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“Most teachers who reach the interview stage can do the job of teaching, they have the qualifications and they have experience, but will they fit into an international school? Will they be models of international mindedness to the parents and students in the school?”

John Bastable, p18

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Marking anniversaries and looking to the future

We begin the introduction to this, the second issue of *International School*, to be published under our editorship, with a huge thank you to all who responded to the invitation to submit articles for the first issue. We were delighted with the variety of different perspectives represented in the many submissions we received, on so many different topics. Such was the size of the response we were unable to include all those relating directly to the identified theme of promoting international mindedness, and we are therefore extending that theme into this current issue.

Sharp-eyed readers may have noted that we are now generally including the author’s email address at the end of articles, which allows those readers who wish to follow up on any of the points raised in a particular contribution to make direct contact with the author. We also wish to encourage debate more widely in response to the various articles published, so if you have any thoughts arising from what you’ve read that you would like to share more generally, do please make contact with us as editors, via editor@is-mag.com.

The January 2015 issue of *International School* will be the 50th since the magazine was founded. To mark this milestone, we would like to hear about any significant international education-related anniversaries or events that are anticipated during 2015 in your own institution or organisation or, indeed, more widely. This could be a 50th anniversary of the founding of an international school (of which we know there are a number) – or it might be some other milestone or event that you feel is worth noting. The 90 years of the International School of Geneva and of Yokohama International School celebrated in the pages of this issue may be difficult to match, but other anniversaries are also worth celebrating!

In addition to noting significant anniversaries in issue 50, we have identified as a theme for a future issue – linked to looking forward in addition to reflecting on past achievement – the current and potential relationship between information technology and international education in the context of the digital age. We are therefore inviting contributions not only from those who wish to note a significant anniversary, but also from those with ideas about the use of technology in learning, teaching and administration that they would like to share with other readers.

It has been recent practice to associate particular issues of *International School* with identified themes and that is a practice we wish to continue. Such themes will be advertised in advance and, although themed articles will only ever form a part of each issue, ideas for articles you think will be of interest to readers, whatever the topic, will be well received. Submissions of between 600 and 1000 words – about good practice, interesting initiatives and/or good news, as well as provocative articles that will stimulate discussion and debate – are all welcome. And if you have an idea for an article but you aren’t sure whether it’s appropriate, we’d be happy for you to check it out with us first. We look forward to hearing from you!

Mary Hayden and Jeff Thompson
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Integrated Information Systems for International Education
Does ‘global citizenship’ really exist?

As a term, it is ‘emotionally satisfying but intellectually bogus’, argues John Godfrey

The late Nelson Rockefeller, Republican Governor of New York from 1959 to 1973 and 41st Vice President of the United States from 1974 to 1977, was mightily fond of the expression “the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God” and invoked it endlessly in his campaign speeches – so much so that reporters started referring to it as his BOMFOG speech. Wikipedia provides a pithy definition of BOMFOG: “Think content-free hot air, endlessly repeated.”

For me, BOMFOG and global citizenship are virtually interchangeable, because both make you feel good and both are essentially meaningless. ‘Citizenship’ is an idea with a long, rich, precise, and arduous history. Men and women over the ages have fought and died to establish and defend their citizenship. Citizenship is tangible and concrete, and we need to remind ourselves of its reality. But the subsequent use of ‘global’ as a modifier has the curious and perverse consequence of weakening and diminishing, not enhancing or strengthening, the challenging reality of citizenship.

In 2005 Canadian political scientist Michael Byers gave a funny talk entitled ‘Are You a ‘Global Citizen’? Really? What does that mean?’ He quoted several contemporary examples of the widespread use of the term – including, rather cheekily, a reference to Martha Piper, the President of his own university (the University of British Columbia) who had previously announced that “UBC has a responsibility to provide educational and research programs of the highest intellectual quality that will contribute to educating global citizens”.

Michael Byers begins by asking what citizenship means. “My Canadian citizenship gives me the right to reside, vote, express my opinion, associate with others, travel freely within and leave and enter this country. It does not give me
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In dismissing the concept of ‘global citizenship’ as essentially ill-considered and meaningless, I am arguing for a more rigorous alternative which is a deeper understanding of national citizenship and a more sophisticated understanding of the international world as it actually is. I do think there is a real task for internationally-minded schools in thinking through carefully what citizenship skills we need to teach our students for them not only to survive but also to thrive in the 21st Century.

Dr John Godfrey is former Headmaster of Toronto French School.
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Daring to be different

Robert Harrison reports on an inspiring conference that explored international mindedness in schools

It’s possible that international mindedness is a term that’s too small, and whose course has run. Perhaps today there are better ways to talk about this important but elusive idea, even in the very special world of international education. Many international schools have long expected students to understand and take advantage of their experience. We have long valued for our children exposure to the geographies and citizens of nation states beyond their own. However, should we now be increasingly concerned with more demanding intercultural, global, human mindsets? How can students be international if they never leave their nation or seldom interact with those of other nationalities? On the other hand, could we now be living in such a highly globalized world that the word international is redundant when used to modify education?

These days, is mindedness enough? In its defence, international remains an important word. I doubt that the concept of ‘nations’ (either as states or ethno-linguistic identities) is going away very soon. Nation states have proved to be a very useful way of organizing the world, even when they are in conflict with one another, or stand in tension with the peoples who comprise them and who exist across their borders. International education is also likely to remain important against hyper-local and sometimes quite nationalistic approaches to preparing young people for their future roles as citizens and workers. Increasing international mobility in business and dramatic global migration patterns are likely to ensure that there’s a role for schools which can help students learn to thrive in an era of intense globalization.

But I was reminded recently that if we want to keep talking about international mindedness as an educational goal, we will have to go beyond its literal, denoted meaning. At the Nordic Network of International Schools annual conference this year in Oslo, we enjoyed the even-better-than-usual benefits of sharing, supporting, connecting and celebrating the passionate commitment of international educators and their students. Teachers and school leaders took part from Oslo International School, Stockholm International School, International School of the Gothenburg Region (Sweden), Copenhagen International School, Esbjerg International School (Denmark), Trondheim International School (Norway), International School Telemark (Norway), International School of Billund (Denmark), Ressu Comprehensive School (Finland), and a new school in Iceland.

There were joyful moments, talented students, wonderful food, and exquisite culture on display. There were new friendships forged and old acquaintances renewed, and mind-expanding opportunities to learn about things near and far. There were the requisite number of “It’s a small world after all” moments; people had great fun exploring the winding pathways that had brought them together to the same gorgeous Scandinavian spring.

There were also some important challenges to the typical presentations about third-culture kids and global citizenship – some indications of how we may need to expand what it means to be internationally minded. In the way that only a well-planned but still serendipitous conference can, this one built up experiences and arguments that opened new
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Promoting international mindedness

territory, truly ‘Daring to be different’ (the conference theme):

- Bboy Spaghetti (aka Navid Rezvani), a Malaysian-Iranian-Norwegian-Brooklyn break dancer, showed us that when we talk about any kind of mindedness, we have to remember that our minds are always part of our bodies. Increasingly we are aware, as educators, of the deep interconnection of our ideas with our physical existence. We can no longer believe in a Cartesian world in which our bodies are simply an efficient transportation and life support system for the frontal cortex of the brain. All of us are holistic, living beings whose somatic experience deeply shapes our understanding and experience. Learning about the history of dance is not the same as dancing.

- Students from a middle school geography class showed us that mindfulness includes having a mind to do something. In education, we often talk about the written (or planned), taught and assessed curriculum. Yet curriculum only matters when it is enacted. Understanding international mindedness this way means that we must always get our students and ourselves ‘out there’ – inquiring, investigating, doing, serving, learning in the world that lies just beyond the classroom. The wonder of globalization is that we don’t have to leave home to enter the international dimension. These days, the world is already on our doorstep.

- Demonstrations of Maori war chants and discussions of land rights of the Sami people showed us that international mindedness includes being able to celebrate one’s own very national heritage and culture. To be fair, the cultures we create and that create us are always nuanced and dynamic. Yet we all come from somewhere(s), and we are all born in the midst of communities that initially delimit our self-understanding. To know and love one’s own traditions—warts and all—is the starting point for knowing and loving others. Before we can share our gifts, we must unwrap them for ourselves.

The weekend, altogether, added up to a poignant reminder that our lofty ideals, sophisticated academic models, and complex international politics all begin with individual people – each one struggling to construct, inhabit and thrive in a world where we can be true to ourselves, relate empathetically to others and strive continually to become more authentically human. This fundamental quest to understand and act with integrity with respect to our unique identities and shared core values is what really lies at the heart of international mindedness.

This definition goes beyond the literal meaning of international mindedness as ‘attention to the things that happen between [people from] multiple nation-states’. I believe that the prologue to the International Baccalaureate learner profile captures the insight well, identifying internationally-minded people as those who, ‘recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world’. For the moment, that definition of international mindedness is big enough for me.

Robert Harrison is Head of Middle Years Programme (MYP) Development for the International Baccalaureate.

[Email: robert.harrison@ibo.org]
International understanding doesn’t always need a journey overseas

Rachael Westgarth explains how Round Square schools are encouraging ‘intercultural’ mindedness

“The boy growing up in brotherhood with foreigners cannot help but learn to care about the rights and the happiness of at least one other nation.”

Kurt Hahn (1936) Education and Peace

Much has been written in recent years about the need to develop, through education, a sense of international mindedness in the next generation. It’s a subject close to the heart at Round Square, where our six pillars, or IDEALS, begin with international understanding as the foundation for sustained shared thinking on a global scale.

Round Square (RS) is a not-for-profit network of more than 150 schools on five continents. Our proposition is based on the theories of Kurt Hahn, who believed that schools should have a greater purpose beyond preparing young people for college and university. Together, the schools in our network share a belief in six pillars – or IDEALS – inspired by Hahn’s beliefs, which are:

- International understanding, empathy and tolerance
- Democratic governance and justice
- Environmental stewardship
- Adventure, motivating self-discovery
- Leadership, with courage and compassion
- Service to others

RS schools carry this belief into their practices and pedagogy, offering a holistic and collaborative approach to learning that develops students into well-rounded, informed, responsible, principled and confident global citizens.

Our students instigate, and engage in, practical initiatives that develop their skills and understanding – both of themselves and others – on an international scale. They are challenged to seek out issues that have resonance locally, regionally and internationally and to form their own opinions and ideas about these in the context of the RS IDEALS.

John O’Connor, Principal of Brookhouse School, has no doubt of the power of the RS approach in developing students’ understanding. “As a Round Square Member School”, he says, “Brookhouse shares a commitment to nurturing the hearts and souls of young people through a philosophy of international understanding, commitment to democratic principles, environmental stewardship, a spirit of adventure, servant leadership and hands-on experience of service to the wider community.

Brookhouse is in Kenya, where the gap between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ could not be wider. Embracing Round Square was a perfect fit 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.”

As a network, RS is internationally-minded in its approach to education and learning, which creates a strong foundation...
promoting international mindedness

for expecting the same of students. RS schools commit themselves to collaboration, working together to build and benefit from a mutually supportive network that shares resources, ideas, methods, experience and opportunities, locally, regionally and internationally. These opportunities include:

- RS service projects that connect students directly with communities where their hard work as volunteers can be of real practical benefit;
- student and teacher visits and exchanges;
- student-led conferences that celebrate cultural diversity.

In the past few years the RS international conference has been hosted in places as diverse as Canada and Thailand, the UK and Kenya, South Africa and America and, this year, in Jordan and India. “A gathering of so many students from a huge diversity of cultures really affirms the crucial part Round Square has to play in developing international and intercultural mindedness in education”, says John O’Connor. “The conferences are memorable because they are such fun, but also a revelation for the students involved as they exchange ideas and views with other students from a variety of cultures. Eventually they discover that they have so much more in common than they first thought, and that collectively they have a great responsibility for shaping the future.”

At a basic level, intercultural mindedness could be described as a realisation and understanding of different cultures, and an empathy and respect for the influence those cultures have on the beliefs and interactions of individuals. This may or may not involve large geographical distances. A snapshot of populations of some of the largest cities in the world illustrates the intercultural dynamics on our doorstep.

In this context the concept of international mindedness is perhaps an increasingly blunt instrument in describing the need to expect, recognise and appreciate inherent differences between people simply on the basis of their geographical origin.

Taken one step further, if our students are asked for the single most profound lesson they have derived from RS, an increasing number will describe intercommunity mindedness. A student from Round Square’s service project in Peru was struck by the relationships that can be built on that simple level: “It taught me how much can be gained from intercommunity service work in regards to the relationships with community members, and integration into their culture. It’s amazing how well a team can come together and bond over the shared passion for an ideal, and motivation to finish the project.”

Simple geography is of course becoming less of a distinction for the i-generation. These days we all live online, in constant communication with friends and fellow students throughout the world. But rather than stifling the face-to-face contact that we know is essential in developing knowledge and appreciation, the broader potential of on-line communication can bring increased opportunity and reason for travel. In short, international mindedness is becoming less of a leap. More of an issue, perhaps, is the need to refocus attention within our local communities where intercultural diversity is becoming the norm.

This is increasingly true for many of Round Square’s member schools. Over recent years a subtle shift has taken place in which many of the most enlightening and long-term project partnerships are not being formed across vast distances, but are happening between our schools and their very local communities. Often the greatest lesson for students is that international and intercultural understanding does not always require an overseas expedition. Sometimes they just need to walk round the square.

Rachael Westgarth is Director of Strategy and Operations at Round Square.
[Email: rachael@roundsquare.org]
Promoting international mindedness

Developing international mindedness through community dialogue

David J Condon explains how his school has sparked and harnessed debate and discussion on key topics

After years of attempts to come to terms with the concept of international mindedness, it would seem the international education community may be ready to forgo the hope of a universal definition and to focus instead on those ‘crises of engagement’ that enable our students and ourselves to ‘experience the shock of the other’ (Skelton, 2007: 388). In other words, rather than try to pin down a single meaning of this elusive term or to parse it into universally acknowledged characteristics – actions that themselves may be said to represent part of the Western epistemic orientation and thus be inadequate if not misleading – we focus our attention instead on providing experiences that help to enable students to ‘transcend the limits of a worldview informed by a single experience of nationality, creed, culture or philosophy and recognize in the richness of diversity a multiplicity of ways of engaging with the world’ (Harwood and Bailey, 2012: 156). In short, to develop international mindedness, we can focus on the promotion of critical cultural awareness.

With a 100-year history and a current enrollment of nearly 600 students from 41 different nationalities, Canadian Academy in Kobe, Japan (an IB World School) has a long tradition of celebrating cultural diversity. While some of that celebration has taken the familiar, somewhat superficial form of ‘food, festivals, and flags’, in recent years the initiation of a ‘Headmaster’s Symposium’ series has provided community members with the opportunity to engage in rich dialogue on deep and complex cultural issues. As a result, Canadian Academy (CA) has manifested its Core Value stating ‘Embracing human diversity provides opportunities for enrichment’ and, I believe, the promotion of international mindedness.

Scheduled four times throughout the school year, each symposium consists of a moderated panel discussion on a topic related to student learning, the school community, and/or differing cultural values. Generally five to eight volunteer panel members who are representative of our diverse community are chosen so that a wide range of perspectives, including those of students, are heard. While panel members are usually physically present for the symposium, there have been instances in which individual panel members participate through digital technology.

Before the event, panel members are provided with a set of guiding questions to stimulate their thinking and to provide a possible starting point for sharing their views. Each panel member begins with opening remarks lasting three to five minutes. After these initial remarks, panel members have the opportunity to follow up on what each other has said – to ask questions, make clarifications, or respond to specific remarks. After about thirty minutes of such dialogue, audience members have the opportunity to offer their own views and to respond to those of others in attendance. In addition, the events are often live-streamed so that others may participate in the discussion online.

One example of a symposium topic was ‘Culture and Identity: the CA Experience’. Held in December 2012, guiding questions for this event included the following:

1. What are the various cultures to which our CA students (and parents and teachers) belong? Is there inevitably one culture that can be said to be a person’s “home culture”?
2. How do our various community members answer the question ‘Where is your home’?
3. What is the role of language in determining cultural identities and affinities?
4. What is the ideal relationship between global perspectives and local perspectives?
5. In what ways can CA be said to be Japanese? In what ways is it international?

The purpose of these discussions is neither resolution of specific problems nor competitive debate, but greater understanding and acceptance of the various perspectives found within the community.
6. In what ways does CA promote a global perspective?
7. What else might we do to promote such a perspective?
8. What else might we do to accommodate and benefit from the diversity within our school community?

Another symposium focused on the theme ‘Cultural Interpretations of Student Success’ and featured such guiding questions as the following:

1. How do we know whether or not our students are being successful?
2. What are the different cultural perspectives within the CA community regarding what does and does not constitute student success?
3. Within your culture, is education seen as a means to an end or an end in itself?
4. What are the strengths and limitations of quantitative measures of student success such as grades, grade point averages, and standardized test scores such as MAPs, SAT, and IB Diploma scores?
5. Would a 10-point decrease in an IB Diploma point total be acceptable if it meant the student slept 20% more than s/he currently sleeps and generally felt happier?
6. How should we measure the success of our students?

The purpose of these discussions is neither resolution of specific problems nor competitive debate, but greater understanding and acceptance of the various perspectives found within the community. The Headmaster selects panel members, formulates the guiding questions, and moderates the discussions to ensure that a full range of perspectives is shared.

While no formal assessment of the effect of the symposia dialogue on participants’ level of international mindedness is conducted, informal narrative feedback clearly indicates that these conversations are, without exception, robust, lively, and meaningful. For example, one audience member recently reported “I didn’t just learn about the other cultures within our community; I learned from them. Though I’m not exactly sure how, somehow I have been changed by these conversations.” Another shared “Having an event like the Headmaster’s Symposium helps our community get to know each other on a deeper level. As we talk and share our cultural understandings, we learn that we have similarities that bind us. We also learn about our differences. Understanding each other’s similarities and differences helps us build a better community.”

One is reminded of Hurley’s assertion, referencing Benhabib (2003), that ‘living amidst complex cultural dialogues and webs of interlocution, people construct shared versions of narratives, concepts, and ideals’ (Hurley, 2008: 8). Viewed in this light, international mindedness can be seen as a socially constructed concept unique to each community that engages in dialogue on the various cultural differences found within it. At Canadian Academy, its meaning is continually being negotiated and thus it remains a vital, enriching concept.

David J Condon is Headmaster of the Canadian Academy, Kobe, Japan.
[Email: dcondon@canacad.ac.jp]
Promoting international mindedness

Why our teachers need to be internationally-minded

John Bastable says the need to recruit teachers with an international outlook is greater than ever

While recruiting teachers for international schools, international mindedness is one quality in the character of a teacher which should not be overlooked. When cultures mix, where attitudes vary, where people come together with diverse points of view, the need for culturally tolerant, flexible, broad-minded people able to see the 'bigger picture' is what will keep the school a harmonious place: a place where parents feel comfortable, their children safe and their cultural and national perspectives respected. The importance of hiring internationally minded staff should never be overlooked (Langford, 1998: 38).

Without internationally-minded teachers how can any school produce internationally-minded students? More to the point, in schools where a large number of the children are third culture kids (TCKs) how can these children be understood and properly taught without internationally-minded teachers? International mindedness is mainly 'caught' rather than 'taught'; of course an international curriculum, and the lessons themselves, can be constructed to produce situations and contain content which engender internationally minded questions and responses, but without an internationally minded mentor little may happen.

Compared with the very serious problems which arise in schools between owners, parents, board members and teachers – due to, for example, cultural misunderstanding, ignorance of local laws, and narrow mindedness – any concerns over the pedagogic skills become far less important. A school needs an interculturally aware staff to facilitate the intercultural development of its students. 'In other words, it is the people who make a school international' (Langford et al, 2002: 34).

Most teachers who reach the interview stage can do the job of teaching, they have the qualifications and they have experience, but will they fit into an international school? Will they suffer culture shock? Will they cause problems for the teams they join, the programmes schools provide and the
Most teachers who reach the interview stage can do the job of teaching, they have the qualifications and they have experience, but will they fit into an international school? Will they be models of international mindedness to the parents and students in the school?

Promoting international mindedness

parents of the school because they are not flexible enough to see things in a variety of ways? Will they be models of international mindedness to the parents and students in the school? International mindedness in this context means more than an understanding between people of different nations; international mindedness requires a commitment to model and change attitudes between individuals.

It continues to amaze many Heads when they find a new teacher in an international school has failed to realise what they are there for and to miss a major purpose of the new job – that is, to make the school work for the families and staff in its learning community and to shape their attitudes; to create students with what Gardner calls the ‘respectful mind’ (2006: 157). The students in our trust are often TCKs, they tend to speak more than one language and they are often socially sophisticated. Many need support as they feel they have no roots. Yet so many teachers go on teaching in a national context using their national curriculum pedagogy and skills as if they are at ‘home’, treating the international school as a national school which has merely been set down rather inconveniently in a foreign land. As Alexander (2000: 540) remarks, ‘pedagogy connects the apparently self-contained act of teaching with culture, structure and mechanisms of social control’. Many teachers do not adapt their pedagogy to the needs of a different kind of student, do not exploit the students’ cultural experiences and strengths, and fail to give them support in important areas of their social and emotional development.

The parents of international students tend to be highly motivated with high expectations, and often come from a different educational background from the teacher. Instead of grasping this and turning it to their advantage, many teachers treat international parents as if they are difficult and demanding. These teachers may find board members, educational providers and owners even more trying. Such teachers spend little time introducing new parents to the ethos of an international school because they do not appreciate it themselves. They fail to appreciate the need to develop new strategies, to inform their pedagogy with their new student’s previous national learning approaches (Thomas 2000: 114), or to adapt their own. They simply remain the teachers they were trained to be.

As the number of local students attending international schools continues to grow, the need for internationally-minded schools and internationally minded teachers becomes still more acute. Without international mindedness the local host nation students are also likely to fail to properly integrate and are less likely to succeed academically, or achieve their full potential. In such circumstances staff relationships may fracture socially and divisions form in the staffroom between local staff and expat staff.

A good induction programme followed up by continuous in-service programmes are essential for the creation of an internationally minded school. The production of an internationally minded student is arguably the highest achievement of the international school, the confirmation of the school’s student profile. Ambassadors for both their host country and the country(ies) of their parents, sensitive to the needs of others, patient and tolerant towards alternative views and values, peacemakers, actively seeking understanding and agreement through dialogue, these students are the internationally minded product of great schools. We need even more of them and we need internationally-minded teachers with appropriate pedagogy to support them.

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John Bastable is Principal of the International Community School, Amman, Jordan. [Email: j.bastable@ics.edu.jo]
The ‘Maid Phenomenon’ – a worrying trend for schools?

Gail Bradley says that ‘hired help’ for families can present additional challenges for teachers

An immigrant woman steers a pushchair through the crowds in a shiny new mall, carefully guiding a toddler with her other hand. Mother strolls in front, eyeing the latest designer goods. Maids in their throngs stand at the gates of a prestigious international school at the end of the day, waiting to greet their charges; children pour out and automatically throw their bags at the maids’ feet. Little conversation takes place. You might have witnessed these scenes.

It is not difficult to spot the signs of this relatively ‘new’ phenomenon: children in the charge of female foreign domestic workers, or maids as they are commonly known. For many of us in international schools, these images are becoming increasingly familiar; for some of us, they are becoming progressively more concerning.

Initially employed as domestic workers, maids often find themselves extensively used as an inexpensive and accessible child-care alternative, in many cases acting as the child’s main carer, thus performing traditional maternal duties. This practice appears to be an increasing global trend, and it is not uncommon for families, particularly those in oil-rich nations, to have several maids – sometimes one per child.

Today’s use of hired help is a ‘new’ phenomenon (Lutz, 2002). Although the servant economy has long been the norm in bourgeois society, certain factors are more recent, such as taking on a maternal role, and the fact that most present day domestic workers come from developing countries and have travelled thousands of miles overseas. Driven by absolute financial necessity, these individuals are dependent upon and beholden to their employers. Often willing to work for extremely low salaries, they sometimes endure appalling conditions in order to provide slightly better lives for themselves and their families back home.

The use of hired help is on the increase in developed countries worldwide, but amongst affluent families the increase is particularly marked. In some parts of the international schools arena, numerous students hail from the host-country economic elite, with an element of the transnational elite as far as mobile families are concerned. Greater affluence allows many in these communities to hire a posse of helpers in the form of drivers, tutors, maids and cooks. My own experience as a teacher and administrator in five very different international schools has made me aware that many families follow this escalating global trend.

One question which comes to mind is ‘Why does this practice exist?’ It might be too easy to suggest that some families do this because ‘they can’. Certainly, some host-country parents hail from affluent backgrounds, frequently due to oil and gas revenue: such wealth enables them to employ maids, drivers and other individuals who actively contribute to the division of labour in the household. It is necessary to acknowledge too that, globally, women have a changing role, with many developing careers and relying upon maids as a result. The traditional ways of life, rules and community have, to some extent, been modified.

Expatriate families, meanwhile, often have levels of disposable income which secure a luxury lifestyle, including inexpensive hired help, in many instances, both parents work. Expatriates leave behind extended families and their traditional community. Help and advice on child-rearing provided by grandma, and walks in the park organized by grandpa, are not possible. In many cases, close relatives are replaced by a series of maids from developing countries who, in turn, have often left their own families at home. In essence, the maids sometimes adopt the role of the extended family, although they may not always have the interest and emotional attachment that an extended family would normally have, and their raison d’être is purely financial (Al-Najjar, 2001). Rules of upbringing and the division of...
tasks and roles that may have been the norm for expatriates in the home country – parents and maids alike – may well be different in the new context.

However, using maids as substitute mothers incurs penalties. This is partly due to the fact that, for some children, maids frequently continue to undertake basic tasks such as bathing and carrying belongings for far longer than teachers in an international school might normally expect. Maids often take total control, which can create a dilemma for the schools. Consequences of the maid phenomenon can include (see, eg Roumani 2005 and Ehrenreich 2002):

- poor language development
- promoting ‘learned helplessness’, which could affect the child’s potential for growing into a self-reliant and responsible adult
- attachment disorders when children spend too long with maids
- poor behaviour, with a lack of clearly-defined adult roles which can lead to disrespect for parents and other adults
- children relinquishing vital skills which have consequently become unnecessary for everyday practice, and unimportant to central life in this situation
- children taking for granted that others pick up after them; thus the consequences of certain actions and behaviour are often diminished
- a belief that some individuals are worth less than others, as a result of hierarchy and general stigma attached to maids

In stark contrast, curricula from many national systems promote the acquisition of life skills, independent learning and attitudes which develop personal, social and emotional areas. Additionally, many inspection bodies seek evidence of a student’s independent thinking and sense of responsibility. Similarly, the International Baccalaureate encourages the development of international students who are inquirers, thinkers and risk-takers; who are principled, caring, open-minded and reflective, while the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) emphasizes elements in the development of young children such as personal learning, enquiring minds, respect for other nationalities and cultures, and skills to confidently face the world.

Recent small-scale research in two international schools suggested that the maid phenomenon has the potential to change children’s behaviour: differences appeared to exist between children with maids at home and those without, with implications for areas of learning amongst ‘maid-children’.

Unquestionably, in a situation where children appear to be totally dependent upon hired help, there is a critical need for international schools to help to empower them, thus enabling them to acquire independence skills for inquiry-based learning, to access the curriculum and to function appropriately in the international classroom.

References


Dr Gail Bradley is an international educator, currently working as a training specialist in a major leadership training initiative which is part of the on-going education reform programme in Abu Dhabi, UAE. [Email: cairogak@hotmail.com]

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Recently, I overheard some students having a conversation about what was the appropriate color to use when coloring drawings of people. Some students automatically went for the ‘pink’, others for the ‘light brown’ and another reached for the ‘black’. I was pleasantly surprised to overhear their discussion and conclusion about what was the correct skin color. They all agreed that “there’s no such thing as skin color”.

Students educated in an international school experience a mini-world within a confined setting. They are exposed to a plethora of world views and practices. It is our job to ensure that the opportunities and learning experiences to which they are exposed take advantage of this unique environment. It is essential that we use our students as our ‘assets’ in promoting international understanding.

Internationalism is more than the superficial recognition of cultural ‘clothes’. It stems from a deep international mindedness. A unique understanding fosters this mindset and acts as the building blocks of our own cultural lives, and the fascination, respect and desire to understand others from different backgrounds. From this springs positive interaction; a desire to understand and accommodate other views, and a willingness to take action. This is the basis of being truly international.

Tokyo International School (TIS) thrives on creating a ‘truly international’ experience for our school community. We believe that in order to foster and value internationalism there is a need to go beyond the so-called 5 Fs (food, festivals, famous people, fashion and flags). While these play an integral part in the design and decoration of cultural celebrations, they barely touch the surface of understanding the true meaning of living out ‘internationalism’ and the ‘interconnectedness’ and ‘commonality’ of all human beings.

To share a common understanding, TIS created a vision for internationalism. In 2014 teachers participated in a workshop focusing on and celebrating our own cultures,
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Students educated in an international school experience a mini-world within a confined setting. They are exposed to a plethora of world views and practices.

beliefs, curriculum, resources and the ways we continue to foster the uniqueness of our international community. Our new vision celebrates where we have come from, where we are going and the uniqueness of our school makeup.

How do we continue to create our international feel? Firstly, we use our most valuable resource: the smiling faces of our students, teachers and parents. Throughout our library we have student faces with words of welcome written in all the languages spoken in the school community. Students, parents and visitors alike move throughout the space, reading these inspirational messages in languages from all over the world. Something as simple as this reaches out to every culture. Students are amazed and respectful of their peers when they read these messages. Every bookshelf is cared for through our ‘adopt-a-shelf’ program. At the beginning of the school year many parents adopt a shelf. Their photo is attached and remains there for the year. This has helped keep our library neat but, more importantly, tells everyone that “we are readers from all over the world”.

The most important thing that a school library can offer is an abundance of authentic texts. In her TED talk, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about the danger of a single story. She describes her own experiences with books as a young girl, and the lack of personal connection she felt. We at TIS try our very best to provide texts that allow our students to see themselves (text-to-self), others (text-to-others) and the world (text-to-world). Allowing students to engage with characters who are like themselves allows them to see themselves and know that they are not alone in their own joys and concerns. Providing them with books ensures that they learn about others, learn about different cultures and learn to empathize. Learning about a world that they may face in the future prepares them to think globally. Students talk about what they read, and we believe that this is a central part of the reading experience.

Promoting the mother tongue and any additional languages is vital for language development and cultural appreciation. Our library consists of books in additional languages from all over the world. Parents and students are encouraged to add to our collection and support the units taught throughout the curriculum. Our students are encouraged to read and communicate in all languages.

The Japan Library Network is extremely strong and each year we conduct the Sakura Reading Program. Currently 30 schools participate in the program and books are chosen to make up the Sakura collection. This gives students the chance to read books that other students from different schools are also reading. The students then form teams and meet with students from other schools to engage in conversations, games and activities associated with the books. This has become known as the All Japan Book Bowl and has opened up our reading community, bringing together students from all over the world with a common goal: to share their love of literature from around the world.

TIS is developing a ‘culture bank’. New families will be asked to contribute by giving a short interview explaining their origin, what is important to them and their culture, and their children’s educational experiences. We are designing an electronic world globe, showing where our students, parents and teachers come from. The user will push buttons to activate the globe and listen to content displayed on screens. The students are already sharing their own journey through maptales, an interactive site that allows them to take others through their life journey. This has given teachers and peers an opportunity to get to know each other better.

Being truly ‘international’ is a state of mind that supports appropriate action. Knowledge of ourselves and others cuts through the ignorance and bias that can cause grievous harm to our relations with others. We hope that, through our positive outlook and teaching, we at Tokyo International School are taking a small step to equip our students with the tools needed to create a truly international world where diversity is celebrated and embraced.

John Kolosowski is International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme/Middle Years Programme Teacher Librarian at Tokyo International School, Japan. [Email: jkolosowski@tokyois.com Twitter: #johnkolosowski]
Smaller world, bigger challenges

Carol Inugai-Dixon reflects on the International Baccalaureate Peterson Symposium, held in May

The term international mindedness has been a central, if at times somewhat enigmatic, identifying characteristic of an International Baccalaureate (IB) education since the organization began with the Diploma Programme in 1968. As IB schools and programmes have grown and spread around the globe, inevitably there have been questions, reflections and discussions – sometimes heated – on what the concept really means and, furthermore, actually looks like in practice. Such questionings, discussions and the search for clearer definition continue today and were the features of the recent Peterson Symposium organized by the academic division of the IB based in The Hague. The symposium is an annual event which commemorates the valued work of Alec Peterson as the first director general of the IB (1966-77). The forum offers staff and invited guests an opportunity to listen to, and interact with, experts in a variety of fields that intersect with their work. This year’s theme was International Mindedness: smaller world, bigger challenges. One benefit from the world becoming smaller was that Alec’s son and granddaughter could both be present at the event; Henry Peterson flew in from London and Amelia Peterson had previously recorded her presentation.

A day of engaging and provocative presentations took place at The International School of the Hague, facilitated by Jane Larsson, executive director of the Council of International Schools. The presentations were interspersed with musical performances from the students and a twelfth grader’s personal reflection on her international education. On the previous day, as an introduction to the event, IB staff had been given the opportunity to challenge themselves and experience ‘Dialogue in the Dark’. In complete pitch black darkness, a group of twenty four of us participated in a two hour workshop led by three blind guides. With a sudden complete reversal of roles, sighted people became limited and disadvantaged and had to rely on the blind for security and orientation. Dr Andreas Heinecke, founder of the enterprise, later pointed out how we often miss the chance to learn from people with different backgrounds to ourselves because we too readily create assumptions which can lead to practices that exclude and discriminate. But we are all strangers somewhere, as he says, and should consider more consciously and more often why we are doing what we are doing. In his presentation on the following day, Dr Farid Panjwani, from the Centre for Research and Evaluation in Muslim Education at the Institute of Education in London, echoed and developed this idea of reaching out from our particular physical and social settings, and sense of self, and journeying to understand other perspectives. One way on this journey is to be conscious of and examine the images we hold about ourselves, as well as others, with the aim of expanding and enriching our understanding. Dr Panjwani asked us to consider what a pedagogy for this might look like and the role of aesthetics and ethics.

In questioning the purpose of a journey of international mindedness, Dr Darla Deardorff, a research scholar from Duke University, emphasized it as being vital in learning to live and work together and in addressing the pressing global challenges that confront us. One of these challenges, pointed out by the presenter Mr Robert Metzke, senior director of Philips Ecovision, is that by 2050 it is estimated there will be nine billion people on the planet. Multinational companies such as Philips are confronted with the need to understand these emerging conditions. To cope with such an increase in population requires deep social transformation that will build new behaviours as well as new technologies. These new behaviours require a broad education that reflects the values, beliefs and understandings about the interdependent, complex and fragile world in which we live.

Amelia Peterson, a researcher with the Global Education Leaders’ Program, drew our attention to the need for depth of understanding as well as breadth, and also to the importance of developing a feeling of care for our shared world that we carry with us to new situations and contexts.

Of course, in exploring such a wide concept as international mindedness, we are bound to come across conflicts and ambiguities. Although we may share common understandings, we may also differ in our interpretations and emphases. This would seem to be a necessary aspect of a concept that values difference and openness to change; but what are the implications of this for recognizing international mindedness and even assessing it? Can we assess something so slippery? How could we be sure to assess the most appropriate capabilities? – and if we can’t assess it, does it exist? Dr. Michael Singh, professor from the Centre for Educational Research at the University of Western Sydney, started the day of presentations asking such questions. They provided valuable anchors in the breakout discussions held the following day as curriculum development and assessment staff considered how international mindedness can be further integrated in the programmes, and continue to be central to an IB education.

*The IB is currently developing a guide for schools on how they may evaluate international mindedness in their own context. Schools are invited to send submissions to sumaya. alyusuf@ibo.org
Can developing global citizenship improve your whole school?

Graham Ranger, of the Council of International Schools, on the progress of a pilot programme

The definition of what constitutes an international school is increasingly fluid, and the notion of a school being in a host country is increasingly redundant in many contexts where local citizens are seeking for their children the qualities that may be developed through an internationally-focused approach to students’ learning. This marks a move away from national to global citizenship in the formal education offered in many countries. However, the ambiguity of global citizenship is expressed in its differing definitions and interpretations, and the socio-political contexts in which the term is often used (Oxley & Morris, 2013). Schools are concerned with the development of ‘global citizenship’ in our young people, defined and contextualized by the school. As a result, The Council of International Schools (CIS) is working collaboratively on a whole-school pilot basis with ten schools to co-evaluate and help expand work on developing students’ global citizenship. These pilot schools were not looking for another evaluation/ accreditation process: some were already accredited or, in the case of government schools, had in place a mandatory quality assurance programme overseen by their own regulatory authority. The focus of the work, CIS International Certification (IC), is on institutional change/school improvement, and this is where the similarity with the evaluation/accreditation process probably ends. It is deliberately and distinctively different. CIS is now embarking on the second year of the pilot with a diverse group of schools: for example, one in mainland China, working in partnership with an international school in Hong Kong, a bilingual (French/English) school in Toronto, some in the United States, some in Australia, one in England, and a bilingual (Spanish/English) school in Buenos Aires. All are CIS member schools and we can, therefore, vouch for their quality. Many, but not all, are IB World Schools, offering one or more International Baccalaureate programme(s). The work is led at school level by a leadership group, and this helps to frame the focus on how the leadership of international schooling must be assessed against the cultural considerations that shape the
leadership discourse (Dimmock and Walker, 2005:1-6).

The schools are united through wishing to focus on the power of global citizenship to act as a catalyst for whole-school development, and we have worked together to use this focus to develop the school’s ability to reflect, take action and develop, with a focus on students and their outcomes, in the broadest sense. So, how does the process work and what’s special about it?

CIS has refined the International Certification process during the two phases of its pilot through listening to the feedback given by the partner schools. The process entails:

• consulting on, and reaching by consensus, a shared, contextually-appropriate definition of global citizenship for the school community;

• providing guidance in developing and implementing plans to improve intercultural learning opportunities in the school community;

• for the leadership group overseeing the IC, taking an intercultural assessment that will measure the intercultural perspectives of school leaders and staff that influence the school’s strategy and programmes. The tool used is the Intercultural Development Inventory (http://idiinventory.com) and includes an individual online survey followed by a group debrief meeting to discuss the collective results;

• planning and overseeing seven projects which demonstrate the school’s development and achievements involving and including key stakeholders from the entire school community;

• communicating with both the school community via a blog and the wider community of CIS schools via a common, shared virtual space, encouraging networking and collaboration for mutual development; and

• planning for future developments in global citizenship.

The culmination of this work is achieved through the sharing of the seven projects:

• a review and reappraisal of the school’s Guiding Statements and their link to global citizenship;

• a whole-school project on global citizenship;

• sustainable environmental practices with reference to the school’s operating systems;

• a focus on pedagogy;

• service learning;

• how the school expands opportunities for students through global networks; and finally

• the contribution of co/extra-curricular activities.

Unlike an accreditation protocol with its focus on meeting standards, CIS uses project rubrics and criteria contained in continua, for each of three domains: leadership commitment; students’ growth; and institutional and community support. In this way, the school self-evaluates, CIS advisors join the school in a co-evaluative capacity, and there is a commitment to joint, shared, collaborative evaluation and development. Let’s hear from the first school to achieve CIS International Certification, Mentone Girls’ Grammar School in Melbourne, Australia:

The process of developing our (Strategic) Plan took into account the reality that our young people are inheriting a hyper-connected world full of inspiring realities, amazing possibilities, and unprecedented opportunities for women. However, these exciting possibilities are coupled with some incredibly daunting challenges. So, one of the most important things we can give to our students is a sense of authentic connectedness. A GREAT school teaches them this: how all things hang together, how different facts and knowledge relate to one another, how people are connected – locally, nationally, and internationally – in their daily learning, in leadership, and in life. A great school helps students consider people as three-dimensional human beings who need, want and desire the same sorts of things that they do, wherever they come from, and to realise that one’s actions have a ripple effect that can influence Wellbeing, Achievement, Values, Enterprise and Success. We call these our WAVES priorities. They are the cornerstone of our educational philosophy and drive our curriculum and the particular way in which we engage with young women.

With the importance of connections in mind, we have been developing and re-aligning our curriculum to help each Mentone girl become a remarkable woman, internationally-minded and a true global citizen. At every age from Kindergarten to Year 12, we are teaching our students about intercultural understanding and the power of authentic interactions. We are also teaching our students how to stay in tune with themselves, how to better manage their thinking, emotions and reactions, and how to ‘disconnect’.

With the confidence of self, the appreciation of others, and a broader view, they will be better equipped to meet the many challenges of their times.

Schools will, I believe, want to look increasingly deeply at how they are preparing young people for global citizenship. This project moves away from the usual approaches to school evaluation/ accreditation to evaluate against criteria in rubrics. The project-based approach offers schools choices of what they wish to exhibit and jointly evaluate in order to demonstrate students’ achievements as developing global citizens.

References


Dr. Graham Ranger is Director of School Support & Evaluation for the Council of International Schools (CIS)

[Email: grahamranger@cois.org]

[With thanks to Fran Reddan: Principal of Mentone Girls’ Grammar School]
Promoting international mindedness

An international day in a national school context

Philip Dixon on how a cultural experiment is now a fixture in his school’s calendar

Working in two large and prestigious British international schools in South-East Asia has had a strong influence on me as an educationalist, a manager and an individual. Since moving back to the UK in 2004 to take the post of Deputy Head of Kingswood Preparatory School in Bath, I have endeavoured to introduce to my current context some of the ideas I met whilst working overseas.

Kingswood Prep (KPS) is a school of over 300 primary-aged children and part of the Kingswood Foundation, which comprises an overall population of approximately one thousand students from Nursery to Year 13. Kingswood is a Methodist foundation based on Christian principles of tolerance, respect, understanding and peace. The school prospectus states that ‘We strive to create an atmosphere where all pupils learn to live together amicably, gain an awareness of others and begin to develop attitudes, values and beliefs based on Christian principles’. The school values the broad base of nationalities represented within its day and boarding community. While Kingswood does not offer international programmes, it is proud of the breadth of curriculum offered and seeks wherever possible to include an international dimension. Kingswood Senior School, for instance, has long hosted an annual MUN conference attracting participating schools from the UK, Europe and beyond.

In my first year at KPS I introduced an International Day based on a concept I had seen work well at Bangkok Patana School. Such an event, I believed, would play an important part in helping to shape the attitudes of our children in recognising and respecting the great diversity of the world in which we live. Though it would be naïve to believe that this event alone would achieve this aim, its impact has
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nevertheless been profound. Its initial success ensured that it became an annual event in the school calendar which is eagerly looked forward to by the children.

The aim of the annual KPS International Day is to help promote amongst our children respect for and tolerance of other countries, races, religions and cultures by providing them with an insight into, and understanding of, other parts of the world. It is also an opportunity for us to value the diversity of backgrounds in our school community and to celebrate our differences. In March 2014 KPS celebrated its 10th International Day. It has not been possible to replicate the scale of International Day events at Bangkok Patana School – with its more than 50 nationalities, each one having a committee of parents who oversaw how they would best present their country in a static or interactive display. Nevertheless, parents and other contacts from different countries have proved to be valuable resources in running workshops. Without exception these workshop leaders have gone to enormous lengths to make the day an educational, memorable and enjoyable experience for the children.

To insert a degree of freshness into International Day its format is tweaked a little each year. It always includes, though, a whole school assembly, and children dressing up in an international costume of their choice and circulating among workshops with a homemade ‘passport’ to the classrooms which have been transformed for the day into a number of different countries. Each year there has also been a special themed lunch. Each workshop now lasts 50 minutes, starting with an introduction to the country which is followed by one or more activities. Examples range from dance to children’s traditional games, cookery, art and craft work including jewellery and mask making, and musical and drama activities. One of my roles is to ensure in planning that there will be a balance of experiences for the children.

Classes and year groups are mixed up, and older children are given the responsibility of looking after the younger ones. Members of teaching staff accompany each group as they move from workshop to workshop, which enables the workshop providers to focus on their task without needing to worry about classroom management issues. One challenge for workshop providers is that they have to offer their workshop five times over the course of the day. I usually suggest that they plan a number of similar though not identical activities. For their own sanity, running the same activity five times can be too much!

About 40 countries have been represented over the years. When selecting the countries each year we try to include, if possible, a range of cultures and major world faiths. Workshop highlights have included playing piñata in Colombia, ribbon dancing in China, coffee making in Ethiopia, fruit carving in Thailand, kite making in Bhutan, and representatives from the Uzbek Embassy in London running an interactive workshop which involved sampling different foods from their fascinating country.

Our children will become global citizens who will hopefully contribute towards creating a world where there is greater tolerance and understanding of other peoples and nations. Education has to be the key to combating the ignorance and intolerance that have given rise to so many of the problems our world is currently facing.

I can think of no better way to conclude than to quote part of a message sent to me a few years ago by Kamal Abdel-Nour, who had led an International Day workshop on his own country, Jordan:

“Unfortunately, the sad events that take place in the Middle East, whether in Iraq or in Palestine and Israel, draw a very dark image of the region and its people. Positive attempts, such as your International Day, are important contributions to help students see the world through the eyes of other people and to develop sympathy towards other different, but reasonable ways of life”.

It is not only international schools, in my experience, that can make these important contributions to opening the minds of the global citizens of tomorrow.

Philip Dixon is Deputy Head of Kingswood Preparatory School, Bath, having previously taught in international schools in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur.

[Email: pgsd@kingswood.bath.sch.uk]
The value of guidance — a young person’s voice

Alan Beckett, of Step One, asked Luke Addison, a University of Winchester student, to write about his personal perspectives on the importance of guidance. Here is what Luke had to say...

The best way to talk about guidance is not simply to say what it is, but instead to put forward clear evidence of what the right guidance can do. If approached correctly, and handled professionally, positive guidance can have the potential to change, fix or even create whole new lives. I am keen to emphasise the importance of guidance as a whole, and the effects it can have on both parties involved in the process.

I was fortunate to experience expert guidance and really find my own feet, getting myself to a point of feeling comfortable but still with the desire to learn. Had I not been involved in educational guidance in one way or another I would not be in the position I am in now, or had the opportunities presented to me which I have had. In this article I will use examples from my own life as well as wider speculation about the positive outcomes which well-managed educational guidance can produce.

I am passionate about the importance of education for young people today, who I believe cannot just be ‘taught’ how to become the person they will grow up to be. For them it will be a journey of self-discovery, which is where focused, well-constructed guidance can come in and improve their lives, while allowing them to ask the questions they normally might not, to access easily the options available to them and to know they are not on their own in the decision-making process.

Educational counselling is focused on the guidance of students, but we continually discover that, in fact, the schools, teachers, counsellors and especially the parents also benefit. This is primarily down to the professional approaches found through guidance which leads to a growth in inspiration. With the right approach, and a well-constructed educational ‘plan’, a young person will find themselves becoming increasingly inspired to learn.

When working with young people, engaging inspiration is one of the most important factors overall. If they are not engaged in something, they will not approach it with their complete attention and capability. If a young person can be successfully encouraged to want to learn, then the future is in their hands already. This is what educational guidance is about; not only ‘shaping’ the person the young student should become, but also assisting in the creation process, keeping a careful eye on what it is that makes the young student him/herself, asking questions and encouraging detailed responses. Good educational guidance can be crucial to a young person’s intellectual growth and is a powerful tool that creates stability, honesty and forward-thinking.

Had I not been involved in educational guidance in one way or another I would not be in the position I am in now, or had the opportunities presented to me which I have had.
I personally experienced guidance last year when I was approached at a Leadership Course by members of a local (UK) Rotary Club. I had never been involved in a Rotary Club before, or in volunteering of any kind, but their approach – and the way in which they introduced themselves and then introduced me to the rest of the group – was inspirational. They were open-minded and enthusiastic about the work they do, and any question I asked was responded to honestly, drawing on real experiences. It was through working with these Rotary Club members in other activities and events, and getting directly involved with them, that I began developing my own interests and took a huge step in my career path – thanks to the guidance and support they provided.

This is my personal experience of course, but it is certainly also true more generally that students respond positively to support in becoming unique individuals, independent learners and confident decision makers. It is through awareness of the self that young people will begin to access opportunities available to them, as well as creating their own paths while maintaining an awareness of the importance of guidance, and not forgetting to ask questions along the way. One fascinating aspect of participating in educational guidance is that it is truly a two-way process; the mentor benefits as well as the mentee. Once the student understands the opportunity presented by the guidance process, he/she will engage with it and strive to reach his/her potential. The mentor can look out for signs of this early on, encouraging and motivating, while gaining experience of working with young people.

Young people are the future; they are the adults of tomorrow and we need to ensure that opportunities are provided for those who can make a difference in that future. The next generation of politicians, police officers, doctors, lawyers and teachers will come from the young people being educated today. These young people need inspiration, they need direction and they need encouragement in the tough world out there. Good teachers and guidance counsellors can inspire, by showing the way and opening horizons, showing students what is there and highlighting the exciting opportunities that lie ahead for them.

Luke Addison has recently graduated in English and Drama from the University of Winchester, UK, and is President of the Winchester Rotaract Club. ([Email: addi_570@hotmail.com](mailto:addy_570@hotmail.com)]

Alan Beckett is Chair and Founder of Step One, specialising in working with students in the international community. ([www.step1.ac](http://www.step1.ac); Email: alanbeckett@step1.ac)
Applying blended learning — a classroom experience

Emre Firat explains how he used the flex model to teach a Grade 10 maths class

As defined in Wikipedia, blended learning is 'combining Internet and digital media with established classroom forms that require the physical co-presence of teacher and students'. This definition may raise in a teacher's mind the question 'How can I apply blended learning in my classroom?' This formal education program is in fact very easy to apply. As the name suggests, all you have to do is to blend face to face classroom activities with online learning activities.

Blended learning has become a popular model over the last ten years because it meets the expectations of students from different backgrounds, students who are used to different teaching/learning approaches and methods, and students with different multiple intelligences. There are four major models for blended learning: Rotation, Self-Blend, Enhanced Virtual and Flex Model. In this article I will share details of one of my lessons in which I applied the Flex Model.

The 80-minute lesson was pre-calculus with Grade 10, and the objective was to find the sum of an infinite geometric series. The lesson was divided into four parts. In the first part, I gave the necessary instructions and explanations, and shared with the students the flow diagram (shown on page 32). After that, I told my students to open a Google Form for pre-assessment. I designed the document in such a way that whenever a student submits an answer, he/she gets immediate feedback. In this way, the students were able to see what they had missed in terms of required background knowledge, and they were able to refer to the necessary resources they could check before continuing with the new subject.

The second part of the lesson was the application of the flex model. As can be seen, there are four different modules to continue with and each module is designed in a different way. The students were free to choose the module they would like to work with. If they felt the module they chose wasn't suitable for them, they had the chance to change the module. In each module the students could choose to study individually, in pairs or in groups. The first module is the traditional way of using the textbook. The students working on this module worked with their textbooks. They studied related pages to learn sums of infinite geometric series and worked on the examples. Then they solved the exercises in the textbook and uploaded their answers to a Google Document for future evaluation. I provided them with guidance when needed, as I did with the other students working with the other modules.

The second module was the online instruction part. They were supposed to follow the resources in the Khan Academy website. Since Khan Academy resources are designed on the mastery-based method, the students were also practising what they learned. Besides, I was able to see each student's progress in the coach section of the Khan Academy website. The third module was another online instruction part. Robert College library offers lots of electronic resources for our students. In order to use the library databases, I took my class to the library and that was an interesting experience for all of us. I asked our librarian Mr Atakan Aydın for assistance and he helped the students who preferred to study with this module. The students working on this module did some research on the topic and studied the documents they found in databases. Since databases contain lots of information, I asked the students to work collaboratively to find the most useful resources, share them with each other and create a document which summarizes the topic.

The fourth module included hands-on activities to model the idea. Students cut a piece of paper into smaller and...
smaller pieces and calculated the areas of the pieces. The sum of the areas approached to a number and that was the main idea behind finding the sum of an infinite geometric series. After completing the activity they solved a set of problems from a worksheet and I collected them for future evaluation.

The third part of the lesson was a wrap-up activity. I gathered all students in a classroom inside the library and carried out a Q&A session to evaluate how much they had learned. The fourth part of the lesson was the post-assessment part, in which students completed a quiz consisting of open-ended questions. I used a Google Form which helped me to analyse each student’s progress. In the end I evaluated the lesson and considered what had gone well and what could be improved.

Things that went well included that I was able to apply different ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) standards in one lesson. Although it is sometimes difficult to implement these standards, it happens naturally with blended learning. Other positive aspects of the lesson were that students became aware of the advantage of being autonomous learners, and that students who finished their tasks earlier became my assistants. They mentored the others who were struggling with their assignments and falling behind.

In terms of what could be improved, hands-on activities took much more time than I had planned, though I was able to keep them on track with the assistance of other students. Taking students from the classroom to the library and waiting for them to get ready for the lesson was not the best use of time and, because the library is bigger than an average classroom, I had to run from one corner to another. In reflecting on what could go wrong; although the instructions are clear enough, some students might have difficulty in following them and could therefore be provided with further guidance.

Overall, however, this was an informative experience and I would encourage other teachers to consider trying the flex model or one of the other models of blended learning in their own classroom.

Emre Fırat is a mathematics teacher and Google Apps For Education Certified Trainer at Robert College, Istanbul, Turkey. [Email: efrat@robcol.k12.tr]
Moving forward with integrity

Leila Holmyard investigates academic honesty and suggests six tips to help achieve it

In the 1990s and 2000s, academic honesty was addressed predominantly through discipline policies, and the blame for cases of plagiarism or collusion was placed firmly on the shoulders of the students. With the emergence of more research on the subject has come a shift towards the understanding that students need to be educated from an early age in research and referencing skills. The International Baccalaureate (IB) Asia Pacific Conference 2014 hosted three workshops on academic honesty, all of which highlighted the growing focus on developing a culture of educational integrity in schools. Outlined below are six tips to help promote academic honesty, based on these IB workshops.

1. Develop a culture of educational integrity
   On the surface it may seem that there is a disconnect in relation to academic honesty between the values of students and those of educators. The situation is more complex, however, as was illustrated by Celina Garza, the IB Academic Honesty Manager, when she began her workshop by asking how many teachers in the room had plagiarised that week. The awkward silence and sheepish looks that followed said it all. In many schools, it seems that students are held to higher standards of academic honesty than are their teachers!
   The first step to promoting a culture of educational integrity is to develop a shared understanding of academic honesty amongst the teaching staff, through open discussion and dialogue. In fact, this shared understanding should go beyond the school gates to all community members, including parents. This will assist them to embrace their collective responsibility in upholding educational integrity values.

2. Explicitly educate students about academic honesty
   In 2005, a study by Marsden et al found that only a small proportion of academic misconduct cases arise from a deliberate attempt to gain an advantage; most of the time students plagiarise either because they misunderstand what
is acceptable, or have never been taught the skills of research and referencing. Furthermore, research undertaken in 2013 by Skaar and Hammer found that explicit education about referencing correlates with a reduction in plagiarism.

In his IB workshop the Head of the Edubridge International School, Michael Purcell, advised that education about academic honesty should begin from a young age. Simple statements such as ‘My mother helped me with this homework’ will develop an early awareness of academic honesty which can then increase in complexity as the students move through school.

3. Empower teachers through professional development
Developing confident and capable teachers conversant in the language of research and referencing is key to promoting academic honesty. One school that is making professional development about academic honesty a focus is the British International School in Ho Chi Minh City. Head Teacher Richard Dyer says “Academic honesty has to be at the very heart of education. For us at BIS, it flows naturally from our mission statement, which has the words ‘integrity’, ‘respect’ and ‘inquiry’ at the core”.

By training all teachers in the APA referencing style and the use of ‘Turnitin’, the school hopes to ensure that students receive a consistent message from their teachers about academic honesty. Students will therefore be better supported and their work can be monitored more effectively by teachers. If underpinned by a clear policy for academic honesty, professional development is a powerful tool for creating a culture of educational integrity.

4. Develop and use a policy for academic honesty
This summer the IB will release a new publication including guidelines for schools on how to write and implement a policy for academic honesty. Celina Garza said in her workshop that these guidelines will encourage schools to start the process of developing a policy by auditing their current situation regarding academic honesty.

When writing such a policy, it is vital to ensure that the processes, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Students need to understand the consequences of academic dishonesty, teachers must know what to do if they suspect academic misconduct, and the process of dealing with issues of academic dishonesty needs to be transparent. While the focus of the policy should be on promoting educational integrity, academic dishonesty cases should be dealt with consistently yet incrementally, as students mature and move up through the school.

5. Design original tasks
In the IB Position Paper on academic honesty, Jude Carroll suggests that academic misconduct can be minimised by devising original tasks for students. Unique, current and context-specific assignments require more synthesis of information and therefore reduce the ease with which existing texts can be used. Assignments with multiple aspects, such as a mind map followed by an essay, also make it more difficult for students to plagiarise. Additionally, requiring students to document the stages they go through in completing their assignment enables teachers to authenticate work more confidently, as they will have seen the writing evolve over time. This also makes it more difficult for students to commission work from others.

6. Set the bar high for students
IB students must sign a declaration stating that the coursework they submit is their own work and that they have acknowledged all of their sources. Most schools check for and address issues of academic honesty prior to the signing of this declaration, in order to protect students from the serious penalties for academic misconduct imposed by the IB – but is this setting the bar high enough for our students?

Jacques Weber, IB Diploma Coordinator at the British International School of Jeddah, argues that if we are truly to prepare students for university life and beyond, we must give them greater responsibility regarding the academic honesty of their work. Following the development of a comprehensive curriculum in research and referencing, students at his school are required to sign the academic honesty declaration when they hand in their coursework, thereby removing the safety net provided by many other schools. This may seem a radical approach, but students at the British International School of Jeddah have shown themselves to be capable of meeting the high expectations set by their school, and ex-students often comment on how well-prepared they were for academic writing compared with their peers at university.

In summary, and as illustrated by the IB workshops drawn on here, it is through sharing good practice, learning from the experiences of others and explicitly addressing academic honesty that we can ensure that our students are supported in understanding the importance of educational integrity in this digital age.

References

Leila Holmyard is Assistant Head of Sixth Form at the British International School in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam [Email: leilaholmyard@gmail.com]
TechKopila – an experiment in social media

Educational technology coach Suzy Becker explains an innovative service learning project

An experiment, you say? Well, not the scientific sort exactly. I didn’t have a hypothesis. There was no control group. In fact, to my knowledge, there wasn’t even a textbook or electronic resource to guide me through the process. I just had to go with my gut and pursue what I felt would benefit my students and our cause.

As teachers at the American International School of Zagreb we are asked to examine our curriculum and look for logical connections to service learning. What exactly is service learning, you ask? According to Cathryn Berger Kaye, an international authority on the subject:

Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

I intended to teach a unit on Communications and Social Media this year, and thought I could somehow connect it to service learning. The big experiment was to examine social media through a different lens. Previously, most of this unit had been based on cautionary guidelines such as: don’t post this, don’t share that, stay safe online, and don’t overshare. I was hoping to turn this model on its head, and allow students to discover how sharing via social media could be appropriate and used for a positive change.

These were uncharted waters for me, but I knew success hinged on connecting my students and engaging their commitment. We began looking at several successful social media campaigns for worthy causes. The students were particularly impressed by a crowdfunding campaign initiated by a young blogger named Matt Madeiro:

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet.

Using the Internet and specifically social media, Matt Madeiro managed to raise over $25,000 to buy a school bus for the children of the Kopila Valley School in Nepal. He raised awareness and garnered financial support from hundreds, if not thousands, of people he had never met.
If Matt could do it all by himself, what was to stop twelve middle school students in Zagreb from achieving a similar goal? After all, there were twelve of us and only one of him. We were curious. How did Matt do it and could we replicate his success? We were then at the next step in our service learning project. Again, according to Cathryn Berger Kaye:

Students actively research, plan, and carry out service learning projects and then use what they learn to solve real-life problems. Find the ideas and resources you need to carry out a successful service learning program and help students become actively contributing citizens and community members.

The students identified a school in Nepal, the Kopila Valley School in Surkhet, that they wanted to help. It was a school that I had a personal connection with, and happened to be the same school that Matt Madiero had helped and bought a school bus for with his social media campaign. The students made an unanimous decision to raise funds for new computers for the kids at Kopila Valley, simply because they couldn’t imagine an academic life without computers. Thus was born TechKopila: kids empowering kids!

We talked, we debated, we collaborated, we examined, and we started to develop a plan. The students took an interest survey and identified the areas of the campaign where they thought their skills could be best utilized. I developed a list of jobs I felt would be important to the success of the project, and assigned student leaders for each area based on the interest survey: website designer, Facebook manager, public relations manager, Croatian community outreach lead, Instagram and Twitter managers and, of course, a finance manager. Even though each student had a primary job in the campaign, each was also required to understand and write a press release, submit an idea for a brand name, and design a logo.

I invited guest speakers into the classroom to talk about branding, communications, video production, and graphic design. We toured the offices of Zagreb’s most popular radio stations, appeared on national TV, won a $1000 grant for service learning from the Central and Eastern European Schools Association, gave presentations to multiple organizations, learned a lot about professional marketing, communications and social media – but, most importantly, learned about ourselves and how important it is to believe in and fight for a cause bigger than yourself.

According to the students involved in the TechKopila campaign, this project has been a powerful learning experience. This is what they’ve had to say about it:

I think that this project is important because it not only helps other people in the world, but it also teaches us life lessons. It will be a memory that we will never forget. (Joris, age 12)

It makes me feel like I’m doing something important with my life. (Soo Young, age 13)

TechKopila’s goal is to raise $28,000 for a new computer lab at the Kopila Valley School. But even if we fall short of our financial goal, we – and I am certain the students will agree – feel our experiment in social media has been a success.

Suzy Becker can now be contacted at sbecker@peckschool.org
The time of the school year which teachers enjoy the most seems to come around with increasing frequency. Whichever month you choose, chances are that you have just finished writing reports, or are about to start. Reports are like mountains. We know they are there waiting to be conquered, but when their slippery slopes have been climbed the view from the top is sweet indeed.

Having been an international teacher since the Cretaceous Period, I have experienced the process in a wide variety of schools. In the early days before computers, I wrote an A4 page for each student, remembering not to include ‘silly’ or ‘stupid’ in the comments, followed by my class teacher’s summary at the end. Each one took about an hour. A carbon copy was also made by pressing firmly onto the paper with a pen. Mistakes were also faithfully copied, and the big no-no was to include a spelling mistake, or get the student’s name wrong. There was no Tipp-Ex to come riding to the rescue, so for just one mistake the whole report had to be rewritten. It could take two or three tries to get it right. Sunday evenings are definitely not the best times to do this. Writing 100 or so reports can steal whole evenings, ruin weekends, even spoil relationships, so it’s not surprising that teachers look for shortcuts. When computers arrived, with helpful ‘word processors’ and even ‘dot matrix printers’, some IT-savvy teachers realised that Copy and Paste could speed up the process, while the more traditional of us still wrote by hand and sneered at their laziness. I imagined that a handwritten comment in blue fountain pen ink, signed with a flourish, was somehow ‘better’ and more ‘professional’ than printed text. It wasn’t in the spirit of report writing to get them over and done with as soon as possible and change comments around so easily ...... or was it?

One method seemed to have the idea sorted. A numbered comment bank, which teachers updated regularly, would streamline the whole process from days into minutes. So, for example, the teacher would only have to put (for instance) 56, 104, 5, 12, 92 into a grid to have the numbers changed by magic computer dust into five paragraphs, with gender pronouns correctly added. I happily rushed through reports in this way for a few seasons. But parents grumbled that the comments were too general, fee-conscious administration listened and the system was replaced by more traditional methods, which changed the minutes back into days.

I used to stay for hours after school using my computer to write reports, and would often meet up with like-minded colleagues doing the same thing. After laughing or crying at our comments, and tutting at some of the miscreants being described, we would drown our sorrows in the local hostelry, which effectively stopped any further sensible writing, or maybe improved it. With the internet and wifi...
Most teachers are painfully aware of the official start and finish dates to report writing. They are on the school calendar from the beginning of the year, so why the agonizing delay before the first one? Psychologists call this ‘task displacement’ – but they don’t have to spend a weekend indoors writing them.

broadband it is now possible, of course, to write reports while far away from school. Never write them on a sun-drenched beach though, because sand and tanning cream mess up the keyboard, and the glare off the screen ….

Most teachers are painfully aware of the official start and finish dates to report writing. They are on the school calendar from the beginning of the year, so why the agonizing delay before the first one? Psychologists call this ‘task displacement’ – but they don’t have to spend a weekend indoors writing them. I suddenly remember other chores that just have to be done before starting. Sock drawers don’t tidy themselves you know, and when was that kettle last de-scaled, or those windows cleaned? The key thing when writing reports is to ‘maintain some momentum, take the work seriously, set small achievable targets and try to stay focussed. I would like to see greater attention to detail and instructions carefully followed…’ Do those words seem vaguely familiar?

As a child in the 1970s, my own school reports were honest, terse, critical, but straight to the point. Teachers back then didn’t mess about with platitudes, or worry about being politically correct. ‘He is a lazy boy, who deserves to be in the D stream next year’, ‘Quite good effort’, ‘Fair’. Neither my parents nor I would dare to ask for an explanation. Students now have the opportunity to comment on and discuss their teacher’s report, and suggest strategies for improvement based on their individual learning styles, etc. etc. At one school many years ago a parent, fingering a heavy gold chain rather too obviously, strongly hinted that a good report would be very useful to the student and to myself. Well, I was 25 years old and poor ….

What should the comments contain? The consensus is that they resemble a sandwich; easily-digested and positive outer layers, with a filling containing chewier and less palatable comments. It can be difficult to find suitable phrases, but the internet comes to the rescue again. There are many sites giving useful ideas on what to write. We often use a cryptic code, called ‘Teacher Speak’, trying oh-so-hard to be both honest and positive at the same time. The lively, extrovert student with a lot to say can also be high maintenance and dominate the class. We wish they would shut up and listen, but to write an accurate comment reflecting this takes time and skill. A quiet, reserved student who says nothing for the whole term can be overlooked. Writing ‘X is a quiet student, and I would like him/her to participate more during class’ just states the obvious. Quiet students tend to stay quiet, and the lively ones stay lively. Ever was it thus.

Each term, someone in the staffroom will say “There must be a better way to do this”. What they really mean is “I don’t want to do them anymore”. But as professionals, we have no choice. They are a reference point when meeting parents and can be used as a virtual warning for misbehaving students. “I’ve just written your report and your parents will soon see it”. The reply can vary from stunned silence to “Great, so can I read it?” Of course, in reality I haven’t started any report writing yet, but it reminds me I must start soon and student X has a relevant comment coming his way ….

Julian Silverton writes reports at the International School of Geneva, Switzerland.

His books “1001 Report Card Comments” and “Lazy D Stream Boy Does Good” are international best sellers.

[Email: jss229@bluewin.ch]
Who says history is a boring subject? Excited Grade five students of Ecole Mondiale World School Mumbai, aged 10 to 11 years, started their last unit of the IB Primary Years Programme Exhibition based on the theme ‘Where we are in place and time’. The central theme was the impact of the past on present society. Young students, the adults of tomorrow, were absolutely captivated by the history of India. The Mughal dynasty, Alexander the Great, democracy in India, and the impact of British rule on the social and political system of India were burning areas for inquisitive individuals and the group.

To get a first hand glimpse of Indian history, the class took a trip to the Prince of Wales Museum in Mumbai, the design of which is influenced by British architecture. Students started a discussion about the influence of the British on the present day social and political system. This was the time when elections in India for Parliament and the Prime Minster were a hot topic on the TV, in social gatherings and at home. Surprisingly, on the way back to school a lively discussion started about elections in India. Students were actively engrossed in putting across their views on the two major parties and the two main contestants to be Prime Minster. They utilised the 'why why why strategy', learnt earlier in class. They used it when the discussion turned towards India and how the Indian Prime Minister's policies will influence the global front. The two major parties in the election have different ideologies. This focused the students’ curiosity and critical thought processes on diverse issues which can impact globally. The students’ views can be influenced by their families, who come from diverse but affluent backgrounds.

Students displayed the complete culmination of the PYP in a real life context. The attributes of the learner profile were displayed, and they were knowledgeable while asking conceptual questions, aware of the present situation, very good communicators making their points confidently and collaborating effectively by listening to each other, reflective in reflecting on the current scenario, caring and open-minded. When they spoke about communal riots, a number of students talked about respecting all cultures and the
In this one and a half hour journey with my students, the real culmination of learning was evident in engagement with all the five essential elements – knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and, most important, action.

The visit helped students practise what they had learned in the PYP campaign asking people to participate, but many do not vote due to ignorance while some educated people come up with excuses to avoid voting. They came up with an action plan to ask their parents and relatives to give their vote to the party in which they believe. This discussion is very much in alignment with Mahatma Gandhi’s vision that ‘You must be the change you wish to see in the world’.

As an educator, I have heard the sentence ‘the PYP Exhibition is the culmination of learning in the PYP’ many times during discussions. In this one and a half hour journey with my students, the real culmination of learning was evident in engagement with all the five essential elements – knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and, most important, action. Our purpose of nurturing young minds who can become leaders in their respective areas, who strive to take action to create a better world, is fulfilled to some extent. This is a milestone in their learning journey related to social issues, and giving thoughtful consideration will be consolidated in the IB Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme, as all three programmes instil the attributes of the IB learner profile and inspire students to take action in the form of service to society and to become global citizens.

Mona Chaudhary is Early Years Coordinator and Assistant PYP Coordinator at Ecole Mondiale World School, Mumbai [Email: monayash.chaudhary@gmail.com]
Future-proofing for success
Andrew Wigford says international schools need to have robust teacher recruitment policies in place

Recent devastating incidents involving staff in international schools go to show just how critical the recruitment process is for any school – international schools more so, because they miss out on the safety net of national policy and protection procedures, and because of their propensity for short term employment contracts and global hires. But child protection is not the only issue for international school recruitment today. The competition for best quality teachers is becoming increasingly challenging as the market continues to boom.

As a market sector, we’re lucky. We are experiencing extensive demand, healthy profits and tremendous growth potential. Far beyond swimming pools, theatres, and high technology, the success of international schools over the past twenty years has largely been due to the reputation for high quality teaching and learning. Forecast to increase in numbers by 75% within the next ten years, the international schools sector needs to take stock now of the demands this growth will put on the one resource we depend upon most; quality staff.

Staffing is a school’s biggest investment. Typically 80% of the budget is dedicated to it, though it’s rarely given the commitment of time and resources that such investment deserves. If such an expense was assigned to a new facility for the school, imagine the planning, the time, the team of leaders and administrators assigned to support the project. So why doesn’t that happen when it comes to recruitment?

Rarely is time devoted to the planning of staff needs in line with school development, or a collective review and evaluation of staff skills, support, benefits and retention. And how many schools can honestly say they have failsafe recruitment processes – including a critical and exhaustive vetting procedure – to ensure they know that every appointment they make is as good as it can be?

Quick and cheap recruitment methods need to be replaced with a carefully planned long-term strategy that includes active marketing to teachers and a strong referral process. A close partnership with a professional recruitment consultancy can help to develop these strategies, as well as to widen the field of candidates and provide support with important vetting procedures.

Recruiting for today and the future
A well-planned recruitment strategy will help prepare a school for its staffing needs today and for the future. The key to effective and successful recruitment is for a school to be proactive rather than reactive, even when exact staffing...
needs are unknown. Placing an advert or attending a recruitment fair should be just a small part of a multi-faceted approach to recruitment.

International schools have, for the most part, lived and breathed a culture of short-term contracts. These will always have their place within a market that is built, in large part, on expatriate staff motivated by the global travel and teaching experience. But with increasing demand for skilled teachers, retention and succession strategies must now play a part in recruitment strategy. Leaders can and – as Jim Collins’ Good To Great model suggests – should be appointed from within, helped there with structured specialist training, incentives and growth plans.

Recruiting: from the outside in

A well-planned strategy should turn the recruitment process on its head and look at the school and its hiring procedures through the eyes of the candidates. For most people, a job search starts with a website, a Google search, an enquiry through leading trade associations, the advice of recruitment consultants, and word of mouth – largely through blogs and social media – from other teachers. What can a school do to ensure these sources deliver the most accurate, positive and detailed information to candidates?

Once an application has been submitted, a candidate will judge a school by the quality of its response. Some schools only reply to short-listed applicants and, unfortunately, many teachers who take time to fill out detailed application forms or write specific letters of application never receive a response. The standard of reply a candidate receives varies enormously, as does the information provided by schools. A select few make use of today’s technology to deliver positive messages about the school and what it has to offer.

All this boils down to strategic planning well before recruiting actually begins. But it’s not all about structures and systems. In our candidate-driven market, where good candidates interview with – and have their pick of – so many schools, what is the true deciding factor of the whole recruitment process? This is a question TIC regularly asks successful candidates once they’ve completed their job search. The answer is invariably not location, nor salary, nor benefits. It’s connection. It’s down to the person who represents your school throughout the selection process, the team who interview, and the contact who responds to the mundane but essential candidate questions such as ‘how cold does it get in winter?’ It’s so often the connection with each and every one of these people that helps a candidate to make their choice.

Sounds simple, but it’s frequently not valued enough by schools. And it’s this lack of value that can establish an impression of the market as a whole. One teacher from Edinburgh who recently attended a TIC ‘teaching overseas’ seminar had such a poor impression of one international school during a recruitment experience earlier in her career that she completely changed her mind about working overseas. It was only years later, with a nagging desire to travel and teach, that she had tentatively considered the possibility again.

Although, as schools, our recruitment procedures are very individual and by their very nature competitive, as one market we are collective in our reputation. It’s the collective reputation for teaching and learning that has helped the international schools market to achieve its current success. And, looking ahead, it’s our collective efforts that will help the international schools sector to position itself as a serious contender for career potential amongst the much-needed pool of skilled, experienced teachers and school leaders in such countries as the UK, Canada, USA, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa.

Through, and only through, the quality recruitment practices of individual schools, the collective spirit of the sector, and the support of our representative bodies – with such valued kite-marks as accreditations, inspections and induction year qualifications – the international schools market will, hopefully, be able to increasingly attract enough skilled teachers to feed our teacher pool.

Needless to say, it doesn’t end there. It’s a teacher pool that requires investment to ensure continued growth and retention. And that means a serious and strategic commitment to quality CPD, incentives for extended contracts, succession planning and leadership training. A collective as well as individual effort is essential here too.

Andrew Wigford spent 16 years teaching and leading in international schools before launching in 2006 Teachers International Consultancy (TIC), which specialises in personalised, professional recruitment strategy and support for international schools.

[Email: a.wigford@ticrecruitment.com]
(Re)defining inquiry for international education

Stephen Taylor urges a pragmatic approach across the educational continuum to suit all age groups

“The history of educational theory is marked by opposition between the idea that education is development from within and that it is formation from without.”

(Dewey 1938: 17)

In our mission-driven international schools we strike a unique and delicate balance between the ideals of internationalism in education for a better world and the globalist reality of a demand for success - exemplified by access to top universities. With programmes such as the International Baccalaureate Organisation’s (IBO) Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP), we are committed to delivering a high-quality, inquiry-based education, yet as students close in on the high-stakes terminal assessment of the DP, it becomes increasingly challenging to convince stakeholders of the importance of inquiry as pedagogy. To ease this tension, do we need a common definition of inquiry that works across the continuum of learning, supported by high-impact teaching practices?

A pragmatic approach to inquiry

Inquiry forms the heart of an IB education, though its meaning may not be universally understood.

The tension between inquiry-focused teaching and outcomes-focused instruction echoes the ongoing debate between progressive and traditionalist approaches to
education, yet we do not need to fall into the trap of this false dichotomy in our practices. A century ago, the same discussions were taking place, with John Dewey proposing an open, student-driven approach to inquiry and L. S. Vygotsky increasingly emphasising the role of the teacher in guiding learning and setting the foundation for inquiry. It might seem that we have not come so far in the debate since then, as we see the behaviorist/empiricist characteristics of the exam-focused high-school instructors balanced by the more cognitive/rationalist views of inquiry-focused teachers (Greeno et al, 1996). However, we now know much more about how learning takes place and how effective pedagogies can help this learning to stick.

A careful (re)definition of inquiry as ‘critical reflective thought’ (Elkjaer, 2009) may help us to bridge the gap between our internationalist ideals and their practical realities. Scriven and Paul (1987) define critical thinking as ‘the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and/or evaluating information’, a collection of command terms immediately recognisable to any IB teacher as embedded in our programmes through the top-level descriptors of many assessment rubrics. Reflection is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as ‘serious thought or consideration’, another behaviour valued by teachers at all levels of education. Elkjaer modifies her definition of inquiry further to give the pragmatic approach, which in Dewey’s sense is ‘a method to think and act in a creative (imaginative), and future oriented (ie consequential) manner’. Even the PYP, whose approach to inquiry may be perceived as more open and student-oriented, defines inquiry as ‘structured and purposeful’, through which students are engaged ‘actively in their own learning’ (IBO, 2009: 29).

**Curriculum Before Pedagogy: Making room for inquiry**

We cannot make meaningful inquiries without a foundation of worthwhile, suitably-challenging disciplinary content. As we design curriculum within our frameworks, we have the opportunity to engineer educational experiences, moments in which ‘habitual thinking and action are disturbed and [which] call for inquiry’ (Elkjaer, 2009). The curriculum we design is a selection from our culture in that ‘certain kinds of knowledge, certain attitudes and values are regarded as so important that their transmission to the next generation is not left to chance in society but is entrusted to specially-trained professionals (teachers) in elaborate and expensive institutions (schools)’ (Lawton, 1975). A curriculum packed with esoteric content, geared only towards standardised testing, is unlikely to become the ‘moving force’ that will ‘arouse curiosity (and) strengthen initiative’ (Dewey, 1938) in the learner, but we must not discount the important roles of a good foundation of disciplinary knowledge and of expert teachers. There is a personal and cultural importance to our curriculum and if we know nothing, we cannot inquire meaningfully. Although the IB’s programmes are moving to a more concept-based model, the construction of a solid, transferable conceptual understanding is built upon a scaffold of carefully-chosen
and effectively-taught disciplinary knowledge and skills (Erickson, 2002). Once we have proposed an appropriate and worthwhile core curriculum we can evaluate its ability to encourage inquiry; to invite students to think critically, creatively and with consequence. To achieve this, we need to make room for inquiry, ensuring our curriculum leaves sufficient time and space for the higher-order skills of authentic inquiry.

**Making Teaching Matter: Building a solid conceptual foundation**

Teaching matters as we ensure effective learning of foundational content and skills. Where we started as the architects of a curriculum that invites and makes room for inquiry, we need now to become the on-site contractors, the guiding hands that help students build their own factual and conceptual foundations for that inquiry. As we define inquiry as critical reflective thought, we must recognise that teaching critical thinking is notoriously difficult (Willingham, 2007), and although we might be honouring the ideals of Dewey in the construction of a programme of inquiry, our practical conceptualization perhaps aligns more with Vygotsky and his more modern counterpart: evidence.

We can employ high-impact teaching and learning strategies such as direct instruction, metacognitive techniques, formative assessment and feedback (Hattie, 2012) that ensure that students are given the raw materials (knowledge) and tools (skills) they need to enhance future learning. By acting as activators of learning, rather than simple facilitators (Hattie & Yates, 2013), we may help close ‘the Gap’ between where a learner is and where he/she needs to be. As David Asubel notes, ‘the most important single factor that influences learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly’ (in Hattie & Yates, 2013: 114), where the power of prior learning can have a positive or an interference effect. We must ensure that we do not promote misconception and that we evaluate our teaching so that the knowledge, skills and conceptual understandings that our students use for inquiry are correct. If we fail in this mission, we set up problems for future learning that are very difficult to reverse (Abdi, 2006), weakening the potential of future inquiry that builds on those conceptual understandings.

A pragmatic approach to inquiry as critical, creative, consequential and reflective thought can be implemented to suit all age-levels; these are attributes that we all want in our students. We could employ the pragmatic approach to our own practices in schools as we consider teaching and learning, curriculum and assessment, professional development and evaluation. We are all lifelong learners – let’s model that for our students.

**References**


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The Alliance for International Education (AIE) prepares for its biennial World Conference

Very soon now the Alliance for International Education (AIE) will be holding its seventh biennial conference. Following the hugely successful conferences held since its first, 2002, conference (in Geneva) and subsequently in Duesseldorf, Istanbul, Shanghai, Melbourne and Doha, this next conference will be hosted by Ecole Mondiale World School in Mumbai.

As in all previous conferences, we are expecting a stimulating and enjoyable few days of interaction between educators from all over the world who share a common interest in international education – whether that be offered in international schools, in schools offering one or more international programmes such as those of the International Baccalaureate, the International Primary Curriculum, the International Middle Years Curriculum or Cambridge International Examinations – or indeed in schools offering a national programme but encouraging the development of international mindedness and intercultural understanding through raising awareness of different ways of looking at the world and drawing on a broad range of resources.

Participants this time, again as in previous years, will be from schools, colleges and universities – coming together to share experiences, good practice and ideas arising from their common area of interest.

One exciting feature of the AIE is that, in holding its biennial conferences in a different location each time, it attracts a mix of participants – those who have attended some or all previous conferences, as well as those who are discovering the benefits of AIE conference participation for the first time, perhaps because they are based locally to the conference location, or because they have only recently heard about the AIE and have decided to find out more about the benefits to be gained from interacting and sharing with those from many different backgrounds and experiences.

If you can't join us in Mumbai, it isn't too soon to start thinking about participating in 2016!

For further information about the Alliance, and to find out more about the location and dates for the 2016 conference, see www.intedalliance.org

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International education – forthcoming conferences

**September:**
19–21: ECIS Art Conference, Gothenburg, Sweden (www.ecis.org)
26: ECIS Librarians' Conference, Waterloo, Belgium (www.ecis.org)

**October:**
10–12: Alliance for International Education Conference, Mumbai, India (www.intedalliance.org)
16–19: IB Africa, Europe and Middle East Regional Conference, Rome, Italy (www.ibo.org)
17–19: COBIS/King’s Group Student Leadership Conference, Madrid, Spain (www.cobis.org)
20–21: COBIS Conference for Teachers and Support Staff, Amsterdam, Netherlands (www.cobis.org)
31–Nov 2: EARCOS Leadership Conference, Sabah, Malaysia (www.earcos.org)

**November:**
7–8: COBIS Pupil-Centred Pastoral Care Conference, Bucharest, Romania (www.cobis.org)
7–10: FOBISIA Heads and Senior Leaders Conference, Thailand (www.fobissea.org)
19–22: ECIS Annual Conference, Nice, France (www.ecis.org)

*Any information about forthcoming international education conferences or events can be emailed to editor@is-mag.com.*
The importance of education and the attitudes engendered by exposure to the spectrum of ideas generated by human culture, exploration and intellectual endeavour is becoming ever more obvious in our troubled world – not least for the humility that develops from such encounters. Over the past few years a number of countries have been seeking to develop their science education foundations to include a broader base of accessibility, a greater emphasis on practical work and a more enquiry-based approach to learning.

Over the past year I have been involved in just such a project, fostered by the Ministry of Education in Ghana and involving the International Training and Educational Consultancy (ITEC). The project has had a two-pronged approach: over 200 schools nationwide have received equipment and resources to augment the provision for senior science classes and, subsequently, around 900 teachers and lab technicians have been trained in the use of this equipment.

More importantly, the teachers involved in this training in equipment use have discussed and been exposed to practical ways of broadening their approach to the manner of their communication with the students.

This training took place in the country’s second city, Kumasi, using labs at two well-established boarding schools (Opoku Ware School and Prempeh College). Four one-month long sessions were used, during which the Ministry seconded teachers from all districts of the country to attend the workshops. Teachers were put up in hostels for the month’s duration, and their dedication was evidenced by their willingness to be away from home in order to gain experience from the sessions. The enthusiasm and approach of the teachers to this opportunity was immense, as was their
willingness to discuss the realities of their school situation – while some came from city schools, many came from situations that were not lavishly endowed and where they were coping with class sizes of well over 40 students. These realities were revealed during the delivery of the equipment to rural areas – and indeed to schools where buildings were still being constructed. Aside from the specific scientific orientation of the workshops, the key to the whole project was the desire to bring about a paradigm shift in the education provision for students.

This project was government-sponsored and directed at local schools and national provision. It shows how national systems are seeking to develop, and generated the question in my mind as to whether one practical demonstration of international mindedness that could be developed or extended by international schools in their particular contexts could be the seeking of ways to become involved in interaction with local state schools in their vicinity. This could be carried out at a variety of levels, from student interaction to facility and resource sharing. Those parameters would need to be worked out in a local context in order to be as effective as possible.

The reflections in this short article were prompted by participation in this particular project over this past year. I do not hesitate to admit that many international schools are already practising this type of interaction. My reaction from my Ghanaian experience is to encourage them to persist and sustain their efforts.

Dr Richard Harwood is an education consultant (scientific and international education).

[Email: rickharwood@btinternet.com]
Dr Livingstone?  
You presume!

ET Ranger explores the question of balance

The mission of David Livingstone’s expedition in 1858 was to put an end to the indigenous slave trade in central Africa and to bring ‘Christianity, commerce and civilisation’. Could this be the ‘international-mindedness’ of Victorian England? In Livingstone’s case it eventually cost the lives of himself, his wife, and some of their children, and – note this – many more of his local bearers. Livingstone’s adventure was brought to my mind by news of a disaster on Mount Everest, in which an avalanche killed 16 Sherpa guides who were helping today’s adventurers to ‘find themselves’. My questions would be: ‘who gains from adventure? and who takes responsibility for the loss?’.

Some years ago one such adventurer came to the ECIS conference to tell us about his experiences in achieving his ambition to climb on Everest. His personal struggle brought about dramatic changes in his life, and this story could have inspired us to see ourselves in a fresh light, to accept challenges and to advance to a more fulfilling and productive life. But it seems that there are now over 100 bodies lying unburied on the slopes of Everest, the largest population being Sherpa. Can our profit justify their loss?

I would not attempt to justify the serial ‘adventurer’, the sort whose latest self-indulgence is the first-ever trip to the North Pole by pogo-stick, accompanied only by a camera crew, make-up artist, medical staff, scriptwriters, Press Officer, and the emergency services of six adjacent nations. I merely suggest that we should have an audited responsibility trail to teach our students to engage with the world on ethical terms, in school, at home, and on planned outings.

The decision is a matter of balance. We live in the WEIRD world – Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic – and WEIRD people sometimes seek risk because they feel everyday life is too bland. Insurance, compensation, lawsuits, and health and safety regulations reduce risk, at a cost to liberty and productivity. Extreme tourism dips a toe into a world where people live with risk. And that world, spending less on security, is cheaper to run. International companies can produce goods there at better rates, so world trade develops. The voice of realism says that this is the world we live in; get used to it or stay home.

Can we encourage our students to be winners without creating losers? Yes, this is a facile way of putting it – the Sherpas did not die in a shoot-em-up game, in the binary world of goodies and baddies, angry birds and villainous pigs. Nobody wished them any harm; in fact many of the tour companies take care that their financial gain is shared with the community. But here is an industry, extreme tourism, in which those from the rich and secure parts of the world pay to visit a fantasy realm in which they rub shoulders with people whose lives are poor and insecure. They return exhilarated, enlightened in many cases, and perhaps humbled. But on the slopes of Everest there is now an infamous trail of high-technology litter – and Sherpas, mourned but not buried.

Our actions have consequences for others at a distance, but the further away they are, the less clearly we see them. Where is our horizon of responsibility? At what distance do consequences become invisible? These are not simple questions, but we need to show students that there are choices open to us. We can adapt our lifestyles to promote sustainability or environmental balance. The growth of Fair Trade, now 10 years old, shows that many people are choosing to factor fairness into their budgets.

It may be that our students are heading for a commercial world in which risks need to be taken, in which – one hopes – unfair risk to others will be regulated by society rather than rewarded by business, but in which some activities do give personal gain at someone else’s cost. Future wolves of Wall Street need to be trained in competition while they are cubs, but where in that training is the ethical element that will equip them to distinguish Right from Enron?

Each student and each teacher faces the question of balance. Western levels of human rights are expensive, and yet they are part of the standard of living which we enjoy and advocate, and to which developing countries aspire. They come with the rising expectations of a developing economy, and they raise production costs. If our missionary activity manages to introduce better practices in one country, this will be expensive. And companies will move to another, less finicky country, where they will soon need an international school…

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**Future wolves of Wall Street need to be trained in competition while they are cubs, but where in that training is the ethical element that will equip them to distinguish Right from Enron?**
International education celebrates 90 years

George Walker looks back at the first international school

The International School of Geneva (Ecole Internationale de Genève, or ‘Ecolint’) is 90 years old. On 17 September 1924 eight children aged from six to twelve turned up at a rented chalet on the route de Florissant in Geneva and spent the day with their teachers building a hutch for a pet rabbit. Ninety years later Ecolint offers a bilingual education on three large campuses to 4,350 students of 138 nationalities, speaking 84 different mother tongues.

The story of Ecolint’s origins is familiar enough. In 1919 the Treaty of Versailles established the League of Nations in Geneva. The League, together with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the already-present International Committee of the Red Cross, built a strong international presence in Calvin’s city. This in turn created a demand for a suitable school for the children of a new breed of international civil servant, ideally a school that would reflect the same values as those promoted by the international organisations themselves.

However, the reality was rather more complex because that chalet in the route de Florissant belonged to Adolphe Ferrière and he had plans of his own for this new school. Ferrière’s passionate ambition to become a teacher had been destroyed when, at the age of twenty, he became profoundly deaf. Instead, he devoted his life to the movement known as ‘éducation nouvelle’, or progressive education, which was being developed at the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva. Ferrière and his colleagues, Edouard Claparède and Pierre Bovet, saw a rare opportunity to set up an experimental school and they lost no time in proposing a candidate, experienced in progressive education, as its first principal.

Progressive education had its roots in Rousseau’s seminal but controversial work Emile, published in 1762. Children are naturally good, insisted Rousseau, and their bad behaviour is due to the malignant influence of the surrounding environment. Progressive education, which today we associate particularly with Friedrich Froebel, John Dewey and Maria Montessori, places the child at the centre of the education process and constructs a carefully planned, active interaction with the environment that is designed to take account of the child’s stage of intellectual development.

Meanwhile, back in Geneva, another group, sympathetic to the idea of a progressive education and grateful for the support of the Rousseau Institute, was thinking about the new school from a different perspective – that of the parents. It was an impressive group, led by Arthur Sweetser, President Woodrow Wilson’s observer at the League of Nations, and it included Ludwik Rajchman, future founder of UNICEF,
The International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC) are two world class and comprehensive curricula delivering rigorous and engaging learning for children aged from 3 to 14. They provide students with the academic, personal and international knowledge, skills and understanding they really need, preparing them well for their next stage of learning.

“One of the strengths is that it is a thematic, creative curriculum but with a global perspective. I think this is essential if we are to create truly global citizens.”

– Jonathan Turner, Head of Primary, International School at ParkCity, Kuala Lumpur

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People and Places

and Fernand Maurette, head of research at the ILO. Perhaps more to the point (as will become clear later), the group also included their wives.

The combination of Sweetser’s pragmatism and Ferrière’s idealism provided the momentum for the new school. After the initial disappointment, enrolment increased rapidly and by the early 1930s had reached 200. However, it was becoming apparent that all was not well: teachers came and went at an alarming rate, dissatisfied with poor pay, challenging bilingual teaching and a lack of career prospects. An expert in progressive education recruited especially in America by Arthur Sweetser (she even had a PhD in the subject) lasted only one year. A young teacher observed:

During this period parents grew restless and felt the school lacked cohesion, a clear programme and discipline. Some began to wonder whether an international school was really possible.

and the romantic description of a former student

...300 young ones from all parts of the world and some 25 or 30 professors, a motley bunch. Then we settled into learning, not how to get rich, except in knowledge. No texts, no marks, no exams, just learning, learning, learning ...

suggests another source of difficulty. No texts, no marks and no exams might, in the hands of an experienced, inspirational teacher, provide opportunities on which to build high quality learning, learning, learning but one can easily imagine the fate of inexperienced, newly-arrived teachers left, unsupported, to their own devices. In April 1929 a group of parents presented a petition to the school’s governing board expressing concern about the school’s leadership, the lack of stability amongst the teachers and the poor preparation for national examinations. This followed complaints that had been made earlier in the year about the students’ general behaviour.

Progressive education did not seem to be working. By the late 1920s Ferrière’s influence was waning and with it the authority of his chosen principal. It was time for a change of leadership and for the appearance, centre stage, of one of the most remarkable characters in the history of international education: Marie-Thérèse Maurette.

Since the Maurettes’ arrival in Geneva and their participation in Sweetser’s inner circle of parents, Marie-Thérèse had been waiting in the wings, describing herself as ‘a worried mother and a frustrated teacher’. Educated in Paris, she had trained as a Froebel teacher in London and had opened Montessori classes in her first job back in Paris. With some reluctance (so she said, though it seems unlikely!), she agreed to take over the school’s leadership which she sustained during the next twenty, crucial years. Completely bilingual, she brought structure, she brought discipline, she brought a clear set of values and she brought an international curriculum – much of which would later influence the shape and content of the International Baccalaureate.

Although Ecolint never became an experimental school, the early influence of Ferrière and his colleagues at the Rousseau Institute ensured that many of the characteristics of a progressive education became embedded in the development of international education: co-education, student committees, a cooperative, techniques of inquiry, regular interactive assemblies, an awareness of current affairs, all summed up as experiential learning that places the child – in particular the young child – at its centre.

Maurette was a true pioneer of international education and her most important statement Educational techniques for peace. Do they exist?, published by UNESCO in 1948, is perhaps the earliest attempt to define and describe the characteristics of an international education. This remarkable document is still available and may be accessed at http://unesdoc.unesco.org (document code SS/TAIU/9).

Happy Birthday, Ecolint!

George Walker was director general of the International School of Geneva from 1991 to 1999. [Email: george.walker@ibo.org]
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PEOPLE HAVE IDEAS. ENTREPRENEURS MAKE THEM HAPPEN.
Yokohama International School (YIS) will shortly celebrate its 90th anniversary, certain to be a happy occasion for us all. The school opened its doors on 27 October 1924 with six students aged between six and twelve years, a local teacher and a rented room at the Yokohama YMCA. The timing of the opening was significant since the ideas of ‘international schools’ and ‘international education’ had germinated at a similar time in another part of the world, in Switzerland. The International School of Geneva (Ecole Internationale de Genève, or ‘Ecolint’) opened around three weeks prior to YIS,
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and the two institutions are thus regarded as the world’s first and second schools, respectively, with ‘international’ in their titles.

YIS is situated in a beautiful residential area of Yokohama, the second most populous city in Japan. Surrounded by parks and greenery, the campus overlooks the historic port that to this day remains a prominent hub for foreign trade. The campus grew rapidly in the 1950s, with new buildings added as land became available and affordable. Ninety years on, YIS has grown to some 635 students with over 90 full-time teachers spanning 15 nationalities. The student body itself is made up of 50 nationalities and this eclectic group of cultures brings to YIS a warm, family atmosphere rich in diversity and with a strong sense of community. The school continually strives to maintain an ethos built on harmony, tolerance, self-esteem, self-motivation, compassion, respect and responsibility.

It can be said that YIS stands in the vanguard of international education, continually at the forefront of creativity, innovation and the application of new concepts and techniques. The school’s mission, aims and values reflect its multicultural background, commitment to internationalism, and the desire to inspire students to become responsible global citizens.

In 1986 YIS introduced the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, with a cohort of seven students taking the full Diploma. Things have moved on since then and, presently, we have almost seventy students in grade 11 embarking on the full Diploma. In the year 2000, YIS became the first school in Japan to adopt the Reggio Emilia approach for early learners, and the following year it became the first school in the country to gain authorization to offer the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP). An innovative approach to education, Reggio Emilia is based on the principles that children must have some control over the direction of their learning, should enjoy opportunities to learn through experiences of touching, moving, listening, seeing, and hearing, have opportunities to explore material items in the world and form friendships with other children, and be provided with endless ways and opportunities to express themselves. Today, as an IB World School, YIS offers three IB programmes, having recently been authorised to offer the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) in addition to the DP and PYP.

We are extremely proud of our history and the journey through these past 90 years. Equally, we take great pride in the initiatives the school has brought on board and embraced over those years. Some recent initiatives include that in early 2012 YIS launched a new, home-grown diploma programme, the Global Citizen Diploma (GCD). Unique to this school, the YIS GCD – extending across high school and providing an optional pathway for students – was developed to complement both the high school and IB diplomas while at the same time helping to foster the skills and experiences that create globally aware and accomplished graduates. It is a diploma of recognition, recognizing the breadth and depth of the students’ many accomplishments both inside and out of school. Some 45 students have already graduated with the GCD since its inception, six of whom have reached the level of distinction.

Also in 2012, we were chosen as an IBOWS (IB Open World School) for the Asia Pacific region, engaging in a pilot project to facilitate students from non-IBDP schools gaining access to an IB experience through online DP courses. Starting the same year, we also launched our Connected Learning Community, aimed at leveraging advanced technologies and progressive teaching approaches to enhance student learning, promote collaboration, and facilitate the creation and sharing of knowledge both locally and globally. This initiative included the introduction of our 1:1 laptop program that now stretches from grade 3 to grade 12. More recently, we have been engaging in a 2:1 trial for our grade 7 students, who now have the use of not only a laptop but also an i-pad. The school continually seeks to remain at the forefront of education, through innovative pedagogy and a robust professional development program that includes regular workshops across a wide range of curriculum areas, including the technological ‘Beyond Laptops’ and ‘Flat Classroom’ initiatives. Community and service are embedded across the school, and students engage in a wide range of experiential and outreach experiences.

YIS has grown in leaps and bounds over the past 90 years, and we look forward immensely to celebrating this special milestone in the school’s history. Fifty-six seniors graduated on 7 June this year and their gift to the school, a beautifully designed flag with the inscription ‘90 Years Anniversary Donated by the Class of 2014’, has recently been hoisted. The flag will be proudly flown on a daily basis in front of the school as we approach our 90th – and beyond.

Happy birthday Yokohama International School!

Dennis Stanworth is Head of Academics at Yokohama International School
[Email: stanworthd@yis.ac.jp]
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Learning to Look – an eye-opening experience

Chris Starr on how artists have been taking part in an exciting new school project

New York art fans will recognize the name Accra Shepp. His solo exhibition of photographs entitled ‘The Islands of New York’ was on display earlier this year at the Queens Museum. He has work in the permanent collections of The Museum of Modern Art, The Victoria and Albert Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago and a host of other prestigious galleries. Numerous books and publications have featured his art photography and he has been on the faculty of well-known art schools such as Pratt, Bowdoin College, and the Lewis Center for the Arts at Princeton University.

Earlier this year, Mr Shepp was invited by the International School of Luxembourg (ISL) to participate in their Learning to Look art series. He spent a week in Luxembourg at the school, conducting workshops on photography and photographic manipulation and addressing students in a variety of age groups.

Learning to Look is the brainchild of ISL Upper School Art Teacher, Olivia Lorton and the ISL Art Department. Each month the school features a professional artist across a wide range of disciplines. The artist’s work is placed on display in common areas of the school, and the artist visits the school at least once to share their vision, career path, and techniques. The aim is to widen ISL students’ perception of where a visual arts degree can take one professionally. The series originally began with local artists in Luxembourg but is now expanding on an international scale. Past genres on display have included painting, print making, photography, etching, and graphic/surface design.

Another Learning to Look artist was American-born Anita Dore. She spoke to the students about her creative process of designing patterns for textiles and other surfaces. Ms Dore has worked as a professional art director for
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companies such as LL Bean and Maine Cottage Furniture. During all of this she has continued with her painting, photography and drawing and had various shows of her paintings in Maine and New York. Students learned from Ms Dore that one can “find inspiration in almost anything – a garden, the steam coming up from a cup of coffee, reflections of streetlights on a rainy window”.

The Learning to Look series at ISL was launched in November 2013 with the paintings of British-born Luxembourg resident JKB Fletcher. The etchings and prints of Diane Jodes were featured in December. Diane is Luxembourgish and the founder of the country’s only collective printmaking studio. Swedish-born painter Jeanette Bremin, meanwhile, offered inspiration for students throughout a cold January.

Scheduled to visit soon are ceramicist Fergal O’Hanrahan from Ireland, and English painter Ben Carter. In every case, students not only enjoy the artist’s creations; they also get to interact on a personal level with the creators themselves as they visit the school for special assemblies and workshops.

Through the work and expression of these visiting artists, more and more students at ISL are learning to look for aesthetic inspiration in the world around them.

Chris Starr is an alumnus of Woodstock International School in India, and is currently the Communications Manager/Team Leader at the International School of Luxembourg.

[Email: cstarr@islux.lu]
Congratulations, IB Educators and MYP School Leaders!

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From Shanghai to Somerset

The opening of new ‘friendship centre’ saw visitors from more than 5,000 miles away, writes Lynne O’Halloran

In November 2013 a delegation from Shanghai made their way to Somerset, UK for the official opening of a new International Friendship Centre at Haygrove School in Bridgwater. The state-funded Academy school, which teaches just over 1000 students aged 11–16, has in recent years established an exciting link with the Yew Wah International Education Foundation, one of the largest providers of international education in China. The link is evolving each year, enabling students and staff from Haygrove and Yew Wah to gain a unique experience of each other’s culture and values.

The opening ceremony was attended by local MP Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger, who emphasised the importance of international links to the local Bridgwater economy, and the value of the work being done at Haygrove School to encourage young people to understand and respect other cultures. Guest speaker Dr Mary Hayden of the University of Bath reminded the audience that “International education and the promotion of intercultural understanding are no longer the preserve of the globally mobile, but are crucial to us all”. Speaking of the special relationship between the two education partners, Dr Gary Morrison, Head of International Education Services at the Yew Wah International Education Foundation (YWIEF), told the audience it was ‘highly fortuitous’ that they had established links with Haygrove School, which he described as a ‘perfect match for our Yew Wah students’.

Mrs Karen Canham, Haygrove’s Headteacher for the last six years, believes that the school’s strong reputation rests on its commitment to the timeless values of respect and courtesy, which undoubtedly appeals to their Chinese partners. She says “It has been a great pleasure working with our Chinese colleagues to develop the International Friendship Centre and there can be little doubt that this new space will make a huge difference to all our young people”.

The International Friendship Centre is a new teaching and learning facility built in partnership with YWIEF. Each half term, Haygrove School welcomes a group of Yew Wah students through its doors to experience an ‘English education’, and it had been a long-held ambition of the
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partnership to build a bespoke facility to benefit both the visiting Chinese students and their Bridgwater peers. The number of Yew Wah students visiting the school is growing annually, with over 150 expected to step through the school’s doors this academic year.

The school recruits its own students to act as volunteer ‘Haygrove buddies’ who befriend the visiting Chinese youngsters whilst they are on the school site and help them settle into school life. The scheme has proved hugely popular and the number of Year 9 and Year 10 students wanting to get involved increases with each Chinese visit. The Chinese students attend some regular Haygrove School lessons with their buddies so that they can experience Western-style teaching. In addition, the teaching team at Haygrove work closely together to provide a cross-curricular programme of activities that enables Haygrove students to work alongside their Chinese peers on special projects to build and enhance cross-cultural understanding. The school also plans and delivers after-school and weekend activities that complement the curriculum-based programme. In addition to this packed itinerary, the Chinese students have a busy schedule of trips and visits organized by the YWIEF staff team, and spend time relaxing and reflecting on their experiences at their Yew Wah-owned accommodation in the nearby village of Chedzoy. Mrs Kirsty Collinge, Director of International Studies at Haygrove, says ‘We have been delighted at how our students have responded to working together with our Chinese visitors. It is clear that there is a strong desire for all the students to understand what experiences they share as well as how their lives differ.”

Haygrove School is committed to international education and is recognised as a centre of excellence for Modern Foreign Languages. To the already comprehensive language curriculum, which includes French, German and Spanish, has now been added Mandarin. This language was introduced in September 2013 via a partnership with The Castle School in nearby Taunton, with whom we initially shared a Mandarin teacher, Miss Xiao – making these two pioneering schools amongst the first in Somerset to offer Mandarin as part of the curriculum for all Year 7 students. Now that Mandarin is growing at both schools, Haygrove School has recruited its own teacher, Mrs Weiling Huang, who joins the teaching staff this September. At Haygrove there is also an after-school club for Year 9 students and this small group will become Haygrove’s first GCSE Mandarin cohort. Mandarin is often thought in the UK to be one of the most difficult languages to learn, but a dedicated team of determined Haygrove students mastered enough of this language in a single term to participate in the first West of England Mandarin Challenge held in Bristol. At the Challenge event, in recognition of this unique local partnership, the Lord Mayor of Bristol presented Miss Xiao with a special award for ‘the greatest contribution to developing understanding of Chinese language and culture’.

Discussions are currently ongoing to see how Mandarin teaching could be embedded more widely in the Haygrove curriculum, an initiative entirely consistent with the school’s commitment to continuing the strengthening of ties with China and, in particular, our links with staff and students of Yew Wah International Education Foundation. To date, student travel has been one-way, from Shanghai to Somerset, but recently Haygrove Headteacher Karen Canham and Assistant Head Mr Steve Wheeler visited Shanghai as guests of Yew Wah in preparation for students making the Somerset to Shanghai journey for the first time. As a result, a group of Haygrove students are now looking forward to the chance to travel to China in October this year to spend time with staff and students at the Yew Wah School in Shanghai. We hope this will be the first of many such visits – an experience of a lifetime for our students, and the opportunity to try out their new Mandarin language skills!

Lynne O’Halloran is Marketing Officer at Haygrove School, Bridgwater UK.

[Email: LO’Halloran@educ.somerset.gov.uk]
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The Pestalozzi educational experience in Zambia

Veronica Wilkinson and David Wilkinson report on the work of an expanding education centre

Children living in the more remote, generally impoverished, areas of rural Zambia often have little access to quality secondary education. In 2009, the Pestalozzi Overseas Children's Trust (POCT) took up the challenge of enabling children from the economically most disadvantaged backgrounds in such areas to expand their horizons beyond the rigidity of the rote teaching and learning that occurs in almost all Zambian classrooms, and providing the opportunity for them to put their own learning into the context of the wider world.

Pestalozzi Education Centre opened in January 2010 with the first intake into Grades 7 and 8 of only 80 young people, all fully subsidised. A selection process was set up, involving a small team of interviewers who would travel to four very remote areas. Children in their final year of primary education who had proved themselves to be academically outstanding were chosen, but only after a rigorous investigation of the financial circumstances of the parents.

This is an exciting time, for the school is being built stage-by-stage as student numbers grow. The number of day scholars has begun to increase strongly so that over 300 students in total now attend. The attraction for local parents to send their children to the Pestalozzi Education Centre is that the approach to learning is based strongly on the philosophy of Johann Pestalozzi that, in his own words, should involve an education of the 'Head, Heart and Hands'.

Our own involvement is to work with teachers at the school to encourage them to see their role in this context and to put it into effect, not only in the classroom but also in all aspects of school life. The larger world is not forgotten!

As the Zambian curricula are very restricted in their
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content, we faced a challenge. How could we bring the wider world into the classroom, so that students could relate local events to what was happening elsewhere? Their horizons needed broadening beyond Zambia’s borders. A current affairs programme was introduced: students are required to inform themselves of international news and a weekly quiz is held to see how much they know.

Games were invented. The students embraced the idea of teasing each other with questions on geography. Then the competition became fierce, with questions exchanged between them ranging from capital cities of little heard-of countries to longest or widest rivers, everyone trying to outdo the others with the level of difficulty as time passed. A student never knows when he or she will be pounced upon by a peer whilst moving between classes with a question such as ‘What is the capital of Kyrgyzstan?’ or ‘Where is Kyrgyzstan?’

Wherever possible, when a lesson has a local topic it is expanded to a world context, and cross-curricular lessons are the norm. The students no longer regard their lessons ‘in a box’, but appreciate knowing that what they learn in history, for instance, expands to at least two other subjects. Teachers, too, have found that co-operating to introduce a topic is a pleasure. As an example, the biology teacher took his class on a field trip to a dairy farm, and his lesson then centred on various types of milk. This was followed by an economics lesson on the cost of transporting the finished product, the packaging, shelf life, and so on. Next came the home economics lesson that, of course, picked up the theme of milk quite nicely and expanded it to include butter, cream and cheese. In that lesson, various cheeses from around the world were discussed.

What is most pleasing is the way in which a holistic approach to learning has been taken up. Results obtained in the national examinations have shown that the highest
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level of results can be obtained without a concentration on rote learning. In the first three years of results, a 100% pass rated has been achieved and the school is obtaining overall standards in the national examinations that places it in the top handful of schools in Lusaka province.

Such success has not been achieved at the expense of a wider educational experience. Students have performed outstandingly in a variety of sports, with the girls' volleyball team winning the Provincial competition and both boys and girls winning individual events in the athletics competitions at national level. Arts and cultural events have also highlighted the talents of the students, and the school has a wide-ranging service programme; the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme has begun in the present year. Residential scholars all have a small piece of land on which to grow vegetables to help the village become self-sufficient. Skills training is also important: students learn how to sew so that they can make their own uniforms as well as sheets and curtains, and some assist a cobbler and have learned to make their own shoes.

We've managed to obtain a donation that has enabled us to purchase a class-set of laptops. The students themselves can now expand the lessons as they research their homework on the internet.

One of our biggest concerns was to break the rote teaching and learning cycle. Given that most Zambian schools have more than 60 students in a class, teachers are trained to rote teach in teacher training college. PEC, however, has a policy of a maximum 25 students per class. The concept of active teaching and learning, handouts, worksheets and the teacher not spending the lesson with his back to the class, writing endlessly on the board for everyone to copy, was a hard habit to break. Slowly but surely, though, the teachers' minds turned to new ways of teaching a topic, covering aspects of the required, official texts whilst also using Internet sources to introduce new and international ideas: this has given both the teaching and learning a different and far more interesting flavour.

The school is slowly becoming Pestalozzi in practice as well as in name!

Dr Veronica Wilkinson is an Educational Consultant, an Examiner for the IB Diploma and a governor of two international schools. [Email: wilkinsonv@gmail.com]

Dr David Wilkinson is an Educational Consultant and a governor of two international schools, and was the founding head of two of the United World Colleges. [Email: davidwilkinson696@btinternet.com]
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Science in the spotlight
Beth Coombes reports on a student forum that is growing in size and stature

As the 56th London International Youth Science Forum reached its end in August 2014, it was clearer than ever that Youth Science continues to play a major role on the global education agenda. In 2014 this long-standing event welcomed participants from 64 countries, the most ever, and perhaps as importantly attracted the attention of its highest ever number of professional and industry bodies. The increased support and involvement of organisations including The British Council, European Patent Office and The Royal Society of Chemistry shows that LIYSF is a vital platform for developing those who will be at the forefront of our major scientific discoveries in the coming decades.

The themes and speaker list this year included a diverse and dynamic range of experts from the science world, bringing together Professor Sir Roy Anderson (Rector of Imperial College London), Professor Peter Jenni (one of the founding fathers of the ATLAS collaboration, which today comprises some 3,200 scientists in 177 institutions in 38 countries), Professor Lesley Yellowlees (immediate past president of the Royal Society of Chemistry) and Professor Dame Carol Robinson (University of Oxford) – as well as many more.

Richard Myhill, Director of LIYSF commented: “Science innovation is a key tool for economic recovery and we must invest in, and extend, opportunities to science students both at home and abroad wherever possible. The challenges we face are ever-growing, and the need to stimulate and promote science education is vital for maintaining economic competitiveness.”

Industry visits form a huge part of the LIYSF programme, and in 2014 delegates were able to visit a series of facilities including Oxford and Cambridge University departments, the University College London Jill Dando Institute of Security and Crime Science, The National Physical Laboratory, and many more. Students will also have the opportunity to visit some key centres of industry including the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy, Airbus and Rolls Royce.

LIYSF offers a cutting-edge residential programme which runs across July and August each year, attracting young scientists between the ages of 17-21 from all over the world. Most attend as winners of national and international science prizes or competitions. Over two weeks, students board at Imperial College London and embark on a world-class programme of lectures, with access to research centres, laboratories and leading education institutions. What sets LIYSF apart, and what fuels interest in the programme from around the world, is its unique approach in not pitching students in competition with each other. LIYSF is an event designed to spur debate, to advance learning and understanding of the scope of science, and to encourage students to examine their specialisms while socialising with others who share their passions. Most other science events on offer to talented young students are prize-based, and do not allow for the same relaxed learning environment or shared best practice as is found at LIYSF.

Each year the UK Prime Minister gives the Forum’s welcome address – another nod to the credibility of the programme. Student participants have often gone on to base their career choices on the wealth of knowledge they can tap into at LIYSF, and the opportunity they have to examine the benefits of wide-ranging scientific career opportunities. Importantly, students make lasting, international friendships from their time in London. LIYSF offers an exclusive opportunity to participate in an international event which brings together some of the world’s leading minds and learning experiences. The modern world presents new challenges and scientific advancements continue to increase. Students who attend LIYSF are the thinkers of today and they will be the driving force behind moving science forward in the future.

Former delegates who shared their thoughts on participating in LIYSF include Sai Maithili Jayanthi from the UK, who said that “LIYSF has been such a valuable opportunity for me; it has helped me in making my career choice and has taught me new ways of looking at science and technology”. George Kettle from Australia spoke of what his time at LIYSF meant to him: “It felt incredible to be part of LIYSF. I have never met so many like-minded people in one place”, while Kayleigh Maxwell from Canada added “Through LIYSF, I got the chance to collaborate with so many young scientists from around the world that I would not otherwise have met”.

For further information about LIYSF, see www.liysf.org.uk or follow @LIYSF on Twitter.
This book was written in response to the growing popularity in America of the ‘gap year’ and offers ‘a systematic study’ of how a gap year assists students both as scholars and as world citizens. It is concerned with students who take part in structured programmes of volunteer work, not those who take time out to roam exciting foreign parts. The raw material for the study was based on the narratives of 180 students from Britain who had experienced a gap year through a UK provider organisation. There were also in-depth face-to-face interviews with 31 students, and analysis of the end-of-year reports of 400 participants. Some parents were also interviewed. O’Shea uses this material extensively in the first part of the book to provide narratives illuminating how the gap year experience relates to a student’s view of the world, relationships with others and perception of themselves.

The motivations for a student deciding on a gap year are illustrated and discussed. The author notes with some surprise that students were less involved in ideas of altruism than in seeking new experiences: ‘a life time opportunity’. Interesting from the point of view of school counsellors and possibly the curriculum in the UK is the point that a large number of students want not just ‘time out’ but ‘time out from study’. They are rejecting ‘the academic treadmill’, and a ‘narrow focus on career preparation’.

A whole chapter is devoted to ways in which the gap year is seen as ‘life changing’, promoting resilience, emotional maturity and self-confidence. Possibly the most interesting section of the book is the comments of students on how their experiences led to changes in self-perception. It should also be noted that O’Shea is robust in his discussion of the difficulties faced by some students, particularly those with mental health disorders. Similarly the development of relationships, including those of a sexual nature, are discussed frankly.

In the second part of the book O’Shea develops the theme by exploring how students grow both personally and as cosmopolitan citizens. To illustrate this development there is discussion of how the gap year experience is part of a process of ‘meaning making’ and development of empathy, and various links are made to the theories of transformational learning. O’Shea states in the Introduction that

“The challenges of our time demand an educational system that can help young people to become citizens of the world. We need our students to be smart, critical and innovative thinkers but also people of character who use their talents to help others.”

If there are limitations to this study they arise from the base of the research being a limited group of British students whom O’Shea admits are mainly ‘middle class’. International school teachers may also feel that, for whatever reason, there is a lack of awareness shown of the ideas and pioneering curriculum of the international school sector, particularly in relation to service learning and thinking skills. Sadly there seems to be no awareness at all of the ideas and ideals of international curricula or the innovative work of the International Baccalaureate.

Nevertheless, throughout the study O’Shea is aware of the educational potential of the gap year and teachers, international or not, are likely to have no hesitation in agreeing with his final statement that:

*a clear message …… is that we should begin to consider gap years for their educational potential – not just to improve individual wellbeing but to facilitate civic development in ‘ways the world needs’*

Dr Caroline Ellwood is Editor of the International Schools Journal (ISJ).
[Email: CarolineEllwood@ecis.org]
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