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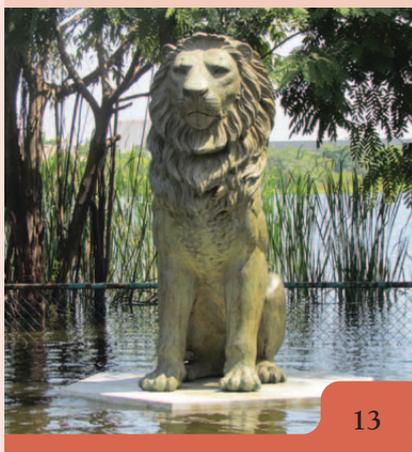
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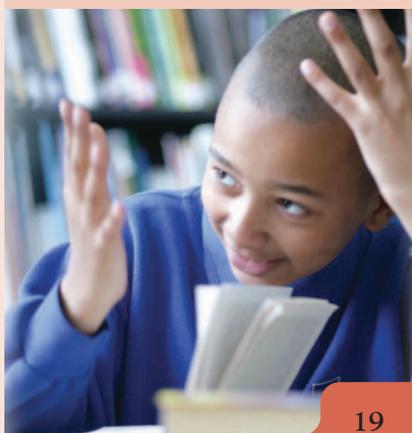
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The ECIS Mission Statement

ECIS is the leading collaborative global network promoting and
supporting the ideals and best practices of international education

comment

Collaboration, cooperation and competition

Friday, 20th January, saw just over 1000 international school teachers and administrators from 15 schools come together in two venues in London for one day of extraordinary in-service training. At a time when there are pressures on resources and when there is competition for students, to have these schools working together sharing campuses, ideas and initiatives is impressive.

Every two years the member schools of the London International Schools Association (LISA), come together to pool budgets and faculty in order to provide high quality training. LISA is a diverse group of ECIS accredited international schools that circle London and which (oddly) also includes the International School of Aberdeen as a member school. It is a cosmopolitan mix of American influenced schools, IB continuum schools, an Islamic based IB school, British-style international schools and also Special Needs schools. They range in size from 80 to 800+.

Organising training on this scale involves teachers working together on event management, planning programmes, inviting speakers, arranging catering and hosting guests. With relatively low costs to schools at about \$100 for each delegate, LISA is able to allocate \$100,000 to the training day which gives great buying power when searching for influential and relevant keynote speakers.

This year, the lower school conference was held at The American School in London, one of just a few venues with an auditorium able to seat 500 teachers. The main speaker was Professor Sugata Mitra, who updated the audience on his 'Hole in the Wall' project in which internet abled computers and screens were installed in ATM style settings in slum areas of India and children independently learnt from them.

In break out sessions teachers and teaching assistants had a wide choice of workshop: Tony Buzan, Lesley Snowball and Martin Skelton were among invited speakers but this was also a chance for teachers in the schools also to take a lead in their areas of interest.

Almost 500 LISA middle and upper school teachers spent the day at The King Fahad Academy with their keynote speaker, the former Director General of the IBO, George Walker. In previous years Mel Levine and novelist Michael Morpurgo have also headlined the LISA Days.

The main point that I am making is that, regardless of the status of each school and the fact that we all fish from roughly the same student pool, there is a sense of collegiality that transcends. Admissions teams also connect with each other, passing on recommendations and monitoring where student vacancies exist. Mary Mitchell, the marketing expert from TASIS England, has referred to this state as 'co-operation.'

There are of course many other umbrella organisations that encourage this kind of shared understanding, ECIS having probably the widest reach, closely followed by other groups such as COBIS, FOBISSEA, SGIS, AIA, AIS, AISH etc. There must be very few international schools that stand alone without this kind of support network.

Cooperation also exists increasingly in schools that expand and develop partnerships around the world. My own school, The North London International School, is part of a global group, the Dwight Family of Schools with the parent school, The Dwight School in New York and sister schools in Seoul, South Korea, in Canada on Vancouver Island and in Beijing in China. Opportunities for students and faculty to learn from each other are magnified as the schools share a common curriculum, a Dwight Global Leaders program, the IB and a common philosophy that focuses on the target of 'uncovering the spark of genius.'

I believe that it is healthy for schools, students and families to experience the kind of coexistence and openness that partnership provides; certainly it is better than the guarded, secretive and fiercely competitive alternative.

David Rose is Head of the North London International School.

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Celebrating 200 years of Charles Dickens

But do you still teach his novels, or just watch the films? asks Caroline Ellwood

It is not so long ago that a novel by Charles Dickens was as much a necessary part of the study of English literature as Shakespeare. Usually, around the age of 15, a serious study would be given to *Great Expectations* or maybe *Oliver Twist*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *David Copperfield* or *A Christmas Carol*.

Often a Dickens novel would be a set book for study at O or A level; one way or another, few English-speaking students would leave school without having read one of Dickens' works.

Ask a student today if they have read a Dickens novel and the answer is likely to be "No, but I have seen the film or a serial on TV." Indeed Dickens' novels are regularly adapted for television, radio and film, so that his larger-than-life characters are familiar, not through the text, but as TV actors. For a great many people 'Dickens' is 'Oliver' or 'Scrooge'.

An admittedly not very extensive survey of English teachers revealed a mostly negative response to his inclusion in the secondary school curriculum. "We don't teach Dickens, full stop! Not very international! They are all collecting dust in the English resource room."

This answer could sum it up. Is that damning 'not very international' a genuine or sufficient reason to exclude from the syllabus a writer of rich imagination who is a model in the powerful use of words, insight into character and ability to tell a good story? A writer who tackles poverty, injustice, the need for social reform, not to mention the sadism of school masters? A writer who, as it so happens, was part of the movement that set up Spring Grove International School in 1867? Or is it just that most Dickens' novels are just too long?

Dickens' novels are, on the whole, quite long. But so are the Harry Potter books, and that does not deter readers even younger than those usually asked to read Dickens. *Oliver Twist* or *Nicholas Nickleby* may not be full of magic, but they do have a good racing story, exciting characters and plenty of violent action.

Perhaps this 200th anniversary is the opportunity to take another look at 'teaching Dickens' and his relevance for 'international students'; a chance to consider what is of value in his work and whether it is true to say that these classic tales have no universality, no generality of message suitable for other than native English readers.

Would the argument that Dickens is 'not very international' not also remove *Anna Karenina* or *Emma*

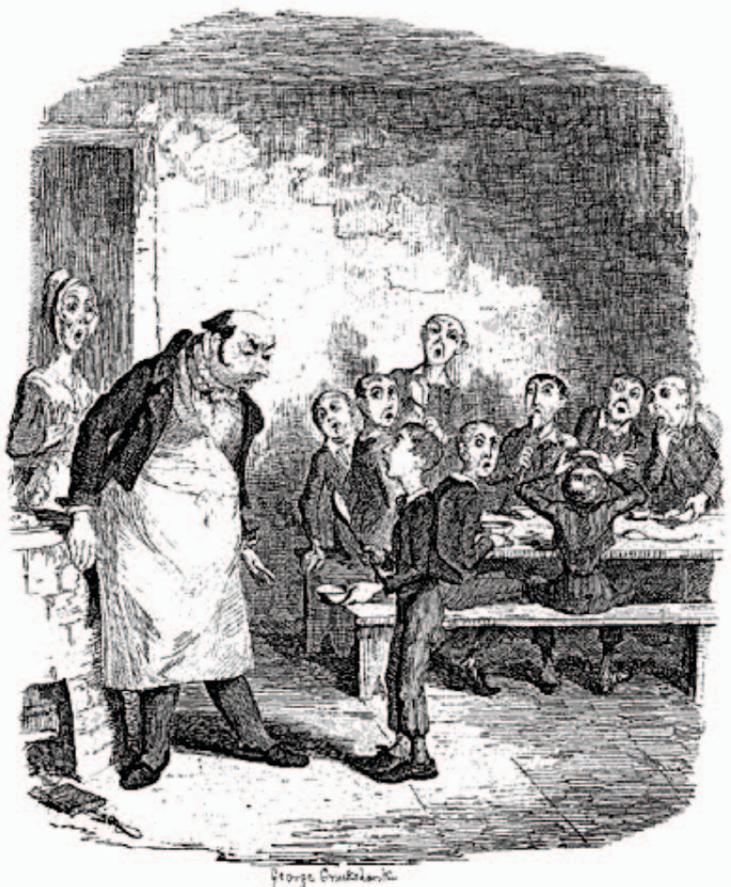
Bovary from the international study list? Or are they international because they are translated from another language regardless of their content? Does Dickens then become international to the non-native English speakers?

Dickens wrote with a purpose; to understand that purpose is to realise that the message the books contain may be about a specific time, problem, need and situation in an England in the mid-19th century. But attitudes towards money, class, power and possession are both parallel and relevant to us today.

For example *Hard Times*, a short book, is an excellent example of a novel with a purpose which, if studied at IB Diploma level, could be the basis of discussions concerning capitalism and social reform in history, the philosophy of education in TOK, and the role of the female in literary studies.

If celebrating 200 years of Dickens by studying one of his novels is neither possible nor appealing, then there

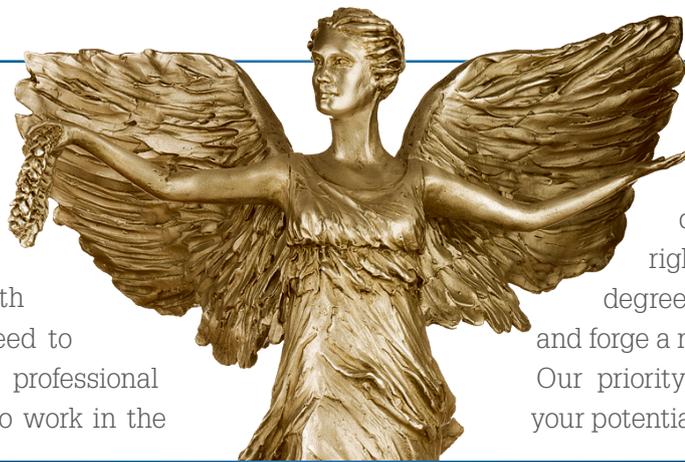
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are some other possibilities to involve and broaden the reading and understanding of students at different levels. Short extracts can be used to illustrate Dickens' writing skills. Admirable for this purpose is the opening of *A Christmas Carol* or the introduction of Oliver to Fagin. For younger students the latter is also an episode that can be dramatised.

Dickens is sometimes accused of being more interested in caricature rather than characterisation. This could be the basis of discussion using descriptions of characters such as Fagin, Miss Havershaw, Gradgrind, Uriah Heep and Mr Micawber, and lead to analysis of what makes a character 'flat' or 'round' in E M Forster's terms, or considered in relation to Lord David Cecil's comment: "It does not matter that Dickens' world is not lifelike; it is alive."

Younger students can enjoy discussing Dickens' art in naming characters: Ebenezer Scrooge of *A Christmas Carol*; Joseph Bounderby, the avaricious mill owner, in *Hard Times*; Wackford Squeers of Dotheboys Hall in *Nicholas Nickleby*; Polly Toodle, a jolly nurse in *Dombey and Son*; and Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield*. Many more suggestions of names, together with short biographical details, can be found on the web.

For those who would like to take the opportunity of a celebration to study one of Dickens' books, or just

organise an entertaining activity and are looking for ideas, go on the web. There you will find a fund of possibilities, biographical details, teaching aids, plans for lessons, suggestions for activities. There is something for every age and, may I even say, nationality.

This recent comment came from a teacher in China: 'I've been reading chapter one of *Great Expectations* to my classes in celebration of Dickens' bi-centenary. So far they have all been entranced.'

Or, of course, you could just watch a film!

Caroline Ellwood

* For further details of this remarkable experiment see Silvester, Robert The First International School: The Story of the London College of the International Education Society (1866-1889) on Google.

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Marching to a different drummer

Bill Siegfried considers the 150th anniversary of a revolutionary book

As an American born during the Second World War, I first encountered Henry David Thoreau (1817-62) through a few pieces included in an anthology of literature, one of the textbooks issued to me in Grade 11, which gave me a taste of everything but failed to satisfy my hunger for anything.

The other textbook, a grammar workbook, made up in tedious exercises what it lacked in intelligible explanations, and my teacher devoted a semester to each textbook. In the 1960s, *Civil Disobedience* was the manifesto for those of us who demonstrated against what we perceived to be the injustices committed by our country at home and abroad, and *Walden* became the bible for those of us who wished to escape these problems by living in a commune.

I do not know if John Updike was right about *Walden* 'being as revered and unread as the Bible' as my freshman

composition teacher used it to teach rhetoric and I got to know it well.

Read or unread, *Civil Disobedience* and *Walden* were quoted and discussed in the '60s. I do not think this is happening now, as Thoreau has never appeared on the book lists of the many American schools that have sent me English A1 Paper Two scripts to mark for the IB.

Admittedly, I did not teach Thoreau for the last ten years of my career. Thoreau spent two years at Walden Pond, but it took him nearly ten years and several drafts to complete the book. The end result is so multilayered that reading it is like peeling an onion. Students, who are at home with emails and text messages, find it difficult to go to the effort necessary to get at the kernels of wisdom in Thoreau's writing.

Thoreau is the source of quotations that shall continue to echo down the ages, but that is not enough to persuade



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students that he is relevant to them. The title of this piece is based on two sentences from the conclusion of *Walden*: 'If a man loses pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured, or far away.'

This will ring true for students as they are developing their own individual outlooks. Being keen observers of their parents and their teachers, they will smile knowingly when they read 'the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation', and promise themselves to be as noisy as possible if they should feel desperate. And surely students will find the motto cited in the opening line of *Civil Disobedience* – 'that government is best which governs least' – relevant to the uprisings of the Arab Spring.

More than lines quoted out of context is required to fuel a good discussion; students must grapple with the text. If they do so, they will find that the famous opening of *Civil Disobedience* is followed by a second and more radical assertion: 'That government is best which governs not at all.' This raises the question of whether or not Thoreau was an anarchist and only by reading the rest of the essay can this question be addressed.

Thoreau famously acted on the principle espoused in his essay by not paying tax to support a war, which he opposed, and had to spend a night in jail until his aunt bailed him out. It took Mohatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King to put Thoreau's philosophy of non-violent protest to work for the rights of their followers and achieve results.

Of course, reading Thoreau's essay in the light of these two martyrs, who expended their lives for what they believed in, may lead to a consideration of the efficacy of non-violent protest in view of the way dissatisfaction with government actions frequently leads to violent riots nowadays.

Students can learn a lot about writing by analyzing the multilayered sentence structure of Thoreau's prose. One of my former students came to class one morning and announced: "This guy blows your mind!" *Walden* makes great use of exposition, but Thoreau relies on other forms of rhetoric, so that the book includes many examples of description, narration and argument to support the exposition.

The way he moves from a literal statement to a figurative one to an abstraction, and often jumps from one to another or merges them into one statement is indeed a mind-blowing experience.

The most rewarding aspect of reading Thoreau is getting to know him. Of course, that is true of reading anyone's writing, but Thoreau's work is more intensely personal than that of most writers and he was very witty. Shortly before death, he was urged to make his peace with God and he replied, "I did not know that we had ever quarreled."

Bill Siegfried recently retired from teaching English at the Vienna International School, Austria and continues his association with international education as an examiner for the IB.

PEOPLE & PLACES

UWC Atlantic College celebrates 50 years of pioneering international education

Created at the height of the Cold War and in the aftermath of the Second World War, **UWC Atlantic College** was a response to Kurt Hahn's concept of engaging young people from all nations in learning to find peaceful means of bringing together a world divided by political, racial and socio-economic barriers.

Fifty years on, Hahn's belief in the growing need for peace and reconciliation across the world remains fundamental to the college's distinctive educational proposition.

There are currently 350 students from 90 countries represented at UWC Atlantic College, each selected via a unique system of national committees in more than 140 countries. In keeping with the original vision, many students come from areas of conflict and tension such as Israel, Palestine, Tibet and north African countries, with approximately 60% of them receiving some form of financial support.

In its 50-year history the college can lay claim to a number of key achievements. It led to the creation of a



global education movement of United World Colleges, with 13 throughout the world.

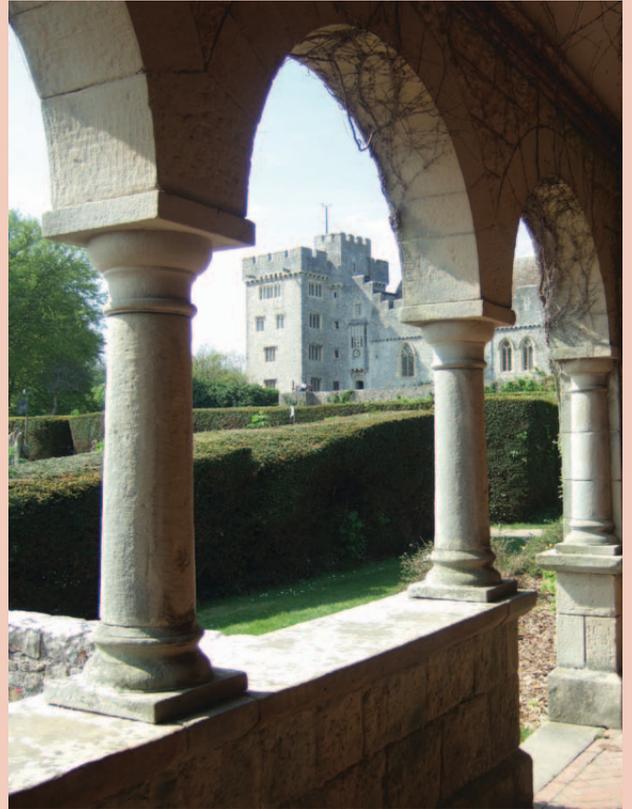
It was instrumental in the development of the International Baccalaureate (IB), alongside the International School of Geneva and the UN School of

New York. It was the first educational establishment in the UK to abandon the national curriculum in favour of the IB. The college remains an integral part of the success of the IB through the creation of a school-based syllabus that includes political thought, peace and conflict studies, world religions, and environmental systems (now ecosystems and society).

Since its inception, UWC Atlantic College has played an instrumental part in shaping the lives of 7,500 alumni, providing a positive impact on the communities and countries in which they live. As part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations, the college commissioned an in-depth survey of former students.

The results highlighted a clear synergy between the ideals set out by the college and its alumni who are continuing to 'live the mission'. The survey revealed that 76% have returned to their home country, notably to Africa and South America, and 40% of alumni now work in the political world, public sector or for non-governmental organisations. In September, the college is planning to bring these alumni together in London for its largest reunion party.

The celebrations will also focus on the college's rich history of service and co-curricular activities. During their time at the college, students undertake 400 hours of community action and service, ranging from volunteering on the college's RNLI lifeboat; therapy with Alzheimer's patients; participating in the marine environmental conservation; or even helping to rehabilitate offenders at a nearby prison.



UWC Atlantic College will be joined by UWC constituencies from across the world to participate in the programme of community service initiatives. The Celebrate with Action campaign will see events, activities or campaigns that bring the original UWC Atlantic College initiative alive in communities across the world



Harrowing times in flooded Bangkok

Wilf Stout reports on the value of community, compassion and collegiality as flood waters closed his school

I have had difficulty in deciding how to write this article. With many of our staff, both teaching and administrative and a large block of our parents having lost possessions, businesses and homes, should it read as a story of sadness as a school finds itself a victim of the terrible flooding that has afflicted much of Thailand?

Perhaps, I wondered, a simple reporting of the facts would suffice? Objective, detached, possibly, for want of a better word, dry. However, if it's facts that are required, then a quick visit to the Harrow website (www.harrowschool.ac.th)

with its updates, posted daily since the school evacuated its 120 resident staff and families on Sunday, 23rd October, will satisfy any curiosities. On that day the school was closed until further notice as flood waters invaded the school site. By that time the homes of many of our staff and parents living to the north of the school had been totally flooded and school families were forced to leave their homes – a number finding refuge in the then dry school.

No, what I alighted upon was how the school, my



colleagues, the school community and, for that matter the surrounding community of other international schools in Bangkok, have faced up to the challenge of these terrible events. I have been a Head Master for perhaps too many years but I have never been so impressed by the fortitude and inventiveness of my management team, of the staff, parents and of the students – and, in particular, I have been awestruck by the resilience of the Thai people.

A dry account of facts would not suffice, the flood of support and depth of spirit has been too great – the combined effort, energy and imagination of the Harrow community in setting up *three* temporary schools (and *four* Early Years centres) in only seven days deserves more. Indeed this recent natural disaster has given us an opportunity to put the Harrow Bangkok mission statement – *Leadership for a Better World* into practice.

Our staff and many of our parents and their families left Bangkok for safe, dry havens in hotels, timeshares, condos and with family and friends all over Thailand and overseas. When the government ordered all Bangkok schools to be closed until 15th November, it became clear that we would not return to our campus this side of 2011 so we began the task of finding ways of providing continuity of face-to-face education for our students.

In our first week away from school, most students and parents were able to access our virtual learning platform, aptly named FROG. This allowed staff to set research projects, continue producing coursework and, more importantly, make students feel that there was still, somewhere in their fractured world, a sense of normality.

Within a few days we had secured three schools prepared to host our Year 1 to Year 13 students as evacuees for the remainder of term. Words cannot express the gratitude that Harrow wishes to show to the other schools, and to our partner service companies, in Bangkok.

Despite remaining dry and being only marginally affected by government regulations and enforced closures, the New International School of Thailand, New Sathorn International School, Berkley International School, Bangkok Patana School and Shrewsbury International School have been magnificent in lending us facilities, classrooms and furniture in order that Harrow can continue to educate its students. For much of the time we are competitors, but in times of adversity, all schools understand that the most important factor is to ensure continuity of education for our students.

Our caterers also turned up the heat – working double shifts across three sites with our Harrow chefs working collaboratively with host school chefs to ensure that we are all well fed. Over 150 of our teaching and administrative staff returned to Bangkok to serviced apartments sourced by the school within five days, where they were based for the remainder of term.

Seventy-three of our boarders and 30 staff families were resident in a new Radisson serviced apartment hotel in central Bangkok. The remaining 80 teaching staff and families that we called back had to be accommodated close to the three schools. As a result of the combined

generosity, flexibility and leadership of our hosts and partners, we were able to educate, feed, transport and support safely the 1003 students able to return, across three host campuses.

We have all learnt the need for flexibility, tolerance and good humour. The school adapted to its new surroundings in three different locations, with timetables changing as more staff arrived back. Years 1 to 5 were in one school, Years 6 to 8 in another. Years 9 to 13, with examinations looming and more technical requirements, took over the new upper school facilities of the New International School of Thailand when its day finished at 3pm.

Our 3:30pm start to the school ‘day’ (classes ran until 9pm) has prompted genuine educational debate amongst the staff of both schools as to the merits of late starts, changed daily routines and changed lesson lengths. Many staff reported increased levels of concentration, increased motivation, greater involvement in lessons, increased dexterity in practical work and a commitment to collaboration and mutual support – and the students displayed these characteristics too! Necessity provided opportunities to discuss and engage in a new future full of possibilities. In short, *a better world for our staff*.

Despite the privations experienced of flooded homes, some for ten weeks, food being brought in on army trucks, businesses ruined, employment lost, over 700 deaths from drowning, no transportation other than boats, rafts, bathtubs and floating bicycles with paddles, the Thai people continued to smile, wave, and appreciate every gesture of acknowledgement. Our director of leadership and his deputy, colleagues, parents and, importantly, students worked tirelessly for over ten weeks supplying over three tonnes of food and clothing to flooded families. Travelling mainly by kayak or walking through filthy crocodile and snake infested waters, this was a work of extreme commitment to the welfare of others; an important characteristic of great leaders and a valuable educational lesson for all concerned-whatever their age.

These five weeks last term provided an opportunity for us, as a whole school community, to learn so much about ourselves, our strengths and our weaknesses. I witnessed extraordinary acts of kindness and compassion. I saw leadership in many forms and from all groups. The strength of care and concern which was shared among us and amongst the people of Bangkok and of Thailand has confirmed my faith and belief as an educator for over 40 years in the ultimate goodness of our species and its propensity for unbounded love.

Despite what we see on TV and read in the media, we are not all that bad. From what I have witnessed recently, there is still hope for the future. We have some incredible children. Who cares whether there is life on Mars, we have it here, and have it in abundance.

Wilf Stout is Head Master of Harrow International School, Bangkok, Thailand.

www.harrowschool.ac.th

To another country, without crossing a border

Marisa Piccioni tells of a CAS student field trip to the Mekong Delta

At International School Ho Chi Minh City, the final field trip of the students' school career has traditionally had a service focus. And it is only right and fitting in a school which prides itself on being a 'caring community' and where the prevailing ethos is such that service quickly becomes an organic and essential part of students' lives.

So much so, in fact, that some will later comment on their surprise that their chosen university is so different in this regard. Being an IB World School, the idea behind the Class of 2012's trip was simultaneously to offer opportunities for creativity, action and service and to enable students to take part in a cultural exchange within a 'foreign' context, thereby developing a broader worldview and a deeper understanding of 'others and their differences' (to quote the IB mission statement).

Like most Asian countries, Vietnam is home to a significant number of ethnic groups. Given this rich cultural diversity on our very doorstep, coupled with the desire to minimize the trip's carbon footprint, it was clear

that there would not be too much travelling involved.

Indeed, much to the students' and some of the teachers' surprise, after a half-day's bus ride from inner-city Saigon the group found itself immersed in a land that was lush and green, where the center of the community was the Buddhist pagoda, and where everyone around us was speaking Khmer – despite being several hours from the Cambodian border.

We were now in Khmer Krom country in the Mekong Delta, an area of southern Vietnam that was once part of the mighty Khmer empire and there could have been no starker contrast to the big city.

The 49 students had been given a choice between the three main service projects: sugarcane planting in the pagoda fields; helping to build a house for an elderly and infirm woman without family; and teaching local schoolchildren. Our base was the very heart of the community – the village pagoda – and local colour was provided in abundance by the saffron-robed monks who were our hosts.

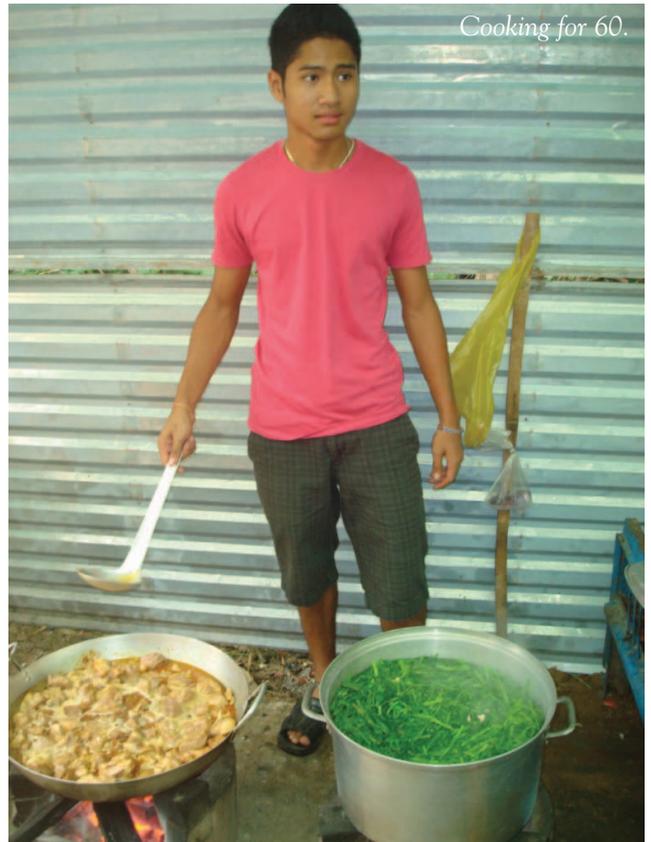
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The class of 2012.



Making new friends.



Cooking for 60.

Naturally, news of our arrival spread like wildfire and we were soon besieged by scores of curious, not to mention boisterous, children, all eager to participate in the many activities our students had planned, such as learning English, making collages and stomp.

A giant tug-of-war proved the perfect ice-breaker as parents and children alike joined in to triumph, repeatedly, over their city slicker guests! In exchange, we were invited into local homes to try our hand at cooking regional specialities and weaving mats from dried grasses.

By way of preparation, students had undertaken research into the Khmer empire and the Khmer Krom and so had valuable opportunities to learn in situ about the history of Theravada Buddhism, for example, as well as gain some insight into the status of ethnic minorities in

modern societies. On the last evening a party, complete with Khmer band and dancers, had been organized in the pagoda grounds in our honour and it seemed like the entire village had turned out for the spectacle.

Preparations had begun early that morning with monks high up bamboo scaffolding constructing the stage, hanging the bunting and, in keeping with tradition, arranging a thanksgiving table of locally grown 'exotic' fruit.

For one last time, ISHCMC students joined with the village children and proved themselves to be valiant risk-takers as they engaged in some entertaining attempts to emulate the elegant art of Khmer dance.

Marisa Piccioni is CAS coordinator at the International School of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.



Planting sugarcane.



Teaching English.

Curricula for international primary schools

Lesley Snowball considers the options

PYP, IPC, CIPP, PICS: how familiar are you with the curricula available for international primary schools? In 2006, the *Herald Tribune* (Greenlees, 2006) reported that 'there are about 3,000 schools around the world that could be classed as international, based on the student body, curriculum and language of instruction'. These figures continue to increase: in January 2012, ISC Research lists almost 6000 international schools in its database, and all these schools need curriculum.

As the international education sector has grown, the curricular options available have also increased so that even experienced educators may not know what's out there. The most familiar model is not necessarily the most widespread and the least expensive is not necessarily the best value.

While some schools choose to adopt or adapt national or state curricula, many want a specifically-designed framework. For new schools starting up, for established schools seeking to change direction, and for teachers or parents choosing a school, the choice can be somewhat bewildering. This article gives a brief overview of the major options currently available.

The Primary Years Programme, initially developed by the International Schools' Curriculum Project in the early 1990s, was adopted by the IBO in 1997. The PYP has three main elements, each of which differs significantly from traditional curricula:

The written curriculum is transdisciplinary, using six themes to organize content around a programme of inquiry, tailored specifically for the school. The themes pull together and transcend the individual subject areas, making learning for students more connected and coherent.

The taught curriculum is inquiry-based, facilitating the development of conceptual understandings, transdisciplinary skills, and positive attitudes to learning. Its approach empowers independent learners and encourages in-depth and individualized investigations.

The assessed curriculum is student-focused, combining teacher assessment with student self-assessment and reflection. It provides authentic feedback on both the process and products of learning and leaves schools free from rigid external testing.

The common planning format and the learner profile are also seen as key strengths that contribute to teachers

feeling part of a worldwide IB community. However, as is often the case, there are challenges even within these strengths. In the written curriculum, some schools find the requirement for six units of inquiry per year to be too rigid, often contributing to superficial and rushed completion.

In the taught curriculum, inquiry is a difficult approach to implement and resources, space, class-size and teacher skill levels are all potential obstacles: PYP teachers need to be confident, self-reliant educators with an in-depth understanding of how students learn. In the assessed curriculum, the flexibility allowed by the programme can lead to 'assessment anarchy' in schools, with ad hoc use of tasks and tools and little systematic monitoring of progress.

The continued expansion of the PYP into national as well as international schools raises its own challenges, but overall, is testament to the significance of a programme that genuinely tries to put the needs of international students at the heart of the curriculum.

The International Primary Curriculum was developed by Fieldwork Education, initially for Shell Oil schools, a group that was trying to adapt its existing education model to better meet the needs of an increasingly international workforce. Launched in 2000, the IPC is a 'cross-curricular, thematic, rigorous teaching structure designed to engage children of all abilities':

The Early Years programme for three to five year olds and the Main programme for five to 12 year-olds consist of structured sets of milestones for student learning, developed through a series of thematic units. Describing the programme as 'very user-friendly', teachers value the strong focus on learning and find it easy to plan and teach using the comprehensive units provided. The flexibility to select and combine the units into a personalized route map to meet the specific needs of each school is also seen as a key strength.

The Assessment for Learning component helps schools develop a systematic approach to monitoring student achievement and a database now facilitates recording and reporting.

The Looking for Learning component provides an accreditation and self-review tool that supports schools in 'Getting started', 'Getting better' and 'Going deeper'. Explicit international perspectives are central to this curriculum, helping students focus on becoming better citizens in both local and global contexts.

Continued overleaf →

Currently, the IPC does not specifically address mathematics and language, leaving schools free to use published schemes or national curricula. While some schools value this freedom, it can make integration more complicated and others would prefer to have the current programme extended to include provision for these two core subjects. Similarly, the IPC does not dictate any specific pedagogical approach and while some value the freedom to use a variety of approaches, others would prefer more guidance.

Overall, the main appeals of the IPC seems to be the balance of structure and flexibility, together with an approach described as 'responsive' and 'service-orientated', which should ensure that as challenges arise they will be thoughtfully considered with the needs of the learners in mind.

Cambridge Primary Programme, developed by the University of Cambridge International Examinations, is a curriculum framework detailing English, mathematics, and science skills, knowledge and understandings for five to 11 year-olds. Designed to be flexible and to complement a range of teaching methods and curricula, schools are free to choose those parts that best suit their needs:

English curriculum framework – describes year by year objectives for reading; writing; speaking and listening; phonics, spelling and vocabulary; grammar and punctuation.

Mathematics curriculum framework – describes year by year objectives for number; geometry; measure (sic); handling data; problem solving.

Science curriculum framework – describes year by year objectives for scientific enquiry; biology; chemistry; physics.

English as a second language framework – describes six stages of development in reading; writing; use of English; speaking; listening.

Cambridge primary progression tests – internal tests aligned with the achievement objectives for English, mathematics and science.

Cambridge primary checkpoint – external internationally-benchmarked tests for English, mathematics and science, providing diagnostic feedback on individual students, classes and year groups.

While the Cambridge Primary Programme may not be as explicitly international as the alternatives, its main strengths are its clearly structured subject focus and its modular nature that allows schools to adopt individual elements.

The Primary Inquirer Curriculum System is a relative newcomer – a modular programme developed by Putting it into Practice, based on 30 years of working closely

with a wide range of international schools. Inquiry-based in approach, international in outlook and flexible in implementation, the PICS provides ready-to-use models for each of its components, with an option to tailor these for each school. Many of the individual components had been in use in schools for several years and it was launched as a complete system in 2011. It consists of 13 components, including:

A programme of 20 inquiry starter units with teacher guides and 60 CDs of differentiated student resources.

A scope and sequence of objectives for key subject areas.

A planning system for both integrated and standalone teaching.

An assessment system with guidelines, models and 100 sample assessments.

A reporting system with portfolios, student conferences and an Early Childhood Record of Achievement.

Practical teacher guides for key areas, eg internationalism, assessment, inquiry.

The main strength of the PICS is that it has been developed as a consequence of direct and longstanding contact with schools and it therefore offers a responsive and non-restrictive alternative to existing frameworks – each component is provided as a 'ready-to-use' model that can simply be adopted as it stands, or that can be tailored further. The main challenge is that although the individual components are well known, schools are not yet familiar with the complete system.

So, in conclusion, whether you are in a new school or an established school, whether a teacher or parent, if you are seeking a specifically-designed for international curriculum framework, these are currently your main options. The increase in numbers of international schools and students looks set to continue and, as it does, it is important that further curricula alternatives emerge and existing frameworks adapt to meet the needs of this highly significant and diverse sector of education.

Dr Lesley Snowball has been a teacher, administrator and consultant in international education for 30 years.

She is currently the director of Putting it into Practice, supporting schools worldwide in improving practices and systems.

Note

A growing number of schools are involved in The Common Ground Collaborative, which is based on a curriculum framework originally developed by Kevin Bartlett and his staff at The International School of Brussels. Still in formulation, it involves a global network of practitioners who are linked in order to exchange good practice and agree on core learning, decision making remaining with the individual schools.

Fourteen schools are already involved with what Bartlett refers to as 'the first fully coherent curriculum with common transferable standards'. Whilst still in a formative stage, this initiative is certainly making ground. For further details of this curriculum, see *is* magazine, January 2012, Volume 14, Issue 2, page 11.

Boys into books

Alec Williams considers ways of encouraging them to read for pleasure

Do boys read?

'Boys do read. They read differently, and are too often labelled non-readers because they do not choose to read what adults would like them to read', wrote UK author Wendy Cooling. My experience of working in many countries suggests that boys' achievement is a widespread concern – and that reading for pleasure is one of the keys to progress. Getting boys into books has exponential success to boys' overall achievement. But as Wendy's remark shows, there are assumptions to challenge.

This article shows how teachers, in conjunction with a lively school library, can make practical steps to address reading by boys. Most of these steps are good ideas for promoting reading in general, and (here's the single most important point) *getting the overall reading culture right* is far more important than any single target group.

Boy-friendly schools

Schools where boys thrive are those where hands-on learning is part of the agenda; where time at desks is punctuated by more physical activity; where there is regular feedback and guidance offered; where boys' improvement is praised; where there is a chance to do out-of-school activities; where special attention is given to learning styles that suit boys – and where there is a bit of fun thrown in! Echo these factors in reading promotion.

What do boys want?

Our schools must have books that boys genuinely *want to read*, so we need a mix of popular authors and series, and not to press them to 'read something better'. Have comics and magazines, short stories, quick reads, poetry, jokes, picture books, and more. Talk to boys; if you're genuine about knowing their reading tastes, they'll respond to this – though allow for them telling you what you want to hear! Once you've engaged boys' interest in an idea, they'll amaze you by how much they do.

Here are some frequent conclusions from surveys and experience; see if they apply to boys in your school:

- Boys are more likely to read for a purpose, if they can 'see the point in it'.
- Boys often prefer non-fiction; illustrated books; and 'fun facts' material.
- Boys enjoy fast-paced stories, with plenty of action.
- Boys may have more difficulty identifying themselves in stories.
- Boys will 'dip into' books, lacking reading stamina.



There are exceptions, however; base your actions on your own students. Finally, be careful to distinguish between so-called 'reluctant readers' and boys with genuine reading difficulty.

Books are only one ingredient in the boys' reading mix. Think about reading's profile in the school: can visitors tell that yours is a school that values reading? Is your library welcoming? Does it say 'be yourself' or 'be careful'? Is it a place that's cool for boys to be seen in? Has it got plenty of face-out book display, floor cushions, sofas to aid browsing?

It's a man thing

Boys also need male role models. When their peer leaders, and male staff, are known to read – are seen reading, talk about reading, and enthuse about reading – boys take notice.

Make the most of any male role models you can, from school and the community. Visitors could include authors, storytellers, fathers, grandfathers, community figures, and local 'celebrities', talking about why they love



reading. A male Principal can model the importance of reading at the highest level – can he regularly talk about reading, or share his book choices?

Which activities work?

- Showcasing books for boys in displays. Highlight books appearing on TV or in movies.
- Reading aloud; ‘taster extracts’ from books that might appeal to boys. Plus storytelling of traditional tales too!
- Do work on ‘how we choose books’ (title, author’s name, cover design, blurb, first paragraph, *etc.*). Boys often comment that they don’t know what to choose, and this will strengthen their confidence.
- Feature boys’ reading choices (presented by boys, if possible) at assemblies.
- Identify enthusiastic boy readers; use them as ambassadors, and reading buddies.
- Use short-term reading challenges, with prizes and lots of feedback. Boys like to know how they’re doing, and have achievable goals.
- Target boys as pupil librarians; they respond well to being given responsibilities, and it can help their self-esteem.

- Boys are competitive. Use quizzes and competitions.

Isn’t technology what appeals to boys?

For many boys, it is, so don’t set books against technology – use IT to promote reading.

- Bookmark websites about reading, and authors’ own sites.
- Get boys involved in the school’s own website.
- Use your library’s data – publish regular ‘top tens’ for both boys and girls, for example, and announce chart positions at assemblies.
- Use video to film book trailers, and digital cameras to photograph readers with their favourite books’ (including teachers!).
- Make positive use of e-books

Can’t parents help?

Yes! Fathers especially can model the fun of reading – even if it’s simply through magazines and newspapers. Try:

- Advice sessions for parents on how they can support boys’ reading.
- ‘Lads and Dads’ projects – reading groups, reading challenges.
- Reading lists for parents to use with their children.

How do I know if I’ve succeeded?

Encouraging more boys to read (and boys to read more) should be a long-term campaign. Have clear aims at the outset; decide which activities you’ll try in the first year, the second year, and so on; build in milestones and celebrations; keep collecting evidence: figures about boys’ reading and library use, but also noting improvements in their work, collecting anecdotal evidence, and photographing all you do.

What else can I do?

- Make some easy changes first: posters, and more male role models.
- Read more ‘boy-friendly’ fiction yourself.
- Plan a boys’ reading campaign in school, enlisting help from a team of others, raising it at senior management level.
- Find partners – a public library service, nearby schools, or ECIS contacts.
- Contact the author for more information, on alec@alecwilliams.co.uk

Good luck!

The Look and the Book

Jeanette Hannaford develops a simple model to help critical literacy among younger students

There needs to be more conversation in international schools, as there is elsewhere, about introducing critical literacy into the ongoing culture of classrooms, especially with younger students. Critical literacy has been described as 'the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships'¹

Critical literacy pedagogy provides a way for children to identify the ways in which different elements in a text work together to create certain values or ideologies, to think about who benefits and who loses from the position texts advance, and to reflect on the ways in which readers are invited to take on these values by the text, and whether or not they do.

Over a five-year period, I took a number of measures to implement critical literacy pedagogies into my school's classroom practice. These actions included a staff seminar, peer-mentoring teachers, and a team project to write critical literacy question-sheets for our classroom book-sets.

As a part of this work, I developed a simple model to assist students in my own classroom to begin to critically decode language. 'The Look and the Book' is a broad and adaptable model, suitable for students throughout the primary years, which helps children distinguish between two aspects of a text. (A 'text' is broadly defined here as anything that can be 'read' *ie* the printed word, images, moving images *etc.*) Simply, the model utilizes short, memorable word cues to denote two different ways of reading a text.

The first part of the model is the Look. When asked to describe it, the student describes the textual signifier (what they see) as precisely as possible, purely according to their visual perception, and with no consideration of the text's meaning and purpose. For example, 'tell me about the Look' can be used at a word level as a directive for sounding out letters or syllables when new vocabulary is stumbled over.

The Book, on the other hand, refers to the implied meanings, *ie* what the text is signifying or what it means which, in this example of new vocabulary, would be a cue for a discussion of the word's meaning *in situ*. The explicit separation of these two elements simplifies and assists in the teaching and understanding of texts, and paves the way for more complex, analytical approaches to come.

The model can be applied to a range of texts, and in a number of ways. In the first unit of the year with my Grade 3 class, we decided to take street signs as our texts. The 'Look' here called for responses that utilized simple sentence structure and focused on early-stage vocabulary learning such as colors, shapes and perhaps letter/sound recognition, perfect for the new EAL students in the

class. For example, the Look of a stop sign text could be described as: a hexagon shape; red with a white edge; with the letters s, t, o, and p displayed across the centre.

Later in the year, while working with the classic book *The Lorax* (Seuss, 1971)² during a unit concerned with global environmental issues, the instruction to consider only 'the Look' of the text had students critically decoding the how of how the book delivers with such charm in its use of rhyming schemes. The class later used this knowledge as a guide for writing their own persuasive poetry. Delving into meanings, the Book, can be a complex undertaking with young students in the early stages of language attainment, but our initial exploration of street signs eased the way in.

Early in the year a colleague lent me a stop sign she found lurking in the cellar. This large and dramatic artifact became one of the first signs we decoded. The children collaboratively constructed the Book for it, debating over suggestions and additions until they settled on the following:

You should stop your car completely (but not take the keys out) and look if there is another car and if not you can keep on driving.

Almost all of the children quickly understood that different kinds of description were required by the two terms. Over the course of the year with repeated use of the Look and the Book model in a number of different learning situations and with different kinds of texts, students came to understand that there are a range of readings possible for any text. As the children's language skills and intellectual maturity developed, the class's capacity to approach texts analytically increased remarkably.

The Look and Book model was a simple starting tool that the children easily understood. It was regularly re-used to assist children to undertake textual analysis at increasing levels of complexity. When established, follow-on conversations extending the Look and the Book into more critical and analytical avenues can begin to be undertaken from the 'typical' critical literacy angle of exploring why the writer/designer/illustrator/artist has made their choices.

Jeanette Hannaford is currently a PhD candidate at Griffith University, Australia.

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¹ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Education. Critical Literacy. Retrieved 17 February 2012, from <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/4437>

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Unlocking musical skills in the primary classroom

Martin Lijinsky describes how the Kodály approach inspired both his teaching and his students

When I began my career as a piano teacher, I found it difficult to understand why several of my young pupils failed to grasp simple musical concepts. A training session on the Kodály approach with Cyrilla Rowsell opened my eyes to what the problem really was. In order to play well, my pupils needed first to learn basic musical skills including pulse, rhythm and pitch, and these skills had to be taught effectively and thoroughly.

The solution? The Kodály approach to music teaching. The course had a huge impact on me and I went on to train in Hungary as a Kodály practitioner. Meanwhile, Cyrilla Rowsell and her colleague David Vinden had produced the Jolly Music programme, providing me with a ready-made resource to deliver top-quality Kodály teaching to my new pupils.

Even as a trained Kodály practitioner I was very grateful for the clear and detailed lesson plans – not to mention the suggestions on games, puppets and other props to make the lessons fun!

Although my pupils were mostly happy to sing, their intonation (singing ‘in tune’) and pitch-matching skills were not well developed. Lots of practice at unaccompanied singing improved not only their singing ability, but also their listening skills.

Solo work is a key element of the lessons and is a great way of building children’s confidence. I decorated a classroom chair to make it into a ‘singing chair’, which I told my pupils would help them sing really well when they sat in it, and lo and behold, they couldn’t wait to

have a turn! Solo performance is also vital in allowing me to assess each child’s development individually.

Of all the musicianship skills that Kodály taught us to develop in our pupils, perhaps the most important is inner hearing (referred to in Jolly Music as the ‘thinking voice’): the ability to hear musical sounds ‘inside your head’, like reading silently or doing mental arithmetic. I have seen great improvements in both individuals and the class as a whole as they learn to use their ‘thinking voices’ to imagine the sounds before they sing them and then sing more accurately.

Games are a key element in our music lessons, and are a perfect example of how children move from unconsciously experiencing musical concepts to consciously understanding them. For instance, many games involve showing the pulse of the songs. After several months of this kind of play, the children have no problem understanding the concept of pulse when I come to explain it.

Kodály was one of the first music educators to see the importance of tailoring the musical material and activities to the developmental stage of the child. Young children have a limited vocal range, and will growl or use their speaking voices instead of singing if pushed beyond it. The songs that I teach the children use only a small number of pitches and are therefore easy to sing. They’re short and simple, but the children enjoy them and are happy to repeat them endlessly, especially in the context of a game.

From such deceptively simple activities, we have





witnessed amazing results. Even children who in the eyes of some might appear unmusical have proved capable of developing an accurate sense of pitch, rhythm, and a strong sense of pulse – skills that form such a critical basis for future musical development. They continue to reap the benefits when they begin instrumental studies, because they progress more quickly and enjoy the classes more.

Musical learning has immense value outside music lessons and across the curriculum. Because the explicit expectation in music lessons is that children will listen, concentrate, respond and work together on improving their performance, this encourages the development of good learning skills.

In fact, the children's alertness to patterns in sound is a key factor in the development of their literacy skills. Co-ordination skills also improve. Above all, I have been astounded by the increased confidence of the children, who now perceive themselves as 'singers', and enjoy performing, because they know they can do it well.

Kodály at a glance

The first truly child-centred approach to music education.

Every child can learn musical skills.

Children should acquire basic musical skills *before* they

attempt to learn an instrument.

Unconscious learning must take place before concepts are made conscious.

Progress from the simple to the complex.

The unaccompanied voice is the primary instrument.

Traditional singing games form the core repertoire.

The musical material must suit the child's abilities.

Skill areas include:

musical memory;

inner hearing;

pitch awareness;

pulse and rhythm;

listening;

co-ordination and co-operation (ensemble work).

Martin Lijinsky is primary music teacher at Cheam School, UK.

Jolly Music is designed to be accessible to non-musical teachers as well as specialists. For more information go to the Jolly Music website.

Planning for inquiry mathematics

Christine Orkisz Lang explores ways to ensure that teachers are provided with a manageable conceptually-based mathematics curriculum that can function as their main guide through the mathematical maze

The amount of content that dedicated teachers need to teach, the increasing number of approaches that inspiring teachers need to employ, the variety of tools that modern students need help using, and the number of considerations for individual learners that teachers need to address, have increased parallel to our understanding of how learning occurs.

Even when only reflecting on the teaching aspects of one particular subject – mathematics – the list appears unmanageable and certainly exhausting: estimation; problem solving; knowledge; skills; conceptual development; computers; calculators; real-life applications; vocabulary; hands-on manipulatives; self-assessment; differentiation; reflection; inquiry; investigations; homework; and more. All of this is to be packaged into a set amount of lessons each week dedicated exclusively to mathematics. Even for the keenest list making, chart-keeping, conscientious class teacher, teaching today is a true challenge.

To begin to address this challenge, individual schools need to ensure that teachers are provided with a manageable conceptually-based mathematics curriculum that can truly function as their main guide through the mathematical maze. In this, the vertically articulated key understandings need to be clearly stated and understood well by all stakeholders.

A high level of wide-ranging subject matter knowledge in mathematics for each teacher is critical here. It is not enough for teachers to only concentrate on the outcomes that will likely fall into their particular age range of students, as planning and working effectively in an inquiry-based way will be difficult. In order to determine where each student is in relation to each key understanding, teachers will need to know where the understanding of each concept begins and how it moves along its own continuum toward real understanding.

Each interaction that teachers have with individual students needs to be able to be put into a wider context by the teacher in order to help students see where the idea came from, how it fits now and where it might be heading. Teachers will require varying amounts of engaging and relevant support in this area.

For teachers planning units of inquiry on a collaborative planner, mathematics that fits appropriately into the unit can be taught either during maths lessons or inquiry-designated lessons. Although central ideas of inquiry units are planned carefully, the direction that students take the inquiry will often change certain aspects of the unit.

While planning, therefore, it is sometimes difficult to assure that specific mathematical concepts will be fully taken up in particular units. Usually the maths

that is taught through the unit is applied mathematics – mathematics as a tool for the student geographer, historian or scientist to use. While it is completely appropriate to integrate mathematics sensibly into inquiry units wherever possible, long-term planning of this applied mathematics also needs to be considered separately.

Not until all maths is filtered through the planner's guiding procedures does the approach to teaching maths change to become more inquiry-based. Stand-alone maths not planned on a planner is usually taught as it always has been, with inquiry either hit-or-miss, or not evident at all. The time it takes to write these separate mathematics planners is time well spent. As these planners will not change much over time, except to be updated and improved upon, teachers can endeavor to create one or two per year and gradually build up this resource.

Examples of stand-alone mathematics planners can be shared, and teachers will find it relatively easy to adapt others' ideas to individual school settings. Looking at how the transdisciplinary key concepts of form, function, causation, change, connection, perspective, responsibility and reflection can be developed through mathematics ensures continuity across the curriculum and provides for gradually increasing levels of thinking.

Additional and essential related concepts in mathematics need also to be considered in planning to establish and maintain the underlying principals of this specific subject area. These include, among others, the concepts of order, system, pattern, symmetry, quantification and proportion.

Considering that teachers are likely to have a maximum of about eight sessions of mathematics teaching and learning each week, careful mid-range and short-term planning is essential. If the current inquiry unit has natural mathematical components, these maths-related lessons can take place during regular maths sessions or can be additional to the current program. The entire rest of the mathematics curriculum needs to be fitted into the remaining dedicated lessons and throughout each day in the classroom.

It is likely that, after planning a stand-alone maths planner, there will be four distinct areas that emerge which encompass most, if not all, of the many aspects of teaching and learning mathematics that have been identified previously. These can be explicitly planned for each week and are described below, using multiplication at a Grade 3 level to illustrate.

Conceptual development: Two lessons per week can have a conceptual development focus. What is multiplication?

How is it connected to addition? To division? Well thought out, planned key questions guide these sessions. This is the place to share the bigger understandings of and connections among the knowledge to be studied.

These can be whole class lessons with children then working in small groups to develop their thinking. Students will have their own questions to use as a basis for further inquiry. Journal writing for vocabulary development and reflection can be used here effectively, as well as graphic organizers to help illustrate thinking.

Skill development: Two lessons per week can be used for skill development. Children can work at their own pace in a multitude of ways to develop their fluency with the multiplication tables, for example. This learning can also be set up as station work, contracts, goal groups, and other flexible groupings. Here, the use of hands-on manipulatives, calculators and computers come into play, as well as providing for multiple intelligences, differentiation and self-assessment.

Strategy development: Two lessons per week can have a strategy focus. Here an understanding of how concepts and skills merge can be developed. The language of mathematics is emphasized, drawing in learners who may be reluctant in mathematics generally while also developing learners', especially ESL students', vocabulary. A single challenging problem can be presented, such as 16×4 .

Children can discuss what this problem means and the many ways in which a solution can be found. Rich problems with several correct answers find their way here into the weekly program allowing for reasoning, problem

solving, estimation, home/school connections and even internationalism.

Applied mathematics: If the current inquiry unit doesn't have specific mathematical components, two lessons each week can be planned which emphasize the application of knowledge and skills. Real life situations that involve money, word problems that students have written themselves, task-based problems such as those which come from Exemplars (exemplars.com) or nzmaths (nzmaths.co.nz) can be effectively used here. These also make good homework assignments and encourage continued development of perseverance and communication skills, both written and oral, as children describe their strategies.

By focusing on these four areas when developing long-, medium-, and short-term plans, teachers will be helping students to see mathematics more as a subject of the humanities where learning is wide and slow, rather than as a place to race to get one single right answer in a world full of individual and separate problems. When teachers use a variety of resources and approaches while posing key questions that lead to the understanding of essential concepts, a strong foundation is built and children see the purpose of their learning. On the way to constructing their own knowledge through inquiry, students are encouraged to ask their own key questions, thereby unlocking the doors to a better understanding of this important subject.

Christine Orkisz Lang is a teacher, trainer and researcher at Vienna International School, specialising in the area of primary mathematics.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Mia is Europe's ambassador

Nine -year old **Mia Taylor** from **St John's International School, Brussels**, was chosen out of hundreds of applications as the only ambassador to represent Belgium in the World Education Games in March. Fewer than 70 students worldwide have been selected to serve as ambassadors. Mia is also one of only two ambassadors to represent the entire continent of Europe!

The World Education Games began in 2007 as World Maths Day. Since then, World Maths Day has taken place each year on the first Wednesday of March. At the first competition, 286,000 students from 98 countries took part, since when the event has got bigger and bigger each year. In 2010, students from around the world set a new Guinness World Record; and in 2011, 5.5 million students from 56,082 schools from 200 countries and territories took part.

All students participate live online with students of the same age and ability level worldwide. During World Maths Day, students compete in 60-second mental arithmetic 'maths games' in which they have to answer as many questions as possible.

For more information on the World Education Games, please visit www.worldeducationgames.com and www.worldmathsday.com



IB PYP exhibitions: developing essential skills for later life

Cindy Blanes discusses why an inquiry-based approach can be so important at the latter stages of a students' primary education



The end of primary education can be a daunting prospect for some students faced with moving up to a secondary education system, which often marks a big leap in expectation and learning styles. However, as is characteristic of an international education, the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) seeks to make this transition as smooth as possible and rather views the final years of a student's primary education as the beginning of their transition into secondary education.

Throughout the PYP, students are encouraged to develop independence in their learning and an understanding of how the knowledge they acquire is applied to the world around them. The PYP exhibition that takes place in Grade 5 or 6 serves as the pinnacle of this process in really allowing students to engage in an 'active learning' project, where they pose a question of their own and are asked to come to a conclusion through research and discussion. This is a concept that in many other curricula is not explored until a later stage.

As part of the exhibition, students take part in a collaborative inquiry-based unit of work, which is transdisciplinary, carried out over about a nine-week period during which all other subject lessons are integrated where possible.

Students are required to develop an inquiry that considers the local and global aspects of a given situation or question. Inquiries could include such subjects as 'how our actions affect other people'; 'the effects of on-line gaming'; 'animal welfare' and 'the global economy'.

IB PYP schools will differ as to how they construct the groups of children and how the inquiries are chosen and built. But the underlying aim is the same: the children must work with their group on a presentation based around the chosen theme and conclude with a specific 'call to action'. This process means that the learning is not passive: students are not lectured to by a teacher at the front of the classroom, but are instead guiding their own learning and being asked to demonstrate how they can really make a difference to a particular real-life situation.

The exhibition is really an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the IB Learner Profile that they have been developing throughout the PYP, and is embedded throughout the IB programme, from the PYP through to the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the IB Diploma:

inquirers – students are encouraged to develop and engage their natural curiosity;

thinkers – they exercise initiative in thinking critically and creatively to solving problems;

communicators – they receive and express ideas and information confidently in more than one language;

risk-takers – they approach unfamiliar situations without anxiety and have the confidence to explore new ideas;

knowledgeable – they have explored themes that have global significance and have acquired a critical mass of knowledge;

principled – they have a sound grasp of the principles of moral reasoning and have acquired integrity, honesty and a sense of justice;

caring – they show sensitivity towards the needs and feelings of others, and have a sense of personal commitment to helping others;

open-minded – they respect the values of other individuals and cultures and seek to consider a range of points of view;

well-balanced – they understand the importance of physical and mental balance and personal well-being;

reflective – they give thoughtful consideration to their own learning by constructively analysing their personal strengths and weaknesses.

Giving students an opportunity to build and direct an inquiry-based unit of work, like the exhibition, encompasses all of these areas. Not only does it provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate independence and responsibility for their own learning, it also allows them to explore multiple perspectives through their group discussions on the topic and guidance from the teacher, as well as demonstrating how they can take action as a result of their learning.

The exhibition is also a wonderful community event with teachers from across the whole school, Early Years, Primary and Secondary, as well as parents, grandparents and big brothers and sisters offering their services as mentors, specialists and consultants. It serves to bring the whole school community together.

Through the process the children learn about collaboration, self-management, running meetings, setting agendas, agreeing roles and tasks, presentation skills, consulting with and interviewing other people,



such as their parents or older students; all very powerful skills to be learning at this age, and developed and built on in their later education. By the time a full-IB student reaches the working world, all of these skills are second nature – a dream for employers.

The PYP demonstrates that it is never too young to learn and develop these skills as long as they are supported and structured in a way that has meaning for the children undertaking the challenge.

Cindy Blanes is lower school principal at ACS Egham, UK.



The Remember Book

Caroline Scott suggests a useful aid for newly-arrived young children with little or no English



International schools have the very special opportunity of developing a learning environment with students from many cultures, speaking many languages. Working with different nationalities and celebrating similarities and differences, gaining an insight into working together across cultures, resolving conflicts and fostering a host country as well as a global identity, can only enrich the learning platform.

However, it's certainly not an easy task, especially when many children are new to the country and in the beginning stages of learning English. These children, often termed 'new arrivals', can find themselves feeling like a permanent stranger in an unfamiliar place. The customs in which they grew up may no longer have significance and new, unfamiliar customs unexpectedly have priority.

It's common for a child with limited English to suddenly feel unsuccessful at almost every task, which can result in feelings of inadequacy and frustration. The learning of survival language is by no means the only aspect of helping a new arrival to feel 'at home,' however, as it can be one of the most stressful aspects of their life change. Therefore a carefully tailored plan to accommodate their language learning needs is essential.

One notable tool for language learning that is particularly helpful for new arrivals is a Remember Book, especially for seven year-olds and up who are able to write in their mother tongue. A Remember Book is a notebook small enough to fit in a pocket (A6 size), but with enough space to write between the lines (depending on age).

Throughout the sessions, the pupils should write, update and revise new learning in the Remember Book in order to practise new vocabulary and language structures learnt in both survival language sessions and in other contexts of immediate interest to the learner. The Remember Book has two functions:

To provide a record of what pupils have learned at the end of every lesson in order to support revision of English outside the class.

To record independent learning in order to provide opportunities for understanding new learning in lessons and then revising the new language outside the class.

The teacher or child should write the new learning for the lesson in the book. In cases where children are very young, it would be helpful to have the new language

copied and ready for the children to stick into their Remember Books during the lesson. Unless children are very able, it is better to cut and stick the new language instead of writing. This is because writing can be slow and inaccurate, especially with younger pupils or for those in the early stages of learning, or for those who aren't familiar with using the Roman script.

Children must take their Remember Book and a pencil with them everywhere and be encouraged to write words or sentences in the back of the book as soon as they learn useful language. If children are literate in a home language, then they should be encouraged to write the translations.

If not, they can draw a visual to remind them or just write the word on its own. It doesn't matter about spelling at this stage – it's the speaking, listening and remembering that is important. The attention to detail in the spelling can come later. Children use the back of the book to avoid mixing up their useful, independently learnt words with the lesson work positioned at the front of the book. Children can use the Remember Book independently by:

Adding new words at the back.

Folding the page so they can't see the English and use their translations to look, cover, say and check that they remember the new word.

Ticking off words they know and highlighting words they find difficult.

Copying out the new learning on to Post-it notes which they can stick on the wall and learn. These Post-it notes could be stuck randomly around the house on specific objects as a label of what it is or put in key places where the children spend time; for example, next to the bed, by the TV or on the back of the front door.

Children can use the Remember Book with a parent or friend by:

The parent or friend reading the word in the home language and then the child saying it in English.

The parent or friend reading the word in English and the child saying it in the home language.

The child reading the words aloud for the parent or friend who can then check their pronunciation.

The parent or friend giving the child five words a day from the book in the morning to be reviewed throughout the day.

The Remember Book can form a section of the children's homework and can become part of the daily homework routine. The work they focus on in their Remember Book can ensure that they are surrounded by language in school and at home. This will motivate them, help them to identify what they need to learn and support progression.



There is a wealth of resources available for supporting teachers in helping children in their first steps of learning English and many elements of these have been drawn together in my latest book *Teaching Children English as an Additional Language 5-11*. It provides a school-wide resource for supporting class teachers and ESL/EAL teachers with new arrivals and includes 68 survival language lessons (with child friendly resources) on key vocabulary and grammar structures needed for beginners and helpful planners and ideas on how to include children with limited English into your day to day lessons.

It also contains notes on effective language learning strategies, how to support the learning of a new script, admissions and settling in information, information on young learners and managing EAL provision in your school (along with a useful reflection sheet to self check how you're doing).

Finally there is a DVD with resources to support all areas of survival language learning covered in the intervention. If you wish to learn more about *Teaching Children as an Additional language 5-11*, visit www.communicationacrosscultures.com

Caroline Scott is director of communication across cultures and primary principal at the International School of Milan.

is readers can order copies of the *Teaching English as an Additional Language – A Whole School Resource File* by Caroline Scott and save £25 off the full price of £150 when quoting promotional code TEAFL12. Offer valid for online purchases at www.routledge.com only. Ends 1.12.12. For teacher and trainer training opportunities visit: www.communicationacrosscultures.com

Passionate poetry in K-2

Sheryl Pross-Harraz describes a personal journey to promote the love of writing poems



It was while searching for ways to improve my teaching of writing in order to encourage my students to write that I was fortunate to have the chance to attend a National Writing Project's summer institute and to read Regie Routman's *Kid's Poems: Teaching Kindergartners to Love Writing Poetry*.

As part of the NWP experience, each teacher presented how they taught writing in their class, so I chose to talk about writing poetry in my primary aged classes (K-2). By setting this poetry writing goal, I spent the next five weeks putting myself in the shoes of my students: writing and sharing my own poetry, reading numerous books on the teaching of poetry and writing and planning out my year of poetry writing.

My NWP goal was to research, implement and present on writing poetry with my young students and that is what I did. Thanks to this opportunity, the poetry seed was firmly planted into my teaching and it became a life-changing, paradigm-shifting experience and has changed how I teach writing. Writing poetry became a passion for me and for my students and I hope it will be for you as well.

We all have poetry within us. The key to finding passionate poetry writing comes from experimenting with words, playing with them and having fun with them. To be able to teach this to our students I believe that we as teachers need to be writers, too.

Another wonderful book that helped me become more confident with writing poetry was *poemcrazy: freeing your life with words* by Susan Goldsmith Wooldridge. It encourages the reader to become a collector of words or phrases, an observer of the world around us and to keep a writing journal. I became a collector of wonderful, tantalizing words, ones that 'tickled my ears'.

This was the way I started with my students. We began a 'word tickling' chart and posted words as we came across them in our stories. The students became expert word collectors and started to incorporate these into their own writing, which became more descriptive and energized.

They started using language that helped to paint a picture in the reader's mind; they noticed and talked about sounds and words and used words that drew attention to their descriptive language. It was inspiring to me as a teacher to see my young writers 'voices' come through in their writing.

Having been so inspired by my passionate primary poetry writers, I wanted to make sure that I made changes in my writing curriculum. A major step was to make sure that I created a poetry environment, touching on all areas of literacy – listening, speaking, reading and writing. We practiced reciting poems while dramatically acting some of them out. We had a poetry listening center in a variety of forms (podcasts, CDs). We read poems by a variety of poets, both rhyming and non-rhyming, throughout the year. And we wrote poems to express feelings or sensory experiences.

I also created a timeline for the year, plotting out the types of poetry that I might want to teach (list, patterned, repetitive phrases and acrostic poems). We wrote one poem per month to go along with a specific unit of study (eg insects, family) or to enjoy the current season or holiday (Love Poems for Valentine's Day or Snowman Poems).

The students kept poetry journals, collected poems, illustrated them and had pages for their own poetry writing. I also created poetry frames to help the timid writers, English language learners and to also support the type of writing we would be working on. Various mini-lessons were planned for crafting poetry which included:

White space.

Repetition.

Same word to start each line.

Ending lines.

Finding the 'seeds' capturing the writing 'gem'.

The internet provided additional ideas on the creation of poetry frames that supported the current topic. The poetry frames are a great tool for repetition poems, white space mini lessons and visually showing the students the number of words needed and why word choice is so important

Writing celebrations were planned where there was

the chance to share our poems with each other, with other classes and with parents for the best part of poetry writing with young children is the sharing and the celebrating. They are proud and excited to share the 'ear tickling words' they found and to see how the poem sounds to others. They prepared for publication by editing, revising, and sprucing them up for their poetry readings.

Poetry writing can be linked to all areas of the curriculum, not just writing workshops. Poets, like scientists, observe, gather (ideas, thoughts), record (happenings, thoughts), notice and experiment (with language/structure). Some of my most favorite poems came from a science unit on living things. My five year-olds started using words like ferocious, dangerous and prowling.

They even used 'ear tickling' words in their math explorations and wrote poems about math. Poetry also worked well in social studies with themes of family, love and school poems. This year, I was surprised to find that even my beginning kindergartners could create repetitive ABC poems.

So take the plunge and write poetry with your primary

students! The amazing thing is, young children are natural poets who thoroughly enjoy being creative and passionate writers. Remember, however, that if you want your students to write you need to write too. Find your own 'voice' and comfort level with writing poetry and your passion will pass on to your students.

Sheryl Pross-Harraz is a kindergarten teacher at The American International School Vienna.

This article is based on the presentation she made at the ECIS Conference in Lisbon, 2011.

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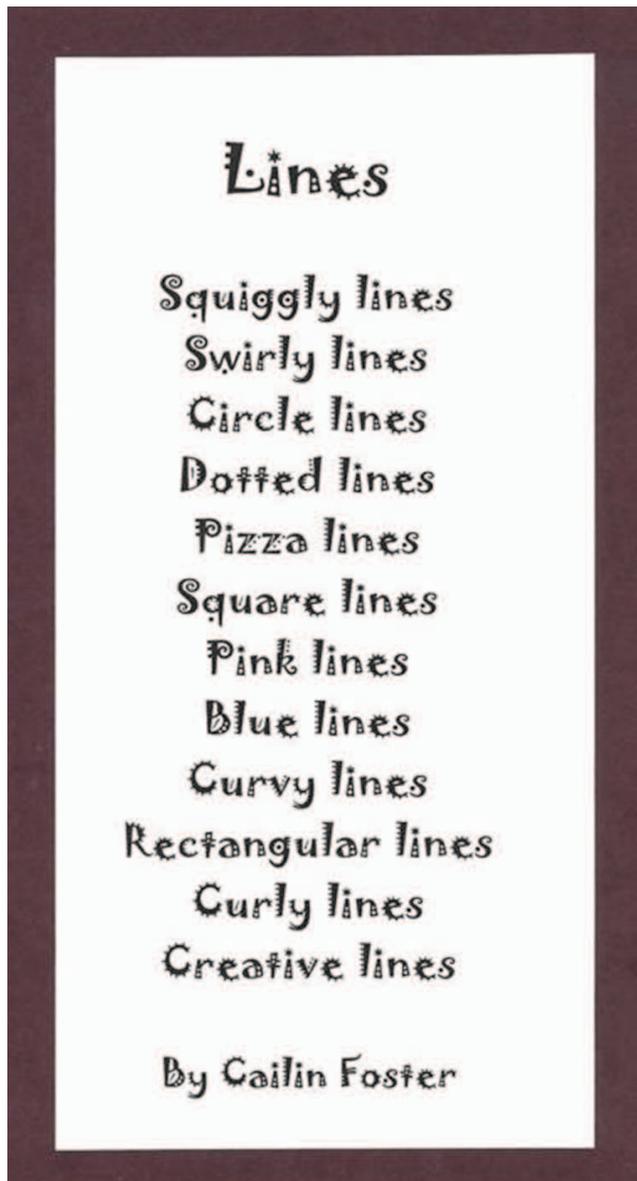
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See also page 66.



Defining the future of school admissions

David Willows reports on a well-attended conference

In his book, *Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation* (Riverhead, 2010), Steven Johnson examines how and why innovation occurs. Addressing this question from an environmental perspective, he is particularly keen to explore the *spaces* that have historically led to unusual levels of creativity in individuals and organizations. Change your environment, says Johnson, and there is a chance that what begins as a 'slow hunch' will connect with other ideas and, in time, provoke the start of something completely new.

Seven years ago, a group of admissions professionals from schools in central and eastern Europe had a hunch that they should sit around a table and begin to talk about their craft. At a time when there was very little by way of professional development in this field, and even less allocation of funds towards those wanting to be trained in this area, this certainly seemed like a good idea. Surely no one around that table could have imagined, however, how determinative this 'hunch' was to be for the future of international school admissions across Europe.

Seven years later, to cut the story short, another group of admissions professionals came together in Brussels for an event entitled Admissions Job-a-Like 2012. This time, though, one table was not enough as nearly 70 representatives from over 40 schools across Europe and beyond packed the conference room for a two day symposium on The State Of Our Art.

Hosted by the International School of Brussels, there was plenty to talk about as conversations focused on some of the most pressing questions of the day: How do we define our role within a learning organization? What kind of policy and protocol will support the work we do? How do we manage and make sense of the data we have to manage? When and how does admissions connect to the advancement office?

"The thing that I'll take away from this event," said Kathy Messick from the American School of the Hague, "is the fact that this kind of gathering keeps us strong and cohesive. Another person's challenge may also be ours and this is an opportunity to support each other and come away with real strategies."

So is it simply the case that 70 people sit in a room together, share the 'pain', hope to have good ideas, and shape the future of international school admissions? Whilst it might be true to say that the wisdom is 'in the

crowd', it is almost certainly a little more complicated than that.

And one of the most exciting aspects of this year's gathering was the support offered by the event's sponsors, bringing a new perspective to the various conversations. Finalsite spoke about the emerging role of digital technology in telling the story of our schools, as well as link up with the event organizers to develop an online collaboration space to keep the conversations going.

Similarly, Faria Systems were there to listen to the needs of admissions professionals as they develop a range of new, supportive software applications in this field. Perhaps most significantly, however, Jean Vahey, Executive Director of ECIS, was also present and spoke of the historical lack of good professional development in this field and the ways in which ECIS will be looking to support this critical function in the future.

At the beginning of this gathering, an idea was dropped into the conversation. Admissions, it was suggested, is akin to the maieutic art of bringing people to the moment of decision, understanding and choice. In short, the role of the admissions professional is, contrary to our misperceptions, a critical *educational* function within our schools, not simply a secretarial point of information.

So what's the future of school admissions? None of us have a crystal ball, but there's a ground-swell of opinion out there and a bunch of questions that are not going away about the relationship of this function to the story of the school and the need for some kind of certification for those who are just getting started. The conversation from this year's Job-a-Like is almost certainly going to keep on growing and they will be demanding new kinds of spaces in which to share, learn and reflect together.

So if your school was not involved this time around, it probably should have been. Watch this space and look out for the ideas that begin to come from it.

Dr David Willows is director of external relations at the International School of Brussels.

In March 2012, he and his team hosted the Admissions Job-a-Like 2012 in Brussels. David is also a member of the ECIS Advancement Committee.

Meeting the VIPs



Christian Oxonitsch, of Vienna City Council, welcomed delegates.

Keynote speakers

Andy Hargreaves, Thomas More Brennan Chair in the Lynch School of Education at Boston College, and Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Educational Change, whose subject was Teaching and Leading at the Crossroads of the World.



Mining Magnificent Minds: how to unwrap the gifts embedded in ADHD was the subject of keynote speaker Dr Ned Hallowell, Managing Director of The Hallowell Center.

Award winners



Edward Greene (left), Chair of the ECIS Board of Trustees, presents the Promotion of International Education Award to Robert Gross, Office of Overseas Schools, US Department of State, USA. With them is Jean Vahey, Executive Director of ECIS.



Adèle Hodgson presents the SISG Diploma to Dr Jay Teston, Qingdao No 1 International School, USA.



David Willows, Director of External Relations at the International School of Brussels, receives a Subject Committee Event Host School Certificate from Jean Vahey.



Edward Greene presents Administrative Committee Chair Awards to Melanie Swetz, Bilkent Laboratory & International School, Turkey, (ECIS Spouses & Partners Committee), and to Steven Thompson, Head of Primary, Raha International School, UAE (ECIS Elementary Administrators' Committee).

A time to meet, talk, listen, learn...



Time for some enjoyment...



And thanks to the ECIS team...

Fifth column: the impact of ‘impact’

E T Ranger delves beyond the wow! factor

It may be just pedantry to defend existing meanings of words against the tide of innovation, but sometimes it is the meanings themselves that are in danger of being extinguished. Leaving aside the ignorance of using ‘parameter’ to mean ‘limit’, nothing enrages this pedant more than the use of ‘impact’ as a verb.

It is not the new meaning that is the tragedy, but the loss of the other meanings that have been displaced. In the new discourse we have lost such valuable words – and with them, their meanings – as ‘influence’, ‘affect’, ‘modify’, ‘alter’, ‘moderate’, ‘amend’, and a host of subtle meanings. It is as though today we can only imagine an intervention as violent.

The image that is evoked by ‘impact’ is sudden and forceful. It is like the fist of Superman, the Magnum of Clint Eastwood, or sending a gunboat. It is the plot twist that appears in the last reel, when the hero utters the immortal words: “Honey, It’s gonna be all right!”, or HIGBAR as I like to think of it. After the HIGBAR moment we know that with one blow he will destroy all Evil; job done.

This is the simple dualistic world of the War on Terror. A single entity is behind all of our fears, so if we can defeat it we shall never be afraid again. Never mind that terrorism (which is presumably what was meant by ‘Terror’) is simply the weapon of the isolated and impoverished, anywhere, at any time. Anarchists, FLN, Stern Gang, Hamas: this is the world of ‘shoot-em-up’ computer games, in which we can only see the immediate target. Its presence in world politics is only too evident today.

Where is the drama in the gradual? As usual, Shakespeare had something to say. Hamlet famously muses:

That is the question: whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and, by opposing, end them.

One per cent inspiration makes good soundbites, but it is the 99% of perspiration that delivers results. We teachers constantly complain about our students’ attention span, so perhaps we should be promoting patient attention to studies, rather than short-term revision for the test. As well as inspiring them with the wow factor, we need to equip children with the application without which nothing substantial can be achieved.

‘Impact’ expresses an incoming influence upon our thinking; the words that it replaces describe the threads in that complex maze of internal discourse through which we actually reach decisions. Value-judgments are most often reached by weighing up implications and imagined consequences that we have accumulated over many years; they are seldom the result of a single over-riding principle that outweighs all others. Even the Crusades were in reality motivated by many aims, not all of them as noble as the headline ambition.

These complex systems of life-experiences are less open to destabilising influences from outside. TCKs, whose individual life histories are kaleidoscopes of interacting experiences, are unlikely to be knocked off course by a new one. They are practised in plurality, and – with luck – stabilised by the one set of influences that has been with them throughout their moves: that of the family.

But for teachers on their first, and perhaps only, expatriation, the shock of the new can be devastating. For them a fresh cultural exposure can indeed have an impact, which conflicts violently with all that they previously learned at home about the world.

International school leaders may be faced with the challenge of establishing institutional norms that bind everyone together in unexpected circumstances. These are impacts indeed. A natural disaster, political instability, a heightened threat of terrorism, even global financial tectonics, may challenge normal life. At these times the social organisation may fragment if it is not bound together by strong threads of shared values.

How can this institutional strength be developed? We can only work with what is actually there in the school. We need to recognise the beliefs and values that are held by our communities, a complex business when there are several cultures contributing. What a job!

And when, as commonly cited, directors have a term of office which scarcely allows them to recognise where they are, let alone learn the language, the temptation to ‘impact’ is hard to resist. But I believe that where international schools achieve a strong and supporting ethos it is one that has been generated by teams of experienced and wise educators who take time, to influence, to affect, to modify.

Science Matters

How lizards can walk upside down, and spiders' webs don't break. Rick Harwood on exploiting the nanoworld

Nanotechnology offers novel insights into how our world functions and a multitude of possibilities for the future practical development of new materials. Since the atomic world was opened up using the scanning tunnelling microscopy (see the now iconic image of the 'atomic corral') and other similar instruments, the exploration of this world of the very small has generated an incredibly wide range of exciting potential applications.

Novel fullerene forms of carbon – 'buckyballs' and 'nanotubes' – have suggested, amongst other things, new methods of medical drug delivery and conducting materials; while reactions have been carried out in miniature using 'nanotubes' as reaction vessels.

Researchers have drawn on ideas from the natural world in their search for new possible materials. The amazing climbing ability of geckos has attracted the interest of scientists for centuries. However only in the past few years has progress been made in understanding the mechanism behind this ability,

relying as it does on sub-micrometre keratin hairs covering the soles of geckos. Each individual hair produces a minuscule force, but the millions of hairs on each foot together create a formidable adhesive force sufficient to keep geckos firmly on their feet, even when upside down on a glass ceiling.

It has proved very tempting to create a new type of adhesive by mimicking the gecko mechanism and scientists at Manchester University in the UK have reported on a prototype of such 'gecko tape' made by microfabrication of dense arrays of flexible plastic pillars, the geometry of which is optimized to ensure their collective adhesion.

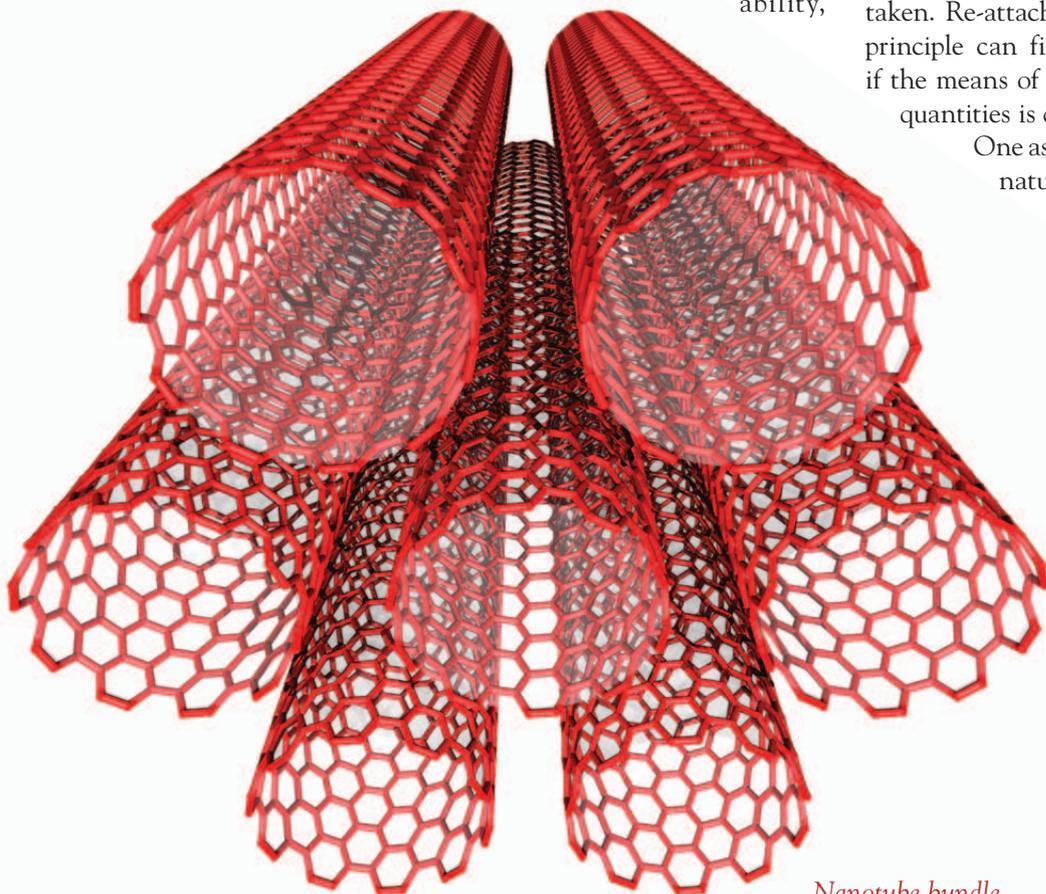
In an amusing trial of the tape a 'Spider Man' toy clings with one of its hands to a horizontal glass plate. The toy (15cm high and weighing 40g) has its hand covered with the 'gecko tape'.

Note that the toy had already attached and detached several times to various surfaces before this photo was taken. Re-attachable dry adhesives based on the gecko principle can find a variety of important applications if the means of reliably producing the tape in sufficient quantities is developed.

One aspect of the approach aimed at mimicking nature that has received extensive reporting in global news channels is the exploitation of some of the characteristic features of the fibres found in spider webs. The aim is to understand and use the incredible strength of such materials, and approaches have included the genetic engineering of spider silk protein in silkworms and goats.

A recent report in the journal *Nature* showed how a spider web has the ability to adapt to different levels of stress and that this is the key to its remarkable stability. Webs are found to stand up to a variety of stresses, including hurricane-force winds.

As well as seeing how much strain natural webs could take, the researchers used computer simulations to elaborate how the silk structures responded. They discovered that a spider web's design, and the unique



Nanotube bundle.



Spider's web.

properties of its silk, allowed just a single thread to break so the rest of the web remained unharmed.

Given the remarkable properties of the fibres of a spider's web it is no surprise to hear of attempts to synthesise larger scale amounts of the protein involved. One example of the applications of genetic engineering to this problem has led to the transfer of spider genes into silkworms. The silkworms can be more readily 'farmed' and they produce a composite protein which contains

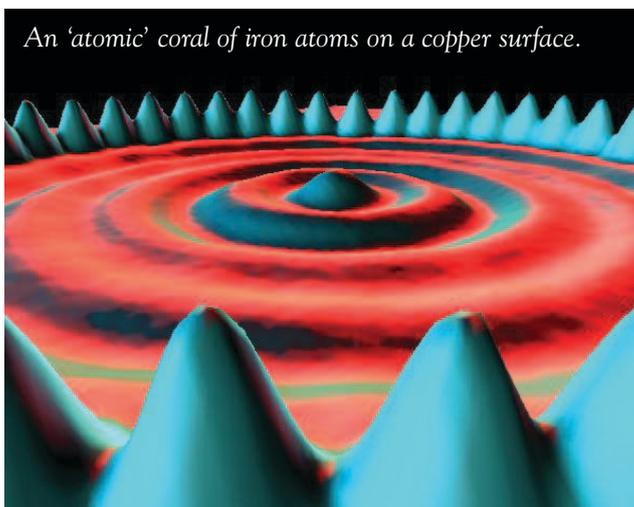
bits of spider silk combined with mainly the silkworms' own silk.

The research has also shown that this composite has improved mechanical properties. The main applications envisaged could be in the medical sector creating stronger sutures, implants and ligaments. But the GM spider silk could also be used as a greener substitute for toughened plastics, which require a lot of energy to produce.

Both these sets of research results have been reported on the BBC News website in recent weeks while an alternative genetic engineering approach – the production of spider web protein in the milk of genetically modified goats was featured in the BBC *Horizon* programme 'Playing God' screened recently.

In this programme the presenter, Dr Adam Rutherford, investigates aspects of the new science of 'synthetic biology'. He is shown round the Utah State University research farm by Professor Randy Lewis, the leader of the team rearing the genetically modified goats. The transplanted gene means the goats produce milk containing large quantities of an extra protein, which is extracted and spun into spider silk – thread that is among the strongest substances known to man.

Some appreciation of the potential of nanotechnology is now part of A-level and IB Diploma syllabuses. A



An 'atomic' coral of iron atoms on a copper surface.



highly useful introductory article on the subject is to be found in the on-line journal 'Science in School – issue 10 <http://www.scienceinschool.org/2008/issue10/nanotechnology>

This article, by Matthias Mallmann, includes details of some practical experiments and a reference to an introductory kit (NanoSchoolBox) available from the NanoBioNet network. Other references are given and the issues surrounding nanotechnology are discussed in several IB diploma texts, including *Chemistry for the IB Diploma* (by C Talbot, R Harwood & C Coates, published by Hodder Education).

Some useful re-vamped websites

The website for schoolsscience.co.uk has been remodeled and continues to supply a whole range of useful resource material

www.schoolscience.co.uk

In particular it includes the announcement of the re-launch of the 'Science and Plants for Schools (SAPS)' website which has always been a key site for experimental ideas

www.saps.org.uk

Also of interest is the 'U4energy' site which provides resources on energy teaching, and details of a project-orientated competition which schools can enter: www.u4energy.eu/web

Dr Richard Harwood is a scientific and international education consultant based at Whitby, UK.

The writer's life

Anne Akay encourages young authors to write for publication

One of the most satisfying aspects of my work as an English teacher in an international school has been seeing the wonderful developing fluency of my students during their two years with me. I teach Grade 9 and 10 IGCSE first English language and literature to students who study Turkish, English, and a modern language.

These students have incredible verbal skills, and it is often in the first years of high school that they begin to recognize and appreciate more fully the special benefits this talent of multi-lingualism offers them. The light bulb seems to go on; they can imagine themselves as *writers* in English, with something unique and interesting to say. It's my job to show them what they can do with this wonderful skill.

First, we spend time working on the terrific prompts offered by IGCSE first language English composition tasks, which are truly thought-provoking and interesting questions. For example: 'Do you think that it is right for English, in all its forms, to become the most important world language?' Or 'Write a descriptive account entitled "The Flower Seller"'

Or, from the narrative unit: 'Write a story in which greed plays an important part.' These leading questions open up multiple responses from every student, regardless

of English language ability, and are therefore excellent ways to begin the process of turning a student into a *writer*.

Of course, at an international school such as ours, it is very easy to turn then to personal life experiences of the students – who may have swum the Bosphorus, or climbed Mt Ararat in eastern Turkey. They may have been air-lifted in a state emergency from a war-torn African nation, or studied bio-medicine at a summer camp at Johns Hopkins University in the US. They are interesting kids, leading interesting lives, and their stories reflect this background.

A proud teacher can share excitement over excellent essays from her students with parents during parent-teacher conferences, but the real validation and recognition of excellence in writing comes when these stories and essays are accepted for publication or win awards in international magazines and competitions.

One magazine that enjoys publishing the work of international students is *Skipping Stones Magazine*, based in Eugene, Oregon in the US¹. This multi-cultural magazine will publish student writing in poetry, environmental awareness, art, family traditions, and stories from an international point-of-view. They also

run an annual Youth Honor Award program, which highlights student writing each June.

This year, for the first time, Scholastic Art & Writing Awards², based in New York City, opens its prestigious competitions without entry fees to international students in Grades 7-12 who attend a US accredited school. Here there are many categories from 'flash fiction' to journalism, drama, and novel writing. Winning students can earn Gold Key Awards at the regional level, and Silver and Gold Awards at the national level (such students are invited to Carnegie Hall in New York City for an amazing week of publishing and art workshops). These can become important accomplishments for graduating seniors to list on their college applications.

Another place to submit student writing is *Imagine Magazine*³, which has wonderful monthly issues devoted to science, art, engineering, creative writing, and other disciplines, highlighting important work in that field. Their website often runs writing contests in fiction, travel writing, and poetry, and is open to students under

age 18 without a fee. It is easy to download a 'best work' submission from anywhere in the world.

These writing activities can invigorate an English language classroom, and connect students to the broader community of young writers around the world. By finding their voice, developing their confidence as authors, and stepping onto the world stage, these young writers can become well educated to take their English language training to the university and beyond.

Anne Akay is a Grade 10 English teacher at Bilkent Laboratory & International School, Ankara, Turkey.

References

- 1 *Skipping Stones Magazine*. www.skippingstones.org
- 2 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. www.artandwriting.org
- 3 *Imagine Magazine*. cty.jhu.edu/imagine/

Whilst *is* magazine does not publish students' essays or fiction, every issue has a section for student poetry (see page 66). Please send examples of your students' poetry to the Editor at carolineellwood@ecis.org



In the footsteps of Kurt Hahn

John O'Connor describes Round Square, a global movement in education which can impact the philosophical fabric of a school

I have been fortunate enough to work in international education for the past 25 years and have observed how much has been done by organizations like ECIS and CIS to reinforce and support the professional operation of international schools – self-study accreditation cycles, professional development networking and a myriad of structural and governance support services.

If international education were a living creature, one could argue that the skeleton is strong and the body healthy. However, I have been concerned that the heart or soul of the same creature can sometimes be less well catered for, and that whilst some schools point to religious affiliations as the framework for their ethos, many schools, including those that are multi-denominational, look for a suitable umbrella for all those excellent activities that contribute to the ethos of their schools.

After some time I came upon Round Square, more a movement in education than anything else, a vision shared by the 100 or so member schools worldwide, and a commitment to nurturing the hearts and souls of young people through a philosophy of international understanding, commitment to democratic principle, environmental stewardship, a spirit of adventure, servant leadership and hands-on experience of service to the wider community.

Round Square has its foundation in the theories of the German educational philosopher Kurt Hahn, who believed that schools should have a greater purpose beyond preparing young people for college or university. Hahn believed that it was crucial for students to prepare for life by having them face it head on and experience it in ways that would demand courage, generosity, imagination, principle and resolution.

He also saw the dangers that are inherent for those children who come from a background of relative privilege – they can go through the corridors of their schooling without ever questioning their role in society, let alone appreciating that, with advantage, comes the responsibility to contribute to society. In short, Hahn understood that without guidance children of privilege can end up self-serving non-contributors, despite their access to world class educational opportunities.

My current school, Brookhouse School, is in Kenya, where the gap between the 'haves' (who attend Brookhouse and several other international schools

in Nairobi) and the 'have-nots' could not be wider. It was therefore, for me, a perfect fit to embrace Round Square because it addressed some of the most important questions I had about our role as international educators.

I wanted to be able to say that our school consciously addressed these issues and was committed to producing young graduates who not only went on to first class universities worldwide, but took with them those values that would make them meaningful and courageous contributors to society when they completed their studies.

Round Square has done just that for our school, and many others around the world. It has allowed such values to be at the forefront of everything we do. Round Square member schools believe that the pillars of Hahn's insight are the ideals on which our future is built. These broad fundamentals form the IDEALS of Round Square:

- I International understanding and tolerance.
- D Democratic governance and justice.
- E Environmental stewardship.
- A Adventure motivating self-discovery.
- L Leadership, and most importantly,
- S Service to others.

However, Round Square as a global organisation is not only about philosophical considerations. Round Square schools commit themselves to collaboration and sharing with each other and engage in major activities, locally, regionally and globally, including:

Annual regional and international student-led conferences that celebrate cultural diversity.

Local, regional and international student exchanges.

Round Square International Service (RSIS) projects that change the lives of less privileged communities or assist threatened environments.

Regional and local service projects that connect students directly with local community partners.

It is hard to describe the power and impact that attendance at Round Square student-led conferences has on your school. It takes a few years for the impact to fully permeate the fabric of the school, but when it does the effect is profound. Students at a Round Square school sense their connectedness with the Round Square family of schools around the world.

And family is probably the best word to use in relation to Round Square. For no matter how large this family grows, and it is growing quite fast now that more and more schools across the globe become aware of its existence, Round Square remains a wonderful glue that binds together young people, schools and educators who see such values as crucial to genuinely holistic education.

So, Round Square is a global association of schools which share a commitment, beyond academic merit, to personal growth and responsibility through service, challenge, adventure and international understanding. Ultimately, Round Square seeks to empower students to become the leaders and guardians of tomorrow's world ... rather than the leading exploiters of tomorrow's world. Quite a lofty aim in several ways, and yet it is given tangible and meaningful form in the shape of Round Square.

In the last few years the annual international Round Square conference has been held in places as diverse as Vancouver in Canada, Ajmer in India and Pattaya in Thailand, always hosted at the campus of a member school.

In 2011 the conference was hosted at Wellington College in the UK, and in 2012 the conference comes to Africa, being co-hosted between Brookhouse School

in Nairobi, Kenya and Penryn College in South Africa. Such gatherings of 500-1000 students from around the globe really affirm the crucial part Round Square has to play in the evolving role of international education.

And these conferences are, above all else, memorable because they are such fun for the students involved as they exchange ideas, cultures and views with students from all over the globe, eventually discovering that they have so much more in common than they first thought, and that collectively they have a great responsibility for shaping the future.

So for me and for my school, Round Square has been a great lesson in how a philosophy can take on a tangible shape and form, and bring so much that is valuable to the intangibles of any school.

For Brookhouse, CIS strengthens the skeleton and body of the school in admirable ways; Round Square feeds the soul of the school. Together the two memberships make for a powerful and positive combination in facing the challenges of international education in the 21st century.

John O'Connor is Director at Brookhouse School in Nairobi, Kenya. He currently serves as the regional director for Africa on the Round Square Board.

The 2011 Annual International Round Square Conference at Wellington College, UK.



What do you know?

Mark McGowan discusses a ToK approach to learning for all grade levels

How do you know what you know? How do you know it's true? These two questions form the basis of the Theory of Knowledge (ToK), an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma course, and yet the same questions could be the foundation at all levels of education.

Teachers must understand what their students know before they can teach them something, yet asking students to evaluate the validity and usefulness of what they know can strengthen their understanding of a subject.

The IB would like to see ToK's approach to learning integrated into all of its courses, as students are constantly asked to justify the conclusions they reach and to compare those justifications with those of other students. This allows them simultaneously to comprehend a variety of perspectives while also understanding how knowledge is gained in different areas.

For example, the conclusions that one reaches in science are different from those reached in art. How are they different? Why are they different? Those types of questions encourage students to see their education holistically as they gain a stronger view of a discipline's nature. The question is: can such an approach be applied at all grade levels, and what would be its value?

In an attempt to answer this question, I asked teachers at the International School of Brussels, in the primary, middle and high schools, to fill out a chart based on five simple questions, which mapped out a lesson plan. The questions were:

What do your students know about this topic?

How do they know it?

What don't they know?

How will they find that out?

And how is this subject similar to or different from other subjects?

Teachers were not told to ask their students these questions directly, but rather 'how would you or your students obtain the answers to these questions'. After discussing the teachers' responses with them and filming some of their classes to see how their ideas were put into practice, two things became clear: students acquire knowledge in similar ways, and using the aforementioned questions allows students to understand how and why they are learning a subject.

Students often know something about a topic before it is taught, either from a previous class, the media, or their parents. However, what they do know can either be a small part of the topic, or it may be erroneous. For example, in

11th grade geography, students often think overpopulation is the most important population issue of our time.

They also think population growth is occurring most in sub-Saharan Africa because of a lack of education, contraception and health services. Yet, they know very little about gender inequality due to population growth, and they forget to consider the Asian, Indian or European continent in their initial responses.

A pre-kindergarten class is quite different. Before beginning a unit on 'patterns', a teacher has to ensure that the students know what the word 'pattern' means. Once they do, the teacher's objective is to have them identify and continue different patterns.

In Special Education, the dynamics change even more. Students being taught how to live independently have to learn how not to talk to strangers when alone. This can be difficult if the student's ability to retain information is low, therefore repetition and role plays are vitally important.

Nonetheless, regardless of the class or the grade level, similar approaches are effective. If students re-evaluate what they know, or what they think they know, they enhance their understanding of the lesson. Additionally, teachers are able to ascertain, quickly and directly, their students' mindset, which in turn determines the direction of their instruction.

The final question in the process may be the most important. Once students are taught a subject and feel they know it, it is interesting to ask them how one subject is different from another. How is the study of history different from the study of physics? How is learning a musical instrument similar to learning math?

By synthesizing what they know, students realize that different disciplines require the same or different methods for obtaining knowledge. Consequently, they have a deeper understanding of each subject individually and of their education as a whole.

This approach to learning and teaching is not new or complex. Teachers do it all the time, implicitly or explicitly. However, it could be beneficial to inexperienced teachers, and sometimes experienced teachers need to be reminded of how to tap their students' true potential. In addition, for schools that do not feel their curriculum is consistent, this approach could be implemented across grade levels so that their students are well educated from Nursery to 12th Grade.

Most educators want to help their students learn more. Perhaps a simple approach is most effective. Starting with the question 'What do you know?' might be the answer.

Mark McGowan is TOK coordinator at The International School of Brussels, Belgium.

Back to basics: the three Es of education

Boyd Roberts takes a candid look at educational skills and competencies needed in the 21st century

The start of the 21st century was a time for optimism, and of dawning realism. Optimism was expressed in the formulation and agreement of the Millennium Development Goals; realism by a growing awareness that the old pecking order between nations was being challenged. In education, there was plethora of initiatives on 21st century learning or skills. Thousands of words were written on the skills and competencies our students need to work and compete in the global world of the new millennium.

Twelve years on, and the new century is seen in a different light. Many of us work in, or come from, countries whose economies are reeling after the financial debacle. Optimism and long-sighted realism have been buffeted, in some parts of the world at least, by the immediate challenges of keeping the banks open, coping with debt and reducing expenditure. We are so much preoccupied with our own financial circumstances that we seem to have little time, will or money to work strongly towards the Millennium Development Goals to which so many countries pledged support.

Democratic countries have a political perspective shaped by the frequency of elections: few elected politicians have the inclination or ability to take a longer view. But as educators, ours is a relatively long game. The fruits of our efforts are not always clear for years, even decades, after we have finished our work with individual students. We need to take a perspective that reflects this timescale.

Clearly helping students to acquire skills and qualifications so that they can get a job in a global employment market is very important. We know that there is more to life than employment and earnings, and education is more than preparing students for the life of work. But it has been argued that education still embraces a model appropriate to an industrial world, where we are preparing workers for production.

While pursuing competence and achievement goals we need to keep hold of other things of enduring importance – to make sure we don't lose sight of the basics.

It was not lack of cleverness or competence that gave rise to the collapse of various banks. Indeed some of the most able brains on the planet were engaged in the slicing, dicing and selling of worthless debts – modern day alchemists trying to turn dross into gold. Rather it was a lack of ethical awareness – of the implications

of individual and corporate actions. Self-interest took centre stage. Keep this thought, to which we shall return.

On 31st October, 2011, we passed a significant milestone of the new millennium. On this day the United Nations officially recognised that the human population had reached 7 billion. Our increasing population, and the perfectly understandable and reasonable aspirations of those in emerging economies to enjoy a standard of living some of us have long enjoyed, combine to raise challenges about how the earth's limited resources are exploited and distributed.

There is growing awareness that we need to give attention to aspects of education that are most clearly related to our place as human beings sharing a finite planet with fellow people, and with other species. Keep this thought too.

For many years there has been talk of the three Rs – reading, writing and arithmetic – taken to be the cornerstone of basic schooling. These have been reconfigured into the broader concepts of literacy and numeracy. More recently, the Partnership for 21st century skills has put forward the 'four Cs' as part of its broader framework of education for our time: Creativity and Innovation; Critical Thinking and Problem Solving; Communication; and Collaboration (www.p21.org).

We can't subsume education under such simple models, but they are useful ways to remember key aspects of education as we go about our daily work, and to provide focus in our planning and deliberations. In this spirit, and drawing on what's been said before, I would argue that we should also give overt attention to the three Es – a further group of attributes we should be fostering. In the same way that we refer to competence with words as literacy, I'm suggesting three Es, all concerned with abilities:

Ecology – the ability to live sustainably – involving living responsibly to take account of other people, other species and the environment on our shared planet.

Ethicacy – the ability to make sound and ethical judgements and to act ethically; and

Efficacy – the ability to take effective action.

The three Es, which I'll elaborate on a little below, seem particularly important in our global 21st century world, although they are a repackaging of and re-focus on some timeless attributes.

Continued overleaf →

Ecology is a new term I've coined to combine three elements – home ("eco-"), study ("log-") and ability or competence ("-acy"). Ecology is the capacity to live sustainably in our planet home, with its other inhabitants – human, plant and animal. This requires an underpinning of key knowledge about our planet and the interactions between its inhabitants, but in considering the use of resources, goes beyond this to consider our lifestyle and behaviour as individuals and a species.

It is more than sustainability, because it focuses on our fellow inhabitants of the earth – human and other. It is concerned, for instance, with extinction of species and elimination of habitats not always present in discussions of sustainability. And its importance for us as educators is that it is concerned with our attributes as individuals.

What specific features would an 'ecologist' person have? How would we work to develop these in education? Developing ecology seems a key challenge with an arguably unprecedented urgency as the population rises and expectations increase. (Ecology is somewhat different from 'ecology', a term coined by the eminent biologist Garrett Hardin and defined as having a working understanding of the complexity of the world and the longterm consequences of interactions.)

Ethicity is not the formal study of ethics, or the ability to develop a well honed ethical argument in an essay or debate but the capacity and practice of making ethical judgements in daily life. It's about *doing* ethics. It involves an ability to identify that issues have an ethical element (which research indicates we should not take for granted), to analyse ethical issues involved and to think through and take appropriate action.

Critical thinking is clearly important here, and the IB Diploma's Theory of Knowledge can help. But ethicacy places an emphasis on getting things right – not only arguing persuasively or cleverly. It moves from the purely cerebral, to embrace a commitment to action, not

inherent in critical thinking. Ethicity is about doing things that are good or right, and for the right reasons. But ethicacy is not about indoctrination. In the words of the IB mission, we – and our students – need to 'understand that other people, with their differences can also be right'.

Efficacy is being able to influence events and to take effective action – getting things done. Efficacy and ethicacy go hand in hand, although of course we can be effective in the wrong direction. Ethicity determines the direction and focus of action and efficacy is concerned with how we carry it out.

Key to this is the ability to work alongside others, to influence, to share in decision-making, and, where appropriate, to exercise leadership. Efficacy helps us to express our good intentions. Taken together ethicacy and efficacy are not concerned with what we know but what we do; how we behave and act effectively.

Any such model is going to be oversimplified and incomplete.

Here, the three Es are only being aired. And, of course the underlying intentions are not new. But the three Es may help to remind us as educators that there is more to life than economic wellbeing and material success and the three Rs and the four Cs. There are some basics concerned with humanity and our life together on earth that we should always think and act upon. Taken together, the three Es represent the core of global citizenship. And, I'd suggest, nurturing these is an even greater challenge for 21st century education.

Boyd Roberts' 30 years experience of international education included being head of two international schools. Recently his work has focused on global citizenship education and grappling with the three Es. He was project director for the IB's community theme project, and is the author of Educating for global citizenship, published by IB. He initiated and oversees the International Global Citizen's Award for young people (www.globalcitizensaward.org).

'Democratic countries have a political perspective shaped by the frequency of elections: few elected politicians have the inclination or ability to take a longer view. But as educators, ours is a relatively long game. The fruits of our efforts are not always clear for years, even decades, after we have finished our work with individual students. We need to take a perspective that reflects this timescale.'

Service learning: not just for senior students

Robin Berting and Marta Vernet describe how AS Barcelona elementary school students take environmental work seriously

Students from pre-school to high school at the American School of Barcelona have been doing valuable environmental work at nearby Collserola Park since 2007. The large, beautiful park hosts a diverse array of flora and fauna, and is a major recreation area for citizens of Barcelona.

Several times a year, groups of students head off to Sant Pere Martir, the section of the park closest to the school, and carry out a wide range of environmental activities with the help of park environmentalists. ASB elementary school students are responsible for a number of tasks, but two have had the most impact on the park and the students.

The first task, tree conservation, exemplifies the value of students' work there. More specifically, after part of the Sant Pere Martir area was destroyed by a forest fire several years ago, park conservationists replanted the area. Every year since 2007, the ASB students have returned at the same time of the year to measure and record the trees' growth for park officials. They have also created and then cleaned irrigation wells around the trees and, when necessary, have watered them. Most of the trees are in great shape now.

The second important task is our elementary students taking responsibility for documenting the state of the

park. They fill out a chart provided by park officials recording damage to tables and benches; the state of water channels and trails in the picnic areas; and the condition of the several signs posted in the areas. After reporting their findings they then do what they can to improve the condition of the area: they collect garbage, clean tables and benches, and even unblock water channels or help clear overgrown paths.

The elementary students are encouraged by park officials to take their work seriously. Information they record has to be clear and legible, as well as accurate, and they have to verify it before submitting it. This kind of serious direct intervention by the students has introduced them to the fascinating world of park conservation in a realistic, meaningful way.

It has sharply heightened their awareness of the fragility of the park, has shown them that they can make a difference and, for the majority of students who have been involved since the beginning, the program has provided them with a deep sense of attachment to the park, its trees and facilities.

A fifth grade student says: "Each year when I return to Collserola with my class, I see how the trees I take care of have grown. It makes me feel good to see that what I have done."

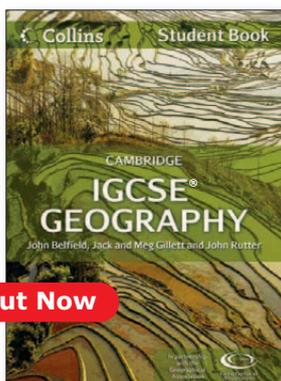
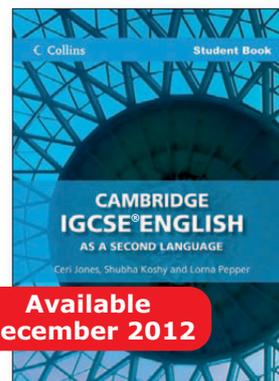
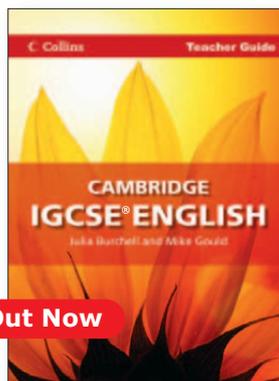
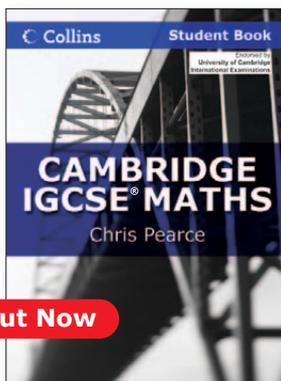
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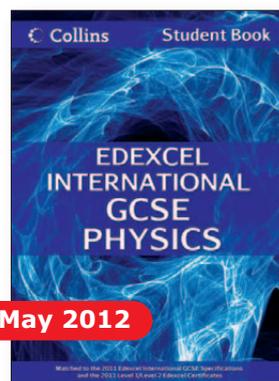
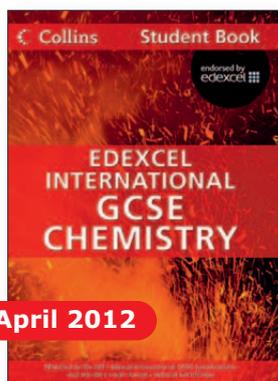
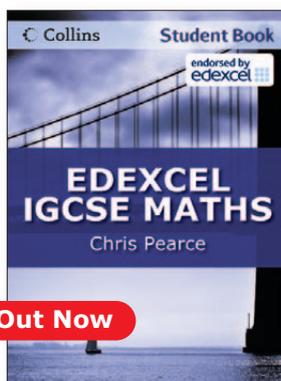


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It has been quite easy for elementary school teachers to make connections with the curriculum. They learn about measurements for math class; about plant and tree growth, erosion, and the water cycle for science class; documenting information in the charts and the reflections done afterwards go well with the language arts curriculum, whether it be in English, Spanish or Catalan. And in some cases, the physical activity matches PE curriculum! But as one teacher states, “valuable learning like this doesn’t always have to follow the curriculum...”

The project has involved a three-way collaboration between the school (administration and teachers); Can Coll, an environmental organization connected to the Collserola Park authority; and the Municipality of Esplugues de Llobregat, where both the school and the Sant Pere Martir section of the park are located.

The school provides the students, Can Coll provides

the environmental experts and collaborates with ASB teachers to come up with the activities, and the Municipality of Esplugues provides bus transportation from the school to the park.

The Collserola environmental project shows that elementary school students can do useful environmental work and develop real life skills compatible with the curriculum – all just a short distance from school!

Robin Berting is the admissions and community relations coordinator and Marta Vernet is the activities, athletics and alumni coordinator at the American School of Barcelona.

See the April 2012 edition of the *International Schools Journal* for an article by Robin Berting and Marta Vernet on institutional partnerships that enhance experiential learning in times of economic crisis.

PEOPLE & PLACES

The Levant Foundation’s \$4.3million gift to Awty International School



The Awty International School has received a commitment of \$4.3 million from The Levant Foundation in support of the school’s *Building for our Future* Capital Campaign, master plan, and the establishment of a teacher leadership and excellence fund.

Sonny Hudson, the foundation’s executive director, presented the first installment of \$1.8 million to the school in a small ceremony last January. The donation comes after the school’s board and parent community have, so far, successfully raised \$1.5 million for the campaign.

This gift is in direct support of the second phase of Awty’s master plan which includes expansion of the lower school, a new preschool building, and a new 450-space parking garage (to open later in 2012) as well as the teacher leadership and excellence fund. The purpose of this fund is to honor and motivate pedagogical excellence, as well as to acknowledge outstanding contributions of longtime faculty and staff who mentor and help develop excellence in new teachers.

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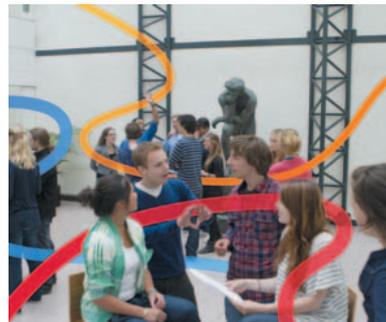
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The new ECIS membership categories

A message from Kerrie Fuller



As you know, membership runs from the 1st July each year and I wanted to use this opportunity to let you know of some important changes taking place in the next year which affects your membership:

Regular members will become known as Full members because schools in this category will have achieved the full rigorous standards met of membership and the new name reflects this more accurately.

A list of approved authorities and bodies will be used to upgrade Provisional members to Full members. We are pleased to offer Provisional schools, as well as new schools joining us, the opportunity of being fast tracked into Full membership if they have received accreditation OR have recognition from an appropriate authority such as CIE or COBIS. This longer list will ensure that the high standards of membership are still maintained but will also ensure our schools receive credit where it is due and avoid the need for membership visits.

Prospective members will be transferred into the Provisional members category. We will have one category, instead of two, containing schools that have not as yet met the required standard. Schools in this category will be required to pay a membership fee based on the number of students rather than a one-off fee as it is currently.

Affiliate and Supporting members will just be known as Affiliate members. We will combine the two categories so that all organisations and businesses wishing to promote their products and services to member schools will be known as Affiliates.

Your membership renewal pack will be emailed to you directly. Previously, schools would have been able to pick up their pack from the November conference but most are taken back to HQ and posted! From the 1st July, Heads will be emailed their membership pack including their membership certificate so that, if needed, they can be printed or otherwise stored electronically.

I will also be looking at clarifying and adding to the list of membership benefits that schools receive, such as providing more online training and development opportunities through iTunesU and electronic publications as well as promoting our ITC, ILMP and SIGS programmes which members can take advantage of at discounted rates.

As always, I'd love to hear your feedback on the membership experience, so please do email me at membership@ecis.org with your comments. I look forward to seeing you all again at the November conference in Nice!

Kerrie Fuller is the ECIS membership and communications manager.

This is My London

Through the Turbine Generation project based at the Tate Gallery in London, United World College Maastricht was able to collaborate with London secondary schools to deliver workshops and promote the UWC movement.

With thanks to funding from the Sir Peter Ustinov Foundation and the ECIS Outreach Grant, we were able to expand the initiative and developed two separate projects entitled This is My London and Our Journeys. This is My London aimed to combat prejudice and discrimination against young people from deprived backgrounds in London through an art workshop. Together with the students at a south-east London secondary school, we created a huge artwork

that incorporated a range of different media and juxtaposed the general stereotypes of London against the 'real' London according to the local students.

In Our Journeys, we focused on promoting the UWC movement and explaining how studying at UWC Maastricht had been a life-changing journey for us. With the students, we created individual collages and paintings that expressed an important journey; it was great to see how many similarities we shared with them.

We were able to highlight the achievements and successes of young people as well as promote the opportunities offered by a UWC education to our target audience who may not otherwise get the opportunity to experience such an exciting journey.



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Successful ILMP residential in Prague

At the beginning of March, ECIS and Fieldwork organised a five-day residential as part of the International Leadership and Management Programme (ILMP). The residential welcomed those finishing the programme from Cohort 7 as well as the starting group, Cohort 8.

From day one, the group were absorbed into the keynote speech which carried the theme Leadership for Learning, delivered by Graeme Scott – in essence, how does leadership impact on learning for students? The finishing cohort did an excellent job of introducing the Personal Leadership Projects to the starting cohort to give a good idea of what is expected of the programme assessment. A welcome reception for both groups started the residential off on an excellent footing with everyone networking and discussing their own leadership stories.

Day two followed on from the theme with a workshop, allowing participants to delve further into the subject and provide a context for their own schools. Some preparation work for the school visits was undertaken by the e-tutors so that the time spent on the visit could be used to best effect.

The next day the group visited The International School of Prague and the British School of Prague. Delegates were encouraged to speak to students and teachers whilst being given the grand tour so that they could get an idea of the impact of the leadership in the school on the students themselves as well as how the mission and vision of the school translates into the classroom.

Day four gave a choice of workshops: collecting and using data; or vision and values. This allowed delegates to decide which area was of most use to them. After the final workshop, entitled Looking for Learning, time was given for the group to discuss their own leadership challenges.



Howard Marshall, ILMP tutor, with Erin Jansen-Wilson.

The last day delivered a wonderful keynote on the subject of Building and Sustaining Leadership Capacity by Jim Laing, who used a clip from the film *Master and Commander* to illustrate a certain leadership style.

The delegates all remarked on what a useful learning experience the programme is and the lessons that had transformed their leadership skills for the future. We look forward to welcoming them to the next residential in London in February 2013 and giving them their completion certificates! If you would like to find out more about the ILMP programme, please go to: www.internationalleadershipandmanagementprogram.com

ECIS Early Childhood Conference in Athens

A genuine interest in the area of early childhood education was proven again through the large success of the tenth ECIS Early Childhood Conference, hosted from 16th to 18th March by the American Community Schools in Athens, Greece.

The dissemination of knowledge and the broad views on the latest research, coupled with the ability to meet, discuss and share expertise, attracted more than 200 professionals from 23 countries, from as far away as China and the US, to seize this opportunity for professional development.

The conference theme was The Changing Landscape in Early Childhood Education. Sessions revolved around different approaches to education such as: the Listening Pedagogy applied by Reggio; the holistic developmental approach; progressive literacy practices; interventions to help treat speech and communication problems; meaning making through the arts; the Tribes' approach; the powerful effect of the outdoors on children; and the importance of play in the acquisition of mathematical graphics.

Mark Levitt invited the teachers to become researcher learners. As the tendency is to give more opportunities

to the students to ask and explore, the challenge for the teachers to satisfy their curiosity grows bigger. Terry Small explained that “the brain thinks in pictures not words”, hence the importance of modeling for the students and the enormous power teachers have in shaping children's attitude about learning, self-perceptions and expectations of success.

Roma Chumak shared the research, proving that students who are exposed to more than one language become problem-solvers and should be valued for what they bring to class. She confirmed that if a child is strong in his home language he is also likely to become strong in English. So teachers must walk hand in hand and learn collaboratively with their students; they should make learning visible, build on team work and invite the students to take pride in their achievement.

Thanks to the hard work of the ECIS Early Childhood Education Committee and the staff at ACS Athens, this conference was a success. The next one will take place in 2015.

Lilly Khairallah is chair of the ECIS Early Childhood Committee.



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ECIS Service Learning Conference – Solidarity

From Thursday, 29th until Saturday, 31st March 90 students and staff from 19 International schools celebrated the fifth anniversary of the ECIS Service Learning Conference in Maastricht, The Netherlands. After Frankfurt, Lisbon, London and Amman, UWC Maastricht was pleased to organise the fifth conference.

The conference was officially opened on Thursday evening by the Major of Maastricht, Onno Hoes, Jean Vahey, executive director of ECIS, and Henk Van Hoof, chairman of the board of UWC Maastricht. They all emphasised the the importance of the development of a sustainable service learning programme in the city of Maastricht and the impact this has on the local community.

Anthony Skillicorn, The Director of Global Concerns at UWC SEA, started the conference with a keynote speech focusing on Solidarity. He ended his speech by saying: "If we can make Service meaningful students will leave our institutions committed to carrying on with Service and thus making the world a better place."

Ten schools presented examples of best practice during the next session which demonstrated both variety and vision. After an inspirational morning and a city tour of Maastricht, students and teachers debated the concept

of service learning and how it is perceived in different schools.

On Saturday morning all students and staff carried out a service project on a piece of land that is flooded every year after the winter, where the students of UWC organized a clean up together with a local organization. In total 55 bags of garbage were collected within an hour-and-a-half, with a winning team collecting 17 bags.

Perhaps the most exciting part for students and teachers at UWC Maastricht was the afternoon program whereby they organized creative reflection sessions for students and a new concept of 'service learning workshops for teachers', starting from the academic subject and linked into tutorial program.

We closed the conference with the design of a Service Learning Treaty at the government of Limburg, exactly 20 years after the Maastricht Treaty was signed there. All schools signed their Service Learning Treaty and together we walked for Earth Hour towards a better future.

Tina Vandewege is the service learning coordinator at United World College in Maastricht, the Netherlands, and the ECIS Service Learning Conference Coordinator.

ECIS Annual Conference, November 2012

Don't forget to save the date for the ECIS Annual Conference which this year will be held in Nice, France, from the 21st to 25th November. We will be updating the ECIS website with all the latest information from the 1st May, so why not keep www.ecis.org on your web favourites till then?

International Teacher Certificate (ITC) Institutes for 2012

We are pleased to announce the following dates for the ITC Institutes in 2012:

24th-26th July in Cambridge, UK.

10th-12th August in Atlanta, USA.

29th September-1st October in Istanbul, Turkey.

The ITC is a training programme designed for international teachers. It is assessed by University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) and is also recognised by the IB in place of the IB Teacher Award. The course revolves around five core standards: education in an intercultural context; teaching competencies for the international teacher; the language dimension; student transition and mobility and continuing professional development as an international teacher. If you would like to find out more about the ITC programme, go to www.internationalteachercertificate.com or email itc@ecis.org

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CELEBRATIONS 2012

May		
1st	Beltane Wheel of the Year – Maypole Dances	Pagan
15th–21st	Christian Aid	Christian
15th	International Day of Families	UN
16th	Buddha Day life and death of Guatama Buddha	Buddhist
21st	World Day for Cultural Diversity	UN
23rd	Anniversary of Declaration of the Bab	Baha'i
26th	Zartosht-No-Diso death of Zarathustra	Zoroastrian
June		
5th	World Environment Day	UN
6th	Tuen Ng dragon boat festival	Chinese
8th	World Oceans Day	UN
16th	The Prophet's Night Journey and Ascension	Muslim
16th	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan	Sikh
21st	Midsummer Solstice	Pagan
21st	Ratha Yatra dragon chariot festival	Hindu
27th	Shavuot revelation of the Torah	Jewish
29th	The Prophet's Night Journey and Ascension	Muslim
July		
3rd	Dharma Day summer festival	Buddhist
4th	Night of Forgiveness	Muslim
9th	Martyrdom of the Bab	Bahai
20th	Start of Ramadan period of fasting	Muslim
26th	Asalha Puja turning of the wheel of teaching	Buddhist
August		
1st	Lammas corn harvest	Pagan
2nd	Raksha Bandham humanity day	Hindu
9th–18th	Farvardigan souls of departed entertained	Zoroastrian
13th–16th	O-Bon spirits of the dead welcomed home	Japanese
19th	No Ruz Shenshai New Year's Day	Zoroastrian
19th	Eid u Fitr end of Ramadan	Muslim
23rd	Ulaband Chinese ancestor day	Buddhist
Sept		
Sept–Oct		
5th	Harvest Festivals	
5th	New Year's Day	Hindu
12th	Paryushan purification	Jain
17th	Rosh Hashanah Jewish New Year	Jewish
21st	International Day of Peace	UN
22nd	Autumn Equinox	Pagan
23rd	Shibun No Hi harmony and balance	Japanese
25th	Yom Kippur Day of Atonement	Jewish
30th	Zhong Qui moon festival	Chinese

A selection of special days and festivals. For further information on UN days visit the UN's Conference and Events site on Google.

Full information about festivals from the major world religions can be found in 'Festivals in World Religions' available from The Shap Working Party c/o The National Society's RE Centre, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4 AU, UK A selection of special days and festivals. For further information on UN days visit the UN's Conference and Events site on Google.

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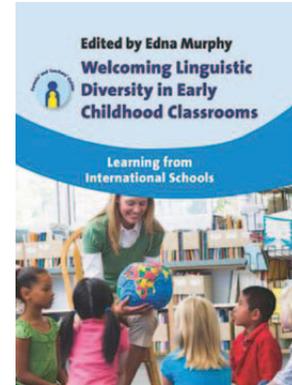
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Welcoming Linguistic Diversity in Early Childhood Classrooms

Learning from International Schools

Edited by Edna Murphy, 2011.
Published by Multilingual Matters
ISBN-13: 978-1-84769-346-4



With the world of international education continually changing and evolving, international schools across the globe are faced with the complicated reality of meeting the language and learning needs of their growing and changing population. The population of many international schools now includes students from not only a wider and more complicated range of linguistic backgrounds, but also some who are now attending school at an increasingly younger age.

Together these two elements place unique and significant demands on early years educators as they strive to help these children to develop language skills that allow them to be successful, both academically and socially, within their new learning environment.

Welcoming Linguistic Diversity in Early Childhood Classrooms takes an in-depth look at the language-based issues that international schools and international teachers now face. Written as a compilation of articles by educators working in the field of early year's education within international schools contexts, the book provides realistic accounts of the different experiences of these practitioners and the lessons that they have learnt through their engagements with young language learners.

Considering a multiple of perspectives in its approach, the book provides a range of considerations and suggestions for language development at a school level, teacher/classroom level, and at a parental level.

The book is divided into three sections that together encompass a wide range of contexts within early years education. As a prelude to the different sections that follow, the introduction, written by Fred Genesee, provides a valuable reminder of the most recent thinking and research in the area of language learning. His writing carefully raises and challenges many long-held views about the language learning of young children.

These include the commonly held beliefs that younger is considered better when it comes to learning a second language; second language learning for younger children

is natural and therefore does not require direct support; that the use of a child's first language is not necessary for the effective learning of another language; and that continued development of a child's first language can negatively affect the development of a child's second language as it impacts on the time spent on learning the second language.

The first section of the book includes a series of reflections written by experienced teachers working with second language learners in their early years settings. Although varied in their specific content and context, common themes emerge throughout the reflections of these teachers that serve as a valuable guide for thinking through practices both at a classroom and school level.

The common themes that emerge throughout these chapters include the importance of mother tongue development; the unquestionable value of building effective classroom and school communities that are culturally inclusive and that celebrate diversity; the essential role that all stakeholders play in supporting a young child's language development; and the need for teachers to really understand the language background and experiences of their students in order to be able to build a language learning plan that effectively supports them.

The second section includes chapters based on the experiences of teachers working within more specialized areas of early year's development and considers approaches that support teachers in developing the language of mathematics, as well as using music and physical education as a language learning tool within the classroom setting.

Chapters within this section also begin to focus on different models of practice for supporting students who are experiencing difficulties in developing their language skills and for using the library as a resource for supporting the language needs of the students and developing a sense of community and support for families



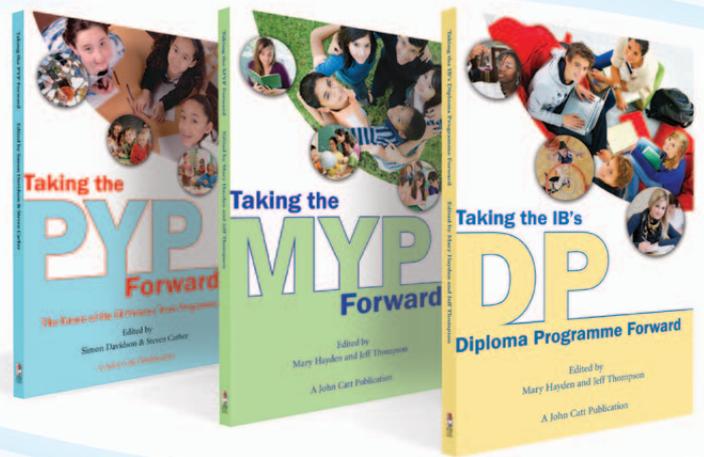
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new to the school and language of instruction. The third section takes a step back from the classroom context and begins to look at the bigger picture associated with language acquisition in schools. It provides suggestions for developing school-wide language policies and for working with parents to better understand the language diversity of the school population.

Chapters in this section also make valid and plausible suggestions regarding possible administrative and structural changes that best support the language learning model valued by the school.

Chapters vary in connection to research-based practices, with some being more of a personal recount of experiences and practices that individuals have viewed as successful and rewarding, and some more heavily supported by research in the area of second language development and language acquisition. This combination provides a level of relevance for teachers looking to be re-inspired within their classroom practice,

as well as those looking for further research to support school-based or classroom-based decisions.

For schools in the process of reviewing their language framework and policies to ensure that they best meet all the needs of their learners, *Welcoming Linguistic Diversity in Early Childhood Classrooms* is a practical resource that would provide a relevant stimulus to important conversations about language learning.

Contributing authors include Fred Genesee, Eithne Gallagher, Denise Sullivan, Patricia Parker, Carol Breedlove, Nancy Stauff, Young Soo Jang-Brumsickle, Anita Hayim-Bamberger, Maulfry Worthington, Frances Bekhechi, Dylan Yamada-Rice, Debra Rader, Stephen Luscomb, Ernestina Meloni, Jeffrey Brewster, Angela Hollington, Colleen MacDonell, Coreen Sears, Jane Scott, Sally Flanagan, Sarah Ford, Elaine Whelan, Laura Bridgestock, Emily Mueni Munyoki.

Sasha Marshall is head of the early childhood centre at The International School of Brussels, Belgium.

'A very Special School' in Africa

A Personal History of the International School of Tanganyika

Graham Mercer, 2010. Pennylane Publications

This is itself a 'very special book'. Not only does it give the story of a school but it weaves it within a narrative of events and people covering 50 years of history. Those who recognise the 'big beasts' of the international education movement who turn up in these pages will be fascinated by the story that Mercer tells.

For those who are interested in exploring the history of international education, here is a most readable, on occasions amusing, often surprising and always well written exploration of the trials and tribulations that are involved in setting up an international school in Africa.

For this is an exciting story of how a school was started in the 1960s, its growth, failures and successes. Indeed part of its interest is that Mercer is not just writing a congratulatory encomium about IST but telling of the problems, personality clashes and troubled periods as well as the points of progress, development and success. Failures of personality or administration, quarrels with the board, and local difficulties, are all told with sympathetic honesty.

Chapters are based chronologically on the period in post of each CEO so that inevitably there is analysis of the administrative style and leadership of each incumbent. Thus we read on page 9:

...histories (and schools) are more than abstractions. They are primarily concerned with human beings. With all their strengths and frailties.

We see the struggles of the early years under Michael Latham and later Lorna Sneddon and the short stay of 'Bob and Ted Who'; consolidation under Harry Potts and then 'Uncle Mike' (Mike Maybury), Niall Nelson, Bill Powell, names that will resound across the field of international education for years to come. There are also staff members who will become innovators and leaders in their own right (Kevin Bartlett, Charlye Woolman, Walter Plotkin) as IST began to attract exciting young teachers.

In telling the story of IST, Mercer is also giving a commentary on events in Africa. For parallel with the growth of the school is the growth of Tanganyika:

IST's ... evolution has taken place in a quickly expanding, intriguingly cosmopolitan city, on the tropic coast of one of the world's poorest but most interesting countries, during times when Tanzania and Africa itself were undergoing dramatic changes. (p9)

It is Mercer's awareness of the 'back story', of global events that are occurring simultaneously with the growth of the school, that gives this book not just a 'readability' not always found in such narratives, but also enhances its value in relation to the wider development of international education.

Caroline Ellwood

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Effective Data Management for Schools

Edited by David Willows and Brian Bedrick

Published by John Catt Educational Ltd

ISBN 978-1-908095-46-6

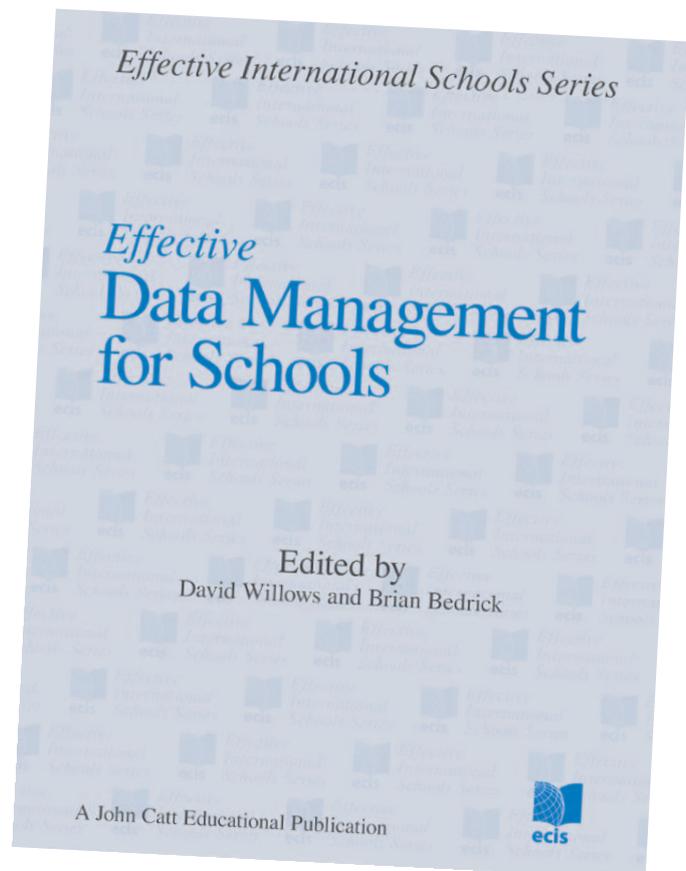
A few years ago now, when I was working in an international school in Singapore, an overzealous consultant informed the assembled faculty that he could rate the performance of any school with a single digit. He shared his math with us on a series of overhead projector transparencies. It was an unedifying moment. At this high point, or perhaps low point, in the accountability revolution, the teachers lapsed into a grudging mood that would have been hard to measure; even so, one knew this encounter had not been a success.

The use of data to measure the performance of schools has clearly produced very mixed results. However we dissect the impact of school league tables, or of inspectorates grading teachers, or of standardized tests driving funding decisions, we may agree that the reductive use of brute statistics in schools has had its casualties. As Arnie Bieber, Director of the International School of Prague, points out in his chapter in *Effective Data Management for Schools*, schools do not produce 'a completely tangible product that can be simply tabulated and analyzed'.

This practical and accessible book stakes out the much more nuanced position on the use of data in schools that has emerged in recent years. David Willows, co-editor with Brian Bedrick, starts off by admitting an initial scepticism to 'the sterile world of scientific fact', before advancing a core argument: every good professional conversation about school effectiveness must be grounded in evidence. In other words, while using data without context can be meaningless, so is making decisions without data.

Writing from different institutional perspectives, an impressive set of contributors each make the point that the judicious use of data serves to clarify, inform and justify best practice in schools. The authors collectively use a much wider definition of data than just scientific facts. A wide range of summative and formative evidence is recommended to provide context for better decision-making.

Every Head of school with a governing body composed largely of business professionals knows the galvanizing effect of a well-chosen statistic. If you want money for a new swimming pool, mention that this was the



number one parental preference in a recent survey, or drop the fact that that the Illustrious International School generated \$150,000 in additional revenue within the first year of operating its new pool, then you have everyone's attention. Hard facts have a power to convince certain important audiences that any amount of flowery language cannot match. They add punch to the story we want to tell about our schools.

Of course, there can be a Machiavellian aspect to this kind of communication. A former physics teacher colleague was fond of saying that 63% of statistics are made up on the spot. Perhaps 57% of physics teachers borrow their jokes from someone else. If so, I apologize. Although I am reasonably certain that 95% of stats used by Heads at board meetings tend to help make his or her case better.

Continued overleaf →

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MISSION STATEMENT

The British International School Istanbul provides a caring international environment, fostering cultural diversity. Individual students achieve their full academic potential, inspired to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens of the global community.

The British International School Istanbul has a worldwide reputation for the education it provides. It is a leading private international School in Turkey, offering a modified English National Curriculum, IGCSE and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. We are an academic school and we send our graduates to universities throughout the world, predominantly to the UK and USA.

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 2 ½ 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.

We are non-selective and are fortunate to be able to offer full-time Special Needs Support throughout both the Primary and Secondary departments.

We have an excellent creative arts programme and offer Music, Theatre and Visual Arts in the IB Diploma Programme. We also have a very strong PE Department boasting school teams in several sports. In addition we offer an extensive range of extra-curricular activities both after school and timetabled.

Our PTA is an active body which plays a major role in the development of our school.

BISI is a happy, caring community with Parents, Students, Staff and Leadership Teams all working together to make our school great. We have a City Campus for Pre School and Primary and a purpose built campus at Zekeriyaköy for Pre School, Primary and Secondary, just four miles from the Black Sea and close to the beautiful Belgrade Forest.

Wouldn't you like to join the BISI Community?



‘Of course, there can be a Machiavellian aspect to this kind of communication. A former physics teacher colleague was fond of saying that 63% of statistics are made up on the spot. Perhaps 57% of physics teachers borrow their jokes from someone else. If so, I apologize.’

And herein lies the challenge of using data in schools, which several of the authors explicitly acknowledge. If data is to genuinely inform our professional conversations we need to be transparent and open minded about what it may show, rather than go looking for facts that confirm our viewpoint.

To model learning, as is argued in the book, school leaders must have the courage to go live with inconvenient data, or to follow the logic of such data into new conversations about student learning. As Brian Bedrick writes in his chapter, ‘conversations about these adjustments and improvements are often more valuable than the actual data you collect’.

We are living through a communications revolution that is full of possibilities for data gathering about how our schools perform. How do we intelligently filter a potentially massive quantity of evidence? It is easy to get overwhelmed. How many schools, for example, deploy either ISA or MAP testing but somehow never find

enough time to properly synthesize what the results say about student learning?

One of the notable agreements that runs through this book is that a less is more approach works better. The use of a ‘dashboard’ report, composed of an instantly recognizable picture of just a few key data points, has become increasingly common in schools that report out to stakeholders efficiently. Another optimistic theme of the book is that to solve shared problems there are more and more opportunities to save time by collaborating on data gathering across schools.

This book serves as an excellent primer for school leaders who must juggle multiple data perspectives in their working days. I would recommend that Heads put specific chapters under the nose of colleagues working in the relevant section in your school and ask for a follow-up conversation based on this new data.

Peter Welch is Headmaster of the Istanbul International Community School, Turkey.

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The Meaning of Life

To look around myself and realize
That life needs a definition,
That love is light,
That time is darkness.

To look around myself and realize
That knowledge is power.
That power is corruption,
That corruption is hatred.

To look around myself and realize
That happiness is not statistical,
That majorities always prevail,
Yet minorities survive.

And to be sitting in this room,
With a pen in my hand,
To find that the world of thought
Is very interesting indeed...
This is the meaning of life.

Ege Acaro lu

Remembrances from Winter

Winter with all its coldness and whiteness
Reminds me of him.
Reminds me of his vibrant bark
And his furry tail that never descended
In the joy of snow.
It reminds me because winter was his favorite time.
The time when he used to abandon his warm shelter
And run to wallow in the snow.
Snow, the white flakes which are the nature of Kangal
Winter reminds me of him.

Çi dem Kökenöz

Music

Music–
Twirls of random emotions
Placed within different pitches and sounds
Crescendo, forte; piano and fortissimo–
Just to describe
Stars thrown randomly at the royal dark-blue sky
The fast rhythm of the drums,
The softness of the flute,
The harshness of the violin
And the calm melody of the brass instruments–
Just to describe the life in the city.

Emmanuella Ogunjide

Poetry from Grade 10 English, Bilkent Laboratory & International School. See also page 30.

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Know Renata

Renata graduated from Richmond in May 2011. She was accepted in to the Masters program at the London School of Economics (LSE), to undertake MSc in Media and Communications. Her strongest memory of Richmond is the international diversity on campus, the cosmopolitan environment it naturally creates and the development of a new perspective of the world around you.

Know Richmond

With students from over 100 countries, and offering degree programs that are validated in the UK and accredited in the USA, Richmond is uniquely placed to produce graduates that are both willing and able to take on the world's greatest challenges.