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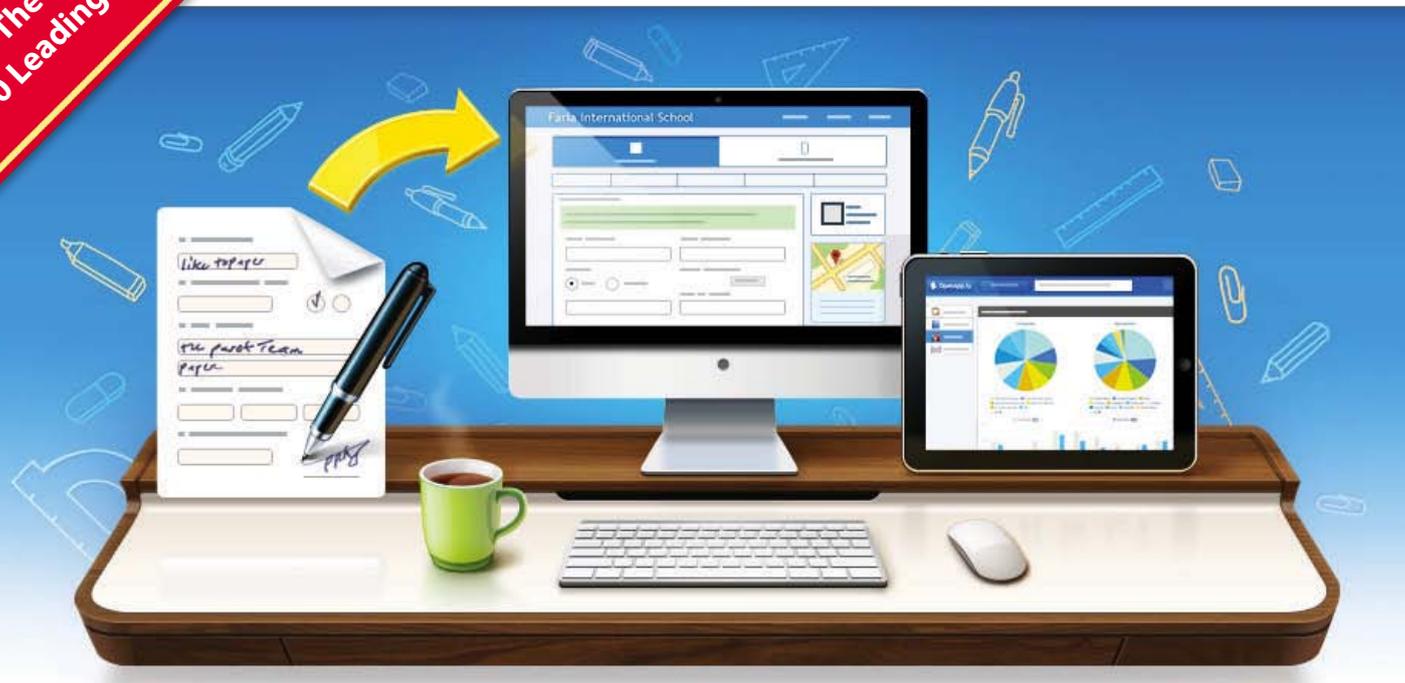
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On IT, information overload and change

The issues we are facing have echoes of the ancient past, argues Nicholas Alchin

Should you care what I am wearing as I write this? Read on, gentle reader ...

Making sure that the education we offer is meeting 21st century student needs is an ongoing priority for us as educators, and part of our responsibility has to be equipping students to use technology well. It's especially relevant to international schools, as technology has enabled internationalism; indeed one might go so far as to say that international schools and information technology are cousins in the family of modernity. Modernity has given us access to a world of possibilities – not least increased lifespan and access to education, healthcare, travel and leisure. But of course it also raises problems.

In education, one aspect of the changes brought on by technology that interests me is the information overload phenomenon – the notion that we are overwhelmed with the internet, emails, images, adverts and so on. I read somewhere that walking down a street in a big modern city, one encounters more data just in the form of billboards than someone in the 16th century would have come across in a year. This historical perspective intrigued me – especially when I came across the following quotes:

What is the point of having countless books and libraries whose titles the owner could scarcely read through in his whole lifetime. The mass of books burdens the student without instructing him.
Seneca (4 BCE – 56 AD)

We have reason to fear that the multitude of books which grows every day in a prodigious fashion will make the following centuries fall into a state as barbarous as that of the centuries that followed the fall of the Roman Empire.
Adrien Baillet (1685)

This might suggest that in fact things aren't so very different after all; perhaps all the hype is nothing new; perhaps information overload is simply business as usual, dressed up in a new phrase. But it can't be as simple as that. Baillet, quoted above, would have been hard-pressed to find what Seneca wrote, whereas we can get to it in a few clicks. So there are differences, for sure.

It's also instructive to look at the history of new technologies. The impact of the printing press is clearly difficult to overstate, but it took centuries for it to be felt. The telephone might be a more relevant example, being an early 'information technology'. American sociologist Harvey Sacks writes that as the telephone was introduced into American homes during the last quarter of the 19th century, instantaneous conversation across hundreds or even thousands of miles seemed close to a miracle. Scientific American magazine described it as "nothing less than a new organization of society – a state of things in which every individual, however secluded, will have at call every other individual in the community, to the saving of no end of social and business complications ... a new organization of society". Karl Marx, then alive in his final years, would have been proud! And such phrases have been written about the internet many times. But Sacks goes on to point out that in fact what we saw was not so new; instead it was the pouring of existing human behaviour into fresh moulds: "our goodness, hope and charity; our greed, pride and lust" (sounds familiar?). New technology didn't bring an overnight revolution. Instead, there was strenuous effort made to fit novelty into existing norms. In Victorian times, one of the biggest questions revolved around decency: was it, for example, disgraceful to chat while improperly dressed? (You will be pleased to know that I always put on a suit when writing, but I will spare you a selfie). I wonder how many of our questions around email, privacy, community, will be seen as quaint and amusing in 2150.

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Nicholas Alchin: 'I wonder how many of our questions around email, privacy, community, will be seen as quaint and amusing in 2150'

But what I am confident about is the fact that the human condition has not yet been subject to rapid change. Perhaps in the future brain-implants will change us; if so, it will be in ways we can barely imagine at present. For now, I would argue that we may be overwhelmed by information, but as Criss Jami wrote: “the eye of the storm is not so much what goes on in the world, it is the confusion of how to think, feel, digest, and react to what goes on.” And in that, we can take an historical perspective which allows us to see continuity with the human narrative over time, as well as differences. I wonder, sometimes, if the opportunities afforded by information technology are seen by early adopters, who are rightly advocating for change, without that narrative. It seems to me that only by placing the opportunities in historical contexts are they likely to blossom; change, by definition, has to start from where we are.

That is not to say that we don't want to be reaching for the something grand; we do; we must. But we are most likely to arrive at something grand when we can see our dreams from multiple perspectives across time, space or some other category. Locating ourselves in the human story is the most

effective way of nudging toward a broader understanding and appreciation of novelty. Barack Obama said that he believes in American exceptionalism in the same way that the British probably believe in British exceptionalism, Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism and the French believe in French exceptionalism. And that's the message, I think; that believing we live in special times, special places, and perhaps even that we are special – in technology and in so many other ways – doesn't mean that other people, times and places aren't special too. And for us in international education, that means that as we adapt our practices to the possibilities, it's going to be evolutionary, not revolutionary.

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This article appeared originally in a newsletter to UWCSEA parents

The Editors would welcome submissions for future articles in the areas of community service; innovative approaches to curriculum and assessment; interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning; guidance counselling (for higher education); supporting globally mobile students; supporting globally mobile teachers. Next deadline for articles to reach the Editors: 29 May 2015.

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Reconciling education with the digital revolution

Jeremy Hardy explains how a Technology Leadership Team can guide the process of integrating online learning into education

Education is experiencing a type of culture shock. Over the course of the last 20 years, personal computers and digital tools have developed exponentially and are changing the classic classroom experience. In a field where taking risks with new ideas or new tools can jeopardize student learning, however, this change has not been embraced by all. What can a computer and the Internet teach a student? How do digital technologies alter student-teacher interaction and lesson plan structures? These are difficult questions to answer in an age where education is still learning to cope with an ever-changing digital world. So what can a school do to make the transition between 20th and 21st century learning more seamless?

One way in which schools have reconciled education with the digital revolution is to initiate one-to-one laptop programs. At Robert College (Istanbul, Turkey), a team of technology directors, faculty leaders and administration helped bring about our one-to-one laptop program. Soon after its launch in 2011, it became clear that this core team would need more help if the program was to be a success. Based on advice given to us by a consultant from the American School of Bombay, a Technology Leadership Team (TLT) was formed. This team comprises faculty and staff members who share an interest in technology, and volunteer time to set and reach goals associated with technology integration in education. In this article I will address some



of the team's successes and challenges, as a means of demonstrating how this model is a necessary part of any school that wishes to confront the change brought about by digital technologies.

Now in its third year, the TLT has worked hard to support students, teachers and parents in the process of technology integration. One of our first steps was to think carefully about how effective professional development is delivered to teachers. Our brainstorming led to the organization of two professional development days based on the concept of building knowledge around the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) student standards (www.iste.org/standards). After all, "laptop programs have to support the standards that students are expected to master" (O'Donovan, 2009). In truth, a teacher only feels confident in class when s/he fully understands how to use a tool and can grasp what impact the tool has on student learning. In this light, our professional development branch of the TLT worked hard to frame the ISTE student standards in a non-threatening way, giving teachers the opportunity to understand their connection to 21st Century learning skills as well as how to apply them in every academic discipline.

A second aspect of our work was to initiate parent digital fluency sessions. Parents are important allies when it comes to supporting our students' intellectual and social development. However, the digital world (social networks and school learning platforms included) is not always easy to grasp for adults who are so-called digital immigrants. Using survey results to guide us, a set of workshops were designed to help parents to bridge the digital divide. The sessions

The digital revolution has certainly brought about a form of culture shock for many teachers who made it through school and university without Googling or tweeting

initially focused on bringing parents up to speed on how technology tools and the digital world can help students to master skills. Our aim this year is to continue this program, providing a range of workshops that also address topics such as cyberbullying and digital citizenship.

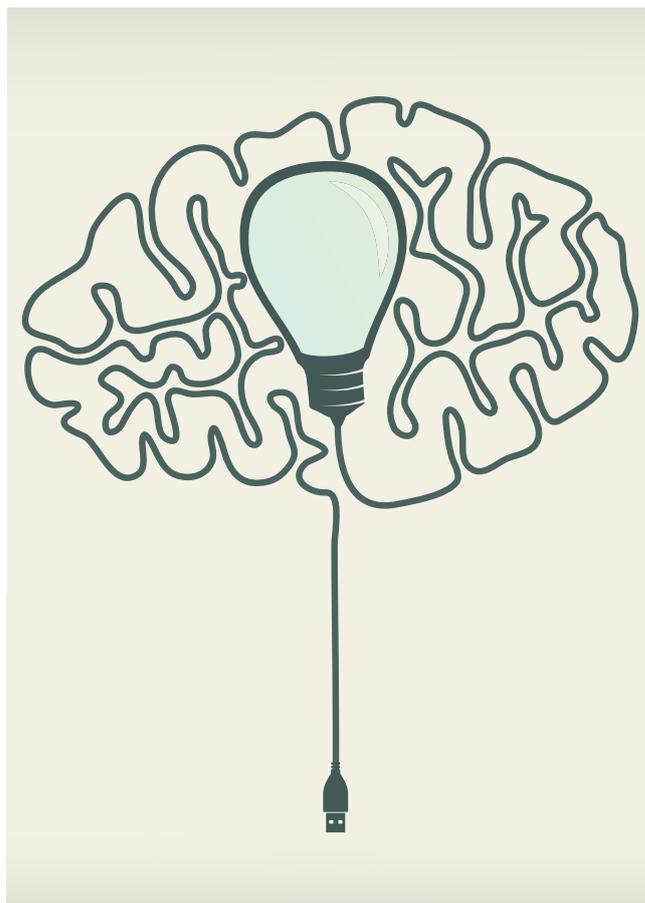
The third and final aspect of our work has focused on our most important stakeholders in the education process: our students. One of the first initiatives taken on by the initial core team was to create a Student Tech Crew (STC) comprising student volunteers who were given guidance on how to help others with technology issues. Although the STC's main aim is aiding other students, they have

become an invaluable resource for teachers in terms of minimizing class disruptions while “technical difficulties” are dealt with. A second achievement with respect to students and technology integration has been the adoption of the ISTE standards, which offer a guiding framework for the infusion of important 21st century skills related to technology. With a set of common skills that can be incorporated throughout all subject matter, students will benefit from multiple opportunities to master the use of technology in their educational experience.

Creating a TLT has enabled Robert College to take a more pragmatic approach to the change that results from the integration of information technology into every-day teaching. However, for all the successes, a multitude of challenges have also surfaced. The first challenge concerns the ability to create professional development opportunities that take into consideration the varying technology aptitude levels of faculty. A one-size-fits-all approach is certainly not effective since aiming too high alienates those who are coming to terms with new technologies, while aiming too low runs the risk of insulting those who consider themselves digital natives. In this sense, the most important consideration when planning professional development activities is how well you know your faculty and their needs. After that, the next step is to value time and patience in training teachers to adopt new digital tools and to implement them in the classroom.

A second challenge concerns the students. Today, with the prevalence of digital tools amongst our youth, we are quick to assume that they come to school with self-acquired technology skills. However, students are tech-savvy teens, not tech-smart adolescents. Although they may know how to manipulate technology to satisfy their needs, they seldom have the skills that are important in allowing them to use technology in an effective academic manner. Computer science classes alone do not suffice to teach these skills, so it is often the shared responsibility of teachers to impart some tech wisdom to their students. But how does one go about designing and implementing a scope and sequence of technology skills articulated throughout each subject curriculum and grade level? While our school has made a step forward in adopting the ISTE standards for students, they are only a guiding framework. In reality, the work behind creating a cross-curricular program supporting and evaluating students’ acquisition of strong technology skills is a monumental task that requires time and support from administration and teachers.

A final challenge is that of assessing the benefits of technology in supporting our educational goals and mission. Although one-to-one laptop programs have been around since the early 2000s, what little research there is on the success of these programs and their influence on student learning shows a variety of results (Goodwin, 2011). We can claim that access to the Internet and digital tools helps teachers to differentiate learning, create more engaging classes and offer students better opportunities to acquire life-long skills, but do we have any evidence that this is really happening? This year, we will work closely with the International Research Collaborative (<http://asbunplugged.org/collaborative/>) to evaluate our one-to-one laptop program and its outcomes. Crucially, the focus of our assessment will not be student



results, but criteria that measure the strength and success of a one-to-one laptop program.

Culture shock is by definition the feeling of disorientation experienced by someone when they are suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes. The digital revolution has certainly brought about a form of culture shock for many teachers who made it through school and university without Googling or tweeting, and must now make sense of how to adapt digital tools and learning in the classroom. Dealing with the transformation of education under a one-to-one laptop program is a process that needs to be organic and to have as much input from community members as possible. While there is no one perfect model for a TLT, it is undoubtedly a highly valuable asset in schools that wish to cross over to a newly-defined 21st century model of education.

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Disrupting everything – big data and the age of the algorithm

Like blended learning? Then you'll also like this latest article by Brian Christian

Do you shop online? Follow the news on your iPad? Use Google to search for information? Of course you do. And you may well have noticed that these activities are becoming increasingly personalised experiences: 'you recently bought X, you might also like Y.' Your data is big business and there are algorithms out there mining the tell-tale silvery trail that, snail-like, you leave behind wherever you browse.

Here's a little experiment you might try out. When you've finished reading this article (I know you won't want to navigate away from this page just yet) search online for 2015 electric cars. Then choose one or two interesting models, perhaps the BMW i3 or maybe the weird-looking Renault Twizy, and read up on them; you could even request a brochure. I suspect you might be surprised to discover how often electric cars, or adverts for BMW and Renault, then start appearing in your online life over the next few weeks. It's not a coincidence – like some poor, unwitting fly struggling in the strands of a spider's worldwide web, you have been transmitting signals to someone who has been eagerly listening out for them.

The commercial and corporate worlds woke up to the possibilities some time ago and, although it took a little longer for us to smell the coffee, those of us who work in education were not too far behind in beginning to understand the potential of data and analytics. Monitoring student progress by analysing the results that students achieve in tests and exams has long been the norm in our schools, but what if we could dig deeper? In today's connected, technology-driven world it wouldn't be too difficult to monitor the books our

students take from the library, to compare performance on tests taken in the morning with those taken in the afternoon, to measure the impact of different experiences – a group project say, or a piece of individual research, on learning and retention. What if we could link a student's canteen card to their test results? Do students who skip lunch, or who eat unhealthily, perform less well than their peers in afternoon lessons? Can we show them the data that proves it?

Eileen Murphy Buckley, former English teacher and founder of ThinkCERCA, an online provider recently recognized by a major award from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, believes that data is changing the way that educators think: "From critical accountability to teacher accountability, to the way we arrange our time, our learning spaces, technology – data is disrupting everything" (in O'Brien, 2014). She compares its effectiveness in education to our use of personal fitness trackers and health monitoring applications to build a meaningful picture over a period of time, guiding us towards making what might be life-changing choices. The more we know, the easier it is to work out a 'best fit' for individual students and, as schools make better and more informed use of technology, the easier it is to deliver a genuinely personalised education.

Blended learning is the term used to describe what is usually a teacher-constructed model combining the best practices of the more traditional classroom with a wide variety of online opportunities, where students are encouraged to collaborate and to exercise some control over the time, pace, and place of their learning. The range

The commercial and corporate worlds woke up to the possibilities some time ago and, although it took a little longer for us to smell the coffee, those of us who work in education were not too far behind in beginning to understand the potential of data and analytics.



of digital resources available to educators is enormous, and we are now seeing teachers who began by incorporating YouTube clips and Ted Talks into their lessons moving on to the very sophisticated use of a whole host of collaborative sharing applications and widespread integration of social media; class Twitter accounts, for example, are commonplace and student bloggers in schools everywhere are sharing their ideas with the world.

Teachers who have been most successful in weaving technology into their lesson planning and implementation are those who have done so in order to improve and build upon pedagogical best practice; the least successful are those who have seen it as a costly add-on or optional extra: the alloy wheels or tinted windows in the glossy brochure. Technology for the sake of technology is a waste of everyone's time, but genuinely blended learning derives from the knowledge and skills that have always been demonstrated by good teachers, intelligently augmented by 21st century technological advances.

For example, a teacher who might previously have created a printed hand-out with a series of questions for students to answer individually could now set up an online forum with a number of signposts to encourage contribution and generate discussion. Students don't just see their own posts – they can see and respond to the posts of their peers, perhaps modifying their original thinking and coming to different

conclusions as a result. Feedback is also shared: clearly the teacher can offer constructive guidance or criticism to the individual, but may also choose to offer open feedback which is potentially valuable to everyone in the group – and, of course, there is a lot of research demonstrating that the most effective feedback of all is that provided by our peers.

I feel certain that over the next few years we will witness further significant widespread disruption of the traditional teaching model. The opportunities that technology affords us to capture, store and analyse data, to build personalised educational programmes to match the needs of the individual and to break down the walls of the classroom, are unprecedented. Today's students are already the beneficiaries of a concerted move towards blended learning; the students of tomorrow may well be educated in a learning environment their parents would scarcely recognise.

Reference

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Online learning: providing the context for the real global classroom

Dennis Stanworth explains his school's digital approach

The use of technology as a teaching and learning tool is a natural part of every classroom here at Yokohama International School (YIS). Technology is evident across all sections of the school, and plays an important role in enhancing teaching and learning for our teachers and students. As a result of its use, our students become acclimatised to many of the technological tools and the kinds of online environments used in taking and supporting an online International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) subject course. Students seem to adapt without too much difficulty. Presently it is possible for a student at

YIS to take one online course as part of his or her Diploma Programme.

In 2008 we started looking at ways to extend choice for our students within the IBDP. Selecting an online provider that really valued the student learning experience, and was able to deliver IBDP courses utilising trained IBDP experienced teachers, was very important to us. This allowed us to offer our students IBDP subjects that we would not have been able to offer otherwise as we didn't have the teachers to teach them at the time; Film, Business Management and Psychology in particular all became of

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great interest to some of our students. Spanish – at both Higher Level and Standard Level – has been a face to face language option for our IBDP students for many years, but extending options to include both Mandarin and Spanish *Ab Initio* has been a real benefit for some of our students in terms of choice and flexibility.

The online learning experience

In 2010 our first cohort of ‘online’ students took Information Technology in a Global Society (ITGS) as part of their Diploma Programme. Those students were studying the entire ITGS course with an online teacher, in a virtual classroom, alongside a group of online classmates who were based in schools around the world.

There is no typical day for online learners, as the nature of studying online means that students have the opportunity to do their work wherever and whenever it best suits them. The school schedules three study sessions every week for its online students, one of which is supervised in the classroom. This is the time when the site-based coordinator (SBC) checks in with students to make sure they are on track, and supports them should challenges arise involving communication with their online teacher or adaptation to the technology. During the non-supervised sessions, students are entrusted to meet the requirements of their online courses in the way that best suits them. Some students use their off-timetable study time to complete the homework from their face-to-face courses so they can work on their online course at home. Others use this study time specifically to complete their online coursework so they don’t have to do it at home. During the school day on campus, these students may choose a quiet spot in the library or a workroom, or they may decide to work at a picnic table in the sunshine rather than in a classroom. It’s what suits them best for their own individual learning.

Each student can be working on his or her course in a variety of ways. For some, interacting virtually with students in other parts of the world at the same time has been seen as a contributor to the expansion and further development of their collaborative and communication skills. For others, the asynchronous learning, together with the student-centred approach, have been considered effective. Feedback on the online learning experience from both students and parents has, by and large, been favourable. Online learning gives our students an opportunity to study outside the classroom, where the classroom walls are non-existent and the context is truly global. This chance to learn together with other students across the world gives them global awareness and connectivity that are perhaps less common in the traditional classroom.

The process of learning online

IBDP online courses do not simply provide access to subject course content digitally. They involve the students being supported throughout the learning process. Pamoja Education, which provides all the IBDP online subject courses, has developed a structure for students to be supported, offering a range of online learning approaches that the students can use.

The online approach to learning doesn’t compromise or sacrifice human contact. Indeed, there are still people at either end of the technology, and the human element is very much present throughout each course. For IBDP students,

online learning is more about using a different set of tools to learn and communicate, supported through the process by their online course teacher and site-based coordinator, both working closely with the students to make sure the learning takes place.

A large part of this support involves helping students to develop their skills as independent learners and to become better time managers with improved organisational skills, because without these skills the whole online course becomes extremely challenging for them. To begin with, most students struggle with the skills, but they improve significantly with practice and appropriate support. Having these skills will undoubtedly assist in the student’s ongoing learning process – both at university and in the workplace.

Preparing for learning beyond school

As a preparatory school for higher education, it is very important that our students leave YIS with the preparedness to embark on a path which leads to success. It isn’t difficult to imagine a future in which online learning is either a prerequisite to, or a regular part of, a university education. Providing the option of taking courses online is one way in which we encourage the development of the digital communication and collaboration skills that we expect tertiary institutions to demand of our graduates. Such skills are a kind of technological fluency that we believe will serve our students well in the future.

Introducing the IB Open World Schools pilot

Our online learning has enabled us to play a major role in the introduction of the IB Open World Schools pilot, the aim of which is to make the IBDP experience more accessible to students worldwide. As a school with a richness of technology, it was felt YIS could not only offer its own students online IBDP courses, but also offer the online approach to students from a wider audience within the Asia Pacific region. To that end, in 2011 YIS applied to become part of the pilot and was accepted as an IB Open World School (IBOWS) soon after. There are currently seven such schools around the world. Students from non-IBDP schools within the region are now eligible to apply, through YIS as the link school, to take some online IBDP courses. Independent students, including those who are home-schooled, are also considered.

Having access to online as well as face-to-face learning opportunities is important for students in this day and age: opportunities that will help to further develop 21st century skills such as self-regulation and time management in the global context of collaboration and communication. We at Yokohama International School are pleased to play our part in making such opportunities available to the adults of tomorrow.

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For more information about IBDP online learning see www.pamojaeducation.com

From digital competency to digital literacy

Lucas Walsh argues there are no excuses for educators to be complacent about technology

Meeting the challenges of a changing global economy and the impact of technology requires students to have a wide set of competencies and employability skills. These range from problem-solving and communication skills (oracy) to digital and cultural competencies that are core features of international education. Such literacies form the building blocks of lifelong learning, which are important to the ability of students to adapt to a shifting workforce which may include more than one career. These skills involve 'doing' as well as 'knowing'. In 2013, then Special Advisor on Education Policy to the OECD's Secretary-General, Andreas Schleicher, suggested that the world economy doesn't pay you for what you know, but for what you can do with what you know (Schleicher 2013). In a changing economy, learning how to learn is particularly essential to adaptability, as is the ability to navigate the vast and often overwhelming amount of information available on the worldwide web. Developing digital literacy is thus central to international education.

A key challenge continues to be developing digital competency and literacy in students and educators as a basis for teaching and learning. This challenge concerns how we think about proficiency in the educational use of technology by students and educators, and the institutional and cultural barriers students face on a daily basis in higher education settings. Firstly, there continues to be a somewhat misleading notion that so-called 'digital natives' are leading the way. Research suggests that young people expect technology to be present throughout daily life – even where access is limited. But while many young people are competent in using technology, they are not necessarily

digitally literate. Where competency involves a basic ability to use a device such as an iPad, computer or app, digital literacy involves higher order skills that enable critical navigation and evaluation of information and technology – moving beyond basic competency to becoming creative in the use of information and a range of digital media, and being able to manipulate and use media in new ways. It is often assumed that young people are digitally literate, when in fact they may only exhibit basic competency.

The same applies to educators. Nevertheless, my experience as an educator suggests that there is a significant generational difference at times. Worryingly, this difference is characterised by low levels of competency amongst some educators, who continue to grapple with the basic use of platforms such as Moodle, and who struggle to integrate digital media into their learning environments. Despite the ubiquity of technology in our society, educators often lack digital literacy in the sense described above.

This is unfortunate, because there is some outstanding work being done. Being able to critically and creatively use digital media opens up all kinds of opportunities, such as through the use of 'flipped classrooms' and the engagement of students across geographic and cultural contexts. I am not suggesting here that technology should drive teaching and learning – good pedagogy, curriculum, and providing rich and diverse learning experiences should always be drivers – but there are many powerful, freely available and relatively easy-to-use tools out there that are arguably under-utilised.

And while some young people may not be digitally literate, since a basic competency in using technology tends

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to be taken as a given, there should at least be parity with educators in digital competency. But we can do a lot better. Sometimes, limited technology usage is in part attributable to factors such as a lack of exposure to effective practice and professional learning, as well as lack of access to suitable and up-to-date equipment, technical support and assistance in a rapidly changing environment. Another delimiting factor goes back to professional learning and development: there needs to be greater emphasis on developing digital literacy during educators' initial development. Universities and training providers could be doing better at this, although pockets of good practice undoubtedly exist.

International evidence suggests that schools in some countries are more receptive than others to the teaching beliefs and practices that new teachers bring to the school (Jensen et al, 2012). Often teachers assimilate into existing school cultures rather than inject new ideas. This may also apply to those teachers who come into schools with high levels of digital literacy and innovative ideas, but face cultural and institutional constraints similar to those described above. A question to be asked here is: does this take place in your school? Developing sustainable, organic, functional and inspiring communities of practice is important.

Given the high levels of access and relatively inexpensive availability of tools, apps and devices, there is no longer an excuse for educators to be complacent about digital media. The choice not to use these tools should be a conscious and deliberate one based on what works best in educational settings. And we should be aiming for the base standard to be digital literacy – not digital competency.

Skills and competencies such as digital literacy are important for developing resilience in graduates when

dealing with changing labour force conditions, as well as broader challenges in life. But while we routinely rely on, assess and report on basic academic skills, we lack robust mechanisms for assessing or certifying a wider group of skills and attributes that are necessary for navigating employment and life in general.

A final point: given that young people value hands-on learning, in what ways can we embed opportunities for hands-on learning of these skills through meaningful and sustainable community and industry partnerships? International schools could more explicitly engage with developing these skills and providing opportunities for teaching and learning in the community, with industry and in the world at large. While some schools are undoubtedly already doing this well, we need to find more ways of turning good practice into common practice in a wider context.

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Forthcoming Conferences

May 9-11: COBIS Annual Conference, London, UK

July 5-11: IB World Student Conference, Barcelona, Spain

July 23-26: IB Americas Regional Conference, Chicago, US

August 2-8: IB World Student Conference, Rochester, US

October 8: ECIS Admissions Conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands

October 29-31: EARCOS Leadership Conference, Bangkok, Thailand

October 29-November 1: IB AEM Regional Conference, The Hague, Netherlands

November 20-21: ECIS Annual Conference, Barcelona, Spain

February 26-28: Alliance for International Education conference, NIST International School, Bangkok

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Digital learning outside the classroom

Julie Bytheway doesn't need to know what's 'hot' – she just wants to empower her students

Continually changing fashions

We generally base our judgement of effective teaching on current – but ever changing – fashions in education. Assessing teaching competencies with reference to changing fashions (rather than evidence of learning) deserves deep discussion in the staffroom, but do teachers have a choice? Can we choose not to change? Change is essential in education. Change occurs so rapidly in the world outside our classrooms. For learning to remain meaningful, teachers are forced to introduce new ways of learning inside classrooms. We work in an extremely pressed-for-time profession, and continually strive to carve out time within the busyness of teaching to improve the business of teaching. Teachers repeatedly trial, test, evaluate and reflect on yet unproved ways of learning, because our profession demands that we remain in fashion. Included in the 2015 educational fashions are digital technologies and game-based learning.

Fashion is also a huge part of our students' lives. Listen to students' ideas of what is 'hot' and 'cool'. Students'

perceptions of 'cool' strongly affect their motivation, which in turn affects their learning. However, digital technologies and games career in and out of fashion. Apps and games that were hot in the summer usually are (as my students tell me) "boring and ssssooooo old" by winter. When it comes to students' digital technologies and game fashions, teachers can't seem to keep up. Minecraft was super hot for youth in 2010 and 2011, but wasn't really recognized as valuable in education until 2014 and 2015. By the time we know what is hot and how it can be used to facilitate learning, whatever it was is usually on its way out as far as our youth are concerned. But is this a chicken and egg situation? Do digital technologies and games actually go out of fashion for our youth because schools identify them and then use them inside the classroom?

Even though it is difficult to keep up-to-date with our students' digital fashions, I agree with Whitton (2010) who challenges the labels of digital natives and non-natives. Labelling generations is not helpful, but limiting. The ability to use technology is not fixed: exposure level and time affect

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competency and confidence. I have limited time available to explore digital technologies, and I certainly took for granted the cooking, laundry, and income earning services provided in my own childhood. Who else yearns for after-school play?

Learning through play

Play is an excellent medium for learning. Most research about play focuses on young learners, but learning through play is also effective for teen and adult learning. Successful companies such as Google incorporate play opportunities into their creative work environments. However, we must remain aware that play comes as a package deal: lose a part and you've lost the whole. Play exists outside normal life, is voluntary, purposeless, uncertain, not serious, make-believe, absorbing, inherently attractive, has a continuation desire, is restricted by time and space, promotes social groups and has rules (Sutton-Smith, 1997). When digital games are used inside classrooms, they lose essential parts of play that make them such a powerful learning medium. Purposeless becomes purposeful, and voluntary become compulsory. In addition, we affect the youth's cool factor by taking ownership of the digital technology as educators. My students tell me, for instance, that Facebook is for parents, as they move en masse to Instagram and the next hot medium.

Digital games facilitate autonomous learning and provide rich learning, especially language learning, contexts (Coxhead & Bytheway, 2014). Games are absorbing, inherently attractive, and have a continuation desire, so learners have time to notice repetition, recognize knowledge gaps, and then self-select appropriate learning. Gamers also fail and repeat until a level is mastered, welcoming the access to a more difficult level. Games are uncertain and make believe, so learners increase creativity and decrease learning anxiety. Learners do not need to manage learning motivation in digital games: the gaming context provides huge motivation. As one gamer said, "you will not blink | you try to prevent from blinking or looking away because it is so exciting | things are moving | yeah every second means something | but in the classroom | just from the books you can turn away | look away | it's no big deal" (Coxhead & Bytheway, 2014). How can teachers in classrooms compete with digital game contexts?

The motivation provided in games is sometimes considered addictive. However, while many people play digital games for approximately 25 hours per week, it is also

the case that many people watch TV for approximately 25 hours a week. But while gaming is considered addictive and unacceptable, TV watching is considered acceptable and normal. Research shows that gamers are replacing TV watching (passive media) with game play (interactive media). It is also worth reflecting on how we describe students who read for approximately 25 hours per week.

Empowering outside classroom learning

Even though digital games facilitate learning, I am wary of introducing digital games into classrooms. Part of what makes games so powerful for learning is destroyed by the transfer from outside classrooms to inside classrooms. I believe that because of time constraints and the goal of lifelong learning, one of my most valuable tasks inside classrooms is to empower learners to learn autonomously outside classrooms. However, empowering students to learn outside classrooms can be shared with learners. I encourage teachers to raise students' awareness of the valuable learning available through digital technologies and games. Students need to identify and share the autonomous learning strategies they use outside classrooms and find ways to transfer those learning strategies to learning inside classrooms. Here is our opportunity to let students trial, test, evaluate and reflect on new ways of learning. I don't need to learn every new hot game. I don't need to use every hot app inside my classroom. I just need to empower my learners to recognize, value and manage their own learning outside our classroom – and leave ownership of what's hot with them.

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'Today's students are 'digital natives' and are 'always connected', instinctively and constantly using technology to link with the wider world'

Teaching remarkable disrupters

Jeremy Lewis and Ryan Barnett celebrate the creativity and innovation of their students

This summer at TEDxTeen London 2014, speakers explored how technology can drive change, and the role of young people as 'remarkable disrupters' – an interesting and apt title given to those young people who use technology to create new ways of learning.

Our students, all now younger than the world wide web, use technology instinctively in their social and personal lives. As such, contemporary education has to find a way of aligning its approach to learning in order to improve students' technological skills and to help them push boundaries.

Encouraging deeper student engagement

Increasingly teachers, educators and IT practitioners are realising the benefits of effectively embedding mobile

technology in the classroom. It is forecast that by 2015, tablets will jump from six per cent in 2012 to 22% of all student-facing computers. Further, 80% of teachers interviewed for the British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA) in May 2012 said that their students had a strong interest in using tablets.

Dr Leah Marks from the University of West Scotland, and co-researcher Dr Dougie Marks from Glasgow University, investigated iPad one-to-one deployment in schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland. At both primary and secondary levels, they found that student engagement increased in classrooms using iPads, with students scoring higher on emotional, cognitive and behavioural levels. Their study, alongside anecdotal evidence from other pilot programmes, including one run at ACS International

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Schools, has clearly identified that when mobile technology is effectively embedded into the curriculum, teachers report greater student independence, and witness increased student participation, deeper student engagement, greater problem solving and collaboration between peers.

Inspiring creativity

Technology can also be used to galvanise students' creativity, with tablets in particular being used to underpin individual learning, making effective and creative use of online resources which present the curriculum in a range of different ways such as an e-Book, educational app or video.

Through such resources, many students find they are able to discover and explore their learning on a deeper level. For example, apps such as Khan Academy, an educational video library; and Wolfram Alpha, a computational knowledge search engine, can help students develop independent research skills. Other apps help them collaborate, illustrate and record their learning using photographs, movies and audio recordings.

It is through content creation apps, such as Morfo Booth, Book Creator, Puppet Pals, Notability and Explain Everything, that students can put their learning into practice and develop digital skills. These student 'favourites' can be embedded throughout the curriculum from Art to English and Maths to Sports Science, helping students develop the very digital skills that they will need in higher education and the workplace.

But it's not just mobile technology that can help students develop a creative mindset. At ACS Egham, for example, grade eight students (aged 11) used the 3D printer during design and technology classes to create components for a robotic design assignment. As Lisa Harouni, co-founder of Digital Forming, said: "With 3D printing, we can create structures that are more intricate than any other manufacturing technology – or in fact, are impossible to build in any other way." Using a 3D printer, students are not confined to the difficulties of production, which in turn allows their minds to focus more

on design and to include more sophisticated geometric forms which, without the specialist technology, would not have been possible.

Students also acquire hands-on experience, gaining detailed knowledge of the manufacturing and design process. Our grade ten students used the printer to create objects for jewellery designs, which required highly detailed precision work. Armed with detailed knowledge of the design process, our young designers were able to produce original and imaginative pieces. At the end of the project, students were required to produce a reflection piece on their journey from conception to final product using their iPads, with many including films and presentations.

Developing a global perspective

Today's students are 'digital natives' and are 'always connected', instinctively and constantly using technology to link with the wider world. Educators need to embrace this within the classroom, providing students with real time experiences accessed during the school day.

Teachers at our sister school, ACS Hillingdon, have used its IT Lab – a room equipped with a working film studio including front and back cameras and two large, wall-mounted LCD screens – to allow classes to connect to the wider world as a group and in real time. For example, as part of their 'Lest We Forget' project, grade ten (aged 15) students were able to collectively watch the Remembrance Day commemorations as they were taking place, helping students reflect on these historical events at a much deeper level.

In ACS Cobham's Interactive Learning Centre, High School students belonging to the school's 'Medics Club' watched a live medical lecture at Oxford University as part of the Virtual University project. Cobham students joined other students from six schools across the country, and were able to interact and ask questions of the lecturer and university students in real time. As a result of this project, students were able to gain a greater understanding of what it is like to study medicine at university, helping them make their own higher education choices.

Technology also allows our students to link with their peers across the globe and experience different cultural viewpoints. We have used technology to connect with teachers who have moved on to other schools – sharing projects and sometimes exchanging our traditions and celebrations. Whilst being a 1-to-1 iPad school, students are also able to use their tablets to connect with virtual pen friends using online messaging and video interaction to communicate in different languages instantly.

Through technology, students are able to develop a global perspective and independent inquiry skills; qualities highly sought after by employers. It is vital that education not only matches but also enhances the digital skills of today's 'remarkable disrupters', inspiring them to be the next generation of trailblazers, using technology to create new ways of living.

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Europa International School, Barcelona, has a teaching staff of 150 from 14 different countries and students from over 40 countries

The relative importance of technology in education

Times and methods change but core values remain the same, says Esther Herranz Frías

From the top of the Collserola hills can be seen one of the most beautiful views of Barcelona: on the horizon the Mediterranean Sea, which has seen the birth of many of the most influential of human civilizations, then spreading elegantly across a creative and cosmopolitan city, which is open to the world.

To a large extent, the city's characteristics – a blend of tradition and innovation, celebrating its local roots but with an international outlook – might also be considered appropriate to describe my parents' dreams. Eladio Herranz

and Conchita Frías, while taking a long walk one day through abandoned vineyards in Sant Cugat, dreamt of founding a school with these same values. They invested all their savings in this venture, along with the invaluable experience they had gained from 25 years dedication to education. Twenty years have since passed, and those once-abandoned lands are now the home to Europa International School, a school with a teaching staff of 150 from 14 different nationalities and students from over 40 countries.

Evoking the past is often not the best or most obvious way

I believe it is imperative to emphasize the fact that technology is simply a tool and that the future, the best future that we can imagine for the generations to come, is not defined by the abundance and sophistication of the technology, but rather by the ability to live together in peace, respecting the environment.

in which to talk about the use of technology in education. Whenever we talk about the challenge of incorporating new technology into the classroom, however, I always try to do so in a manner that follows the ideals of the school that my parents founded, but which at the same time enables our students to achieve their aims.

Technology generates passion, motivating young people and teachers, but changes so rapidly that it is sometimes difficult to reflect on its use and usefulness. When this school opened, it was proud to boast of its computer rooms with their grey 486 processors! At that time it was both a huge achievement and a fascinating challenge for teachers to incorporate the endless possibilities these facilities offered within the school programme.

Our first students from those early days, those who took their first steps in the world of computers with excitement and trepidation in school, are now 30 years old. Without doubt the technological environment has changed beyond recognition: tablets, smart phones, online project work, wi-fi ... who could have imagined such advances? And above all, what have we done to prepare our students to live in this world? In reality, most of their technological knowledge has been self taught.

However much effort we make, we cannot envisage what the world will be like in another 20 years when our current primary students will join the workforce. But we can imagine that it will be ever-changing and that these young people will need to know how to adapt to this liquid modernity, described by Zygmunt Bauman, in order to be able to achieve self-fulfillment. Technology should be used in the classroom not as something related only to the future, but as something entirely necessary to connect us to the present and to enable us to talk to our students from this present. Not to do so will make us irrelevant to them.

Having said this, education is a manner of helping students to face up to their problems, preparing them for the unknown in life, providing them with the ability to overcome difficulties, and offering them the solid tools they will need in order not to lose their way, whatever challenges they may face. Looking at things this way, I don't think our objective has changed that much after all! Perhaps, whilst using technology in the classroom, we could ask ourselves what values are in danger

of being affected and what we can do to safeguard them. How to encourage reading, for example? How do we foster a spirit of discussion? How can we preserve the innate curiosity of young children in discovering the world? It is essential to combine their fascination for technology with the apparently simple, but in reality terribly complicated, experience of just living life.

I remember, when we were evaluating the idea of investing in the 'one computer per student' project, I asked our Head of IT if he thought it was a good idea. He answered that it depended on how much we valued our time directly interacting with the students. In the end we opted for shared spaces, interactive whiteboards in all the classrooms, and a digital platform for communication with students and families in their homes. Of course, I don't intend to imply that this is the best or only solution, but at the time we felt it was the best solution for us. The digital boards gave us a common space in each classroom, a window through which to see the world and to satisfy our curiosity and answer some of our questions. Teachers and students have created blogs and web pages as a method of communication outside of school hours, extending their learning beyond the empty classroom.

Technology is therefore an intrinsic part of our school, and an education system that doesn't incorporate today's tools is unthinkable. However, I believe it is imperative to emphasize the fact that technology is simply a tool and that the future, the best future that we can imagine for the generations to come, is not defined by the abundance and sophistication of the technology, but rather by the ability to live together in peace, respecting the environment. We aim to educate our students so they may make a contribution to a world that may resemble that described by the principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That, I feel, should be the ultimate objective for any school. For this reason, when I think of technology I always try to avoid thinking of what we should use, and ask myself how we can use it to support the development of the school my parents dreamt of and to build the world that we dream of for our children.

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How a VLE can have a measurable impact upon your school

David Horan shares his school's experience of a Virtual Learning Environment

Allen, Seaman and Garrett (2007) describe blended learning as learning that 'integrates online with traditional face-to-face class activities in a planned, pedagogically valuable manner.' Educators may disagree on what qualifies as 'pedagogically valuable', but the essence is clear: blended learning uses online technology not only to supplement, but also to transform and improve the learning process. Successful blended learning occurs when technology and teaching inform each other, where blended classrooms online can reach and engage students in a truly customisable way. With this in mind, online education has potential to impact learning and teaching, not only as a supplement to the status quo.

The research on which this article is based provides balance to the marketing material in the public domain suggesting that a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is a 'one-stop-shop' product that provides a technological solution to support learning and teaching. Whilst the benefits of a VLE are bandied around with great confidence, not much research looks 'under the skin' when a VLE is used in a school. Teaching, according to Moore (1973), is a 'purposeful and deliberate act where planned behaviours are intended to induce learning'. In this case, 'teaching' is the planned student behaviours being driven by teachers utilising the functionality of the VLE.

Warwick Academy, Bermuda implemented a VLE in its Secondary School in January 2011, with the aim of improving student and parent involvement in learning and providing a blended learning experience. The initiative was intended to shift student perceptions of learning from something that only happens in school hours to something that is continual, as well as exposing students to different learning experiences. The school strategic team agreed that focused objectives would prove vital in ensuring the initiative was embedded into daily life. The specific objectives presented to teachers, students and parents in order to support learning and teaching related to:

1. Assessment – the ability of the VLE to administer objective tests, such as multiple choice or short answer questions, as well as to host digital resources that allow for more sophisticated online assessments. The VLE can also support more traditional assessment methods such as work being submitted online to be marked electronically by the teacher and returned in the VLE.
2. Content Management – the ability of the VLE to house materials that students can access at any time. This includes, but is not limited to: PowerPoint presentations, class notes, multimedia resources and online subscriptions.
3. Communication – the ability of the VLE to communicate to students and parents via a single platform. This includes, but is not limited to: teachers communicating homework and deadline information, displaying day-to-day notices, and access to the school calendar.
4. Collaboration – the ability of the VLE to create an environment where teachers and students, and students and students, can interact online. This includes, but is not limited to: class forums, individual messaging and blogging in a department website.
5. Administration - the ability of the VLE to create an environment where teachers and students can access information and documentation to assist them in their day-to-day school-related tasks. This includes, but is not limited to: staff notices, calendar information, school policy documents, room booking systems, email, and access to the school network to allow working at home.

After several exploratory visits to the UK, the school selected the FROG learning platform as our VLE (www.frogtrade.com). Members of the school's strategic team were able to see the working product, and hear from schools that had implemented it successfully, at the British Education and Training Technology (BETT) exhibition in London (www.bettshow.com). The platform has some construction flexibility in that the school is able to design some functionality; on the other hand, it is not a totally bespoke platform reliant on a skilled programmer. Although FROG is an 'off the shelf' product, it is not as inflexible and compartmentalised as many others on the market.

VLEs are now widely used around the world and have been adopted rapidly over the past 15 years. Most recently the FROG VLE product was launched to 10,000 schools in Malaysia. VLEs are expensive tools with costs running into the tens of thousands of pounds, and in many cases have been adopted almost uncritically. Teachers in a school play a fundamental role in the success of the VLE as students can only use those aspects of the environment that teachers use

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and develop. In this way teacher and student collaboration is inextricably linked to the success of the initiative. To this end 45 secondary teachers and over 200 secondary students were involved in a study aimed at measuring the impact of our VLE. In many ways the results (summarised below) depended on teacher and student assimilation within the learning environment, their skill level and their ability to articulate their perceptions.

Teacher perceptions

Teachers perceived the VLE as a tool to enhance teaching, fitting into the blended learning pedagogy. In particular, communication, administration and content management functions were perceived to be beneficial for teaching. There was, however, limited usage of the VLE during lessons and this has to do with the perception of its usefulness in the context of teaching. As it was perceived as a tool to manage online learning, it was seen as having more use outside of class than inside – when students will have greater access to a personal computer and/or laptop.

The study suggested that the perceptions of shortcomings were more than likely driven by a lack of technological skill, and the sense that there is not enough time to create the materials needed for effective teaching through the VLE. In particular, assessment functions were perceived to have limited benefit for teaching, with teachers making very limited use of assessment functionality. It needs to be noted that creating assessment material is time consuming and

the most technologically challenging part of the system, though as third party software becomes available this may well change. There was some perceived benefit to the VLE facilitating online assessment, but it is unclear whether this relates to work being marked online or to work being merely submitted, printed and then marked. Collaboration functions were also perceived to have limited benefit for teaching.

Student perceptions

There is high student usage of the VLE, active involvement and competence shown by students within the learning environment as noted by their activity logs. The study provided evidence that a blended learning pedagogy can be supported through the online learning and teaching functions within a VLE. In particular, communication functions were perceived to be most beneficial for learning where students monitor homework and deadline information extensively. Administration and content management functions featured strongly, with students indicating that they benefit from being able to access content in a variety of forms. Learning was perceived to have the potential to continue outside of the classroom with this access.

Whilst assessment functionality was perceived by students to be of some benefit for learning, there seemed to be very little evidence that assessment was actually in use or that students had a clear understanding of what assessment might look like. Collaboration functionality was also perceived to be of very limited benefit for learning.



Warwick Academy, Bermuda, implemented a VLE in its Secondary School in January 2011, with the aim of improving student and parent involvement in learning



The challenge for VLE developers is to integrate assessment and collaboration functionality into their products, says David Horan

VLEs are now widely used around the world and have been adopted rapidly over the past 15 years. Most recently the FROG VLE product was launched to 10,000 schools in Malaysia.

Conclusion

Clearly there is high usage of the VLE amongst teachers and students at our school, driven partly by effective implementation of the VLE both technologically and through policy driving classroom expectations. Communication, administration and content management functions were perceived in this study to be of benefit for both teachers and students. This appeared to correspond directly to the regularity with which each function is used, creating the possibility that if other functions are used more regularly,

they might benefit learning too. Assessment, which – it could be argued – has the greatest potential benefit for learning and teaching in allowing for measured feedback against learning outcomes inside and outside of the school day, was the most notable shortcoming for both teachers and students. Also viewed as a shortcoming was collaboration between teachers and students within the VLE.

Clearly, teachers need considerable support through continuing professional development and effectively functioning hardware if these functions are to be deployed appropriately. For VLE developers, meanwhile, the challenge remains to integrate assessment and collaboration functionality effectively into these products in order to further support learning and teaching.

For schools in a similar position to ours, we hope these summarised findings will resonate and assist in both addressing potential shortcomings and in contributing to discussion of the potential impact in school of introducing a VLE.

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Building a platform

Lucy Stonehill says there are similarities in ethos between international educators and evangelists of education technology

In October 2013, I spent six weeks touring India, China, Hong Kong and South Korea with a small black suitcase and an iPad. On my iPad were colourful designs of an education technology platform I was in the process of building—the first software as a service platform for international students wanting to apply to universities abroad. During my time in Asia, I met with prospective education partners, groups of students, parents, and educators from international schools and globally-minded national schools. My interactions with educators during these six weeks revealed to me the vast inconsistencies in attitudes towards education-technologies and the role of private EdTech companies in supporting learning processes.

At one end of the spectrum, I encountered educators who regarded technology with an almost xenophobic fear—for these principals, teachers and administrators, the mere mention of the word ‘platform’ was distressing. Technology feels alien to them, something that doesn’t belong in the classroom. At the other end of the spectrum, I met educators who felt that technology had the power to streamline operations at schools, and radically improve educational outcomes and learning-transitions for students.

My experiences working with educators in multiple continents, both then and now, has brought me to the realization that it’s not just the application of education technologies which is confusing. There appears also (and more importantly) to exist some confusion about the impacts of using education technologies on outcomes including student performance, attitudes, and behavior. And yet, research studies measuring the impacts of edtech innovations over the past 20 years demonstrate its overwhelmingly

positive impact (see, eg, Schacter, 1999; Gulek and Demintas, 2005).

First and foremost, student engagement with education technologies is time and time again positively correlated with improved academic performance across a wide range of subjects and skills. And, the use of software programs and learning devices facilitates, for the first time, the creation and implementation of adaptive, personalized learning paths for individual students. With the remarkable way in which algorithms and computer systems enable objective testing, quantifiable measurement and the deployment of large datasets of constantly updated information, education technologies render feasible the creation of truly adaptive learning paths, enabling students to learn at a pace and in ways that are more suited to their learning styles and personal inclinations than ever before.

Furthermore, the cultural, social and developmental impacts of education technologies are remarkable. In their affordability, efficiency, and ease-of-access, education technologies render the experience of becoming educated (in the form of information, tools, games, MOOCs) generally more enjoyable and available to a larger number of eager learners, which in turn democratizes access to educational opportunities and learning more broadly. Multiple studies replicate the finding that students who frequently engage with learning technologies have improved attitudes, enjoyment of learning, and exhibit greater independence of spirit, an inclination towards progressive thinking, and an enhanced desire to collaborate with peers. Notably, optimum results are achieved when the teachers (as well as students) are positive about the use of technology in a classroom setting

Both international educators and evangelists of edtech are committed to the nurturing of a generation of young people who are more collaborative in their interactions with others, more horizontal in their understanding of power systems, more independent and tolerant in spirit, and more progressive in their view of our world.



and are actively engaged in its deployment: ‘consistent student access to the technology, positive attitudes towards the technology...and teacher training in the technology led to the greatest student achievement gains’ (Schacter, 1999).

What is striking to me about the socio-cultural improvements brought about by the integration of technologies into educational settings is the remarkable overlap with what proponents of international or global education are trying to achieve. Both international educators and evangelists of edtech are committed to the nurturing of a generation of young people who are more collaborative in their interactions with others, more horizontal in their understanding of power systems, more independent and tolerant in spirit, and more progressive in their view of our world. To me, this makes education technology particularly suitable for international schools and for other educational institutions that are inclined towards this particular value-set.

During my trip to Asia, I was offered a 20 minute time slot with a highly-esteemed veteran in the world of international education – a person who has acted as the principal of international schools in four continents, and who is now overseeing the opening of an exciting new IB World School in Beijing. The traditional nature of his own educational background, his experience running schools that are centuries old, and the age gap between us made me fear that our 20 minute meeting would be a struggle. But, two and a half hours and one “edtech advocate” later, we were still in his office, looking out at the misty Beijing skyline, brainstorming the impacts of transforming education-transitions using

technology and projecting our visions of higher education in the future. The educator in question has been one of my biggest supporters since.

At BridgeU, we have actively chosen to work with international secondary schools so as to position schools at the nexus between what we’re developing (technology-driven tools improving the student transition to higher education) and the students these products serve. The reason for this is that we believe technology is best utilized in conjunction with traditional learning practices, and best delivered with a soft, interpersonal touch. Technology is a remarkable optimizer, and – when given the chance – it can radically transform educational outcomes and paths for students from all walks of life.

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Learning online helps prepare students for higher education

Martin Oliver recommends a measured mix of conventional and online teaching and learning

Online learning has been happening for over thirty years, mostly within higher education, and the recent excitement around MOOCs has brought it even more into the public eye. For international schools, online learning has until recently largely been a solution for small, start-up and isolated schools that have struggled to employ teachers for certain specialist subjects. However, there is now a growing belief that participation in some online learning during the secondary years might offer students distinct advantages. As a result there is a growing interest in the possibilities that different forms of virtual schooling might offer.

That is not to say that online learning is either better or worse than conventional teaching. As a 2009 US Department of Education report demonstrated, decades' worth of research on 'media effects' still shows no conclusive evidence that any particular learning approach leads to improved outcomes. There is evidence, however, that learners who study both online and in the traditional classroom benefit – not simply because of the medium of study, but because they spend time learning in different ways and are given tasks, materials and learning approaches not offered to students studying solely in a face-to-face classroom.

What are the benefits of learning online?

A study by the Institute of Education, University of London (IOE) published in October 2014 explored the experiences of 108 current university students who had participated in at least one International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) online learning course prior to higher education. The

IBDP includes the option for students to study one or more of their Diploma Programme subjects online, following courses designed and delivered to IBDP standards by UK-based Pamoja Education [www.pamojaeducation.com]. Students who had completed online IBDP courses identified several benefits. Confidence with technology was one obvious advantage. Students who had studied online were familiar with technologies that formed an essential part of university life such as virtual learning environments, discussion forums, Google tools, and audio-visual resources. 94% of all the students researched said finding academic resources on the Internet was important to their success, 78% said being able to plan group tasks using online calendars, scheduling tools and discussion applications mattered, and 71% found social networks useful for building relationships with other learners.

Students in the study also talked about the cultural benefits of the online learning experience. Their online classes had brought learners from different countries together. Learners valued exposure to different perspectives on issues, and one respondent described how the experience of communicating and collaborating online with classmates had helped develop skills and approaches that would be valuable professionally, saying: "I often use Google Docs and other Google tools to collaborate on group projects, including working with teams that are in different locations and time zones."

Perhaps most importantly though, those who had studied online described how valuable it was that they could learn independently. They were less likely than their peers to rely

We know that, in spite of the widespread reference to so-called 'digital natives', learners arriving at university often struggle with the tools they are expected to use. Finding out about technology is not enough: students need to know why they are using it, and what they are expected to achieve, not just how to operate it.



'IBDP online students benefit from developing an international perspective on their subject and an understanding of diverse cultural viewpoints'

on university tutors for help, more likely to set goals based on their own performance rather than that of other students, and had better developed strategies for managing and pacing their studies. One student said that "Studying online is different from attending regular classes. You have to be self-motivated to study on your own and set your own deadlines. Personally, I learned a lot from taking an online course because it helped me prepare myself in terms of scheduling and allocating time to finish each of the subjects that I am currently taking."

Interviews with online students, conducted by the IOE, explored these issues in more depth. Consistently, interviewees explained that online learning brought its own challenges. However, the structure of the online IBDP courses includes access to staff within schools as well as to the online tutors. This provided an environment in which students felt that they could face new challenges – and develop strategies for dealing with them – with help and guidance as needed. One online teacher stated during the research: "I think it's good that they know that they're not out there alone and that they can reach out, ask the teacher questions, get support, move forward and ... increase in their independence; responsibility increases but they're continually supported. So I think that helps with their self-confidence and they just continue to grow."

All the students in the study had participated in their IBDP online courses alongside other subjects which were studied in the traditional classroom environment. This meant that

the unfamiliar experiences of online study were part of a broader schooling experience, rather than an 'all or nothing' alternative.

Researching online teachers

The online teachers interviewed as part of the study recognised the benefits and challenges that the online learners described. They also identified aspects of online learning that were less visible to the learners. These included the fact that postings in an asynchronous online discussion forum allowed quieter learners to be 'heard' by tutors in a way that doesn't always happen in the traditional classroom environment.

In the absence of face-to-face communication, and recognising the diversity of international students, several of the IBDP online teachers described how they have to take care to ensure every step of the learning process is clear to the learners. Teachers described how they use multiple channels of communication, and had learned to manage the levels of support each student receives based on the needs of the individual – a stark contrast to the 'sink or swim' MOOC model of student self-reliance, where support is minimal or non-existent, and where retention is a major issue. One teacher respondent highlighted this comparison: "I can't imagine having an online classroom with a hundred students because there's simply not enough time in the day to do the kind of careful evaluation and feedback that is absolutely necessary to make the online environment work

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..... If the teacher is not really focused and devoting a lot of time to the feedback process, it's really easy for all but the most dedicated students to get lost."

Recommendations

The step from school to university is challenging in several ways. Studying becomes more intensive and complex, courses are increasingly international in scope and participation, and students are expected to make use of specialist technologies as part of their academic work. To help students with managing this transition, schools can either provide experiences that act as a safe 'rehearsal' for university study, or recommend appropriate online courses as options to their students.

We know that, in spite of the widespread reference to so-called 'digital natives', learners arriving at university often struggle with the tools they are expected to use. Finding out about technology is not enough: students need to know why they are using it, and what they are expected to achieve, not just how to operate it. Online courses provide experience using a range of academic technologies: face-to-face classes could provide similar experiences by asking learners to use, or even to contribute to, online materials, including searching outside of the regulated library and virtual learning environment spaces provided by the school itself.

Similarly, IBDP online students benefit from developing an international perspective on their subject and an understanding of diverse cultural viewpoints. They also develop the practical expertise to coordinate group tasks, including collaborative writing. Not all online courses provide

such experiences. Most MOOCs, for example, consist of self-study resources such as videos and multiple choice quizzes, providing little opportunity to discuss, debate or collaborate with others – though there are MOOCs that require discussion, and some that involve interaction through peer feedback. It is also possible to provide such opportunities through partnering with other schools, preferably internationally.

At a school level, it would be possible to develop a coordinated strategy that introduces students to independent study, academic uses of technologies and different cultural perspectives, perhaps drawing on opportunities provided by other schools or institutions. Offering a structured and supported online study option could be another way. Providing this experience for students before they leave for university will help them to make a successful transition to higher education.

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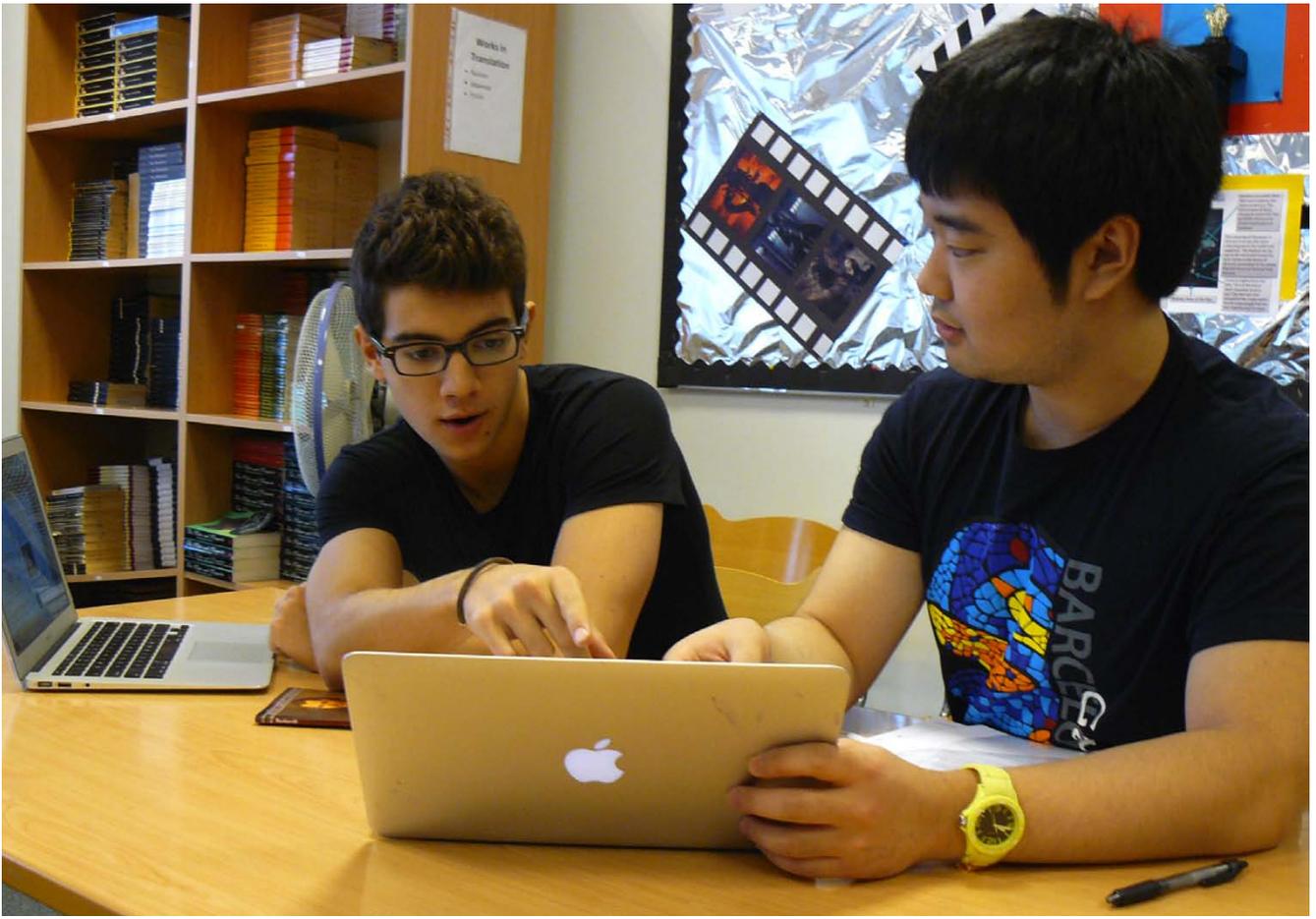
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A copy of the report on the IOE study is available at <http://goo.gl/HC9NX2>





'Online courses are designed to be complete and stand-alone alternatives to the mainstream physical school environment'

Developing an online course

Hedley Willsea shares his school's experience of a project to find their ideal digital platform

As part of a pilot project at the Anglo-American School of Moscow, teachers of electives lasting for one semester have been given permission to design and implement online courses. I'm excited: I feel like Darth Vader being given control of his own Death Star. The project is to relate directly to our school's mission-aligned outcomes for 2016: each student drives his/her own learning and turns it into action, and demonstrates the competencies and attitudes of a twenty first century learner.

My first step was to conduct an internet search of online courses. A sea of related terms and concepts began to emerge, including 'blended learning', 'e-learning', 'virtual classroom' and so on. Online courses have been around for a while now and, having replaced the much slower correspondence courses as a form of distance learning, they are now an integral part of modern adult learning.

The next step seems logical enough: offering courses in an online format to school-age students. However, a quick internet search did not yield much that seemed to be relevant to schools. Admittedly some organizations have begun to offer online courses including, among others, Net School, InterHigh, Briteschool and Academus (which are British-based) and K12 (which is American). The distinction is important when considering the fact that, at the time of writing, students currently enrolling in high school will ultimately be sitting externally graded paper-based exams in exam centres. Most of these sites offer a full curriculum and, in some cases, an individually-tailored curriculum and one-on-one tutoring. While some of the online classes focus on the externally examined years of high school (ages 14-18), others begin with year 7 (age 11).

Online courses are designed to be complete and stand-

To my mind, regardless of which educational philosophies or mission statements we adopt as professional educators, it is clear that blended learning is the future of education, as is reflected in the online courses now being offered by universities, colleges and professional development organizations.

alone alternatives to the mainstream physical school environment. They are led by qualified teachers in real-time (for example via Skype) and class sizes seem to vary from eight to thirteen students, with virtual lessons totalling between one and four hours each week per subject. Given that most of the organizations behind the sites I found charge for the courses, they inevitably have an interest in targeting as wide a market as possible. Several of the sites suggest that this market includes: children of parents who wish to avoid mainstream schooling for religious, political or social reasons; students with physical disabilities or health issues; struggling and excelling students who could benefit from individual tuition, and expatriate students who, while avoiding local and international schools, still seek to sit the exams of international boards such as the International Baccalaureate, Cambridge International Examinations and EdExcel.

Despite some of the courses' similarities, as noted above, they are clearly based on varying philosophies. For example, one website asserted that students cannot experience individualized and flexible learning in a traditional classroom environment. Others stipulated that while virtual classrooms are the primary source of instruction, CD ROMs, videos and textbooks are made available to support varied learning styles and needs. To my mind, regardless of which educational philosophies or mission statements we adopt as professional educators, it is clear that blended learning is the future of education, as is reflected in the online courses now being offered by universities, colleges and professional development organizations.

At the Anglo-American School of Moscow (AAS) developments are still at the embryonic stage. Meetings between the elective teachers, the administration and the IT department are being scheduled, in which discussions are likely to centre around what will be the most suitable platform for launching an online course: Google Classroom and Khan Academy have been mentioned so far. I know teachers who have used Khan Academy to 'flip the classroom', but at this

stage of the project no firm decision has been made. My key concerns are what form the online courses will take, whether students will be able to manage their time effectively, and to what extent we as course administrators can facilitate this. I currently produce a set of scaffolded lesson notes for each of my lessons, with a view to making the content readily and easily accessible to students who have been absent or who want to get ahead; this is what I see as the basis of an online elective course, rather than a regular series of interactive real-time Skype sessions. My main point here is that while teachers of electives will be running their online courses, we will also continue teaching our regular classroom-based versions of these courses.

My initial research proved useful as a reference point, and has helped me to clarify for myself a number of key points about the online courses we intend to offer at AAS. They will run alongside the regular electives as they currently exist but they will be independent, standalone courses; as a pilot project the courses will be offered to between ten and fifteen currently enrolled high school students who will also be studying regular core-curriculum subjects; the volunteering students will be selected by an interview process; the courses will not be intended as a form of distance learning, because teachers will be physically available to participating students and a dedicated work area will be made available to them. As a form of blended learning, I envisage the online courses being based on the model of self-blending; in other words, volunteering students are making the decision to combine traditional classroom-based experiences with further independent study facilitated by online activity. In a year's time I hope to look back at this article and reflect on how far my colleagues and I have come, and to what extent the aims of the project have been met.

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Reflections on the influence of technology in schools

Richard Harwood offers a scientific viewpoint

A recent article in a UK national newspaper put forward the idea that 'the history of computers in schools has been one of grand visions and disappointing realities'. Throughout my career in schools I have come to a view contrary to that, and to see the relevance of information technology to teaching, tutoring and school development. This article is a brief reflection on some projects in which I have been involved. Your experience will be different; you will have ideas to add and many other suggestions to make – there are certainly other resources available – but here are simply pointed out some areas where technology can play a significant role.

Having begun to think over the content of this article, recent posts in ECIS Smart Brief have only served to emphasise how important the appropriate use of information technology can be in the continued development both of our schools and, most importantly, of the staff and students within them. A successful secondary school in the north of England attributes its transformation from being one of the poorest performing schools in the area to the introduction of interactive one-to-one learning programme using tablets. An elementary school in British Columbia cites the introduction of lessons using interactive technology as responsible for improved levels of interest and achievement in its students.

In the international sphere, the winners have recently been announced of the 21st Century Learning Awards for 2014, reflecting excellence in the use of technology in the

school and classroom. These awards attracted entries from 15 countries, and winners were picked from a panel of leading experts in the field who were looking for exemplary and innovative practice in the classroom. Details of the school and teacher award winners can be found at <http://www.pearsonglobalschools.com/index.cfm?locator=PS2h49>. Their presentation videos provide real food for thought on the different ways in which innovative approaches can be beneficial.

These reflections touch on three areas of involvement that have continued with me into retirement:

- The use of computer-adaptive testing in monitoring the progress of course delivery and individual student progress (through my role with the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring, CEM, at Durham University, UK; <http://www.cem.org/>, a BETT Awards finalist, 2015).
- The development of course materials that include practical methods for exploiting data-logging techniques to enhance not only the treatment of the results but also student involvement during the progress of an experiment. Training in this type of experimental work was part of the recent Ghana project on which I reported recently in *IS* magazine.
- The development of interactive course materials on the internet that allow for independent and guided study, formative assessment of student progress and interaction between student, teacher and the resource creator. Such developments add an exciting dimension to the writing of text book material.

There are various situations where, as individual teachers or departments, the evaluation of how we are teaching, the content of our courses and the progress our students are making is brought home to us, causing us to do some soul-searching and possibly leaving us unnecessarily pessimistic about the level of success we are achieving. A school itself can feel equally challenged, both in its own culture of development and when external evaluation 'looms' at times of accreditation or inspection visits.

Self-evaluation is the key concept here, and experience from many different schools and colleagues suggests that this can be the most worthwhile process in generating a sense of individual and community purpose. However, such evaluation needs a context, an understanding of where our students and schools are placed, so that we have a realistic sense of developmental progression. For, while

Ghanaian science teachers training to exploit the use of IT in their schools



Being able to see the results of a reaction kinetics experiment, for instance, processed and created before one's own eyes as the reaction is still taking place, adds an extra dimension to the value of the experiment that can capture a student's interest and aid understanding.

we can be complacent about what we are achieving, it is also quite often true that we are too hard on ourselves. A sense of realistic security is important, particularly in the semi-isolation of an international context. One very useful 'touch of reality' in this context is the objective assessment of student progress provided by baseline tests such as those in the CEM suite of systems. These suites (MidYIS, Yellis and Alis), initially developed for the UK context, have now been adapted to cater for the international context, including the IB programmes, and can be of tremendous support in the pastoral guidance of students by tutors in guiding progress, identifying skills and advising on subject choice.

Being able to see the results of a reaction kinetics experiment, for instance, processed and created before one's own eyes as the reaction is still taking place, adds an extra dimension to the value of the experiment that can capture a student's interest and aid understanding. There are a wide range of experiments where this interactivity can be exploited, and this brings a further dimension to the judgements involved in project and experiment planning. The supply of equipment to access some 200 schools across Ghana to such experiments was part of the project mentioned earlier. The enthusiasm of teachers for the addition of this scope to their teaching 'armoury' was humbling and heart-warming.

The online resources projects in which I am currently involved are:

- the conversion of an IGCSE coursebook for Chemistry into an e-book in the 'Elevate' series being produced by Cambridge University Press (<http://education.cambridge.org/uk>) and
- the Lanterna OnLine science series of sites for the IB Diploma (<http://www.lanternaonline.com/>).

Both these resources, in different ways, add interactivity to the learning experience of students. Both include the dimension of video and animation as an aid to understanding, but perhaps the most important addition is the facility for formative questioning with feedback. These features allow

students to assess how well they have understood the material as they progress through the different sections of the resource. With the Lanterna digital textbooks there is the bonus from an author's viewpoint that the content can be readily updated in response to comment from teachers and students, thus enabling the content continually to develop and extend its usefulness.

The Lanterna Online approach allows teachers to plan lessons that let students engage with content in an interactive way. From text and videos to gaming elements and practice questions, teacher and students are able to get an overview of the strengths to build upon and the weaknesses to tackle. Using methods such as flipped classrooms and individually tailored tasks the teacher can structure lessons, foster understanding and monitor progress at each stage of the course.

Across all these areas the positive advantages to learning are evident, but the central key remains the individual teacher and their relationship with the students. The innovative techniques should allow teachers to focus on what they do best – teach! Teachers are more than simply resource managers and it is the personal communication of enthusiasm, support and intellectual curiosity that is the key underpinning of teaching activity – expressed so clearly in the staggeringly insightful novel 'Stoner' by John Williams. Reflecting at a time of peace in his career, 'He (William Stoner) suspected that he was beginning, ten years late, to discover who he was He felt himself at last beginning to be a teacher, which was simply a man to whom his book is true, to whom is given a dignity of art that has little to do with his foolishness or weakness or inadequacy as a man.'

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The international school environment is conducive to creativity and cultural agility, says Julian Edwards

Why international schools may have a creative edge

Julian Edwards has a fair idea where the entrepreneurs of the future are likely to come from

When those who are currently the youngest students at my school enter the workplace sometime after 2030 they will work with computers as intelligent as they are, at least according to one prediction. When asked what attributes they wanted their children to have on leaving school, the top traits noted by parents at this school, regardless of their children's age, were compassion, resilience/perseverance, open mindedness, adaptability, creativity and problem solving/critical thinking. There is still however a tension in education, highlighted by Yong Zhao (2012), between confidence in academic tradition and a hunch that demands of the future will need more than that. Zhao recommends an entrepreneurial education, combining the best aspects of academics and apprenticeship to develop students who will be creative problem finders and solvers. Creativity and

entrepreneurial spirit are scalable qualities, so if we want an education to develop creative learners we need to match those conditions in our professional communities, and systematically develop the creative potential that lies within our schools. The good news is that, within the fabric of international schools, there are elements which may give them the edge when it comes to becoming creative cultures.

The metaphor of a salad bowl has overtaken that of the melting pot for culturally diverse communities. Each ingredient, it is argued, adds interest whilst maintaining its own flavour. Although we are wise not to generalize about the characteristics of an international school, cultural diversity and turnover are community norms for many, and the intercultural nature of schools is advantageous in some ways. Travel may broaden minds but it is living and becoming



**A creative school
(or classroom)
promotes individual
and group creative
thinking and design,
providing time and
space for both, and
is openly prepared
to use failure as a
learning opportunity.**

immersed in a different culture that are most likely to support creative habits (Leung *et al*, 2008). It is no accident that areas with high immigration are also hotbeds for entrepreneurship and the innovation that supports it, as there are a number of creative advantages when people are forced to act across languages and cultures. Most studies have found a strong connection between bilingualism and creativity (Ricciardelli, 1992), and those who learn to operate effectively in a different culture, on returning to their origins are more likely than others to seek out diverse ideas and to find new perspectives. According to Weisberg (1999) cross-cultural experiences also open our minds to new ideas and concepts by developing our cultural agility as we are forced to understand nuances (such as what it means to leave food on one's plate) and our own norms and routines are challenged. Faculty lounges (and presumably classrooms) that are multicultural lend themselves more to what Rosabeth Kanter (2006) calls 'kaleidoscope thinking' – the ability to shape and reshape our views that is so key to innovation.

In addition to the potential for teacher diversity, the turnover of staff in international schools makes the forming and re-forming of teams the status quo. According to recent figures from ISC Research, of 7017 international schools worldwide, 41% have a UK-based curriculum and 22% a US curriculum, with the rest a combination of International

Baccalaureate and other curricula. It seems a fair assumption that some teachers will move between systems as well as schools, and my own research highlights the dispersal effect when innovative teachers bring ideas from previous schools to their new settings, recognizing that innovation does not only mean new ideas but also old ideas which are new to a particular setting. ISC also estimates that 250,000 more international school teachers will be needed in the next 10 years, making it almost inevitable that our teaching bodies will become more multicultural. There is plenty of support for the idea that this will provide potential for creativity, but diverse teams also require greater tolerance of conflict (Amabile and Khair, 2008). Teams with cultural diversity can have issues with perceptions of harmony and ambience, may need more time to complete complex tasks and, within these teams, individuals are more likely to have negative reactions. According to Hofstede (2001), in teams with differences in cultural norms there may be contrasting 'world views'. Misunderstandings or contrasts around issues such as individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, authority, risk-taking and willingness to make sacrifices increase the potential for conflict compared with homogenous teams. Clearly articulated expectations about collaboration and the nature of creativity may be particularly important for schools and teaching teams that have cultural diversity.



Students at NIST are encouraged to show creativity in a variety of settings, inside and outside the classroom

Whilst hiring for diversity may contribute to the creative potential of a school, leadership for creativity is even more important. Creative leadership methods are gaining popularity both in business and in education (Amabile, 1996; Stoll and Temperley, 2009). With little imagination such approaches apply equally well to the teacher wanting to develop a creative classroom culture. Those who lead for creativity engage people with a sense of meaning and, ideally, urgency. They model creativity and risk-taking whilst seeding new ideas and provoking questions, but at the same time are able to relinquish control and involve others at their highest point of contribution. A creative school (or classroom) promotes individual and group creative thinking and design, providing time and space for both, and is openly prepared to use failure as a learning opportunity. This may seem aspirational given the sheer workload in most schools. However, Amabile *et al* (2002) argue this is not always the case, and my work with innovative teachers supports their findings: when people feel an innovation has the characteristics of a mission (coordinated, well organized and clearly articulated) or an expedition (highly personal, with a small team or single partner and permission to change direction if needed), time is not an issue.

We are living and working at an exciting time, and those of us lucky enough to be involved in international education have access to more of the raw materials for creating our future than we may think. If we consider ourselves more as learning ecosystems, welcoming and exchanging novel ideas, embracing the creative advantage of cultural diversity and supporting the missions and expeditions of our faculties,

international schools may be the educational entrepreneurs who make a difference.

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Care ethics, active listening and international mindedness

How do our students make the leap from having sympathy to showing empathy, asks David Young

For someone brought up in a liberal-minded household in the UK thirty years ago, internationalism was unquestionably a 'good' thing. Internationalism contrasted with a nationalism which itself suggested something partisan, parochial and narrow-minded. Internationalism therefore showed an interest in and a respect for others, an understanding of difference, a tolerance of other countries and cultures. Travel and living abroad in foreign lands was said to broaden the mind through enforced encounters with others, which in turn was expected to lead to an interest in their way of life and appreciation of their food, customs and costume.

And yet this form of sympathetic and tolerant internationalism with its celebration of diversity and the annual International Day of food, fashion and flags has been challenged by the concept of international mindedness. Fortunately for us, this concept was not born fully-formed, and thus the international mindedness (IM) group at the British International School of Jeddah (BISJ) has spent some time firstly, coming up with a collective working definition of IM and secondly, finding ways of applying the concept across the school and within the classroom.

We came up with a six point schema, which on the one hand encourages 'students to understand and develop their own sense of individual identity and cultural awareness' while on the other 'encouraging students to critically recognise the biases, limitations and restrictions that our own nationality and culture place on our ability to understand/know/communicate with those from other cultures'. What we felt was different to internationalism was not the desire to find about or investigate the world in the spirit of an eighteenth century Grand Tourist or a nineteenth century Orientalist but to correspond, understand and listen to the world. In a phrase, the shift from internationalism to international mindedness is the leap from sympathy *for* to empathy *with*.

So, how can one learn to empathise? It's a difficult thing to be sure. Can one really feel for others? These questions struck me as a challenge when teaching an IB Diploma Theory of Knowledge class on ethics. In the 1970s and 1980s a branch of ethics associated with feminism developed which became known as care ethics. In short, this implies that traditional ethical approaches such as Kantian deontological ethics

or Utilitarian consequentialist ethics were too prescriptive. Studies by Carol Gilligan suggested that 'boys and men tend to focus on an ethic of justice being primarily concerned with applying moral rules that specify rights and duties', while girls and women 'seek to preserve the relationship. Thus feelings of empathy and compassion, a willingness to listen, a reluctance to control others, and recognition of the fragility of relationships, play an important part in reasoning'. (in Furrow, 2005) When faced with a problem, someone who wishes to apply care ethics will not look to apply hard and fast ethical rules but will rather view the situation in isolation and ask the question 'how do we respond?'

While it is open to debate whether care ethics simply reinforces gendered stereotypes of the rational male and the empathetic female, it could also be said to draw attention to the ingrained 'masculinity' of codes of justice and social morals of a (western) society. However, what this exploration of care ethics suggested to me was a way of teaching

When faced with a problem, someone who wishes to apply care ethics will not look to apply hard and fast ethical rules but will rather view the situation in isolation and ask the question 'how do we respond?'



Students undertook work on perspective and interpretations using some active listening techniques.

empathy and international mindedness in the context of an international school using a simple formula of: Listen – Understand – Respond.

To be able to empathise, we must learn to listen. But surely listening is something of which most are already capable? As teachers, we have a basic expectation that students will listen to instructions or listen to other students when they make a contribution to the lesson. But active listening has a qualitative difference. Active listening requires understanding as well as comprehension. It is a technique which is often associated with counselling and conflict resolution, and involves the listener feeding back or re-phrasing what they have heard as a means of confirming that they have understood. At BISJ we carried out some active listening exercises as a part of our PSHE Learning to Lead programme. Unit A16 is entitled 'Dealing with Trouble' and introduces students to active listening as well as outlining skills in dealing with problems through five 'golden rules': don't make it personal, consider the other perspective, take responsibility, don't avoid conflict and, finally, agree to disagree.

With our focus on the attitudes and practices implied by international mindedness, with a desire to learn how to empathise informed by the frameworks of care ethics and active listening, how then do we encourage students to listen, understand and respond? One way of doing this is through an activity called Ambassadors in which there are multiple groups in the class, and one member of a group visits another group to share the different perspectives which have been discussed. Another is the Listening Triad, where one student asks questions while another responds

and the third summarises the discussion. Jigsawing allows students to work together to build a common understanding of a problem, while Edward De Bono's classic Six Thinking Hats is effective with some types of issue in the secondary classroom. Finally, a technique that works well is a variant on the Socratic Seminar which is a valuable tool as a discussion circle in which students participate in a non-adversarial 'conversation'. In using this structure with my IB Diploma History classes, students are encouraged to share their opinions in a non-judgemental way on questions such as 'Was Alexander II a great Tsar?'. It is not a debate, and there are no winners and losers. It is not uncommon for students to change their opinions as a consequence of taking part in a seminar such as this.

An understanding of international mindedness as a series of attitudes and practices encourages us to review our teaching methodology. If we want to encourage our students to Listen, Understand and Respond then activities can be informed by practices such as active listening and collaborative learning. International mindedness is not just out there – it is all around us in the classroom.

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Putting prospective IB students on course

Christian Alexander Klaiss explains a new system of advice for DP choices

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme is widely known and respected as a rigorous course. In order to provide incoming IB Diploma students with the best possible advice regarding their course options, IB coordinators, careers counsellors, department heads and subject teachers refer to a student's past results and future plans, before advising on the best options available at IB for them. The Prague British School (PBS) pursues this process in earnest, believing as we do that students are best served by selecting courses that are not only appropriate to their interests and aspirations, but that will also represent challenging yet achievable goals for their IB Diploma.

Each spring, PBS makes available a wide array of information and counselling for all students entering Year 12 (IBDP Year 1), which includes final-year IGCSE and Pre-IB students from PBS, as well as new prospective students from local Czech schools, other international schools, and national schools from countries around the world. Students and parents are furnished with an IB synopsis packet containing information about each IB course offered at PBS. An IB fair for future students takes place on one afternoon in March, followed that same evening by an information session for students and their parents about the components and requirements of the IB Diploma.

Final IGCSE year form tutors and the Head of Year 11, as well as the IB coordinator and careers counsellor, meet several times with each student in that year group (including the Pre-IB class) to discuss his/her suitability for either the full IB Diploma or individual Diploma courses, as well as their suitability for each individual course. We generally focus on the following criteria when advising students about their IB choices: which subjects the student is already

good at and/or enjoys studying, subjects which represent an achievable challenge and, where applicable, subjects that lend themselves to future university plans. University brochures and the UCAS website have proven invaluable in assisting students in this respect.

One key criterion that has sparked lively debate in our school community, and has enhanced the quality of our programme, is the establishment of pre-requisites for entry into each individual course and level within the programme. PBS planned pre-requisites in 2012 and started implementing them the following year, based on the experiences of our school's former students – using the IGCSE subject grades they had attained before entering the IB programme and their subsequent level of attainment in the IB Diploma. For students joining PBS in Year 12 from schools not using the IGCSE or GCSE, we endeavour to produce or obtain equivalent scores. This is clearly much more straightforward when dealing with students arriving from countries with national curricula and reporting systems with which we have had previous experience, such as the Czech Republic, Germany or the Netherlands.

Overall, the requirement for entry into the full IB Diploma at PBS is six grades of A*-C in the IGCSE. Non-Diploma students take a minimum of four IB courses, for which they require at least four A*-C IGCSE grades. There are additional pre-requisites for individual subjects. For example, for students who have studied IGCSE prior to entering the IB Diploma programme, entry into English A: Literature at Higher Level is dependent upon minimum grades of B in IGCSE English as a First Language and IGCSE English Literature.

An important factor that has sometimes restricted the possible breadth of choice for incoming IB students is

One key criterion that has sparked lively debate in our school community, and has enhanced the quality of our programme, is the establishment of pre-requisites for entry into each individual course and level within the programme.



The Prague British School has developed a system to match students with IB subjects that will bring positive results but also challenge and stretch them in the process

national graduation requirements of the student's home country. For example, the German education ministry stipulates some strict requirements; they do not accept self-taught languages, Mathematical Studies or Environmental Systems & Societies as subjects for completion of the German Abitur. This clearly puts pressure on students to perform well enough at Higher Level in either a 'core' Science or Mathematics subject, while completing the other Maths/Science subject at Standard Level. Meanwhile, our in-school pre-requisites present a certain barrier for a student who does not have a very high Maths or Science aptitude. In these cases, we reach an agreement with the student that allows them to pursue the desired subject on a probationary basis for one to two terms.

Students have responded positively to this new system of advice in their IB choices. Undeniably, there is the occasional student who is initially disappointed about not being allowed

to pursue IB subjects that would serve as a springboard to a particular 'dream' course at university. However, the goal of our school's IB Diploma programme is to ensure that each student feels confident in achieving success in their given subjects, while being stretched academically. Improvements are already being noted with the current Year 13 cohort: the first students to have undergone more intensive counselling as well as the pre-requisite system. We are confident that our system of encouraging students to embark on IB courses that are challenging yet enjoyable and achievable, while also fitting in well with the student's future university plans, will further enhance the ability of our students to realise their potential.

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Zurich International School's 'Career Forum' has grown from a lunchtime session into a full-day event

Preparing students for working life

Stephen Burnham and Annette Cil report on the growth and success of a school career forum

As students enter the tenth grade and prepare to choose between the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and Advanced Placement (AP) programs, they are bombarded with decisions concerning their academic future. Before choosing their final courses, and perhaps more importantly their career path, students should (and when considering some universities, must) have an idea of what they would like to study and the career path they are likely to take. A student who would like to become a bio-chemical engineer, for example, would do well to choose higher level math and higher level chemistry. For a student who is eyeing a career in law, perhaps, higher level math would be unnecessary. In short, in grade ten, students must think through these issues and attempt to map out the rest of their educational careers with an eye towards the ultimate career path they will choose. Students in grades eleven and twelve benefit from the advice of the career counselors, but as students approach the end of grade ten the task of choosing the correct courses can be daunting.

In light of this, six years ago a lunchtime chat session was organized at Zurich International School (ZIS) for tenth

graders. It was a session in which eleventh and twelfth graders took the time to explain the workload tenth graders would be facing in each individual course (from a student's perspective) and provided information on the AP and IB courses. The following year this 'lunchtime session' transitioned into a session in which all grade eleven and grade twelve courses were represented by a junior or senior student who offered their free time to speak about the specific courses offered in the AP and IB programs, in a 'fayre' style, which was set up in our school's theatre. What was most telling was the fact that almost every grade ten student attended (despite not being required to do so). It was clear that the transition to eleventh grade and the decisions to be made were important to the tenth graders. While these lunchtime sessions were helpful, it seemed that the students would also benefit from additional careers advice before deciding on a path to take and which courses to choose. During the following two years, this simple lunchtime model transitioned into what today has become a full-day event dubbed the 'Career Forum'.

The Career Forum has become an opportunity for tenth grade students to meet professionals from the Zurich area, and to inform themselves about possible career paths across a variety of fields before making their future course decisions. The first Career Forum was championed by parents at our school three years ago and has quickly become a highly anticipated event. Through partnership with parents, the school now dedicates an entire day (and many teacher, staff and volunteer hours) to the event. All grade ten students are required to participate, and are excused from classes for the day. The format is an informal setting of panels meant to encourage dialogue between the panelists and the students. This past year, each panel consisted of an average of 4 panelists and 15 students. Students could attend three 50 minute panels consecutively with short breaks in between. After the three sessions, students met with their advisers to debrief, and to discuss the forum's effect on their choice of programme.

The preparatory work, however, began months in advance of the actual day. A team of parents worked together to recruit professionals from various fields to participate in the event. This year, the Career Forum was able to recruit over 60 professionals from varying fields and careers. The parents, together with the school, also prepared students for the event by encouraging them to draft questions and to explore career paths that might be of interest to them.

This year's event was highly successful. After the event, students and panelists were surveyed and the results showed that the majority of students either confirmed their thoughts concerning possible career paths or learned something new. Many students also suggested that they would have liked another panel session or more time with the panelists. The reaction from panelists was likewise positive. In fact, in the

survey, 99 percent of the panelists (who took time out of their busy schedules) said that they would participate again, if asked. Panelists also suggested that what they enjoyed most about participating in the event was the interaction with students. As the Career Forum has grown, so too has enthusiasm for the event. Parents who have volunteered at the forum – either as panelists or organizers – have expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the program.

While the Career Forum began as an experiment, in the three years since its inception the Career Forum has now become a fixture in the Zurich International School schedule. The event has also gained a reputation within the Zurich area, and another international school in the area asked for (and was granted) the opportunity to send its tenth grade students to the event. The Career Forum is one of several initiatives at the school aimed at preparing students for their working life. John Switzer, Principal at the Upper School, said "As well as offering an academically challenging program, we believe it is equally important to provide students with opportunities to experience life outside the classroom and to develop additional skills that will help them beyond ZIS." The Career Forum has advanced this objective, and has made what is a difficult time for tenth graders – filled as it is with anxiety over decisions to be made – just a tad easier.

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More than 60 professionals from varying fields attended this year's forum



Teach a child to change the world

Laurence Myers on the aspirations of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

If a child dreams of becoming an NBA/WNBA basketball player, chances are slim that he/she will make it there if, during the school years, he/she studies basketball in theory, watching video and considering it intellectually alone. Then, as the now-young-adult walks out the door of high school, he/she discovers that basketball, like most everything, cannot be learned exclusively during the university years if exceptional play is the goal. Better, as Malcolm Gladwell suggests in *Outliers*, to start early and invest 10,000 hours to be one of the select few to make it that far in the basketball universe. To truly become better at something one must be given ample experience with it, to practice it in the right manner, to mold oneself in its process and application and, in so doing, reach one's true potential. Changing the world, it would seem, should follow much the same sequence.

As international educators we talk a good deal about global citizenship. Many an international school emblazons

'global citizen' on its mission statement. It's most certainly a worthwhile goal. What is often the difficulty is not in determining what we hope to achieve, but in determining how to actually achieve it. As with most things, there is no cookie cutter solution and so one's journey can – for better or for worse – meander in all sorts of directions. And just how might schools assist in creating and sustaining global citizens? Certainly we can't merely talk about making the world better, or throw some money at a cause or, increasingly, 'like' it on a Facebook page, and hope the world will be instantaneously changed for the better. Similarly, and increasingly, we don't think it's enough to ask kids to do superficial service work and walk away having learned how to set up a bake sale but knowing next to nothing of the issue for which the money is raised. For children to realize their personal and collective capacity for change they must recognize the definition and importance of global citizenship and, perhaps more

Many an international school emblazons ‘global citizen’ on its mission statement. It’s most certainly a worthwhile goal. What is often the difficulty is not in determining what we hope to achieve, but in determining how to actually achieve it.



importantly, how their own personal actions blend into a world packed with ever-changing dynamic systems.

And herein lies what we, at the International School of Kuala Lumpur (ISKL), call Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). ESD incorporates the ecological, social, economic and political dimension of sustainable development originally identified by UNESCO’s “dimensions of sustainable development”. The political dimension, for us, focuses on both governance (systemic behaviors) and global citizenship (personal behaviors) as a means of understanding the world. The framework holds many similarities to a host of other sustainability frameworks, most notably that of Compass Education, which has also influenced our learning experiences.

At ISKL, ESD is important enough to be afforded its own set of inter-disciplinary standards and benchmarks so as to draw connections between the plethora of disciplinary curricula. Moving in this direction for ten years now, we have found that it’s not the dimensions themselves that are the most essential in building the knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes necessary for global citizenship. Rather, it is the following characteristics which, combined, are utilized in the development of our 5th, and arguably most critical, standard: Sustainable Synergies. This 5th standard is characterized by the following:

- Learning through direct interaction with nature
- Analyzing global issues through the ‘lenses’ of the dimensions of ESD
- Recognizing the dynamic interaction between the four dimensions
- Utilizing systems thinking in analyzing global issues and offering solutions

- Engaging students in inventing the future (a concept borrowed from The Cloud Institute)

ESD is an excellent foundation for learning the many and varied aspects of sustainable development and our role in creating the future. After all, any change needs to be deeply rooted in a stable knowledge base and skill set. It allows for analysis and deliberation and projecting. But from a real-world, practical and authentic standpoint it still falls short. We need a change maker to inspire change making.

We found our answer in Cathryn Berger Kaye, a well-versed service learning educator who has worked extensively with numerous schools around the world and the International Baccalaureate Organization. Cathy has such a manner in her workshops that it’s worth participating in one just to witness the pure energy she emits in bringing service learning to life. But the not-so-hidden power lies in the connection between addressing authentic community needs and engaging students actively in the learning process. In short, it takes the global citizenship “talk” and turns it into the “walk”.

In an ideal situation – which we are still aspiring toward – a child would go through the service learning process over and over and over again as he/she continues school. Service learning, practiced effectively, allows for a continuous multi-faceted analysis of the world, its dynamic interconnections and the systems that support it, and allows the student to identify leverage points for action as well as ample opportunities to become reflective, life-long learners.

But though that’s fine and dandy, opening that “interconnectedness” can of worms could pose additional challenges on how to address it. When one sits down to do a systems analysis for species extinction, for example,

This figure outlines the ethos and learning benefits of ESD at ISKL



one can easily recognize just how difficult it is to solve all the problems simultaneously. This can overwhelm problem solvers of any age (though perhaps not those very young and eager minds who feel that anything they do will solve all the world's problems!).

With some guidance, educators can flip that very same thing on its head and recognize the power of solutions within systems as well. Just as negatives have a ripple effect across a system and affect other things that, in turn, affect yet others, so positives work in the same way. If nothing else, this recognition allows students to understand that thinking globally can, in fact, be addressed by focusing locally. And there, locally, students can be change makers and future builders of their world. There, right there, they have some influence over their space, their surroundings, and the mindsets of others. We only need to provide them with the tools to do so.

It's one thing to know that the course of human and natural history is currently unsustainable. It's equally limiting to realize just how big the problem appears to be. After all, what can a fourth grader in Jakarta possibly do to stop deforestation, or a small class of students do to stop water shortages in South Sudan? But if we focus on what we can do – build that bridge, plant that tree or educate that community, and learn through action planning and true, deep reflection – then our students

can, as we all envision, become true global citizens. So, when we're molding the global citizens of the future and building the leaders of tomorrow, let's make sure that we're giving them the baby steps of personal change-making capacity which, through trial and success and even failure, will make them the change-makers we all envision them to be. But to get there, it's imperative that we do it here, now.

One child picks up a basketball at the age of four, dribbles a few times until the ball bounces off his/her foot. He/she picks it up and tries again. 10,000 hours later he/she is playing in the world's center stage. Another child plants a tree, which someone in the neighborhood who sees it as a nuisance threatens to cut down. The child then generates an awareness campaign to highlight the benefits of trees, and the tree is allowed to grow. 10,000 hours later the world is a truly better place, not so much from the young tree having grown, but from the inevitable growth that transpires from youth understanding deeply and engaging authentically in global issues. If we can see the potential in that vision we're already a step closer to a better world.

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From a philosophy to a T-shirt: living it, not laminating it!

Michael Thompson and Meeta Varma on reviewing a school mission statement

Mercedes-Benz International School (MBIS) in Pune, India comprises over 70 per cent expatriate children who are part of the world's increasingly mobile community. In the course of our school's first fifteen years there had been only two reviews of its Mission Statement. The second revision in 2009 was completed by just three people. More recently, we felt a need to review the Mission Statement in order to reflect

the current school community – and we also wanted it to be written in a language that everyone could understand.

The Strategic Plan of the school board stated that we should “Involve the school community in the process of developing and creating the school's new mission. ... Create a Mission Statement which is visual, verbal and in as concise a format as possible.”





Project week at UWC South East Asia is a 'unique experience' for students

The essential benefits of outdoor education

Gareth Barlow on how UWC South East Asia continues to take learning outdoors

In 2002, I sat in a UK conference hall with several hundred other students who would shortly be graduating as teachers from the University of Wales. We were listening to an advisor from one of the main teaching unions, whose unequivocal advice was that, as teachers, we should not take students on off-campus trips. The risk was simply too great. Fast forward twelve years and I now find myself in the fortunate position of working for the Outdoor Education department at United World College of South East Asia (UWCSEA), organising many overseas trips and having blatantly ignored this previous advice. Why?

Many people will be aware of the apparent benefits of Outdoor Education and the notion of learning beyond

the classroom: developing self-esteem; promotion of independence; enhancing cooperation and perseverance; developing respect and appreciation for the environment. In my years both as a teacher and as someone who has participated in outdoor activities, I find truth in them all. Yet it is a quote from Kurt Hahn – founder of both the United World College (UWC) and Outward Bound movements – that summarises the value of Outdoor Education and how it can expand personal horizons:

There is more in us than we know if we could be made to see it; perhaps, for the rest of our lives we will be unwilling to settle for less.



UWC South East Asia has 23 possible options for challenging expeditions, from kayaking to mountain biking

Having witnessed first-hand the benefits of taking adolescents into the outdoors and subjecting them to challenging situations, it was Hahn who saw the particular benefits of impelling young people into experiences. Here at UWCSEA, where Outdoor Education is one of the five main elements of the learning programme (alongside Academics, Activities, Personal and Social Education, and Service), we currently run an incremental progression of experiences to students across the K–12 curriculum.

Grade 1 students spend a night at the school, and this will often be the first time in their lives they have spent a night apart from their parents. As students progress through their school life, the time spent away on excursions increases and trips become more adventurous in nature, with a focus on expedition-style journeys taking place in Grades 7, 8 and 9. All of the Outdoor Education trips are a mandatory requirement for all students at the College and, up until the end of Middle School, these experiences all take place during regular term time.

Grade 9 offers the chance for students to select at least one challenging expedition that they must complete during one of the holiday breaks. As I write this, we currently have 23 possible options on offer, ranging from one week to 18

days in duration. This year, we managed to place over 80% of our Grade 9 students on their first choice expedition, and many students also opted for a second, and sometimes even a third, trip.

These possibilities – most of which depend on close work with competent third party providers – include trekking, climbing, kayaking, rafting, tall-ship sailing, scuba diving, sustainability camps, horse riding, mountain biking, biodiversity research programmes, and multi-activity journeys. Many expeditions entail our students camping and preparing their own food as they face up to the constant challenges afforded by such trips. There is an emphasis on personal responsibility, interpersonal skills, and the notion of developing resilience through suffering hardships not usually encountered at school or in students' daily lives. In fact, this is something that we strive to accentuate from year to year.

In terms of risk assessment, close scrutiny of providers is only one aspect of a bigger picture when focusing on providing the students with an authentic experience of the outdoors. We devote a lot of time and energy to managing these risks by collating information in a school database which links directly to International SOS, whose staff are

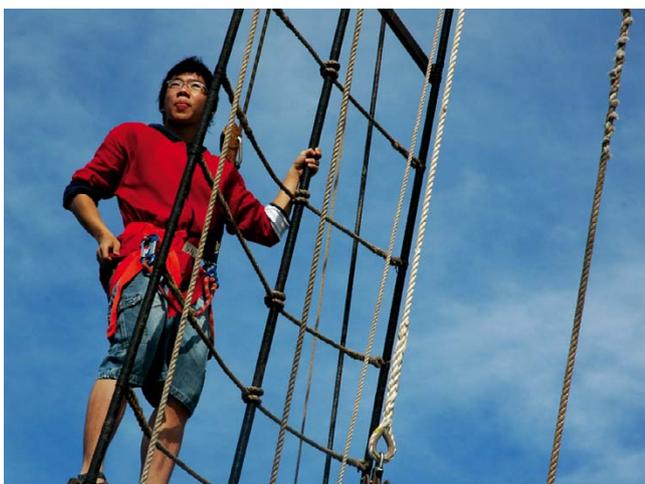
The benefits to students of going on these trips remain long after they return. The positive impact on their relationships and ability to collaborate in the classroom is obvious to teachers.

on-hand to provide support and guidance to staff and students away on trips. We also work extremely closely with an independent Technical Advisor and our procedures are regularly audited, updated and reviewed.

The benefits to students of going on these trips remain long after they return. The positive impact on their relationships and ability to collaborate in the classroom is obvious to teachers, and the opportunity to view one another in a new light is enormously beneficial for those students who may not find themselves a natural leader in the classroom setting. Most importantly, students gain a new understanding of themselves, which they can bring to their learning in other areas of the learning programme.

Although there is a break from Outdoor Education expeditions in Grades 10 and 12 due to busy exam periods, our Grade 11 students embark on a fairly unique experience which, for many students, represents the pinnacle of their time at UWCSEA: Project Week. Working to an individual budget of \$850, students are required to form small groups and travel unaccompanied overseas for a minimum of five days, in order to complete a trip that involves elements of the IB Diploma Creativity, Activity, Service requirement. Students are responsible for every aspect of their trip (overseen by a school member of staff as their 'sponsor'), from booking transport and accommodation, to liaising with service or activity providers and establishing a suitable itinerary.

In today's technology-driven world, it is as easy to agree on the value of Outdoor Education and an experience such as Project Week as it is to proffer that the youth of today are more in need of it, because of their current lifestyle. Hahn's



focus on adventure within his philosophy was stimulated through his Six Declines of Modern Youth:

1. Decline of Fitness due to modern methods of locomotion;
2. Decline of Initiative and Enterprise due to the widespread disease of spectatoritis;
3. Decline of Memory and Imagination due to the confused restlessness of modern life;
4. Decline of Skill and Care due to the weakened tradition of craftsmanship;
5. Decline of Self-discipline due to the ever-present availability of stimulants and tranquilizers;
6. Decline of Compassion due to the unseemly haste with which modern life is conducted.

As much as I find myself empathising with these views, whenever I read them I am always reminded of a quote that, while not certain in its origin, is more often than not attributed to Socrates:

Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders and love chatter in place of exercise; they no longer rise when elders enter the room; they contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers.

Both viewpoints lament the negative attributes of the younger generation, yet the sense of timelessness associated with both suggests that the problem lies not so much with the youth, but with the adults who influence their lives.

Earlier this year, writing in the Times Educational Supplement of Scotland (TESS), Henry Hepburn asked why more teachers aren't heading outdoors, despite the obvious associated benefits. Citing reasons such as budget cuts, and a lack of genuine understanding about Outdoor Education from authorities and other teachers, as well as the fact that the heads of most schools are primarily accountable for their exam results, Hepburn observes that "Outdoor learning remains the cherry on the top rather than an essential ingredient."

Fortunately, this is not the case for the students of UWCSEA.

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Teacher feedback: the breakfast of champions – and losers

William Powell and Ochan Kusuma-Powell on why we need to listen up

For over 75 years, the American breakfast cereal Wheaties has been advertised as the 'breakfast of champions' – clearly trying to forge connections in the consumer's mind between exemplary sports performance and their product. In education, researchers and teachers have also been searching for the 'breakfast of champions' and we have found one; the only down side – and it is a very significant one – is that our 'breakfast' can produce both champions and losers. Feedback can be a double-edged sword.

Recent research (Hattie 2012; Wiliam 2012; Wiggins 2012) underscores how critically important teacher feedback is to student learning. When Hattie (2009) rank ordered the statistical influences on student learning, feedback was number 10 out of 134. However, researchers Kluger and DeNisi (1996) analyzed 131 carefully constructed studies of teacher feedback and found that, while feedback did on average improve student learning, over forty percent of the research studies indicated that feedback actually made student performance worse! Hence the title of this article.

Dylan Wiliam (2012) points out eight ways that a student can respond to feedback, six of which have a negative impact on future learning. Students can respond by changing behavior (increasing or decreasing effort), by modifying a goal (reducing or increasing level of challenge), by abandoning the goal (deciding that the goal is too easy or too difficult) or by rejecting the feedback (ignoring it or taking no action). Six out of these eight responses have a negative impact on future learning. Only increasing effort or increasing the level of challenge are positive.

It is therefore incumbent upon teachers to become feedback literate. There is a lot at stake, and it would seem that the odds are not in the teacher's favor. Simply defined, feedback is information about how a student is doing in his or her efforts to reach a goal. In order for the feedback to be meaningful, the student must first understand the goal. In other words, the learning target must be clear – not only to the teacher but also to the student. The acid test is to ask every student in the class to complete individually the sentence stem: We are learning ... The results can be both surprising and informative.

In order for feedback to be both effective and meaningful,

students need to be able to answer three metacognitive questions. They are deceptively simple and yet powerfully reflective: Where am I going? (What is the learning target?) Where am I now? (What is my present level of mastery or understanding?) and How can I close the gap? (Chappuis, 2005).

Two flavors of misunderstanding

There are two very common teacher misunderstandings about feedback. The first is that "grades" constitute useful feedback. Nothing could be further from the truth. Grades tell students nothing specific about how they have performed or what they need to do next in terms of improvement. In fact, more often than not, grades signal to students that the piece of work is finished and can be filed away. No further thought is required. There is no positive correlation between grading and student learning. (Indeed, we would argue that there is a negative correlation).

The second misunderstanding is that the teacher's responsibility ends with providing feedback and that it is the student's responsibility to use it. Teachers are often much better at providing feedback than they are at ensuring that students use it. Giving feedback that isn't acted upon is arguably the single most wasteful use of teacher time. In short, the acid test of effective feedback is the response of the student. Everyone, students and adults alike, makes decisions about whom they will learn from. Teachers develop positive relationships with colleagues, and informal and formal mentoring takes place. The same thing happens in the classroom. We learn much more effectively and efficiently, and feedback is much more likely to be well-received, from people we trust. Teachers need to deliberately and proactively develop climates of classroom trust.

Feedback flourishes when we encounter misunderstandings, misconceptions and errors. (When students understand and produce error-free work, feedback is generally ineffective in terms of promoting future learning). Teachers need to create a classroom culture in which errors and misunderstandings are welcome: failure is not something to hide or be ashamed of. Outside of education there is a clear understanding that creativity and innovation are directly correlated to the degree to which we fail. 'If we are

not failing ten times more than we're succeeding, it means that we're not taking enough risks' (Murphy-Hoye, in Sawyer, 2007, p. 109). Keith Sawyer (2007) exhorts us to 'Fail frequently, fail early (recognize failure early and don't throw good money / time after bad) and fail gloriously!'

Teacher feedback needs to focus on errors and not mistakes. What's the difference? Mistakes are the result of a temporary lapse of attention. When we are exhausted or distracted and our mind wanders from the task at hand, we will often make mistakes. Many times, we will catch mistakes ourselves or recognize them quickly when others point them out. We know what we have done wrong and we know how to correct them. Teachers shouldn't spend a lot of time giving students feedback on mistakes. What we should focus on is errors. Errors result from either a lack of knowledge or a misunderstanding. Even when an error is pointed out to a student, he or she may not know what to do about it. As Fisher and Frey (2012) write: 'Correcting mistakes while failing to address errors can be a costly waste of instructional time' (p.44).

Distinguishing between 'mistakes' and 'errors' requires the teacher to engage in cognitive empathy – projecting him or herself into the mind of the novice learner – stepping (metaphorically) into the shoes of misunderstanding. This can require rigorous critical thinking on the part of the teacher.

Comfort-oriented feedback

Perhaps the most insidious form of feedback is comfort-oriented feedback. Four recent studies indicate that comforting students who struggle in math (or other subjects) demotivates them and decreases the number of students pursuing math-related subjects (Rattan, Good & Dweck, 2012). The studies explored whether holding a fixed theory of ability – that is believing that ability is innate and unchanging – leads teachers and parents not only to comfort students for their perceived low ability following failure, but also to use practices that actually encourage student long term low achievement. The studies found that teachers and parents who have a fixed theory of math intelligence more frequently judged students to have low ability in math than those who held a more malleable theory, which supposes that people can improve their abilities through hard work and practice. They were also more likely to comfort students for their apparent lack of ability and use "kind" strategies that failed to motivate the student to improve, such as assigning less homework and not calling on them in class.

Students who received comfort-oriented feedback often assumed the teacher had low expectations of what they might accomplish as well as lower engagement in their learning, even when the feedback was expressed positively – as in "You are a good person who has many talents. It may be that you just don't have an aptitude for learning a foreign language." The report concluded that teachers and parents who provided comfort-oriented feedback may well have done so with the best of intentions. These may be exceptionally kind and empathetic teachers, but they inadvertently disable students from future learning.

Teacher feedback to students on their learning and achievement is truly the breakfast of champions and losers. In order for us to support our learners to become the champions we want them to be, it is incumbent upon us to become feedback literate.



"It is incumbent upon teachers to become feedback-literate"

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The two-day Future Leaders programme was held at the Ecole Mondiale World School in Mumbai

Preparing our students to be future leaders

Melanie Hilton and Ann Puntis report on an exciting new programme

Mumbai, Monday morning. A class of 51 students, 16 and 17 years old, and all are new to us. There's some trepidation at what the next two days might hold. However, these are not ordinary students. It's not a normal class. And we are not their usual classroom teachers.

Instead, this is the start of a two day programme for Future Leaders; a programme that aims to develop successful and ethically-driven internationally-minded leaders of the future. This is an ideal time to hold such a programme; we're at Ecole Mondiale World School in Mumbai, the day after the school played host to the Alliance for International Education conference which on this occasion focused on 'Intercultural Understanding' – a theme which is also at the heart of our Future Leaders course.

Future Leaders recognises that the world in which these

young people will be working is one in which international boundaries no longer exist, and the teams in which they will work will be diverse in make-up, global in focus and virtual in composition. The programme these students will be following over the next two days therefore seeks to help them to develop intercultural understanding, and encourages participants to embrace and be responsive to different perspectives.

The room is full of aspirational teenagers who are already mapping out their future careers and see the acquisition of 21st century skills – such as creativity, collaborative problem solving, leadership and entrepreneurship – as key to their future success. In fact, they regard this as so important that they have given up part of their Diwali break to attend!

And they are right to do so. Leading universities and

**The programme
seeks to encourage
participants to
embrace and
be responsive
to different
perspectives.**

employers around the world increasingly demand that today's young people demonstrate a range of 21st century skills, often assessing creative thinking and problem solving skills within the application process. These are skills that facilitate effective knowledge management and afford the ability to consider issues from different viewpoints, including a range of skill-bases and a global perspective.

In its recruitment guidance to applicants, the multinational management consultancy Deloitte emphasises the importance of such attributes, saying "The ability to collaborate and solve problems is key to securing a job here." Similarly, IBM stresses that "creativity, curiosity, and strong collaborative skills are valued in would-be recruits".

In fact, collaborative problem-solving is now so widely regarded as a key skill in today's global society that, from 2015, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) will include a measure of the effectiveness of different education systems in developing this skill.

Yet in the pressurised environment of school schedules and standards, it is all too easy for the focus on such skill acquisition to be squeezed by the demands of the subject-based curriculum – which is why these students are here today, taking advantage of the Future Leaders extra-curricular learning-focused offerings that will help to set them apart from their peers. Future Leaders is one of several accredited programmes offered by UK-based Global Study Pass, delivered all over the world to enhance and enrich existing areas of the curriculum and to equip young people with the skills and competencies that universities and employers now demand.

And so, two days on, the students participating in the Future Leaders course at École Mondiale World School emerged more prepared for the global demands they will face. Through project-based activities, group work, challenges, presentations, discussions and quizzes, they tackled such topics as leadership, teamwork, communication and ethical dilemmas. They debated the possible implications and consequences of particular actions, presented their views, built on prior learning and sought to identify new responses to challenges many of which the ageing brains of the tutors hadn't even considered!

As one student said: it "gave me a new perspective about teamwork and leadership" – one that will prepare students well for the world in which they will be living, learning – and that they hope to be leading.

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The course involved project-based activities, group work, presentations, discussions and quizzes

What's new about innovation?

E T Ranger wonders how his generation fits into the digital age

So where do we stand in this new field of ICT, with its new hierarchies of expertise and of competence? Is it just one more arena for generational warfare? In a novel field, experience and the established canon count for nothing, and merely encumber the memory. The advocates of digital domination claim that all who refuse to kneel to them will be history's roadkill. Rivalries can appear in which established status is overturned, painfully for some. Fashions are ephemeral, and only the committed can keep up with them, as we see from social networking: the faster the communication, the sooner one can launch a new fashion and exclude the old. It gets harder to keep ahead of the pack, yet the leaders claim that the mass of pursuers is a tribute to their leadership.

Is it good? Isn't this one of the eternal questions, from the wheel, through fire, to nuclear fission, and beyond? Something new is found or made, and we use it as we use any tool that we can lay our hands on, to do what we – as individuals – think is worth doing. In turn, this leads innovation to deliver the things that people – spending people, that is – want to have.

But technology is itself a field, and that can be divisive. Are you inside it or out? Lined up for the classic school photo, the Head of IT is the one with what? A jacket with leather elbows and seven biros in the top pocket? A bad haircut and a 'Whitesnake' t-shirt? An MBA in one pocket and a software contract in another? Do you wanna be in his or her gang? Ah, but there is an ace up every IT sleeve; they have powers of patronage unknown since Solomon handed out contracts for the Temple! Never, never cross the IT department. They operate in a field where you are lost without a guide, and they have powers that will one day save your bacon. And you will depend on them, utterly.

My generation, the old and crabby, tend to feel deliberately excluded, and very often are. This isn't good; small groups gather surreptitiously around the coffee-machine at break-time and murmur sedition. In the end they have to capitulate or retire, hurt. Alternatively they can join the race, like over-50s training for the local marathon. Possible – if you already halfway fit – but with a very high, and public, casualty rate. It's tough for any competitor who is already carrying a personal history, a respect for the classical educational canon, to say nothing of a full daily diary: which slice of their life is to make way for IT study – the work, the family, the garden, the fun? Their world is already full.

One answer is to replace something. Do you take language classes? Wouldn't IT be more useful? Well, possibly, especially if you plan to withdraw into the Flat World of Thomas Friedman: that narrow strip of artificial Anglophone highway

that conveniently by-passes the rich diversity of humanity, a world where all speak the language of Silicon Valley and live harmoniously sharing the rich colonial culture of monolingual teenagers. Now *there* is true poverty!

The truth is that IT works wonders – on content. We need to know how to do these things, but we also need things to do. We are witnessing the advance of 'how', but we must never permit the retreat of 'why'. The answer 'because we can' is a justification for nothing. Edison invented the electric chair, but his eager attempts to pioneer it were a squalid blot on his reputation.

A recent book on IT in international education makes thoughtful self-criticisms of the actual outcomes of IT-assisted learning, deflating many of the triumphalist claims with solid evidence. However, it does so in incompetent English which is adequate for conveying facts but not for implying the meanings which are the matter of the humanities. The contest is not between computers and quill pens, any more than food competes with cutlery for a place on the table. The real need is to ensure that the menu gives the diverse, healthy diet that we want. The translation of the Bible into popular language opened the contents to everyone who could read, and IT should also reveal rather than conceal. This is where, if we care about democracy, we must ensure that everyone is admitted to the new debate. The pre-eminence of IT in storing, recovering and presenting material will privilege some and disinherit others. This is a moment to check what it is we value, and to work to make sure it survives the book-burning!

The truth is that IT works wonders – on content. We need to know how to do these things, but we also need things to do. We are witnessing the advance of 'how', but we must never permit the retreat of 'why'.



ACS Cobham International School carried out a survey into the academic value of the AP program

Why choose the AP?

Amanda Briggs outlines the case for the Advanced Placement Program

"IB, AP— which should I do?" The question of appropriate curriculum choice for students is the million-dollar question in international schools, with so much riding on it. Choosing the right courses has widespread implications not only for the student, but for the whole family as well. Ultimately, students take either IB (International Baccalaureate) Diploma or AP (Advanced Placement) courses as a way to secure admission to the most competitive universities: when the family may be relocating or repatriated during the student's high school career, however, and university destinations could be anywhere in the world, decisions about which curriculum to choose can be tough, with many considerations to take on board.

Over the last few years at ACS Cobham International, England, student enrollment in the IBDP has increased whilst enrollment in the AP program has fallen, corresponding to the falling number of predominantly American students and the rise in the number of non-American students. The word 'on the street' is that 'IB is best'. However, the number of AP examinations administered worldwide in non-US regions, excluding Canada, has increased considerably from 23,927 in 2003 to 89,793 in 2014 (College Board, 2014). The international growth of the AP program can be aligned to the

explosive growth in the number of American-international schools, and the fact that APs are accepted as rigorous academic qualifications fulfilling matriculation requirements by thousands of universities in the US and around the world (McKillip & Rawls, 2013). However, the discrepancy between this increasing international growth trend and falling AP enrollments at ACS led me to question the academic value of the AP program for students in international schools. Using ACS Cobham as a case study, surveys and interviews with students, teachers and administrators were conducted to investigate the perceived academic value of the program to the students. Five categories of academic value emerged from the data, as follows.

The learning experience

"They're tough!" The survey results revealed that the quality and quantity of AP syllabi is highly valued by students. Firstly, the range of AP courses offered provides students with the opportunity to take as many (or as few) courses as they wish to be challenged by or to specialize in. Secondly, they enjoy the content of the courses, which they find challenging but stimulating. Students approved of the high standards required of them, which encouraged them to apply those

Viktor Göhlin
Founder,
Nokadi
Alumnus 2006

Bart van Straten
General Manager,
Van Straten Medical
Alumnus 1996

Emilija Petrova
Managing Director,
Trade Resource GmbH
Alumna 2002

YOU!

Roxana Flores
Founder,
BeCaridad
Alumna 2011

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Even though many students in this study thought AP to be a harder program than the IB, it appears to be more suitable to some preferred learning styles (exam focused, one-year courses, intense, fast) allowing students to achieve their learning objectives more directly.

skills elsewhere in the curriculum. APs provided students with a sense of achievement and preparedness for university. Teachers and administrators concurred, noting that although not suitable for all students due to the high level of rigour, the AP courses do provide students with a superior leaving qualification and university readiness.

University prospects

According to the surveys, the predominant reason why students choose APs is for university admissions, particularly for American universities where APs are valued not only in the admission process, but as credits in the freshman year. AP recognition is growing in universities internationally, and in recent years ACS has seen more students successfully applying to UK universities with APs. Furthermore, numerous studies in the United States have demonstrated that AP students have a higher rate of success at university than students without such qualifications or preparedness.

An alternative curriculum option

The AP program is perceived to offer an alternative option to the IBDP, based on course offerings, learning styles, and the differing structure of the programs. It offers more flexibility in course choice, not requiring a language or core subjects, and allows students to specialize in subject areas. Even though many students in this study thought AP to be a harder program than the IB, it appears to be more suitable to some preferred learning styles (exam focused, one-year courses, intense, fast) allowing students to achieve their learning objectives more directly.

Suitability to the needs of international students

Teachers noted that, although the majority of the students in their AP classes were American, more non-American students were choosing APs than previously. Although the AP program can be described as an exported curriculum, through regular syllabus review AP courses are becoming more globalized and less American-biased in their subject content. However, the American-centric nature of some APs such as AP US History can cushion American students returning to the States, and prepare non-US students with prior cultural awareness. On another note, a further valuable aspect of the

1-year AP courses to mobile, transient international students is that it is much easier to relocate to another school between 11th and 12th grade with APs than it can be with the 2 year IB Diploma courses.

The international growth of the program

The AP program being equally valued by both American and non-American students was a key finding in this study, given the context of an international school. For international students, sharing the same learning experiences and environment, and characteristically described as 'global nomads' or 'third culture kids' with a high degree of international mobility, the global spread of the AP program – currently over 1,000 schools in 116 countries (College Board, 2012) – is the ultimate value to them, allowing students to transfer from country to country and maintain some consistency and familiarity in their educational development.

The findings of this study suggest that students opt for APs for the actual learning experience, as a preferred alternative to the IB Diploma or honors courses, and to enhance their opportunities for university admission. Whilst APs were previously taken almost exclusively by American students, the above-mentioned factors are just as relevant to non-US students who are, more frequently, being drawn to the program's international recognition and acceptability. On the basis of this study it appears that, notwithstanding the recent falling AP enrollment at ACS Cobham, the AP program remains a valuable curriculum option, offering a range of learning opportunities and flexibility appropriate to the nature and needs of international students.

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What makes an international teacher?

Inma Morales Rodriguez offers some thoughts

Becoming an international teacher means that you need to become international yourself. Not to be afraid of travelling around the world, to be curious about other cultures and their costumes, and to be open-minded and caring are some of the characteristics one needs in order to be successful as an international teacher. To me, being an international teacher is very important, since I believe in a world where there is a place for everyone regardless of what race, colour, nationality, religion, language or background they have; and that place is what we call an international school.

I love being international, and that is one of the reasons why I moved to Denmark to study the ITEPS (International Teacher Education for Primary Schools) programme. Studying an international degree within an international setting is exciting, as well as increasing awareness of what one's future might look like. From my point of view, I have grown on both a personal and a professional level during the four years since joining the ITEPS programme. I have gained or improved many skills, including risk-taking, communication in different languages and settings, independence, open-mindedness, self-confidence and problem-solving.

I have also become more knowledgeable about education in general and internationalism, and about how to put that knowledge into practice. Basic knowledge of education from theories such as behaviourism and constructivism, and different theorists including Piaget, Vygotsky, Freud and Bourdieu, combined with theories related to teaching and learning, have helped me to create my own profile and teaching philosophy.

In order to put that knowledge into practice teaching practice is very important during the whole degree programme. During the first year of teacher training, student

teachers in some contexts may be disappointed if the only activity they take part in is observation. But to me, observation is an important act that will engage an individual with the real teaching world; a student teacher needs to be prepared and to gain knowledge of how good observation works and how to get the best out of it.

The most recent and best teaching practice I have completed was at the International School Moshi in Tanzania, where all the students, teachers and staff made me feel like a real teacher by giving me responsibilities and treating me like one of the team. Throughout my time in Tanzania I increasingly felt sure that teaching is what I want to do with my future.

It seems to me that being an international teacher is different from being a teacher in a national school. Teachers in many national schools may not have to deal to the same extent with a great deal of diversity among their students or to deal with special education needs in planning lessons which are truly inclusive and in which no students feel excluded.

Becoming an international teacher brings with it the privilege of becoming knowledgeable about the world through geography, history, cultures, ways of living, religions, costumes and languages, as well as providing the opportunity to become more critical and mature in making one's own independent decisions.

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The most recent and best teaching practice I have completed was at the International School Moshi in Tanzania, where all the students, teachers and staff made me feel like a real teacher by giving me responsibilities and treating me like one of the team.

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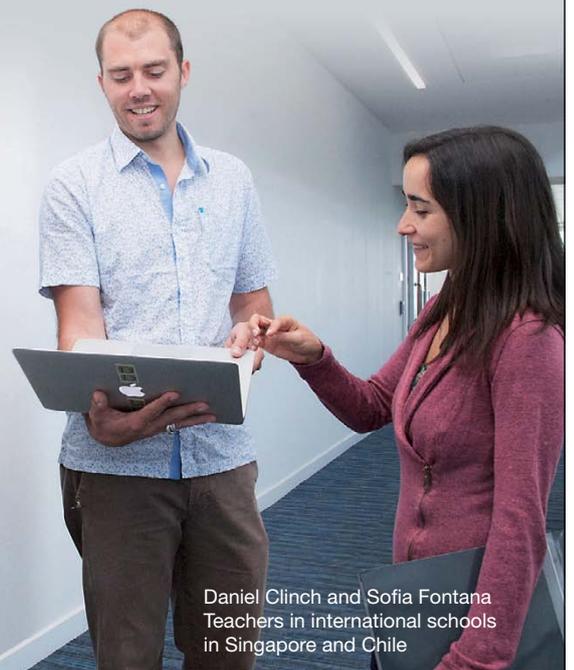
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Catching up with our students!

Paul Young and Mark Leppard give their verdict on a webinar to help teachers with technology

In late October 2014, the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) organised a webinar with a focus on digital technology that was led by two staff from Doha College (Qatar): Paul Young; Vice Principal of Curriculum and Mark Leppard, the Principal. Over 190 people registered for the webinar, and once introductions had been completed Mark and Paul were flooded with an impressive range of questions about the how, why and what of digital technology. It was like a quick-fire quiz round with digital technology as its focus.

Such was the response to this event that it got us thinking that maybe we should follow up the webinar with an article – to offer further insight into emerging technology and how it is impacting on the learning landscape at our college. Since embracing digital technology, we have witnessed a significant number of changes of student and teacher practices which we would like to share, as they may provide the stimulus that helps others to recognise what a fantastic resource digital technology can be.

One concern shared with us through the webinar by staff from a number of schools was that they may not know enough themselves about this technology to be able to support student learning. This was certainly one of our own first challenges at Doha College, which was steadily overcome through clear focused training of staff, followed by further training opportunities for both staff and students. Whilst training was taking place we also had pilot groups which had been set up earlier, showcasing to all staff how effective and relatively simple this ‘new technology’ could be. Clearly the traditional concept of the teacher being the fount of all knowledge has slowly been receding. Since the

introduction of the worldwide web and digital technology, we have witnessed an increasingly prevalent view that the role of the teacher is being adapted to that of a teacher/facilitator who drives, motivates and enthuses the student in the learning process. Students now play a far greater role than previously in their own learning, and have readily adapted to this new approach.

One challenge is how best to communicate to parents that this change will support student learning, and how we can best support parents in recognising the significant advantages the resource affords. For us, the key here was parental workshops and open forum sessions, providing parents with training as well as the opportunity to voice concerns that made them feel anxious. These sessions did not resolve all of their concerns, but they did bring things out in the open in such a way that we could then discuss and address them together.

In this short article, we have intentionally made little reference to the students. It is the teacher and the parent who are the principal learners with this technology. Students of today have grown up with tablets and smartphones; they have already adapted to these emerging technologies. It is we the educators who have been left behind, and it is our responsibility to catch up as quickly as possible if we are to provide the learning opportunities the students of today both need and deserve.

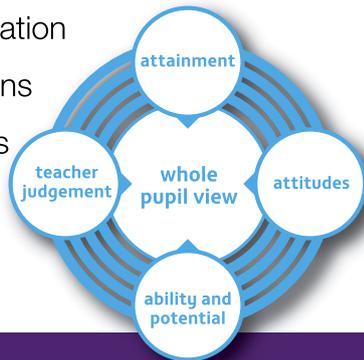
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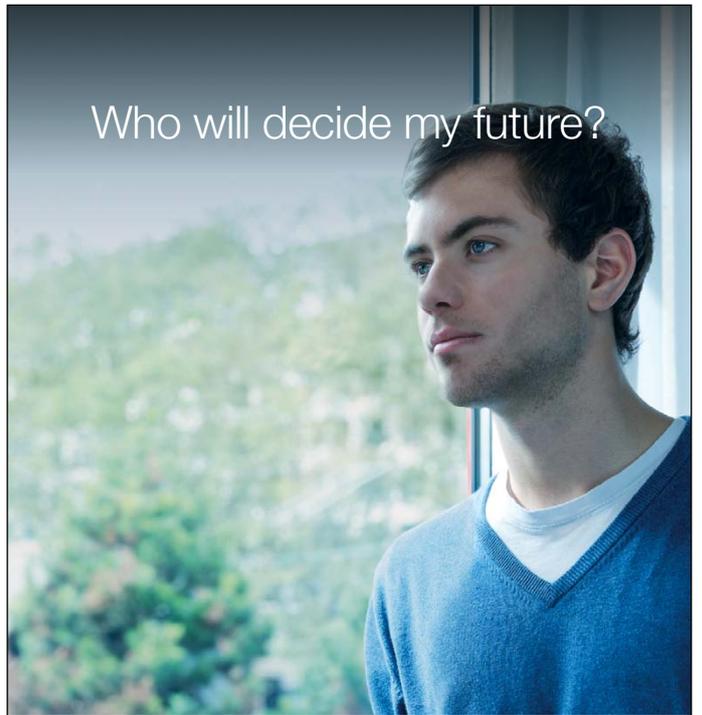
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Bromsgrove's 'Mona Lisa Effect' is designed to make students feel that every lesson has been designed to meet their needs

Seeing our school through the eyes of a child

Matthew Savage describes how attitudinal surveys are helping teachers to better understand students and develop their potential

International schools are wonderful places in which to learn, the mix of cultures providing a rich and varied learning environment for students. However, they also provide a challenge for teaching staff in ensuring that all children progress, no matter what language barriers they may face when they arrive. This is certainly our aim at Bromsgrove International School Thailand where over 400 students, the majority of whom have yet to reach an advanced level of English language acquisition, wend their way through a modified version of the English national curriculum.

We have developed an approach we call 'The Mona Lisa Effect'. We want every child to feel that every lesson has been designed specifically to meet their needs in the same way that when you walk past the Mona Lisa, you feel her eyes are only looking at you. To do this, we need fully to understand

our students and to see life and learning here through their eyes. This is particularly important in an international school such as ours, where cultural nuances have the potential to mask signals on which teachers would normally pick up easily, or to render students easily misunderstood. For example, in Thailand there can be a strong degree of cultural diffidence and deference to the teaching profession. This can lead to a reluctance in some students to question teachers if they do not understand something, which is not ideal for learning to progress.

To help us better understand our students, we pair teacher judgement with a number of other assessment tools. One of the tools we use to identify students' individual strengths, weaknesses and learning styles is cognitive abilities testing. The results provide us with a true picture of a student's developed



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Top tips for uncovering potential learning barriers in international schools

James Neill at GL Education gives his top tips for using assessment to build a comprehensive profile of each student.

With a mix of cultures and languages it is especially important for an international school to understand its students so that they reach their full potential. Here are my tips:

- 1. Get all levels of management on board.** Start by getting the senior leadership team involved in decisions about how assessment data will be used. This way you will have the backing you need to implement interventions when issues are identified.
- 2. Decide what data you need and identify a baseline.** Bring in some form of cognitive abilities testing to identify the developed abilities of your students. From this you might see that the quiet boy at the back of the classroom is not lazy. His poor grasp of English is masking his ability, and he needs EAL intervention. You can then track progression from this point onwards.
- 3. Feed the data into lesson plans.** Develop your understanding of the group learning dynamic from the data, so if you have a cohort with a large number of spatial learners for example, you can take a more visual approach in lessons.
- 4. Explore attitudes to learning.** Use an attitudinal survey to help you understand how students see themselves as learners. The girl who sits and daydreams may be very able, but the survey may reveal she lacks confidence and self-belief.
- 5. Involve students and parents.** Sharing information can help break down barriers to learning and can be the first step to improving progress.

James Neill is International Director at GL Education. He has worked in education for 20 years, and has taught secondary science and physics in schools in the UK and overseas.

abilities in order that, their true potential unearthed, we can help them to learn in the way that works best for them.

To complement the cognitive abilities data we decided to carry out, across the entire school, the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) survey. This attitudinal survey from GL Education [www.gl-education.com] looks at nine attitudinal factors, from a student's feelings about school to how they perceive their own learning ability. Research behind the survey has shown that if a child does not feel confident and happy about school, their ability to progress academically is greatly affected. By uncovering these issues, we hoped to be able to address any underlying concerns so that children would be free to maximise their academic progress. The results of this survey have been an eye opener to us all.

Breaking through barriers

With over 90% of our students speaking English as an additional language, there can be a lack of confidence in English, even among the highest achievers. We were aware of this to an extent, but the survey revealed that many of these students also had a low opinion of their perceived learning capabilities and a poor self-regard.

These findings, in conjunction with the cognitive abilities test results, showed us that some of our very able students do not consider themselves able at all, because they are drawing a false correlation between their grasp of English and their cognitive abilities. In fact, this phenomenon proved to be so extensive that we have dramatically intensified our EAL programme, in order to reduce the impact of poor language proficiency on our students' achievement.

Building confidence and ambition

The PASS survey also revealed that students' natural deference to authority was more deeply entrenched than we had realised, with students taking the view that teachers are superior and learners are inferior. Such a view means that students can become averse to taking risks in case they get something wrong, and they are reluctant to challenge their teachers. As a result, we are now encouraging students to be more outspoken and not to accept everything at face value, and we are transforming the Student Voice programme in the school. By changing the way in which the students see themselves and giving them the freedom to ask questions and to challenge the 'system', we hope to help them to develop into more confident and ambitious individuals.

One of the most exciting outcomes of the student surveys has been that we are all now looking much more closely at the attitudes and progress of individual students, and this has sparked some very worthwhile conversations that we would not have had otherwise. Our next step is to share the data carefully and strategically with students and parents.

I am not exaggerating when I say that the attitudinal survey in particular has been one of the most exciting educational discoveries I have made. We talk about happy and successful students in our mission statement, and by seeing our school and our students through their eyes, we are fulfilling this mission every day.

Matthew Savage is deputy headmaster of Bromsgrove International School, Thailand.
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International Education and Schools

Moving beyond the first 40 years

Edited by Richard Pearce
 London: Bloomsbury (2013)
 Reviewed by George Walker

The problem with international education is that it doesn't yet fit. Education has always been a national priority: the nation's commitment to producing a literate electorate, an effective workforce, a common language, a secure environment and, ultimately, a shared culture. National schools usually follow an agreed curriculum; their teachers engage in common experiences of initial and in-service training and they are held to account with the same processes of quality control.

None of this applies to international education, and this is acknowledged in the excellent Introduction to this book by the editor, Richard Pearce, one of the most experienced practitioners and elegant writers in the field. International schools, writes Pearce, 'are always anomalous. Even when they are part of a group or brand, they are outsiders to their neighbours'. What then follows are eleven chapters, written by an A-list of authors, testing the boundaries of existing categories: pulling, stretching and defining new boundaries in the search to find a better fit, to bring international education into the mainstream.

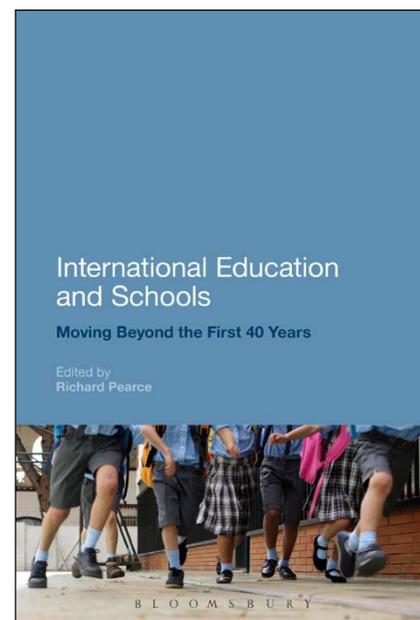
The book is divided into three sections and the first seeks to define, or at least to describe, an international school. Hayden and Thompson develop an historical model comprising three categories, while Brummitt and Keeling, whose perspective is primarily commercial (international education, as they define it, has become a lucrative business), highlight the startling growth in schools that fit into the Hayden/Thompson Category C (non-traditional, pragmatic). Meanwhile, Shortland, who writes from the unfamiliar background of Human Resources (unfamiliar that is to educators), predicts a decline in the number of Category A schools (traditional, supporting the expatriate community) as multinational companies reduce their generous overseas packages. We have been warned.

The second section focuses on issues that make international education distinctive, that support its claim to be recognised not only as different from national education but also as more relevant to a lifetime spent in a globalized world. Pearce addresses the challenge of responding to a diversity of students ('the crucial characteristic of international schools') when most teachers have undergone

their professional training in national systems that have an overwhelming bias towards western-oriented values. Carder writes about the importance of a coherent language policy, deploring the failure to translate extensive research knowledge into practical school policies and criticizing the International Baccalaureate ('another example of "second-language-washing"') for its failure to encourage such policies.

We are half way through the book and only now does the IB make a sustained appearance. Only 10% of IB World Schools fall into the 'traditional' and 'ideological' categories of Hayden and Thompson and more than half (currently 56%) are state public schools, located chiefly, but by no means exclusively, in North America. Only 23% of international schools (as defined by Brummitt and Keeling) have links with the IB. So what is going on? First, many of Brummitt and Keeling's so-called 'international schools' are in fact national schools located overseas, offering a national (usually English) curriculum to a local clientele. (Am I falling into the very unthinking trap this book is seeking to expose?). Second, the IB has consciously decided that the most effective way to 'change the world' is by influencing national education systems, encouraging state schools to become more internationally minded, an issue that is explored later in the book. In a later chapter, Bunnell even detects a sense of betrayal within the rapidly dwindling (percentage-wise) IB community of traditional international schools, proposing that a badge of distinction as 'pioneer schools' be awarded to those schools that continue to drive the IB's innovation.

Meanwhile the Wilkinsons explore the misfit between the rules and regulations that are an inevitable response to 'the increasing demand for reliability and objectivity in assessment' and the insistence of Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827, a welcome newcomer to the historical team of international educators) that teachers must be given the space to develop their own relationships with their students. The Wilkinsons conclude – with some reservations it must be said – that the IB Diploma Programme still passes muster. Roberts then examines the IB's audacious vision of 'a better and more peaceful world', suggesting a number of practical, realistic changes that might be made to the existing



Book review

Diploma Programme before challenging the IB to 'side-step the tinkering with a nearly 50-year-old model ... and offer schools a complete alternative new version.'

Finally, in the third section three authors, noted for their perceptive critiques of international education in general and the IB in particular, use different sociological models to explore that elusive 'fit'. Allan (discourse theory) concludes with 'the indictment of international education in failing to develop a coherent multicultural pedagogical philosophy in a seemingly ideal situation, autonomy from nationalist policy and curriculum constraints.' Cambridge (a Bernsteinian analysis) asks whether the IB's penetration of national education systems, with all the compromises that involves, puts at risk its capacity to serve the international school community. Caffyn (boundaries and boundary management) uses three case studies to explore the challenge to leadership of the complexity of boundary conflicts in international schools.

This brief review cannot do adequate justice to these final, more theoretical, chapters. They will challenge the reader but they will repay the reader's perseverance. At the same time, an anthology of this kind raises interesting issues about who in fact is its audience. While it will undoubtedly be of interest to

those researching the area in universities – whether academic staff or teachers and administrators working on masters and doctorates – it is also the case that such collections will be of interest to teachers and students who may be coming to these particular topics, their concepts, language, models and contexts, for the first time. Those unfamiliar with the topics would undoubtedly welcome a little more of a helping hand; some signposts reminding us where we have come from and where we are going next; some clear definitions of unfamiliar jargon; the occasional pause for a brief summary and, above all else, to see more often that welcome phrase, 'for example'.

If any school deserves Bunnell's IB pioneering badge of distinction it is surely the International School of London whose 40th birthday this volume celebrates. Let us hope that other schools approaching their own important anniversaries will be inspired to mark them in a similarly generous fashion. Congratulations and a belated Happy Birthday ISL!

George Walker was director general of the International School of Geneva from 1991 to 1999 and director general of the International Baccalaureate from 1999 to 2006.
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