.
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Rinzing is a graduate from the American School of Bombay and is now studying BA International Business at Richmond. The London location and the diverse international student body were key factors in his decision to attend Richmond. After graduation Rinzing plans to join his family business and work in the Indian movie industry.

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