

The Climate Is Changing so Why Aren't We?

By Global (Ayechan, Haein, Hayman, Phaebe, and Stuti)

Student climate activists globally are making their voices heard. Their urgent call to action, when it comes to climate change, was sparked most recently by the voices of Greta Thunberg and Luisa Neubauer. They woke up political and corporate leaders globally by saying, "Enough is enough!" They got their message out through their Fridays For Future protests, school strikes for the climate movement.

Students of the International School of Yangon (ISY) Eco Schools Team rose to this challenge on 20 September 2019 by organizing the first-ever protest at ISY, which created a platform for

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Members of International School Yangon's Eco Schools Team led a protest on 20 September 2019, highlighting their main concerns about the school's contribution to climate change and advocating for the elimination of single-use plastics on campus (photo: ISY).

International School Governance and Leadership Diversity

New free specialist reports from ISC Research and its partners

By Anne Keeling

ISC Research has released two new specialist reports that are free of charge to schools and organizations supporting international schools.

The "Governance in International Schools Report" shares research conducted with over 400 international schools about typical governance practice, procedures, and responsibilities. It was produced in collaboration with the Principals Training Center and its director, Bambi Betts.

The research explored typical approaches to the legal status, composition, and decision-making of international school governing bodies. The report offers insight into just how diverse international school governance has become and suggests some notable correlations.

The "Cultivating Diverse Leaders in International Schools Report" focuses on research into international school leadership diversity. This research report was produced by the Diversity Collaborative in association with George Mason University. ISC Research supported the survey to ensure as many schools as possible could participate.

This research is one of the first baselines on leadership diversity within the international school sector. The research report highlights eight key findings and provides an integrated organizational framework to help international schools to become more intercultural.

The report also provides school-level and wider-level recommendations to increase diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in international school leadership.

Both reports are new areas of focus for ISC Research. These and other specialist reports available from ISC Research provide better understanding of specific aspects of the maturing international schools market and the needs, opportunities, and challenges that schools face today.

Details of both reports and how to access free copies are available on the Specialist Reports page of the ISC Research website. ●

www.iscresearch.com

Goodbye, Columbus



Fiona Hilley (8), the author's daughter, agreed to pose as Christopher Columbus when a crewmember onboard a replica of the explorer's flagship *Santa Maria* offered her the chance. Antics ensued (photo: Dibble).

By Meadow Dibble
TIE Editor

I write this farewell missive from the traditional homeland of the Wabanaki, or "People of the Dawnland," a collective name for the indigenous populations that for the past 13,000 years have occupied the territory we now refer to as northern New England, the Canadian Maritimes, and Quebec.

That, right there, is a land acknowledgement, by the way. It is increasingly common to hear such statements in the opening remarks at conferences, protests, or performances around the world. What

the planet's 370 million indigenous people share—as varied and complex as their cultures, languages, and histories undoubtedly are—is the experience of expropriation, exploitation, attempted extermination, and historical erasure that no mere statement can begin to repair.

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Education Forecast for the 21st Century: Change

By Tiffani Razavi
TIE Staff Writer

As educators, we are naturally very future-conscious. After all, we are preparing the next generation to face all manner of challenges flashing up on our TV screens, our phones, and Twitter feeds: climate change, mass forced migration, extremism, digitalization and automation, fake news and post-truth opinion... How are we to understand these challenges, let alone adequately respond?

Historian Yuval Noah Harari's book *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* is a thought-provoking contribution to what is often a fragmented and sometimes frenetic discourse on these themes. Harari aims to "zoom in on the here and now, but without losing the long-term perspective" and to "take insights from the distant past and the distant future to help us make sense" of current issues, "to stim-

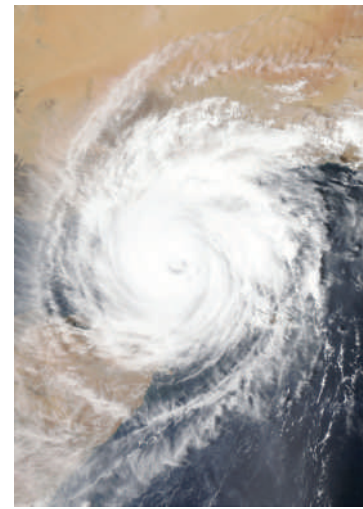


Photo by NASA on Unsplash.

ulate further thinking and help readers participate in the major conversations of our time."

Starting with a survey of the challenges humanity in the collective faces, Harari sounds alarm

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Goodbye, Columbus

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Yet even small speech acts such as this one have value, in the eyes of many. As symbolic reinsertions, they are the first step in bringing awareness to non-native members of dominant groups that have for centuries remained willfully or unwittingly blind, not only to the plight of indigenous people but to their very presence within our communities.

According to the official United States map, I am not presently in Dawnland but in the state of Maine, a relatively young entity created in 1820 whose upcoming bicentennial has already spurred a good deal of collective soul-searching. To cite one example, rather than reiterate the old state slogan, "The Way Life Should Be," in looking forward to 2020 the Maine Humanities Council has asked residents to collectively grapple with the question, "How should life be?"

As for the Maine Historical Society, rather than promote the state's "Vacationland" brand in the lead-up to its 200th anniversary, the institution invited Wabanaki advisors to curate an exhibition that speaks to their millennial relationship to this land as one of leadership, obligation, and resilience. "Holding Up the Sky," on display through February, showcases heritage items alongside contemporary artworks and includes the stunning photograph of Passamaquoddy tribal elder Mary Selmore pictured here.

The show also includes one particularly disturbing item: the Phips Proclamation of 1755. In order to secure land for English settlement in the territory now known as Maine, the Massachusetts governor offered sizeable bounties on native scalps and ensured settlers freedom in "pursuing, capturing, killing, and destroying all and every" one of the Eastern Indians. It was sanctioned genocide, and it almost worked.

I grew up in Massachusetts, but I never learned about the horrific Phips Proclamation in school. In fact, our popular imagination had the story the other way around,

with "Indians" cast as the blood-thirsty scalpers of poor, hardworking "Settlers." And though I was raised in the traditional homeland of the Wampanoag people, whose early encounter with the "Pilgrims" is celebrated every year on Thanksgiving, I was led to believe that the Native Americans of our region were long gone. (They most assuredly are not.)

Despite systematic efforts by colonizers of European extraction to remove indigenous people from the territory now known as the northeastern United States, and despite the devastating epidemics they spread, both the Wabanaki and the Wampanoag people survived. What's more, they have managed to preserve and restore elements of their cultures, languages, traditional knowledge, and worldviews in the face of injustices doled out through the decades, right down to the present day.

Not so for the Taíno people of the Caribbean. "They would make fine servants," wrote Christopher Columbus of the first populations he encountered following his 1492 transatlantic journey in search of the Far East. "With 50 men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want."

In contrast to the persistent view that celebrates the exploits of an intrepid explorer who opened new trade routes for Europe, historical documents have revealed that Columbus was also a slave trader who inaugurated an era of brutal usurpation and genocide.

This is hardly breaking news. Even as my elementary school teacher had us memorizing, "In fourteen-hundred and ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue..." over 100 Native delegates gathered at the United Nations offices in Geneva to confront the navigator's legacy of violence. Among other important outcomes of this conference, it was resolved "to observe October 12, the day of so-called 'discovery' of America, as an international day of solidarity with the indigenous peoples of the Americas."

Writing in 1977, Cherokee artist and poet Jimmie Durham stated optimistically that "from now on, children all over the world will learn the true story of American Indians on Columbus Day instead of a pack of lies about three European ships."



Mary Mitchell Selmore, photographed at Pleasant Point, Maine by Charles E. Brown, circa 1901. Selmore was part of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and the second wife of longtime Passamaquoddy Chief Sopiell Selmore (Collections of Maine Historical Society).

Sadly, the world has been slow to catch on.

Today, my youngest daughter, Fiona, is twice the age I was when this resolution was adopted. For the very first time—and thanks to decades of effort by tribal leaders and activists from the Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, and Abenaki Nations—Fiona and her classmates celebrated Indigenous Peoples' Day this past October, after Maine Governor Janet Mills signed a bill into law.

In eschewing the federal Columbus Day holiday, Maine joined Florida, Hawaii, Alaska, Vermont, South Dakota, New Mexico, Wisconsin, and Washington, D.C. in favoring celebrations that recognize each region's native populations. On something of a roll, Maine lawmakers additionally passed legislation this year banning Native American mascots in public schools throughout the

state, to the great dismay of a vocal band of holdouts.

Even when change is mandated by legislators, it doesn't always take place, of course. Despite the enactment of a 2001 law requiring schools statewide to teach Native American history and culture, little had been done over the past two decades to integrate the subject until Portland public schools began working in recent months with tribal leaders to craft and roll out a Wabanaki Studies curriculum districtwide.

It seems the tide may at last be turning. The move to decolonize the curriculum and recenter the world's indigenous people in our approaches to history is a growing global phenomenon.

While some Latin American countries continue to observe the date on which Columbus arrived in the Americas, a number now refer to it as *Día de la Raza* (Day

of the Race) or some variation on "Day of Respect of Cultural Diversity." These are largely commemorations that celebrate the region's native ethnic groups and cultures in their resistance to the European colonizer.

In 2002, under Hugo Chavez's rule, Venezuela began to mark an annual *Día de la Resistencia Indígena* (Day of Indigenous Resistance). Two years later, a crowd of activists toppled a statue of Cristóbal Colón, as the Italian mariner is known in Caracas.

All the same, monuments to the man continue to enjoy a place of privilege in public spaces around the world. An online "Columbus Monuments Page" lists over 600 such statues in approximately 30 countries throughout the Americas and in Europe. Toppling all of them would take a concerted effort, in the face of widespread opposition to such revisionist interventions. Indeed, in spite of all we know about his crimes against humanity, Columbus continues to enjoy widespread admiration among a powerful contingent who credit him with launching the Age of Discovery.

Miseducation onboard the *Santa María*

One gorgeous September afternoon this past fall, a month before Maine celebrated its first Indigenous Peoples' Day, I brought my daughters down to Portland's waterfront, having learned that a replica of Columbus's flagship, the *Nao Santa María*, would spend three days docked at the wharf. Warning Ava and Fiona at the outset that our visit onboard the three-masted vessel was not about paying homage, I enlisted their help in a mission to examine how the ship's history was being represented to visitors.

One of the first panels we encountered declared the *Santa María* "the most famous ship in universal history" and explained that the replica was constructed in Huelva, Spain (as the original had been) "with the objective of reliving history." I wondered how the slain Taíno would feel about reliving their people's genocide.

Timed to coincide with the 525th anniversary of Columbus's arrival in "America," the contemporary voyage celebrates the role of Span-

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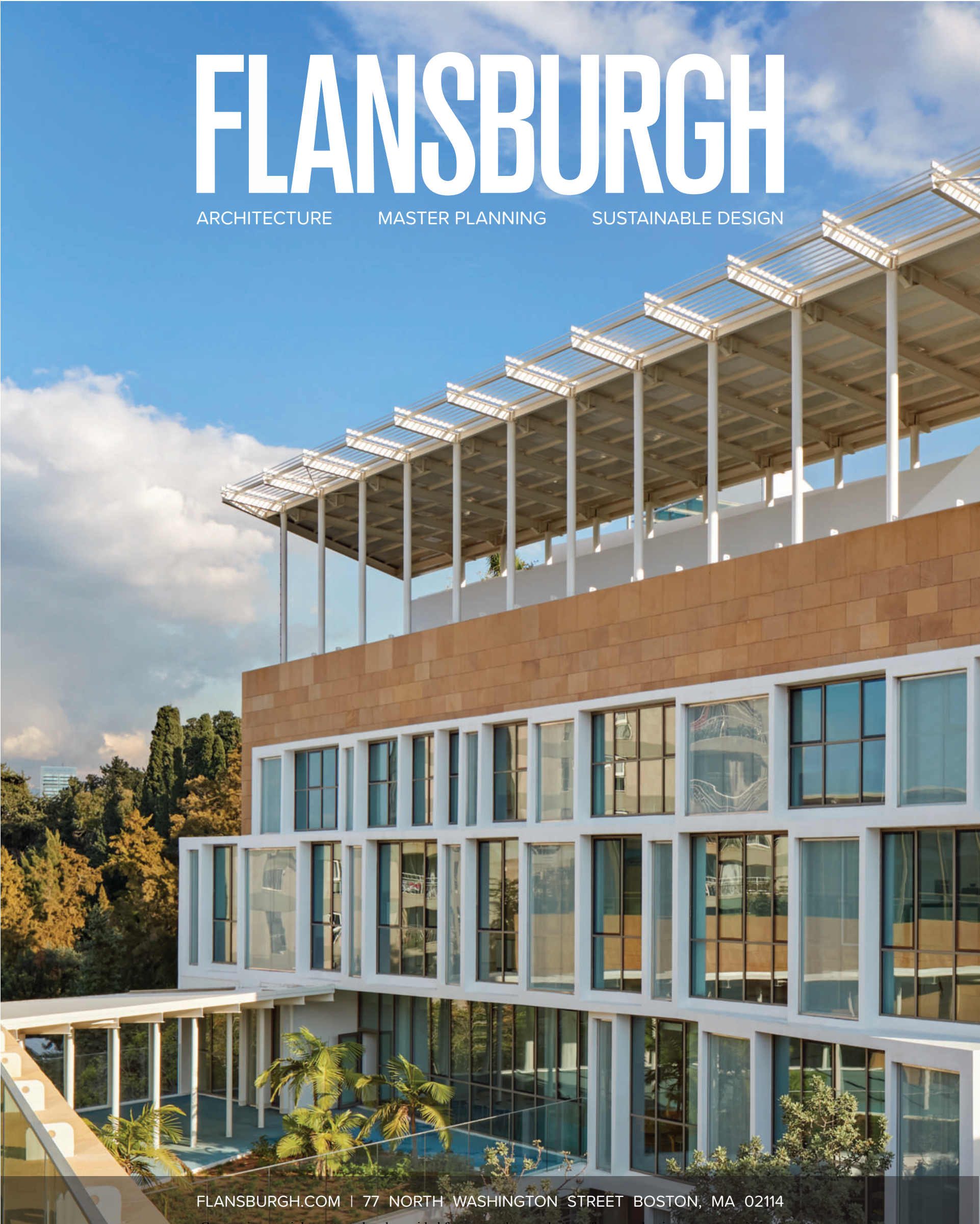
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Students Strike for Climate Action at International Schools Around the World



Students at Mont'Kiara International School made their voices heard during the 20 September Global Climate Strike. Proudly displaying their protest signs made of recycled materials, high school students initiated the movement, taking to the hallways and common spaces, passionate about protecting the environment. Teachers, too, turned out to show their support (photos: MKIS).



Students walked out of classes at the International School of Luxembourg on 20 September 2019 to join their peers around the world in demanding action on a global scale to address climate change (photos: ISL).



DuoCon Dispatch: the Free + Fun Paradigm



By Paul Magnuson

"I'm terrible at learning languages," says Luis von Ahn. Luis is the cofounder of Duolingo, the largest education app in the world. The app teaches world languages.

Sometimes I feel like Luis. But I love discovering new twists on grammar and new words and connections across languages. So much so that I've been a bit of a Duolingo addict since first creating an account in 2013. Now I've flown to London to attend Duocon, the first public Duolingo conference ever.

Not knowing what to predict, I imagined a bunch of folks hunched over their phones and computers banging out translations to "Tu oso bebe cerveza" (Your bear drinks beer, in Spanish), and Att hoppa ut genom ett stängt fönster är ingen bra idé (To jump out through a closed window is not a good idea, in Swedish). Yes, those are actual sentences from Duolingo courses.

Instead, I spent the entire day with just under two hundred Duolingo enthusiasts, a small subset of the 300 million folks who have logged on at least once. I did not, in fact, see anyone on the app. Instead, we heard from a number of bright and driven people connected with Duolingo: folks in charge of education, software, and marketing; people who create courses; and even someone who creates new languages.

I'm in my seat early. Luis mills about with colleagues on the stage, checking microphones, waiting. I feel a little like kids might feel when they are in the same room as their favorite sports hero.

While we wait, Lindsay, an Australian in London on business, introduces himself. He's learning Portuguese because he has contracts in Angola. In addition to Duolingo, he uses an online platform for conversational practice. Good language learners use material from multiple sources, but novice learners might not realize that, thinking that one app is enough. It isn't. Stephen, a Londoner who attended the conference primarily to speak German, French, and Japanese with others, told me later in the day that Duolingo "does what it does very well," but you have to do more. Stephen's preferred method is lis-

tening to movies, sometimes up to one hundred times or more.

Luis starts with a surprising claim. "Education in practice brings inequality to people," he says, "because those with money get good education." From that sentiment comes Duolingo's mission: bringing free language education to the world. The company does this despite its nearly 200 employees and its 60 million dollars in annual expenses. The app is free and Luis promises to keep it free.

Karin Tsai, who has been with Duolingo since the early days, takes the stage next. Her intelligence radiates across the auditorium, in her modest way, just as it had for Luis and would for others throughout the day. She says two surprising things. First, "We believe anyone can duolingo." What! Duolingo is also a verb? As we know from Dilbert's creator, "Verbing weirds language," but as it becomes clear through the day, Duolingo still has the flair of a young startup, a company that knows how to have fun. Yes, you, too, can duolingo.

Karin also says that Duolingo's goal is to teach language so well that users can get a job in the language they have learned. That requires, here in Europe, a B1 or B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). We learned how the app, originally tied to no framework at all, is being aligned with the CEFR through constant updates. The goal is audacious, which the folks from the company accept matter-of-factly.

During a coffee break I introduce myself to Stefan, an IT guy for a bank here in London. He's more interested in how the software works than language learning. Stefan mentions how enthusiastic everyone is. Myra Awodey, a long term Duolingo employee, will even refer to the day later as a "love fest."

I meet Nathalie, representing the Universala Esperanto-Asocio. "Saluton!" I say, and then can't respond fluently at all when she asks if I speak Esperanto. "Jes ..." I say, and then smile, apologetically. Back in our seats, I ask the woman in front of me why she chose to come. Aygul explains that she is a course developer. She has in fact created four courses, including Russian for Turkish speakers and other combinations of English, German, Turkish, and Russian. It's a big job, because as the software engineer, Jake Barnwell, tells us when the talks resume, Duolingo has over 1.5 million sentences and more than 500 contributors.

A highlight of the day for me is the talk by David Peterson. David has created a number of languages, called constructed languages, or conlangs if you want to sound like an insider. He won a contest

to create High Valyrian for the popular show, Game of Thrones, and then was asked to create a second language between seasons two and three. I pictured his living room full of grammars and dictionaries of all the languages he has created, but when asked, he shrugged and said they are all on the cloud. What was I thinking?

Interestingly, David claimed that conlangs are real languages. It's just the speech community that's fake, he says, since there isn't one. But the conlangs do what languages do, minus, perhaps, the field of sociolinguistics. David subsequently created the Duolingo course to learn High Valyrian. There's something special about learning a conlang, he tells us. "It doesn't matter if you are good in High Valyrian, so you can just play!" There's something deep to think about here for language teachers—and learners—but now that I've served it up, I'll let you chew on it.

On my way out I stopped at the table with the swag, a term that may well have come into Middle English from the Scandinavian *svagga*, but it didn't reach me, at least in the sense of cool free stuff, until the last few years. I asked if there have been any independent studies of Duolingo's effectiveness since their first study that suggests 34 hours of Duolingo equals one semester at the university. (What does that even mean?) The person working the table didn't think there had been.

I also asked about the 300 million users. That's the number of individual accounts. The number of monthly users is about one-tenth the size, approaching 30 million. It would also be nice to get more data about how deep learners go into the courses. Is the goal of reaching a B2 level, and employment, realistic? I worry, as Stephen put into words for me, that there are many "aspirational learners," those who have a Duolingo username and do some lessons from time to time, but do not do nearly enough to develop a strong base in a language, let alone branch out to other materials and conversational opportunities to achieve any semblance of beginning fluency. On the other hand, if Duolingo can at least get learners started, good things might follow.

Canes callidi ossa colligunt, I learned in Duolingo's latest release, Latin. The clever dogs collect the bones. And while we users collect the points of this app's refined gamified learning system, those clever humans in the Pittsburgh home office and their collaborators across the globe collect more and more data from us, the language learners, to make this app one of the most successful of all time.

Welche Sprache willst du lernen?

Climate Change

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speaking up about climate action. The team said that they organized it to show how even a "small community in Myanmar can participate in a global movement." This platform allowed ISY students to highlight their main concerns about our school's contribution to climate change. Students from middle and high school, along with a few primary student activists, joined together and marched around campus, shouting slogans such as, "What do we want? Climate action! When do we want it? Now!" and "The sea levels are rising, so are we!"

All participants were determined to create an impact, not only at ISY but to also bring awareness on a global scale about our actions that negatively impact the environment. At the heart of the Fridays for Future movement lies Global Goal 13, Climate Action, which states "Climate change is a real and undeniable threat to our entire civilization" (globalgoals.org).

Students striking instead of going to school aim to spread the message of "Why spend a lot of effort to become educated, when our governments are not listening to the educated?" (from Fridays for Future website). ISY students becoming part of this movement have brought a level of awareness to our community and initiated plans of action we as a school can start working towards. Eco Schools Team leaders emphasized the importance of eliminating single-use plastics on campus, through means such as petitioning for banning bubble tea orders, since they abundantly utilize single-use plastics. Another plan of action deals with the usage of ACs in our school buildings and the practice of regulating them to temperatures of 25 degrees Celsius and above.

Charlotte Rickert, Grade 10 student and president of the Eco Schools Team, was interviewed by Global following the strike. She

stated that, "I can say that we are working on making ISY more eco-friendly, including imposing AC regulations and plastic bans. But until we actually get that through to the ISY board of directors it will be the students' responsibility to not bring any plastic on campus."

Charlotte emphasized the importance of student initiative when it comes to striving towards environmentally friendly habits. When asked about future plans for the Eco Schools Team, she responded, "We are working on making ISY a certified Eco School, through a seven-step plan that will take two years involving forming an eco-committee, surveying the school on sustainability, correcting any mistakes to make ISY as eco-friendly as possible, and more. Once we have established the committee and finished the surveys, we will focus on other environmental issues ISY has for the rest of the year. This is because the Eco Schools certificate cannot be achieved all at once."

Anna Joicey, another student leader of the Eco Schools Team, called out from a megaphone to the 80+ students who joined the climate strike saying, "Thank you, thank you so much for coming. Without you guys here, the strike would have never happened!" She marveled at the number of participants, stating "I wasn't expecting as many people to join as they did, and it went pretty well overall. I think we got our message across."

All Eco Schools Team members were grateful for the outcome of the strike and hope to see students who were unable to join this time, in forthcoming strikes. ISY's first "School Strike for Climate" paves the way for future action not only at this school but across others as well. It sparked interest and inspiration within students to act upon this global issue as there's no time for waiting—the future is now. ●

Global is the International School Yangon's student-led news media team that informs and celebrates the compassionate service learning projects happening around the school.



The news about climate change may be grim, but ISY students were happy to join the protest launched by the Eco Schools Team (photo: ISY).

Teaching as a Practice of Call and Response

By Kassi Cowles



When the teacher is ready, the student will appear. Or perhaps it's the other way around: when the student is ready, the teacher will appear. Or maybe both are true and fulfill a cosmic purpose: when the teacher and the student are ready, their paths will intersect and an alchemy of learning will occur. A transmission. A witnessing.

James Hillman reminds us of the myth of the call and the calling in his book *The Soul's Code*. Each of us has been called forth into this world with a path to follow, a daimon or genius or spirit of fate that will never go away, although it may live within us unfulfilled. He writes, "we must attend very carefully to childhood to catch early glimpses of the daimon in action, to grasp its intentions and not block its way."

What a crucial job it is then, to be a teacher. To be the seer and the hearer and the witness.

And maybe the cosmic chance to witness and transmit is more rare than we professional teachers would like to believe. Over the years I've had hundreds of young people in my classes but I'm sure that not all of them were my students. I think you'll know what I mean when I say that there are a few people in each class, perhaps just one or two, with whom there is an absolute recognition, a clear channel, a connection that is not so much developed as it is activated upon meeting one another.

You know these souls are destined to be your students from the quality of their presence; they are brimming with it. You can feel when they look at you with their clear, bright eyes that you already know each other. I have had a handful of these students in my life, and on a few rare occasions I have been this student with teachers I was fortunate enough to recognize.

But when you are busy administering the ins and outs of your

subject to groups of students, it's easy to feel far away from grand notions of transmission and the alchemy of learning. It's easy to get mired in the muck of the job and to forget that many of us were called forth into this mysterious work. This is a truth that I still feel, 14 years in: teaching is my calling. But who or what is calling me?

Let me tell you about Demi, the student who most recently reminded me of this ancient, fated contract between teacher and student. Demi, of course, is not her given Chinese name but it's the name she chose for herself when she began her education in English, and it suited her because she was tiny and hidden in all the ways her name suggests.

She had a delicate androgyny, which is not uncommon in Chinese girls before they find ways to express their femininity through the confines of their school uniform. She was apologetic in stature, with a speaking voice so quiet I had to bring my ear as close to her face as was appropriate so I could discern what she was saying.

When I saw her walking through the halls, her brow was permanent-

"There are a few people in each class, perhaps just one or two, with whom there is an absolute recognition, a clear channel, a connection that is not so much developed as it is activated upon meeting one another."

ly furrowed in worry, like she was burdened with middle-aged problems. It was an impression reinforced by the briefcase she carried, a detail that still makes me smile now because it was such an anachronistic prop for this small Chinese girl, as if she'd been terribly miscast in the role of Business Man.

Despite her quietness, something in Demi called to me so loudly. It was, I now realize, her daimon, her destiny. I said her speaking voice was almost imperceptible, but her singing voice had a size and force that defied her quiet existence. She was trained in Peking Opera—it could just have easily been piano or violin that her parents had chosen for her, but it wasn't. It was performing on stage, the very channel that allowed her to expand like ink in water. The Demi she presented to the world in her daily academic life was indeed only half of what existed so powerfully inside her small body. Her daimon was screaming to be unleashed, to move, to be seen.

I'm not sure that Demi's parents knew that performing was the relentless spirit in her waiting to be realized, and that if she could forgo this highly academic education and immerse herself entirely in the arts, she could reveal her power. If only we could remove the obstacles in her way, she could show how she understood the world.

I don't think Demi could have identified or articulated this for herself; it's the kind of experience that alchemizes into truth when someone on the outside can see it. I have no doubt that the expression of anxiety that she wore each day was caused in part by the pain of incoherence between her inside desire and her outside circumstances. We all know adults who never aligned the call of their dreams with the context of their reality, those who never found their witness.

I attended to all my students in her class as best I could, but Demi was a special project for me. Her call was incredibly loud and persistent. If there was a way to help her manage the unsurmountable writing tasks so she could move and make and perform, I did it.

Because she was undeniably a dancer. She understood the world not through logic and language but with a somatic fluency that so few of us have or can understand.

I'm not sure my colleagues or her peers noticed this in the same way when they watched Demi perform—I suspect not. This is the mystery of the calling. It's not something that everyone can hear.

During assessment time a colleague told me that he found her in his economics class seated at her desk, head bowed, palms together:

"What are you doing, Demi?"

"I'm praying."

"Praying for what?"

"For my solo performance to go well."

This endeared me to her all the more and solidified a profound understanding: the stakes were as high as they could possibly be. Her performance was as serious as a prayer to God in a country where God is hidden.

In the end, I didn't teach Demi much in the way of content. It was a struggle to graduate her through the intense program of study she was in. But I feel a sense of completion knowing that she is studying performance in university—not business, but theatre.

Her truth rang clearly for me the whole time I knew her. In fact, I can still hear it now. When she is free to move and make and perform, she exists in the brightest and most resonant way. And the lightness of her being brightens and reveals the daimon in me, my calling to be a teacher who hears and sees and witnesses. ●

Forecast: Change

... continued from p. 1

bells. He highlights the dangers of technology and biotechnology as threats to the very notion of what it means to be human, and the string of political and ideological crises that have left us without a narrative, without a way to understand the human story as we contemplate the future.

The agenda is explicitly global, looking at the major forces that shape societies all over the world, but with an emphasis on the implications for the internal lives of the individual, including the "unprecedented pressure" placed by a global world on personal conduct and morality. We live in a spiderweb of spiderwebs, making it more imperative than ever to uncover the biases and barriers that unwittingly keep gloomy forecasts on track.

Nineteen lessons in, heading up the final part titled Resilience, alongside Meaning and Meditation Harari cites Education. The premise of the conversation the author initiates is that "change is the only constant," that we are more uncertain today about the future than ever before. Compared to adults in the past who prepared the next generation within the framework of some basic assumptions about what the world would look like 30 years on, the rate of change in the world is so rapid now that we know we don't know what 2050 will actually look like. No better than we know how long people will live, what they will do for a living, what gender relations will be like... We're trying, of course—just look at the increase in reports and articles about the future, here included—but it is bewildering and frustrating to think that much of what we teach in schools today might well be irrelevant by 2050.

We are still grappling with the fact that information is no longer scarce, and schools are neither the only nor even the first place children obtain it. Instead, we are flooded with both information and misinformation, as well as distraction, tempting us to abandon complicated things like science and politics in favor of funny cat videos.

It is not a new idea that education needs to build the ability to make sense of information—that is, to analyze, synthesize and evaluate. Harari acknowledges the importance of these skills but observes that the aversion to "grand narratives" and the emphasis on giving students freedom to generate their own picture of the world is an approach that assumes plenty of time for the world to eventually get things right. We no longer have that luxury, he warns: we have now run out of time.

Things are moving so fast today that most important is the ability to deal with change, to learn new things, and to preserve mental balance in unfamiliar situations. To keep up, people will not only need to invent new ideas and products, but above all to reinvent themselves over and over again. Harari asserts that as the pace of change increases, the very meaning of "being human" is likely to change.

Under these conditions, past experience, whether individual or collective, becomes a less reliable guide. We are dealing with completely new things: "super-intelligent machines, engineered bodies, algorithms that can manipulate your emotions with uncanny precision, rapid man-made climate cataclysms, and the need to change your profession every decade." Navigating such an environment requires mental flexibility and emotional balance, the ability to let go of the feeling of mastery, and to feel at home with the unknown.

"We know that we don't know what 2050 will actually look like."

These are not easy things to teach, especially because as adults we are mostly the product of educational systems that did not emphasize these abilities. So, Harari flips it over to the next generation and advises them not to rely too much on adults, as there is no way of knowing if what adults say is "timeless wisdom or outdated bias." But he warns them also that being able to rely on themselves is a daunting task, because 21st-century selves are easily manipulated. Corporations and governments are racing to hack humans. If they want to win, they have to run fast, and leave all illusions behind.

As far as what all this means for educators, the ball is (as usual) in our court. It might not be easy, as Harari concedes, but we are still involved, from the sidelines or in the thick of it, doing things and learning things.

There is more. *21 Lessons* is part of a conversation. Let's keep having it.

Over to you. ●

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News in Brief

● Harvard study shows the dangers of early school enrollment

Children are going to school at younger and younger ages and are spending more time in school than ever before. At an early age, they are increasingly required to learn academic content that may be well above their developmental capability. Research shows that pushing early literacy can do more harm than good. Today, children are regularly labeled with a reading delay and prescribed various interventions to help them catch up. If they are found to be not listening to the teacher, daydreaming, or squirming, young children often earn an attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) label and, with striking frequency, are administered potent psychotropic medications. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that approximately 11 percent of children ages four to seventeen have been diagnosed with ADHD, and that number increased 42 percent from 2003–2004 to 2011–2012, with a majority of those diagnosed placed on medication. One-third of these diagnoses occurred in children under age six. New findings by Harvard Medical School researchers confirm that it's not the children who are failing, it's the schools we place them in too early. These researchers discovered that children who start school as among the youngest in their grade have a much greater likelihood of getting an ADHD diagnosis than older children in their grade. In fact, for the U.S. states studied with a 1 September enrollment cut-off date, children

born in August were 30 percent more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than their older peers. The study's lead researcher at Harvard, Timothy Layton, concludes: "Our findings suggest the possibility that large numbers of kids are being overdiagnosed and overtreated for ADHD because they happen to be relatively immature compared to their older classmates in the early years of elementary school" (Foundation for Economic Education, 30 November 2018).

● Global politics takes heavy toll on international enrollment in U.S.

Global political tensions and fears of violence have taken a significant toll on international enrollment at the University of Missouri (MU), where over the past five years enrollment of foreign students has dropped 35 percent, from 2,505 to 1,632. The issue is not confined to MU, however, with colleges and universities around the U.S. facing a difficult recruiting atmosphere. Graduate student enrollment has seen a dramatic decrease as well. Though the U.S. has been a prime higher education destination for international students, many are now weighing other options. "Some international students were hesitant to apply at U.S. institutions," said Dawn Whitehead, vice president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, who relayed their concern about whether they would be welcome and cited the increased difficulty in securing visas (Missourian, 29 October 2019).

● How to flip an entire school day

Flipping the classroom is no longer enough, according to Bob Harris, president of Edudexterity, who is currently working as the head of human resources for Pittsburgh's school district. It's time to flip the entire high school day, in his view, allowing students to gain a variety of real work experiences that will, in turn, give them a deeper appreciation for their potential directions in life. In Harris's model, students would start their day at 9 a.m. by reporting to a workplace that could rotate every semester or year. After working half a day, they would then break for lunch and head to school to do their extracurricular activities and collaborate with fellow students on projects. Finally, in the evenings, students would take their classes online from home. Only about 20 percent of teens hold a job today, compared to a generation ago when 40 percent did. Flipping the school day would give students a better sense of how their learning is connected to their potential careers after school (www.christenseninstitute.org, 10 October 2019).

● Desperate to fill shortages, U.S. schools are hiring teachers from overseas

Across the U.S., schools are hemorrhaging teachers while fewer college graduates enter the profession. In 2018, the country had an estimated shortage of 112,000 teachers, according to the Learning Policy Institute. Arizona alone had 7,000 teacher vacancies going into this year, said Joe

Thomas, president of the Arizona Education Association. Some of those vacancies were filled by people who don't have a standard teaching certificate, he said. Others were plugged by long-term substitutes, contracted agencies, or teachers who must add an additional course to their day. Some schools are hiring teachers from half a world away. Casa Grande Union High hired several Filipino teachers using J-1 visas. The average starting pay for teachers in Arizona is about US\$36,300. While that salary may seem paltry for many Americans, Filipino teachers like Noel Que say their jobs in the U.S. are much more lucrative than back home, allowing them to live better. Que, like other Filipino teachers at his school, lives with roommates to cut down on expenses (CNN, 6 October 2019).

● Student background should be considered in ranking U.K. schools, study shows

A Bristol University report says that more details about students' backgrounds should be taken into account when compiling data for secondary school league tables in England, including factors such as ethnicity, free meals, and special needs. The study found that adjusting for these background factors would improve the ranking of a fifth of schools by over 500 places. Around half (51 percent) of schools judged to be "underperforming" against current accountability measures would move out of this category (BBC News, 29 October 2019).

● Record number of colleges stop requiring the SAT and ACT

Critics of the SAT and ACT tests have long argued that they reflect income more than ability, and the "Varsity Blues" admission scandal reinforced the idea that the tests can be gamed by families with enough money. In the interest of leveling the playing field, one in four institutions in the U.S. no longer requires these test scores for admission. They have lost their luster as a common yardstick, according to experts, who cite the tutoring that wealthy families can afford, extra time their kids are more likely to get, and the prevalence of cheating. The University of Chicago created a stir by making these tests optional last year; it reported a record enrollment this fall of first-generation, low-income, and rural students, along with veterans. Forty-one schools have jettisoned the requirement in the last year alone, the largest number ever. A recent analysis by the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce suggests that the 200 most selective colleges and universities in the country already look at more than candidates' standardized test scores. It found that, if SAT and ACT results had been the sole basis for admission, 53 percent of students who were accepted wouldn't have gotten in. More than 1,000 accredited bachelor's-degree-granting higher ed institutions now allow prospective students to decide whether or not to submit standardized test scores with their applications (PBS NewsHour, 9 October 2019).

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Perhaps Your Script Is Written

By Adam Rugnetta

MY FRIENDS FOUND IT HARD TO UNDERSTAND WHY WE MOVED TO DELHI.

THE EASIEST EXPLANATION WAS FINANCIAL. IT WOULD BE NICE TO BE WELL PAID FOR TEACHING FOR ONCE

HINDUS MIGHT SAY I'M IN THE PHASE OF THE HOUSEHOLDER AND I HAVE A SACRED DUTY TO CREATE WEALTH

AT TIMES LIFE IN A MEGA-CITY MADE ME WONDER IF MONEY WAS SUFFICIENT REASON.

VERA, THANKS FOR LETTING ME TAG ALONG ON YOUR FIELD TRIP

MY PLEASURE ADAM.

LOOKS LIKE TRAFFIC WILL BE BAD...

HISTORY TEACHER VERA GARG WAS MY EASTERN PERSPECTIVE GURU. SHE INTRODUCED ME TO INDIAN PHILOSOPHY.

ARE YOU STILL WORRIED ABOUT YOUR KIDS AND THE AIR POLLUTION?

ALL THE TIME

DO YOU BELIEVE IN FREE WILL?

I'M NOT SURE I'VE EVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT

PERHAPS YOUR PATH IS DETERMINED

BIRLA MANDIR

THIS DELHI TEMPLE IS ALSO KNOWN AS LAKSHMINARAYAN, A NAME THAT REFERS TO A MANIFESTATION OF VISHNU AS A HOUSEHOLDER, LIVING WITH HIS CONSORT LAKSHMI - GODDESS OF WEALTH.

THE TEMPLE, BUILT FROM 1933-39 IS OPEN TO EVERY RELIGION AND CASTE.

A KOREAN STUDENT TOLD ME ON THIS TRIP THAT SHE CALLED HER SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY "STUDYING WITH PASSION" SOMETHING I COULD NOT IMAGINE AN AMERICAN SAYING.

THE ADVAITA SCHOOL OF HINDUISM WOULD SAY YOUR SCRIPT IS ALREADY WRITTEN.

DETERMINISM IS FASCINATING!

IS FREE WILL ON THE TEST?

IN THE ENTRANCE THERE IS A PLAQUE EXPLAINING THAT GANDHI INAUGURATED THE TEMPLE IN 1939. IT WAS AMAZING TO THINK I WAS STANDING WHERE HE ONCE STOOD.

THERE IS A TOURIST ROOM WHERE WE CAN LEAVE OUR SHOES AND LOCK OUR PHONES

INSIDE WERE MANY ALTARS OF HINDU DEITIES. VERA EXPLAINED HER WORLDVIEW.

MS GARG, DO ALL HINDUS BELIEVE IN THE ELEPHANT GOD?

HINDUISM DOES NOT HAVE ANY CENTRAL AUTHORITY, BUT GANESH SEEMS TO BE REVERED BY ALL

FOR ME ALL THE GODS ARE MEANT TO SHOW DIFFERENT MANIFESTATIONS OF ONE ULTIMATE REALITY

KNOWN TO WESTERNERS AS THE SUPREME BEING AND TO HINDUS AS BRAHMAN

OUR DUTY, ACHIEVED THROUGH TECHNIQUES LIKE MEDITATION AND CHANTING, IS TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE OF REALITY BY LEARNING ABOUT OURSELVES

OM Shree Maha Lakshmi

WE ARE LIBERATED WHEN WE SEE THE TRUTH

THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ATMAN (YOUR SOUL) AND BRAHMAN. THERE IS A SPIRITUAL ONENESS TO ALL EXISTENCE

LOVELY CONCEPT

I AM GOING TO FAIL

THE TEMPLE REMINDED ME OF AN EXPLANATION I READ BY INDIAN AUTHOR DEVDUTT PATTANAİK.

UNLIKE GREEK NARRATIVES WHERE ACHIEVEMENT IS CELEBRATED

AND BIBLICAL NARRATIVES WHERE SUBMISSION AND DISCIPLINE ARE CELEBRATED

IN INDIC THOUGHT UNDERSTANDING IS CELEBRATED

THERE IS A FOCUS ON EXPANDING THE MIND AND SEEING THE ILLUSIONS OUR EGOS CREATE.

INSRIPTIONS ON THE WALLS GAVE MORE INSIGHT ON WHAT INDIANS VALUE.

The Duty of the Heroic Student

COOL

ALONG WITH WARNINGS ABOUT WORLDLY AMBITIONS.

He who desires to cross the painful ocean of worldly life which is full of crocodiles of lust, anger, greed, and infatuation should catch hold of the Bhagavad Gita which has the disciplines of action, devotion and wisdom as its oars. It will easily take him to the land of liberation.

The veil which hides illumination is removed and the mind becomes fit for concentration

A BELIEF THE MIND CAN BE TRAINED TO SEE REALITY, HAVE PEACE, AND BE FREED FROM SUFFERING.

I RETURNED TO SCHOOL THINKING HOW HAPPY I WAS TO HAVE ENDED UP LIVING ABROAD.

The peace of the eternal lies near those wise men who knew themselves who are disjoined from desire and passion

Om

Adam Rugnetta teaches at the American School of Milan. After years of making daily political cartoons for his students, Adam decided to make a graphic novel about his time in New Delhi. This is a short story from his upcoming book. Stay tuned, and follow his work @Rugnettanews on Instagram & Twitter or at adamrugnetta.com.

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THE NEW NORMAL
Vol. II

More Tales from International School Teachers

A Compassion Conference at The International School Yangon

ISY has placed compassion at the center of its mission.

By Mike Simpson

The International School Yangon is a community of compassionate global citizens.

Almost two years ago, this mission was adopted by The International School Yangon (ISY). It was developed collaboratively by the ISY community under the guidance of an external consultant, John Littleford. Over a period of months, faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, board members, and organizations whose families are served by ISY formed focus groups to establish ISY's future direction.

Our director, Dr. Gregory Hedger, often remarks how proud he is that the ISY community decided to put compassion at the center of everything we do. Proud and also a little surprised. We did not anticipate such a dramatic change to the mission that had served the school well up until that point. But the community made it very clear that ISY is a community that not only serves itself and its students. To quote ISY's accompanying vision, we aim to develop lifelong learners who will be a force for positive change in the world.

Compassion is one of those terms that might mean different things to different people and is often used interchangeably with sympathy or empathy. We believe that there is a difference between

sympathy, empathy, and compassion. Sympathy and empathy refer to a person's ability to understand or even feel what another person is feeling. Compassion describes what happens when this understanding or feeling drives a person to act to help another person.

At ISY, we are constantly reflecting on how we can develop compassion in our students and in ourselves as a staff and faculty. We have always been a caring community (as evidenced by the change of mission) and we are now more than ever committed to act in the interests of all, including those whose situations and feelings we would struggle to really truly understand. It is clear to us that to begin to develop compassion towards another person, we first must be able to appreciate and understand the perspective of that person.

This need to reflect on what compassion is and how we can develop it in our community was the driving force behind ISY's first annual Compassion Conference held on 20 September 2019. We consider the development of compassion in all young people to be of the utmost importance and as such we invited teachers from schools around Yangon to join us.

We wanted to create an opportunity for teachers to come together to listen and share ideas on what compassion means and how



Cliff and Wilma Derksen shared with ISY students how they navigated their way out of feelings of anger and revenge after their daughter was kidnapped and murdered, finding their way back to compassion, forgiveness, and love (photo: ISY).

it can be developed in their students and in themselves. To help us focus our thinking around compassion at the beginning of the conference, we were honored to have Wilma Derksen tell her and her family's story.

Wilma and Cliff Derksen's world collapsed when their teenage daughter, Candace, was taken hostage and murdered. Wilma shared how they navigated their way out of feelings of anger and revenge back to compassion, forgiveness, and love. Wilma also explored with us the power of sharing the stories of both victims and perpetrators of crime and conflict and how compassion allowed her and Cliff to cross boundaries and work within the criminal justice system, presenting alternatives to cycles of conflict, violence, crime, and injustice and building a climate of tolerance, resilience, hope, and compassion. Wilma and Cliff's story features in Malcolm Gladwell's book *David and Goliath* and could be described as a portrait of compassion as a source of strength for a couple who could otherwise have been consumed by hate and despair.

Wilma and Cliff spent the best part of a week with us. Wilma worked with all of our secondary students and Cliff worked with our artists. Wilma also addressed our parents on the importance and power of relational forgiveness.

Wilma's keynote was followed by workshops facilitated by ISY faculty. These workshops covered topics around compassion, service learning, the experiences of third culture kids (TCKs), the experiences of a local scholarship student at ISY, developing cultural intelligence, working with dyslexia, non-violent communication, and

technology that helps students provide feedback to their peers and document their service.

If Wilma's keynote could be described as a portrait of compassion as strength, the faculty workshops could be described as an exploration of some of the perspectives upon which compassionate action is predicated. The TCK workshop was presented by a teacher with two TCKs and another teacher who is a TCK. The scholarship student workshop was presented by a teacher who was formerly a scholarship student at ISY. These workshops gave invaluable insights into the perspectives, struggles, frustrations, and needs of students who we encounter every day. Equipped with these insights, those teachers in attendance left better prepared to build relationships, alleviate frustrations, and meet the needs of these students. These were just two examples.

Around the same time as the conference, as part of our ongoing Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Focus on Learning Self-Study, we confirmed and aligned our ISY Lifelong Learner Outcomes with our mission, vision, and accompanying strategic themes of service learning, inclusion, celebrating culture and diversity, environmental consciousness, and technology integration.

Ultimately, we want our students to develop into:

- Compassionate Global Citizens
- Lifelong Learners
- Agents for Positive Change

To support these learner outcomes, we will strive to instill in our students the following ISY Lifelong Learning Attributes:



Wilma Derksen at ISY.

- Compassion
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Courage
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Reflection

It is no coincidence that compassion is at the top of this list. We believe that compassion for others is what will drive our students and faculty to use their academic knowledge, skills, and lifelong learning attributes to make the positive difference that the world is crying out for in so many different ways. ●

Mike Simpson is Director of Curriculum and Learning at The International School Yangon.



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The Forgotten TCKs: How Can We Help Children Whose Best Friends Move?



Photo by Ivy Kuhn.

By Tabitha Davis
and Caitlin Tegenfeldt

Third culture children are known for experiencing repeated loss as they go through transitions. Counselors now work with students and families before their transitions to help them through the goodbye process by using the RAFT (Reconciliation, Appreciation, Farewell, Think destination) approach, as outlined in *Third Culture Kids* by Dave Pollock and Ruth Van Reken.

But what happens with the students left behind? How do we, as educators, support our students as they deal with the sense of grief and loss provoked when a close friend moves away? This article will explore how we can identify and support students that are left behind.

Every August we welcome a new group of students into our classrooms. At the same time, we tend to assume that returning students will not need social support in transitioning to our grade level. Unfortunately, these assumptions can be incorrect.

Identifying students early on who are grieving an interrupted friendship helps us to set up support systems, such as pairing a left-behind friend with a new classmate. Teachers from the previous year can help in the identification process by flagging students who they know will be affected by such loss. Counselors should also play an active part in passing along this information.

At the end of the year, when class mixing takes place, schools need to prioritize keeping students with their friends whenever possible, especially when a child is going to be losing a friend. I have experienced class mixings in which little thought is given to the relationships of the students, but rather the priority is placed on separating troublesome students, or academically dividing classes. The first priority should be to ensure, if possible, that each child has a strong friendship in place. Third culture kids (TCKs) go through enough loss

and grief that year-to-year transitions should not add to the list of emotional challenges. Whenever possible, allow parents to see class lists in advance of the start of the year, so they can prepare their child and possibly set up playdates with new classmates before the school year begins.

“How do we, as educators, support our students as they deal with the sense of grief and loss provoked when a close friend moves away?”

According to Tanya Crossman, students dealing with the loss of friends who move away go through four main stages. The first stage is isolation; this is when a child that has lost a friend feels as though there is now a gaping hole where their friend once was. Often, this isolation phase can be more intense for the stayer than for the leaver, since the stayer is surrounded by places and memories that are a reminder of the now-absent friend.

Teachers can be proactive in supporting a child that is in the isolation phase by helping to identify classroom buddies or taking the opportunity to pair a child that has lost a friend with a new student. As teachers, it is good practice to initiate a few buddy pairings for these students, increasing the possibility of a relationship growing. Educators and parents must also accept that this is a normal phase of adjustment. Through our interviews, we found this stage of isolation lasts between a few weeks up to a year. It seems that the older the child, the longer this phase of isolation may be, but there was great variance.

Following isolation, students enter the engagement phase. This is when students start making an effort to meet others. Those having lost a friend may move into this phase more quickly because their routines and involvement in com-

munity activities are already well established. I know of one teacher who met personally with parents in the hope that they would encourage a particular child to sign up for the school musical. The parents were extremely appreciative that the teacher had taken the time to contact them and encouraged their child to participate. This helped the student move from the isolation

phase into the engagement phase.

Being aware of some of the struggles that TCKs face when a best friend has left is the first step to helping the child. Next, teachers, counselors, and school administrators need to set up buddy programs and engage in thoughtful class mixing, to help students develop new relationships. Finally, showing support, understanding, and accep-

tance will help the student to work through the first two stages of isolation and engagement. ●

Caitlin Tegenfeldt and Tabitha Davis are colleagues at the International School of Yangon and have gravitated toward one other through their passion of understanding and supporting third culture kids.

Goodbye, Columbus

... continued from p. 2

ish ships that “opened routes” of “communication and mutual knowledge” and led to “mutual encounters and meetings.” Everything, it seems, took place on perfectly mutual terms, according to the Nao Victoria Foundation that financed this initiative.

As we made our way through the dim hull, we read about how “unbreathable” the space would have been in the 15th century. Not a single sign indicated, however, that the human cargo Columbus carried back to Spain could have been subjected to these extreme conditions. In fact, none of the navigator’s activities in the New World were discussed at all.

Back on deck, I asked a crew member to fill in the blanks left by the spotty exhibition. She was visibly uncomfortable as she referred, in passing, to the “less good impacts on the indigenous people” of Columbus’s voyages. Claiming ig-

norance on the subject, the veteran sailor suggested we do something more fun for the kids and she let them ring the ship’s bell. Then, in the hushed tones of a co-conspirator, the middle-aged woman asked if my girls would like to don the navigator’s faux fur-lined red robe and floppy hat. Visitors typically pay US\$5 a pop for the privilege, but our guide was willing to forego the fee if a game of dress-up could get me to stop asking questions.

The whole trippy experience called to mind one of my all-time favorite movies, *Goodbye, Lenin!*, a 2003 German film by Wolfgang Becker about the psychological challenges involved in transitioning from a particular worldview to a radically different one. It’s October 1989 when Christiane, an East German woman deeply devoted to the socialist cause, falls into a coma. When she awakes eight months later, everything has changed, only Christiane doesn’t know it thanks to increasingly desperate efforts by her son to shield her from the realization that communism has fallen along with the Berlin Wall and her entire way of life.

Between the *Santa Maria*’s sparse infographics and its numerous theatrical props, I couldn’t help but feel that, rather than educate young visitors, children were being implicated in an elaborate and increasingly hard-to-maintain fiction, as if, like Becker’s coma survivor, they were too frail to handle the truth.

The reality is, we educators are all too often the fragile ones.

As Fiona demonstrated, if you give a kid a costume, she’s likely to play dress up, even when morally opposed to what it symbolizes. If we ask our students to memorize a catchy rhyme, they will be able to repeat it for the rest of their lives, whether or not it accurately reflects reality. And if we teach our students a mythology rather than give them the tools to critically interrogate history, we’re sure to be hearing from them in years to come.


The girls and I followed up our *Santa Maria* experience with a corrective visit to “Holding Up the Sky.” ●

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The Imperative of Personalized Learning

By David Callaway

No matter where you have been for the last few years, you will not have failed to see that the world is changing. What's more, the pace of change is also unprecedented. Students that I taught 15 years ago are now entering a world with jobs that did not exist when they were in my classroom. Technology from the Jetsons has become a reality and beyond.

Several years ago, at a Central and Eastern European Schools Association (CEESA) conference, I listened to a futurist expound on what's next. This, by the way, was one of those jobs I had never heard of ten years ago. Futurists are people paid to scour the technology sector and scrutinize the news and then make their best guess on the trends and innovations coming our way. They are typically engaged by corporations to get an edge on the competition. They are also useful in helping those of us who work in education to prepare our students as best we can for their own futures.

From this keynote, I took away two key points. One, that futurists can at best predict just a few years into the future due to the rapid pace of change and technological innovation. And two, that the most important skills for us to teach our students are those related to creativity and innovation that will allow them to solve problems they have never encountered before.

Consider education as a whole right now. Do we see our education systems embracing this change? Despite some promising high-level support for personalized learning from institutions such as the U.S. Department of Education, which cites personalized learning as the only way forward to redress the inequity in the current U.S. education system, there is little to no real change in our classroom practices.

Personalized learning is a complex approach, not least because its practice is determined by the context within which it is applied. To oversimplify, it is the practice of putting students in the driver's seat so that they can move forward at their own ideal pace in progressing through the curriculum. It is often combined with inquiry-based, constructionist approaches with a focus on non-cognitive (or 21st-century) skills. Interestingly, I'm not sure any educators in a one-room, 18th-century schoolhouse would find the concept of personalized learning particularly strange; after all, adapting to meet the individual needs of our students is often second nature to a good educator.

All this said, most schools doggedly stick to a closed, rote learning approach that maintains a fixed pace for all. This may be due to the curriculum the school has ad-

opted or a reluctance on the part of the administration to change. When we really think about it, do any of us believe that the ability to regurgitate facts is actually a useful skill? Do any of us still believe that straight As alone will guarantee an Ivy League college acceptance?

The facts stand against this. Corporate interview practices have already shifted to focus on non-cognitive skills over traditional ability in math, science, and literacy. Companies such as Google and Amazon have well-developed systems to identify who they want and it's not a set of perfect grades they're looking for.

So what are we doing as educators to rise to this challenge? Looking around the globe, there are many schools that are working towards becoming learning-progressive, placing the focus on these so-called "soft skills." In such contexts we might note a heavy emphasis on a design cycle that provides multiple opportunities for students to work on collaborative or solo projects and to develop their creativity. No doubt this is an excellent step forward. Based on what I've observed as part of ICS Addis Ababa's research and development program, however, most of these programs do not sufficiently emphasize the importance of being highly effective.

There has to be a balance. Just as the ability to complete math tasks alone is less useful without the creativity needed to apply these skills, the ability to think outside the box and innovate is less useful without the physics and math knowledge to get that design off the ground. As schools, we need to look at being both learning-progressive and highly effective.

At ICS Addis Ababa, our approach looks at how to support each of our students, so that they have the agency to choose and move forward in their learning. We feel that this requires more than one educator in the room, so we are working on a variety of models that build on the advantages of combined teacher efficacy.

At the highest level, this engages the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) approach, where teachers plan together, look over student data, and collaborate to come up with solutions to support optimal growth in their learning.

We've adapted our classrooms physically to allow more than one class to work together within learning hubs and have reconfigured student support services and schedules to support this learning model. Currently, we are somewhat limited by our classroom layout, but we're in the process of constructing an elementary school building with larger learning hubs that will support four sections of a grade in one area with adjoining breakout rooms.

Within these hubs, students prioritize and select work to focus on, moving between a variety of spaces and seating possibilities, between collaborative and quiet spaces. Educators move around and support students, sometimes through small-group work, sometimes through individual conferencing and a variety of other instructional practices. Students make the essential agreements and build the rules and processes with a variety of support at their disposal. This goes hand-in-hand with the IB PYP new enhancements, which focus on student voice and choice and student agency in their learning.

ICS is currently implementing personalized learning and a hub model approach through the entire elementary school, supported by a Professional Learning Communities approach combined with the IB PYP.

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As innovation in education continues, our needs continue to change and we have got to adapt. There is no magic plan to follow, no easy "how-to" explanation. But as we learn, we develop our own skills as educators, allowing us to continue supporting our students in adaptive and flexible ways.

The world is changing, and as educators it is our responsibility—both morally and professionally—to do our utmost to support our students, which means accepting that we need to evolve. ●

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Living the Life

Sweet to Be Home

By Allison Poirot

Five months ago, my mother died, and I broke off my engagement with my fiancé. About a month later, I decided to quit international teaching and move back to the United States. At the time, my Head of School asked me, “Do you really want to do this?” He cited some famous psych study that lists the most stressful things a person can experience, short of physical violence, and puts “death of a family member” at the top, followed closely by “change in relationship status” and “move.”

I said yes.

Yes, living abroad is an adventure. Yes, I feel incredibly privileged and thrilled to have had this experience, in two countries and two regions of the world, over the past six years. Yes, it’s financially very lucrative compared with public or private school teaching at home in the States (um, my school pays my rent, for starters—eat that, Park Slope). Yes, I’ve seen wonders of the world (Jerusalem! Cairo!



Petra! Mountains and deserts in South America!) and made amazing friends and had incredible conversations, and learned much about myself and my own culture in the process.

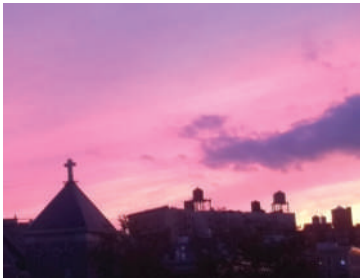
But I haven’t been “home.” Yes, I’ve visited twice a year for six years, but those short tours no longer suffice.

I am tired of living a temporary existence. At age 38, as my father astutely observed, I am interested in finally “settling down.” I want to both build and to deepen. I have 10- and 15-year-old friendships in New England that I want to cultivate. I have interests in teaching and history and psychology and



the arts that I want to explore. Instead of running away from the political mess that is the United States right now, I want to re-engage and see how I can play a small role in highlighting the positive, encouraging the youth, and doing annoying performance art in front of the White House as often as I can stand it.

I just don’t think it’s very viable to do all that while living overseas. Schools overseas too often overlook pedagogy in favor of pedigree (some schools in the U.S. do this also). And expats overseas often seek short-term pleasures instead of long-term lives.



Photos by Allison Poirot.

We live outside our normal society, so we outfit ourselves with different morals. We aren’t fully a part of the place where we live, so we hold ourselves apart. This is what I want to get away from. I want to have roots.

I learned from my disabled mother that taking responsibility isn’t a bad thing, despite what the zeitgeist says. Even though I did sometimes resent the fact that I was her primary caregiver for the better part of ten years, over that time, I grew to accept it. I didn’t expect her to remember my friends’ names, but I still told her about them. I knew she wouldn’t stay awake for the new Muppet movie,

but I took her anyway. I bought her clothes and scheduled her appointments and plucked her chin hairs and played Scrabble. It doesn’t matter if I thought some of it was boring. This is what life is.

I don’t need to always be seeking the highest mountain in South America or the most remote and secluded beach in Brazil. I want to also be content with the view of the trees at a local park and the taste of a toasted bagel with butter from a close-by cafe.

My adventures will be eavesdropping on passers-by and chatting with taxi drivers about the weather, finding a lecture series at a nearby bookstore, going to hear live music in a bar the size of a closet, bringing a friend ingredients for soup and making it at her house, inventing new words with her one-year-old child.

I can still enjoy new and fast and loud, but I resolve to also relish the small, and slow, and quiet, and sweet. ●

Alli Poirot blogs for TIE.

Stronge & Associates: Improving the Work Environment to Retain Teachers

By Xianxuan Xu

A growing body of research documents the strong relationship between work environment and teacher turnover. Although a competitive salary is important, teachers are also primarily drawn to schools with principals who are good instructional leaders, schools with like-minded colleagues who are committed to the same goals, and schools characterized by the availability of instructional materials or a climate that enables them to be effective (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas 2016). The specific elements of work environment are sometimes referred to as working conditions, which encompass not only well-maintained facilities and modern instructional technology, but also the school’s culture, climate, and the relationships among colleagues. In fact, collegial relationships, principal’s leadership, and school culture are two times as likely to predict teachers’ professional satisfaction as school resources and facilities (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay 2012).

When creating a comprehensive solution to teacher retention, two key issues to consider are human capital (i.e., the professional knowledge and skills of individual teachers) and social capital (i.e., the collaborative power of the group). Human and social capital have been used to frame is-

such as the attractiveness of schools and working conditions. For measurable and sustainable improvement in addressing teacher turnover, schools must foster both human capital and social capital (Leana 2011; Wahlstrom, Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson 2010).

In reality, social capital is often neglected in school improvement. A school’s social capital encompasses the level of trust as well as norms of reciprocity and collaboration. Research findings suggest the extent to which teachers feel they are supported by their colleagues, get to work together to improve classroom instruction, trust one another, and have a shared commitment to improve the school are significant predictors of their turnover intentions and also their student achievement (Boyd et al. 2011; Fuller, Waite, & Torres Irribarra 2016; Kraft, Marinell, & Yee 2016).

Work environment is highly predictive of teachers’ intended turnover, independent of other school characteristics such as the racial composition, socioeconomic status, and achievement of students. Also, there is mounting research suggesting that when teachers leave high-poverty, high-minority schools, it is not in response to the characteristics of the students. Rather, that decision to leave is driven primarily by a nonfunctional work environment. And, poor

Components of School Culture and Climate	
Instructional integrity	The freedom of the school to conduct educational programs without extreme scrutiny from community groups with narrow vested interests, and the extent to which teachers feel protected from unreasonable community and parental demands.
Behavior-initiating structure	Whether the principal makes clear to the staff her or his attitudes and expectations about policy and standards of performance.
Consideration	The caring, supportive, and collegial behaviors of the school leader.
Principal’s influence	The principal’s skills of persuasion and effectiveness in working with superiors but remaining independent in thought and action.
Resource support	The availability of adequate classroom supplies and instructional materials, the ease of obtaining extra materials, and protection of instructional time.
Morale	Trust, confidence, enthusiasm, and friendliness among staff.
Academic emphasis	The school’s emphasis on high, but achievable, academic goals for students, a learning environment that is rigorous, and communication of high expectations that students work hard and do well academically.

working conditions are most commonly reported in schools with minority and low-income students (Burkhauser 2017; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay 2012).

The health of culture and climate in a school is contingent upon several factors, as summarized below by Hoyle et al (2001).

Positive school climate also has been associated with higher academic achievement and healthy behavioral outcomes for students,

such as less violence, fewer discipline referrals, and lower absenteeism; but higher student engagement, educational aspirations and outcomes (Benbenishty et al. 2016; Cornell, Shukla, & Konold 2016; Hendro & Kearney 2016). Kraft and colleagues (2016) found that if a school’s leadership, academic expectations, and safety improve by one standard deviation, teachers’ turnover rate would decrease by 4.3 percent. In a study by The

New Teacher Project (TNP 2012), more than 75 percent of highly effective teachers who had turned over said they would have stayed at their current school if their main issues for leaving were addressed. High-performing teachers often leave for reasons that their schools could have controlled. The study identified eight low-cost retention strategies:

- Providing regular, positive feedback
- Helping the teacher identify areas of strength and development
- Offering critical feedback about performance informally
- Recognizing accomplishments publicly
- Informing the teacher that the teacher is high-performing
- Identifying opportunities or paths for leadership roles
- Putting the teacher in charge of something important and meaningful
- Providing access to additional resources to the classroom

The study found that the top-performing teachers are likely to stay at their current schools nearly twice as long (2–6 more years) when two or more of these eight retention strategies are implemented. ●

Educational Technology

Tech is the Circulatory System of the School

By Matt Harris

People often ask Tech Directors, “What exactly do you do?” The answer is of course incredibly complex, but in essence they keep the blood flowing to all the parts of the school.

Let’s think of a school as a living organism (which in many ways it is). This organism is a community of people working towards a common mission of student learning. They work together in an interconnected set of systems, workflows, and dependencies much like those of the human body.

In the human body, each system serves a purpose towards the greater goal of keeping the body alive. Some of these systems are quite visible to users (the consumption of food, our ability to move, our senses, etc.) while others work in the background (the nervous system, the respiratory system, the circulatory system, etc.).

In schools, technology serves as the circulatory system.

In the human body, the vital circulatory system branches out to every part of the body. It contains a collection of mechanisms and parts that ensure the blood continues to be oxygenated and distributed, while keeping the greater system

prepared for emergencies should there be a problem.

The same is true of technology in a school. Technology’s purpose is to distribute the life blood of the organization: information. Whether it’s network cable and wifi serving as the arteries and veins or maintaining access to the most updated information, technology delivers vital resources to every part of the school that needs them. Built into the system are backup and protective measures capable of handling emergencies. And just like in the circulatory system, technology works about 97 percent of the time, though people rarely notice it unless there is a major problem.

I know what you’re thinking: in using this analogy, does he actually think technology is the heart of the school? Well, yes... and no. From a functional standpoint, yes, technology runs our institutions’ most vital organ. The servers and systems that pump information everywhere it is needed act as the four-chamber heart of the school. These pathways need to be well-maintained, protected, and free of clogging. A breakdown of this system is akin to a heart attack, with the same potential severity.



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From a metaphoric standpoint, however, no—technology is not the emotional heart and purpose that drives a school. It is not the reason the school operates or the school’s driving force. Nor

should it ever be, though I think we all know tech people who might disagree.

Recognizing technology as the functional heart and circulatory system but not the emotional heart of a school is key for all stakeholders, as it sets clear expectations and defines the culture.

If leaders, teachers, parents, students, and technology personnel understand the critical role technology holds in all academic and operational areas of the school, then expectations can be appropriately set. Uptime requirements and communications from the tech department will be more in line with the reliance all others place on their work.

The need for institutional support and appropriate funding will help ensure system health. The necessity for clear protective measures and operational procedures will be understood by all stakeholders. And all will hold more realistic expectations around technology capacity, functionality, and reliability. Further, when everyone in a school understands the circulatory-system role of technology, a culture of effective communication and efficient technology usage will emerge.

So how do leaders, teachers, and parents better engage the technology department to build this understanding?

First, a technology roadmap for the school should be co-created to outline the current state of technology across the organization. This will outline the veins, arteries, and (functional) heart of the system. Such a roadmap will allow for greater clarity of decision making and serve as a backup of institutional knowledge.

Next, the process and data flows should be mapped by the tech team. This outline will allow the school to better understand what data it has, how it is used, and how teams work together to ensure consistent flow.

Achieving better data flow, protected technology, and systemic improvement are important goals, similar to those individuals set with respect to exercise and eating. The school should prioritize a tech-healthy plan.

By understanding that technology is the circulatory system of the school and treating it as such, the functional aspect of the organization can be maintained and improved in a healthy manner. This will allow everyone to focus on the true heart of the institution. ●

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Lessons in Learning

Can the Use of Questions Help Students Retain and Use Information?

By Gordon Eldridge

One of the foundations of inquiry-based learning is the use of questions to guide the exploration and acquisition of information, but do they make a difference? Does the use of questions actually lead to greater learning and/or to greater usability of the knowledge acquired?

As part of their ongoing research into the use of argument and debate as teaching and learning strategies, a group of researchers from the University of Central Lancashire, Cyprus investigated the question: "Does information become of greater potential use if the question it answers has been posed?"

Eighty-eight Grade 5 students participated in a study in their science classes in which two conditions were compared. These conditions were identical; only the method according to which information was presented to the students differed. In both cases, students were engaged in debating activities across nine 90-minute sessions, spread out over five weeks. The debate centered on whether electricity generation in their country would be better done using natural gas or solar.

Various activities took place over the nine sessions as students accessed information, presented

arguments to the opposing team, considered the opposing team's arguments and how to counter them, and prepared for a final debate. The difference was that half of the students accessed the information via a text given to them at the beginning of the lesson sequence (Text Condition), while the other half received exactly the same information only it was parceled out into smaller segments across the lessons with a question as the heading for each piece of information (Q & A Condition). The second group could choose four question cards they thought might be helpful to them during each lesson and could also ask their own questions.

As a way of assessing the learning of individual students, researchers had them write argument essays before and after the treatment defending the position they had chosen. The essays were coded for "functional units of evidence," by which the researchers meant that a student had used a piece of evidence in support of a claim. Each functional unit was further categorized as:

Support my own: a statement serving to support the student's position.

Weaken other: a statement serving to weaken the opposing position.



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Support other: a statement serving to acknowledge potential strengths in the opposing position

Weaken my own: a statement serving to acknowledge a weakness in their own position.

What were the results of the study?

- Both groups improved in their use of the available evidence.
- Students in the Q & A Condition showed greater overall improvement.
- The percentage of "weaken other" statements found in essays increased significantly more in the Q & A group (12.8 percent to 70.7 percent) than in the Text group (21.4 percent to 47.7 percent)

• Both groups showed comparable mastery of "support own" statements in the final essays.

• There were no differences between the groups in the usage of "weaken own" and "support other" statements. There was a very small increase in "weaken own" statements for both groups. "Support other" statements were very rare. No students used them in their initial essays. In the final essays two students in the Q & A group and one student in the Text group used these.

What might this mean for our classrooms?

The researchers posit three possible explanations for the superior performance of students in the Q & A Condition: (a) the questions highlighted the potential functional purpose of the information in the ongoing construction of arguments, (b) the segmentation of the information into smaller chunks reduced cognitive load, or (c) the fact that the information was distributed over time made it more digestible. They favor the first explanation, but it is likely that all three factors may have played some role.

In order for us to make use of new information in application situations, we need to integrate it into our existing knowledge systems. The fact that students were

choosing which questions they wanted to focus on in each lesson may well have caused them to examine their existing understanding and consider what they needed to learn next to achieve their purpose. The questions are also highly likely to have directed students' attention to what was salient in the information for their purpose: constructing an argument and refuting the other side.

Questions, even when constructed by the teacher, are a powerful tool for focusing learning. One wonders whether using questions as an organizing tool, without actually organizing the information for students under each question, would have had the same effect. I suspect so.

It is still worrying that even though the questions seemed to support students in developing arguments against their opponents, neither condition led to students acknowledging evidence that contradicted their own positions. The researchers conducted a second experiment relating to this, which I've summarized below, in my second article in this issue of TIE. ●

References:

Iordanou, K., Kuhn, D., Matos, F., Shi, Y., & Hemberger, L. (2019) "Learning by Arguing." *Learning and Instruction* 63, Article 101207.

Can We Overcome "My Side Bias" in the Classroom?

By Gordon Eldridge

Human beings have a natural tendency to overlook evidence that conflicts with their current understanding. This is often referred to as "confirmation bias" or "my side bias." In a previous study into the use of debate and argumentation as a teaching and learning strategy, Iordanou and associates (2019) discovered that most students ignored evidence that supported the other side of a debate or weakened their own position. The researchers wanted to know whether varying the instructional framing of an activity could encourage students to actively consider information that conflicted with their own positions.

Middle school students on a summer program participated in a two-day program during which they researched and debated the issue of whether workers should contribute some of their pay to a government social security program or whether they should instead save for their own retirement.

They were given information in a question-and-answer format that had proved in a previous study (see my other article) to support students in integrating the evidence in the context of their debate.

Individual student learning was assessed through argument essays written before and after the intervention defending the position each student had chosen. The essays were coded for "functional units of evidence," by which the researchers meant that a student had used a piece of evidence in support of a claim. Each functional unit was further categorized as:

Support my own: a statement serving to support the student's position.

Weaken other: a statement serving to weaken the opposing position.

Support other: a statement serving to acknowledge potential strengths in the opposing position

Weaken my own: a statement serving to acknowledge a weakness in one's own position.

The experimental treatment across three groups varied only in the instructions students were given. The first group was told, "Try to use this information in your arguments." The second group was simply told, "Here's some information about the topic." The third group was told, "Here's some information about the topic. Not all of the evidence is going to support your side; if it doesn't, see if you can deal with it."

What were the results of the study?

- The performance of groups one and two was similar. The prompt to make use of the information in arguments did not seem to make a difference.
- The third group, which had been told to deal with incongruent evidence, showed superior performance to that of the other groups. Their essays contained an average of 6.76 functional units, as compared with 3.98 in the other two groups.
- The third group was superior both in the number of students in-

cluding "support other" or "weaken my own" units in their final essays, as well as the total frequencies with which they were used. Among students in group three, 43 percent included evidence that supported the other position as opposed to 19 percent in the other groups. Again, 29 percent of students in the third group included "weaken my own" evidence as opposed to 3 percent for the other groups.

• How did students in group three deal with the discrepant evidence? Some acknowledged it but did not address it any further. Others produced a counterargument against it.

What might this mean for our classrooms?

The study shows that even small reframings of instructional activities can lead to learning gains. Directing students' attention to the presence of conflicting information and asking them to deal with it produced superior learning to simply providing students with the same informa-

tion. However, more than half the students in group three still ignored the incongruent evidence completely in their final essay.

One example is particularly interesting. A pair of students made a claim that governments keep your money safe for you. Each time they made the claim during the debating activities, it was countered by another pair with evidence that refuted it. The second time this happened, the pair who made the claim conceded that their claim was not always true. In their final essays, however, one of the students in the pair chose not to mention the issue at all and the other student returned to the pair's original claim, completely ignoring the counterargument they had heard twice and conceded.

I believe this means that, the advantage demonstrated in this study of varying the instructions notwithstanding, as teachers we simply must teach students explicit strategies for noticing discrepant information and for rethinking

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Lessons on EdTech Integration From the Boeing 737 MAX Disasters

An imagined conversation among a school's leadership team reconvening for 2019/2020.

By Matt Brady

Head: Before we get started, I want to add to today's agenda. I read an article about systems thinking and learning organizations on the plane; please add "Become a learning organization."

Principal: Got it. So all, welcome back. First up today is a tech item. Coach?

Coach: Hi everybody. Speaking of flights and articles, my bit is about the Boeing 737 MAX disasters and the takeaways for us as a leadership team.

So I don't know if any of you read the piece about what actually went wrong, but I immediately thought about tech integration—taking old systems (conventional education/737s), tacking on the latest tech (fancy devices & apps/huge new engines), taking as many shortcuts as possible to avoid additional time/training/costs, and then assuming everything will work just fine.

Principal: Hmmm, I don't get what you're saying.

Coach: The failed tech was software called MCAS. The people involved in testing and approving it did so under faulty assumptions/incomplete views of how the software worked. They assumed the system relied on multiple sensors and would rarely activate, and these false assumptions proved fatal.

Head: Still not following you.

Coach: Disaster happens when systems are driven by assumptions, not understanding. Boeing leadership didn't know where the failures were. What I am saying is, we're assuming that technology is being integrated effectively, but is it? We haven't been interested in where failures are occurring in "tech integration" as long as teachers and students have seemed like they're "using computers" and parent complaints are minimal.

Coordinator: It sure seems like everyone understands how they work.

Coach: Paradoxically, it's the familiarity and ubiquity of tech that blinds people to the lack of substance behind it. There's still an awful lot of signaling over substance, substitution over transformation. A decade ago, teachers walked kids to an IT lab with no responsibility for the technology. Now there are devices in every classroom and every year the number of systems and apps increases. Yet our orientations and PD only include a tiny fraction of the training teachers eventually piece together just to stay afloat, let alone innovate.

Head: It's important to realize our core assumptions still hold:



errors and using things incorrectly are caused by students and teachers not following directions. Punishing behavior we don't want eliminates these errors.

Coach: I disagree. Pinning bad work on a person does not make progress; fixing inadequate systems does.

Head (agitated): So you're saying we need to provide staff with mindfulness training now?

Coach: You're making one of my core points for me: you can't solve a problem you don't understand. Instead of mindfulness, let's call it cognitive overhead. Our tech integration process doesn't scale because teachers don't have enough spare capacity to think about themselves. Our integration planning process is utterly inconsistent and we as a leadership team don't make time to talk about tech enough to actually know where it's failing to fix it for them.

Coordinator: But we know my curriculum meetings are happening fairly reliably and in between student data reviews, curriculum reviews, writers' workshop, and high-yield learning strategies training. We try to work in integration support when we can, but of course trips and events and last-minute things do happen.

Coach: Even when all the inputs of your curriculum planning process are happening 80–90 percent of the time reliably, the cumulative effect is that your end product can have an error rate in the 60–70 percent range! Secondly, have you ever thought about how all those things you mention as "support" actually introduce problems teachers never had before? Classroom management issues? New things for parents to question? New needs for lesson ideas? It's more cognitive overhead.

Principal: Yes, and since my middle school teachers have a lot on their plates already—it's only their second year using Google Classroom and they're working on getting their units into Atlas Rubicon—I am not going to calendar any tech training at all this year.

Coach: Boeing took this kind of compartmentalized approach too. The chief technical pilot sent an

email to Federal Aviation Administration officials asking if Boeing could just remove any mention of MCAS tech from the pilot's manual, and the FAA let them do it. So this 737-MAX-disaster-creating view is that you can just keep everything compartmentalized. Rarely do we look at things holistically, examining the connections and gaps between these programs where the problems often arise.

Coordinator: Absent a *deus ex machina* to improve my system for coordinating curriculum, specialists, and teaching teams, what do I do?

Coach: We'll all be better served by examining your curriculum planning process from first principles. For tech, I hope we'll see that we should be treating technology as a source of value to be cultivated, not a cost center to be tacked on when we "can afford it." Boeing leadership treated tech like a cost center when they outsourced the 737 MAX MCAS software to engineers being paid US\$9/hour. It became yet another factor contributing to the disasters.

Now that you know the story, are you curious about what we could do differently?

Principal/Coordinator (in unison): No. (They laugh.)

Head (shooting a look across the table): Yes. As a team, how do we start?

Coach: We already have... by beginning to replace our limiting beliefs of what is possible. We can rethink our processes to be more sophisticated—it's not "Tech," it's a digital ecosystem. And we need to look at the dynamic equilibrium, the edges, everything. It's also important we step back from the hyperbolic "EdTech" echo chamber and make what we have work first, before talking about the big, new, and shiny.

Head: Exactly as I said—we need to become a learning organization! ●

Matt Brady is a consultant to international schools with expertise in digital ecosystem design, technology integration, and internal communication systems. He now blogs for TIE. mbrady8.com

Thinking Math: A Conceptual Approach to Math Instruction

By Vicky Placeres

Mathematics instruction has evolved over the years. Some parents may associate math class with workbooks and problem sets from their own school days. These exercises emphasized learning the procedures for calculations and problem solving. While drill and practice still play an important role in mathematics learning, nowadays there is more focus on conceptual learning. In other words, the goal is that students be able to understand and explain why they are doing what they are doing. With a conceptual understanding, students are more likely to be capable of transferring their math skills into new, unfamiliar, and "real life" contexts.

This year, the elementary school at Uruguayan American School adopted the Math In Focus program, based on the Singapore Math Approach for Grades 1–5. This program emphasizes more collaboration, discussion, the use of models, and multiple problem-solving strategies than does our former mathematics approach.

So what does a typical elementary school mathematics class look like? A class will usually begin with an anchor task, which is a problem or question posed to help students construct the meaning of a concept. For example, if the lesson objective is "using objects to find number bonds; find different number bonds for numbers to 10," then the anchor task might start with the teacher posing a question. "Marcos bought four toys. How many ways can he put his four toys in two chests to put them away?"

The teacher will then model an approach to the problem, which contains several steps. First, the teacher will ask students to represent the problem concretely. Students might draw or use blocks to show the number of toys Marcos has. Second, the teacher will record students' answers on the board and draw the answers to help students visualize the solution. Third, the teacher will then present a variation on the anchor problem to see if students can solve it without teacher assistance.

"What if Marcos bought five toys? How many ways can he place his five toys in the two chests? Draw all the ways you find on your paper." Throughout the demonstration, or exploration stage, the teacher is constantly describing his or her thoughts, or "thinking aloud," so that students can follow the problem-solving process.

Students then choose the strategy that works best for them and work independently or in pairs to solve the problem. Afterward, the class discusses not only the solution to the problem but also how they arrived at the solution, and why they chose a specific problem-solving strategy.

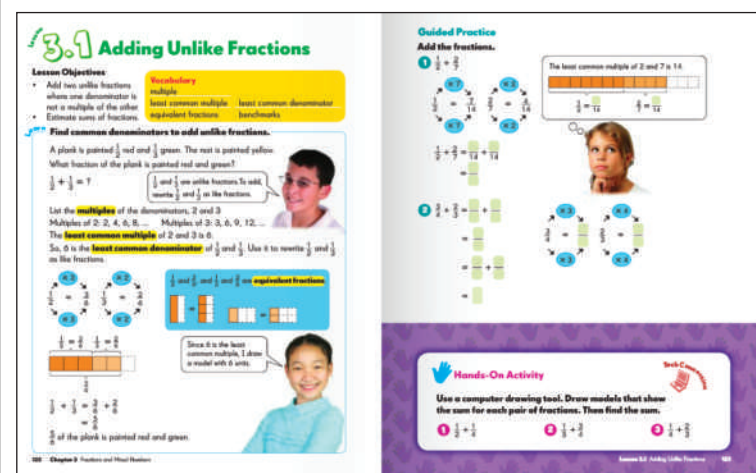
As the class continues, students work on other exercises while the teacher monitors their progress. Those students that demonstrate that they understood the strategy will work independently, while the teacher assists individuals or small groups that need more support. The lesson closes with a class reflection about their thinking process and a discussion of the most effective problem-solving strategies.

In effect, the teacher aims to make students aware of their thinking, i.e. build their metacognition, so that they understand what they are doing and why they are doing it.

With the Singapore Math Method, classes tend to be more active and collaborative. When you walk into the room, students might be discussing a problem, sharing different problem-solving techniques, drawing a pictorial representation, or debating the answer.

Providing a model and time for students to practice with concrete pictorial representations of the problems has been key to helping them internalize new mathematical concepts and skills and to understand that math is about thinking as well as getting the right answer. As a Grade 1 student aptly put it, "I do not just guess answers. I think about the problem." ●

Vicky Placeres is Elementary School Principal at Uruguayan American School.



The Marshall Memo

Helping New Teachers Avoid Common Traps

“Avoiding the Siren Calls” by Mark Wise and Beth Pandolpho in *Educational Leadership*, September 2019 (Vol. 77, #1, pp. 22-29), <https://bit.ly/2m9rLet>; mark.wise@ww-p.org and beth.pandolpho@wwprsd.org.

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Mark Wise and Beth Pandolpho (West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District, New Jersey) list several “Siren calls” that lure novice teachers away from a successful first year. Here are five not-so-effective practices that newbies may carry forward from student teaching, misguided PD workshops, or their own years as students.

- **Siren call #1: Stay on top of the details and everything else will fall into place.** Following this advice can make teachers look like bureaucrats and distract them from what matters most: getting to know their students. “Teachers who ask students about their lives and share theirs in return,” say Wise and Pandolpho, “can bridge the divide between adults who seem to have all the answers and students who are still figuring things out. These meaningful relationships can also support and inform a new teacher’s classroom practices and policies.”

- **Siren call #2: The most important thing is preparing lesson activities.** This runs the risk of students being busy with things that aren’t part of a well-planned unit focused on key knowledge and skills, big ideas, essential questions, and transfer goals. It also lulls the teacher into believing that when students complete the activities, it means the lesson

was successful – which might not be the case. Framing solid lesson objectives is not just a compliance exercise; it’s at the heart of moving students toward important learning outcomes.

- **Siren call #3: When students are working in groups, the lesson is student-centered.** Not necessarily, say Wise and Pandolpho: “New teachers may earnestly, but mistakenly, assign ‘group’ work that consists of routine tasks that could just as easily be completed independently... A group-worthy task challenges students to generate new ideas and revise their collective thinking in their quest to solve a problem, answer a question, or create an original product. It requires the unique talents and abilities of all members as they work independently and together to create a final product.”

- **Siren call #4: Quick-hit checks for understanding do the job.** Asking “Does anyone have any questions?” or asking students to give a thumbs-up or thumbs-down signal does not give a teacher a good sense of student mastery. Neither does calling on a few confident students who have the right answer, and taking the quiet compliance of the rest of the class as evidence of learning. “The importance of checking for understanding in a thorough way cannot be overstated,” say Wise and Pandolpho.



Kim Marshall is author of *The Marshall Memo*, a weekly online newsletter summarizing the best research from 60 education publications.

pho. The key is getting information on all students’ learning and fixing misconceptions and errors in real time.

- **Siren call #5: Exit tickets are the best way to get a handle on student mastery.** The problem with this kind of end-of-lesson check-in, say Wise and Pandolpho, is that there will be at least a 24-hour delay in following up on students’ errors and misconceptions. “Imagine a football team down by 20 points at halftime with a coach who doesn’t offer any new ideas,” they say, “or a violin tutor who does not provide feedback when a measure is played sharply out of tune... Timely feedback can

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Getting New Teachers Off to a Strong Start

“How Principals Can Support New Teachers” by Todd Whitaker, Madeline Whitaker Good, and Katherine Whitaker in *Educational Leadership*, September 2019 (Vol. 77, #1, pp. 50-54) <https://bit.ly/2koulqW>.

In this article in *Educational Leadership*, Todd Whitaker and Madeline Whitaker Good (University of Missouri) and Katherine Whitaker (a Kansas City, Missouri high-school teacher) say new teachers can bring energy and ideas to schools, but that depends on getting good support from their principals. Whitaker, Good, and Whitaker have these suggestions:

- **Be in classrooms.** Many school leaders believe it’s wise to leave new teachers alone for 4–6 weeks. “In actuality,” say the authors, “new teachers say they want principals in their room immediately.” Frequent informal visits starting on the first day of school are the best way to provide reassurance, build trust, and give the quick tips that will help rookies succeed. Regular visits are also the key to preventing bad habits from forming; those will take much more time to undo later in the year.

- **Assign the right mentors.** Convenience is often the default criterion, with mentors assigned by seniority or with location on campus, grade level, and schedule in mind. Instead, say Whitaker, Good, and Whitaker, principals should make choices much more intentionally, based on the implicit message being given to the new teacher: This is who we want you to be like. “The right mentor,”

they say, “can be a blessing and serve as a guide and role model.”

- **Reduce isolation.** “This is important,” say the authors, “because the club that pushes negativity always has room for one more member.” Positive staff members should be encouraged to reach out to newbies and stay in touch as the year progresses.

- **Help with classroom management.** Administrative presence in classrooms is important, but the key is new teachers having the toolkit they need to manage students when no other adults are around. Simple things like greeting students at the door and moving around the classroom can prevent many problems, but when a class goes off the rails, new teachers need to learn how to do a “reset,” dramatically reminding students of expectations and putting new systems in place.

- **Give permission to say no.** New teachers should be told that they don’t have to be at every school event, volunteer for every committee, and get involved in the PTA or fall social. Their full energy should be focused on their classroom and curriculum. “We need to give them the time, support, and space to find success within their classroom walls,” say Whitaker, Good, and Whitaker, “before we expect them to complete less crucial tasks.” ●

Being Selective with Online Materials

“Pinning’ with Pause: Supporting Teachers’ Critical Consumption on Sites of Curriculum Sharing” by Jennifer Gallagher, Katy Swalwell, and Elizabeth Bellows in *Social Education*, September 2019 (Vol. 83, #4, p. 217-224); the authors can be reached at gallagherj17@ecu.edu, swalwell@iastate.edu, and bellowsme@appstate.edu.

In this article in *Social Education*, Jennifer Gallagher (East Carolina University), Katy Swalwell (Iowa State University), and Elizabeth Bellows (Appalachian State University) remember being told, when they were social studies teachers, to “beg, borrow, and steal” curriculum materials and not feel they had to create every lesson from scratch. Lots of teachers follow this advice, scouring the internet (Pinterest, Teachers Pay Teachers) for resources they can download or adapt for their classrooms.

There’s a lot of good material out there, say Gallagher, Swalwell, and Bellows, but with little quality control, “these sites can act as turbocharged conduits for bad ideas disguised as ‘cute’ lessons... If we are not careful, teachers can inadvertently send problematic and mixed messages

about the social world through curriculum from all different disciplines.” Teachers need “critical literacy habits” to pick material that is high-quality, multicultural, and justice-oriented. Here are the authors’ suggestions for critically appraising online curriculum materials (Yes, Maybe, or No for each, with comments).

Purpose:

- Does the activity, resource, or idea support my inquiry question, standards, or learning objectives?
- Is it appropriately challenging for my students? Does it require critical thinking?
- Does it purposefully support students becoming global, democratic citizens?
- Is the learning goal commensurate with how much time and resources it will take?

Reliability:

- Is the content accurate? Can it be corroborated with other credible sources?
- Does the author have expertise in the discipline, in pedagogy, or in my context?
- Are the representations of people and communities authentic and nuanced?
- Is the content up to date?

Perspective:

- Does the content reflect my students’ cultures or contexts?
- Does the content give my students windows into new cultures or contexts?
- Does it help my students question dominant ideas about what is normal or good?
- Am I sure that this activity or resource will not harm students—especially those with marginalized identities and/or backgrounds? ●

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Middle- & High-School Books About People With Disabilities

“Readability” by Ragan O’Malley in *School Library Journal*, September 2019 (Vol. 65, #8, pp. 49-51), romalley@saintannsnny.org.

The publishing industry has been slow to offer books about people with disabilities, says Ragan O’Malley in this article in *School Library Journal*, but things are changing. She recommends these titles:

Middle grades:

- *El Deafo* by Cece Bell – hearing impairment
- *Hello Universe* by Erin Entrada Kelly – hearing impairment
- *A Storm of Strawberries* by Jo Cotterill – Down syndrome
- *Song for a Whale* by Lynne Kelly – hearing impairment
- *This Kid Can Fly: It’s About Ability (NOT Disability)* by Aaron Philip – cerebral palsy

- *Born Just Right* by Jordan and Jen Lee Reeves – being proud of the body you have

- *The Sound of Silence: Growing Up Hearing with Deaf Parents* by Myron Uhlberg

- *Me and Sam-Sam Handle the Apocalypse* by Susan Vaughn – a girl who doesn’t like itchy clothes and soap and has trouble controlling her anger

Young adult:

- *The Pretty One: On Life, Pop Culture, Disability, and Other Reasons to Fall in Love with Me* by Keah Brown – cerebral palsy
- *Strangers Assume My Girlfriend is My Nurse* by Shane Burcaw – spina

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Opinion and Commentary

Sabbatical, Recruitment, and Leadership in International Schools



By Proserpina Dhlamini-Fisher

Taking time off from schools is something I have done several times in my career and have enjoyed immensely. Time to re-evaluate, rest, re-energize, catch up with self and others, and plan ahead. My reasons have varied from taking maternity leave to re-inventing myself, from relocating to reconnecting with family, from shifting toward freelance consulting to feeling like an affirmative action hire with no professional challenges, from experiencing burn out to walking away from a toxic environment.

My latest departure was prompted by a desire to explore running my own business and discovering new strengths and challenges, all within the educational field.

Recently, I sat down for coffee with a dear friend who is also a school leader having taken time away to look after a mentally ill parent and finish a master's degree. As our conversation developed, however, I was saddened to realize that my friend did not feel comfortable or relaxed about the decision, anxious that when the time came to go back to full-time employment in international schools, school administrators who have never dared to take time away from the field would judge my friend harshly for this protracted absence.

How sad is that?

Is it right and fair?

It got me thinking about how I have dealt with this question as a recruiter, and how I myself may have judged candidates' personal decisions and ultimately overlooked the professional sitting before me all because of the time they had taken off work. When seeing a two-year gap in a candidate's CV, had I even invited them to an interview? Had I prejudged teachers because they had opted to take a sabbatical? Had I already decided what constituted acceptable reasons for such gaps before even hearing them out?

This incident forced me to delve deeper into reflecting on and analyzing my role as a school leader with "power" over others. Had I also judged potential employees

because their records indicated a series of one- or two-year periods in and out of schools? I certainly hoped not. I hoped that on encountering such movement I'd asked about it, explaining that I was looking for stability for both the students and school community. After all, I myself had stayed at certain schools for only one or two years; did this make me a bad educator?

After almost 30 years in international education, I have realized that, like the fairy tale about the princess and the frog, sometimes you need to kiss a few frogs before you find a prince (school). What I came to understand, through the course of this reflection, is the importance of asking candidates the right questions at interviews, seeking to understand anomalies in a professional profile without making professionals feel guilty or disrespected.

“When seeing a two-year gap in a candidate's CV, had I even invited them to an interview? Had I prejudged teachers because they had opted to take a sabbatical? Had I already decided what constituted acceptable reasons for such gaps before even hearing them out?”

All this brings me back to school leadership today, and especially international school leadership. It takes a while for us to realize that none of us can ever be perfect. When in a position of power, we have a tendency to avoid taking real time for self-reflection and forget the critical importance of thinking deeply about how we got started on our journey as educators and school leaders. When we do, most of us will acknowledge that at some point, someone saw something in us and gave us a chance. This is not to suggest that we haven't also worked hard to get to where we are today (although I harbor misgivings about every school leader out there having been appointed on merit alone). It was an act inspired by human empathy that eventually let you sign your life to that job that propelled you to eventually become that decision maker with power over somebody else's fate and fu-

ture. As educational leaders and educators, I feel we have an extra responsibility to wield that power wisely, more than do CEOs in the corporate world, since we work with young people, children, and parents.

Although we do not take oaths as do doctors, nurses, lawyers, policemen, and journalists, maybe we should. In the realm of education, an ethical statement of faith might involve swearing to lead by example, to respect our profession, and, most importantly, to be servant leaders within our school communities. It might require a promise to be fair, honest, flexible, great listeners, collaborative, and to always remember that we run schools for student learning and aspire to continue to develop teachers in a meaningful way.

Personally, I have been positively surprised by the amazing school leadership I have experienced (thank you!) and have equally been traumatized and embarrassed by people who claim to be leaders and have no idea or understanding of what the word or its inherent responsibility actually mean. I have always tried to encourage educators I work with to develop an understanding of who they are as individuals, to explore their personal strengths and own their baggage, then consciously reflect on how they can add value to the internationally diverse students they work with, and far less often, their diverse colleagues. I do not claim to be a perfect leader, but I have tried hard to be supportive of colleagues I have worked with.

One of the services I offer in my consultancy centers on cultural diversity and cultural competence, looking at how aware we are of our own unconscious and implicit biases. Are we, in international education, still stuck on affinity, perception, and gender biases? Where is the equity representation for diverse students in staffing and school leadership? What are we teaching implicitly and explicitly to our students? Are schools consciously making enough effort to represent student bodies in staffing and leadership? I do believe we have missed the bus on more racial and cultural representations in international education globally.

I recently visited a school I worked in a while back and was told that “the director says the school cannot hire a black principal because the parents expect a white principal.” Really, in 2019? I was shocked and stunned and made this person repeat what they had said, as I did not believe

it. Again, I say thank you to the inspiring people who have looked past my ethnic background and gender and seen a capable professional. They have given me opportunities to work in their schools and organizations, supported me, and enabled me to grow personally. I continue to be a connector and help educators wherever and whenever I can in international education.

Circling back to my initial question: Must educators feel scared to take time out from schools because we might be judged for it? Are we practicing what we preach to our students when we describe the importance of risk taking and open mindedness?

I am hoping that when I do go back to international school lead-

ership, somebody out there will see all the amazing experiences I have had—both in and outside of schools—that they will see the value I could add to their educational institution, and that they will take a chance on me because of what I can do and have done, and not on what I look like or how I might make some people feel because of it. ●

Proserpina Dhlamini-Fisher is the Founding Director of Educational Aspirations, a global international education consultancy that works mainly with international schools on Cultural Diversity, Inclusion, Strategic Planning, and Mentoring and Coaching.

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Opinion and Commentary

Are Staff Children Different? (Part II)

By Dallin Bywater

In Part I of this series, I proposed that staff children are different from their peers because of (and through no fault of their own) the cognitive and social biases that exist around them. Staff children often are given more attention, have unique social standing, and at times are treated differently when it comes to privileges and discipline at school. If you have taught a colleague's child before, you likely would agree that the experience is different from teaching a non-staff child.

So how do we approach this phenomenon in which staff children are perceived and treated differently from their peers? How do we create a healthier environment

for these international school children who number in the thousands around the world?

Here are a few tips for creating a healthy school environment for staff children, their educator parents, and their international school peers:

1. Talk about the issue. If we don't talk about the unique situation of staff children, then we will continue to make the same mistakes, creating an unhealthy education environment. Do not be afraid to broach the subject and to have an open dialogue.

2. Make healthy professional boundaries a topic of training and continuing conversation. Staff need to be explicitly trained on how to maintain professional boundaries and how to discuss these issues, so

that they share a common language and common expectations. Cognitive and social biases have less power if people are allowed to voice concerns and talk through uncomfortable situations.

3. Set appropriate professional boundary expectations for staff. It should be clear to staff parents and their teachers that teachers are expected (and encouraged) to treat staff children and their peers equitably. Permission for teachers to do so relieves some of the perceived social pressure teachers may feel to favor or highlight staff children.

4. Avoid personal boundary conflicts and model professional behavior, especially if you are in a leadership role. If you identify a clear conflict between your own parent and employee roles, voice the concern, give yourself additional time to make fair decisions, and consult with others. Excuse yourself from conversations or meetings that might jeopardize ethical professional boundaries. An administrator should probably not attend a discipline meeting organized around his or her own child, for example. In any meeting parents would typically not be asked to join, it is likely not appropriate for you to mix your educator and parent identities.

5. Assume that fellow staff have positive intentions. Parents, including staff parents, do not want to make a situation worse for their child. Sometimes staff members who are parents need help identifying problematic areas. Engage in conversation around these topics, and invite others to point out boundary issues that might be hard for you to discern on your own. Be forgiving, flexible, and open to these conversations.

6. Allow flexibility in supporting staff parents. Make sure that staff parents have opportunities to attend parent workshops that are not in direct conflict with their teaching schedules.

Staff children did not ask to be placed in an unhealthy, power-unbalanced environment. It is our responsibility to even the playing field, creating a healthy learning environment for all of our students, especially those who are vulnerable or in unique situations. As we improve professional boundaries and increase productive dialogue about staff children, international educators and students will all benefit. ●

Dallin Bywater is a third culture kid (TCK) and an international school counselor in China.

<https://bywatercounseling.weebly.com/contact.html>

On Allowing Emotional Support Animals in School



Photo by Alicia Jones on Unsplash.

By Joy Jameson

These days, there is a growing trend to allow people to bring emotional support animals of all types and sizes into public spaces such as malls, restaurants, and even on board airplanes. Should this trend be extended to also include international school classrooms?

Proponents of this idea will be quick to point out the advantages. For example, nervous students will feel much calmer with their beloved pets close by. Theoretically, this would mean more well-behaved students, ensuring them a greater chance of academic success. The situation could further serve as a social/emotional teaching moment. Inclusion of such animals might help students to become more tolerant of those with differences. In the case of international school students, having an emotional support pet nearby might help with the adjustment process when moving to a new country, attending a new school, or learning a new language.

On the negative side, allowing individual students to bring pets to class would definitely mean more work for the teacher and would require some form of staff training. How will the pet be controlled so as to not disrupt the class? Some students might have allergies that would be aggravated by pet fur, requiring extra care in making up class lists. Then there are the animal's needs to consider: food and water, as well as regular walks outdoors.

Every child in the class cannot bring a pet to school, so how would animal inclusion be determined? Perhaps only students with documented medical needs should be allowed to bring pets and student age limits established. Also, will there be rules regarding the kinds of animals allowed in school? Pets such as snakes and tarantulas might scare other students, or the teacher!

Then there's the problem of where to keep the pet during the school day. Some animals cannot be kept on a leash, so how would they be controlled? Recess, library, music, art, and PE times will present even more challenges. Should the animal stay in the classroom or accompany the student at these out-of-classroom times?

Finally, how will the pet get to and from school? Will parents be required to transport it both ways or will small pets be allowed on buses? If allowed on buses, the teacher will most likely need to accompany the child and animal to and from the buses to make sure they arrive safely, thus once again creating additional tasks for the teacher.

Critics might argue that for years classrooms have had class pets, therefore there is no need for students to bring their own pets to school. However, students do not usually have free access to the class pet, so it's not the same as having one's own pet close by for emotional support. In addition, traditional class pets are usually fish in an aquarium, small turtles, and/or hamsters—not a huggable pet like a dog.

A point in favor of class pets is that even though care of these animals is the responsibility of the teachers for the most part, the animals do not pose transport, recess, or other out-of-classroom time problems and are intended for interaction with all students, thus making them a much easier option to offer and control.

In these days of full-inclusion schools and laws to protect students' rights, care needs to be taken to ensure that the social, emotional, and learning needs of all students in the class are taken into consideration. In that way, all students can grow and experience success. Therefore, stop and think. What will your school's decision be regarding emotional support animals? ●

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Weighing Risks vs. Rewards in Cultivating School Spirit

By Dave Krockner

Why is it important as a high school principal to take risks? For one, it's a way to model behavior, or "walk the walk." After all, we encourage teachers and students to take risks all the time. Risk vs. rewards, right?

Just the other day a teacher came to me and said, "My Design Thinking lesson was a disaster." I responded with, "Congratulations!"

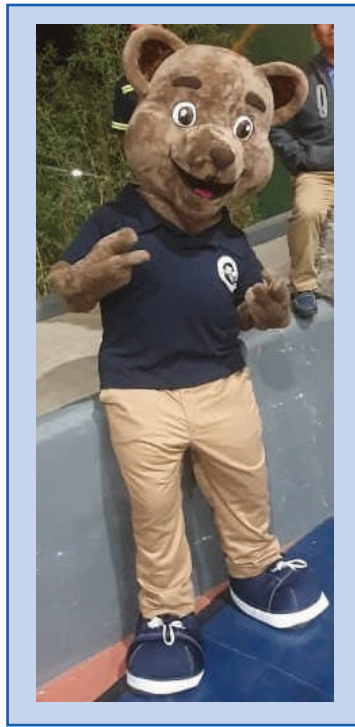
A look of confusion spread across her face. I explained that I knew rolling out this lesson involved taking a risk, but she attempted it, tried something new, and can now reflect on how to improve the activity. She took a risk for improved student learning. This needs to be celebrated.

I do believe it is incumbent upon school leaders to place faith in our students' and community's

ability to handle something new. Tell them you believe in them, that you trust them, and that you want them to have joyful opportunities and make positive memories of their high school experience. Yes, many things can go wrong along the way. But isn't it empowering for your school culture when things go right?

One of our goals in the high school at Colegio Interamericano Guatemala for this year is to elevate our school spirit. Last year, as a new principal to the school, I held numerous student focus groups, using the prompt, "What if...?" Students overwhelmingly expressed a desire for more school spirit.

In collaboration with our Director of Athletics and our Student Council (STUCO), we organized a Friday Basketball Spirit Night. Inviting the varsity boys' and



girls' teams from our neighboring school, Colegio Americano de Guatemala, for a double-header represented a real risk! Up to this point, the bleachers had been largely empty during home games. If students wanted increased school spirit, we were going to have to try something new.

As traffic is horrendous here in Guatemala City, along with safety and security concerns, we knew that if our students left after the 2:15 Friday dismissal getting enough fans back to make this evening a success would be difficult. Anticipating this challenge, STUCO set out to entice their peers to stay on campus until the start of the evening games.

They had great ideas and got busy planning. There should be food and movies, they decided, along with games like spike ball, soccer, and ping pong. They even

planned to create a "chill out" room. As we got closer to the event, the STUCO members grew nervous. They could feel the strain of risk vs. reward.

My own mind raced with similar fears. "What if no one sticks around? What if this turns out to be a complete failure? Will my student leaders follow through?"

The event was an incredible success. We persuaded over 50 students to stay and enjoy the afternoon's planned events, and we all had an amazing time. I heard repeatedly from students that they wanted to do this more often, that this is how school should be—a place where after classes wrap up we can just have fun!

Just as the basketball games were about to begin, the STUCO organizers along with my fellow

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Mindful Classes: Learning One Breath at a Time

By Julia Serrano

Every year, teachers at the Uruguayan American School (UAS) set goals to identify the areas of focus that will guide and enhance our instruction for the year. This year, one of my goals was to promote mindfulness activities in our community. I embarked on this journey thinking that mindfulness was just breathing, meditation, and anti-stress practice, but in the process of becoming familiar with the movement I ended up redefining my approach to teaching.

After reading various articles, following guided meditations, and attending mindfulness events and workshops, I began to notice changes. I was feeling more relaxed, more cheerful, and less afflicted by the actions of others. A more positive attitude and the benefits from that experience were just what I wanted my students to include in their busy, ever-changing world.

Nonetheless, I felt apprehensive about pre-adolescents and

teens taking to meditating or talking about the benefits of being present in the moment. How will my students take to the practice of mindfulness? This year I taught Grade 8 students, who arrived exhausted and restive at the end of the day. Getting them to let go of the events that had just taken place in the hallways or to put aside worries and plans about activities in my class and others was challenging.

Surprisingly, the process of incorporating mindful practices in our English class developed smoothly. At first, I began with repeated reminders to get ready for the class during the five minutes before the bell rang. Once most of the students were able to complete that task, I began to fill in the waiting time with other stimuli: music and a mindful attendance question designed to help students maintain their focus on being mindful, present in the moment, and connected with the objective of the class. In time,

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Overcoming "My Side Bias"

... continued from p. 17

their current understanding by adapting their mental schema to realistically incorporate the discrepant information. Overcoming "my side bias" is far from easy, but is an essential skill in our increasingly polarized world. ●

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Books About People with Disabilities

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nal muscular atrophy
- *(Don't) Call Me Crazy: 33 Voices Start the Conversation About Mental Health*, Kelly Jensen, editor – eating disorders, anxiety, addictive behaviors, post-traumatic stress disorder, and body dysmorphia
- *A Curse So Dark and Lonely* by Brigid Kemmerer – cerebral palsy (fiction)

- *Unbroken: 13 Stories Starring Disabled Teens* by Marieke Nijkamp – physical and neurodivergent differences
- *When My Heart Joins the Thousand* by A.J. Steiger – a teen girl who doesn't like to be touched
- *Wild and Crooked* by Leah Thomas – a teen with cerebral palsy and a father in prison for murder (fiction). ●

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Lauren Hilary Wells M'18
International School of
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Middle School MYP PHE Teacher

The learning experiences I've had and the friendships I've formed have helped me broaden and deepen the perspectives I have about education. I have more of an appreciation for the challenges facing elementary school students and teachers."

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Teacher Inquiry Groups at Munich International School: Open-ended, Self-directed, Inspired Professional Learning

By Kristen DiMatteo

As with most international schools, Munich International School (MIS) is very fortunate to have professional faculty that bring the best practices in teaching and learning to our students. Recognizing the professional curiosity of our faculty, the School Leadership Team continually seeks to engage teachers in a deep exploration of an area of interest. To that end, one of the most effective professional development models we have experienced in recent years is Teacher Inquiry Groups (TIGs).

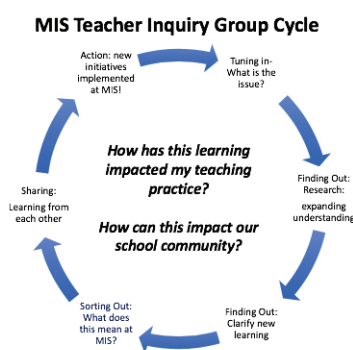
What are Teacher Inquiry Groups?

Teacher Inquiry Groups (TIGs) are teacher-initiated learning co-

orts dedicated to researching, analyzing, applying, reflecting upon, and sharing new learning that directly impacts an aspect of teaching and learning at MIS.

Over the course of a semester, groups of teachers met to explore self-determined areas of interest in their field. Trained faculty leaders facilitated these groups, and the meetings were paced to follow an inquiry cycle (imagine Kath Murdoch's cycle scaled to adult learning).

By keeping the timeline of learning to one semester, engagement, efficiency, and energy for the learning process remained high. The TIG inquiry cycle created clarity in our learning process, and it provided time for both research and reflection on the application of learning in our context.



Finally, the inquiry cycle model involved peer sharing of learning. In our culminating session, our faculty came together for a TIG Exhibition, asking: How has this learning impacted my teaching practice? How can this impact our school community?

At the exhibition, teachers viewed one another's work and asked pointed questions to better understand and consider how these ideas may relate to their own teaching environment.

What makes Teacher Inquiry Groups effective?

By following an inquiry cycle, teachers were effectively mirroring our approach to teaching and learning in the classroom. Interestingly, participating in an inquiry-driven professional learning model brought a sense of empathy for the challenges our students sometimes face as they move through their own learning inquiries. For example, most faculty groups quickly developed lines of inquiry and were adept at homing in on what they planned to research. Yet, teachers, like our students, sometimes struggled to make meaning of a vast array of research and resources at their disposal.

As a result, "Sorting out" took longer than expected (anyone who has mentored a PYP Exhibition group can relate to this!). It took time to make meaning of the learning as it applied to the context of MIS. When it came time for the TIG Exhibition, groups diligently prepared to present their learning to peers. The TIG Exhibition was a lively, interactive sharing session. Mostly importantly, the learning from the Teacher Inquiry Group time was by followed by Action, as the final Group recommendations were implemented across the school.

Examples of MIS Teacher Inquiry Groups include:

- Phonics Instruction: Current best practices for teaching phonics using an inquiry-based approach

- Building an effective EC-12 Pastoral Program that nurtures student wellbeing

- Extended Essay: New criteria, start to finish. A look at how we

can help students approach the criteria in the extended essay process

- House System exploration: Building student voice and capacity for leadership

- Outdoor Learning: How to use the MIS Campus to support student learning

- Longitudinal study of MIS "lifers": What are characteristics of success in long-term MIS students? What has MIS done to develop these? Are there potential predictors of student success?

Feedback on the Teacher Inquiry Groups was universally positive, with faculty recognizing the benefits that this structured form of collegial learning brings.

"There was an excellent group of people on our team. Everyone was very proactive. It was interesting to mix and share viewpoints with teachers from other parts of the school."

"The time working on TIGs has been an excellent use of meeting and PD time. It was nice to leave school on a Friday feeling inspired to learn more."

"It was great to get the time to dwell on our interests and reap results which are practical to our teaching practice."

Our teachers are role models of life-long learning for students, and the opportunity for self-directed professional growth is an essential component to a robust learning community. At MIS, Teacher Inquiry Groups inspired our faculty to propose new ideas to school leadership, to develop new instructional practices, and to implement programs that will directly benefit MIS students.

If you are looking for an effective model of professional learning for school improvement, try Teacher Inquiry Groups. When we offer our teachers the opportunity to lead effective change in our schools, the results are always impressive! ●

Kristen DiMatteo is Deputy Head of School at Munich International School in Germany.

References:

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M., Gardner, M. *Effective Teacher Professional Development*. Learning Policy Institute, 2017. Available online.

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Risks vs. Rewards

... continued from p. 22

supervisors and even the food vendors were shocked to see crowds of people stream in. They had braved the traffic to attend! We had a packed gym with standing room only.

I saw younger kids from other divisions playing on the field, eating food, playing soccer, and cheering on the varsity teams. Parents and family from the visiting school mingled with our fans. Our mascot, the Grizzly, was a big hit and was swarmed by younger and older kids the entire night.

After that memorable evening, I reflected on the effort and time required to pull off this event. From all the smiles, the roar of the crowd, the comments by students and parents, it was clearly worth it. Taking the risk had been stressful, but the rewards were deep and meaningful.

I guess the most reaffirming moment for me came when a group of seniors said to me, as we left campus for the night, "We will think back on this night for years and years. Thank you."

As school leaders, we can get swept away by curriculum, assessment, professional development, budget, parent communication, and countless other responsibilities. It was this Basketball Spirit Night that reminded me, once again, of why we do what we do. It is always about the students, their pride, their sense of self, and their sense of belonging to this community. It is about modeling what we expect of them.

So try something new. Take a risk. Hopefully, you, too, will reap great rewards for your learning community. ●

Dave Krock is High School Principal at Colegio Interamericano Guatemala.

Avoiding Traps

... continued from p. 19

be just as powerful a tool for classroom educators as it is for coaches and music instructors." New teachers must have a sense of urgency about during-lesson, on-the-spot checks for understanding, followed immediately by appropriate praise and correctives. ●

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Mohamed Elleathy M'15
M.Ed. in International Education with Educational Technology Executive Account Manager - International Accounts (Middle East Region), NWEA

"My experience was empowering and transformational on both the professional and personal levels. The collaborative nature of the program allowed for various perspectives working toward an insightful awareness that would be impossible to achieve alone."

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Teacher Training Center for International School Educators

The Importance of Defining Learning



By Matt Piercy

The rapid pace of change this 21st century is undeniable. Computer processors are but one example, their speed said to double every two years. This doubling effect, known as Moore's Law, plays out in a myriad of ways. There is ever more information and a heightened expectation that we stay abreast of it but a perception that there is less time in which to do it. Some say this century is as far away from the 20th as the 20th century is from the Dark Ages. With accelerated change, even the definition of learning has changed.

What does "learning" really mean? It seems essential that we define it—if not as a society, or as an international school community, then at least at the institutional

level. Only after clearly spelling out what we believe it means to learn can we begin to ensure that our students are fully engaged in the process. Or else!

Stakes are rising, as neither climate change nor shifting political and economic models are going to wait. The global dropout rate continues to increase, as does the growing unpreparedness of university graduates attempting to enter the workforce. Meaningful and transferable learning screams out for our attention.

While we aspire to reexamine and define what learning really means, we look to educational philosophy and practice in the hope that they are grounded in an unrelenting necessity to inquire but also in the ability to actually produce solutions. It's then a matter of applying this learning to new situations.

Yet, with Google always at our fingertips, it is not uncommon for students and adults alike to not take time to think. Teachers may unhesitatingly field such questions as, "How do I print this," "Is this graded?" or even, "What time is it?" A teacher looking to guide critical reflection might ask, "Why did we just do this activity?" and be met with, "Because you told us to."

Scary.

Thirteen years have already passed since Sir Ken Robinson, an international advisor on educa-

tion, attested to the importance of creativity. In his TED talk, viewed by more than 50 million people, Robinson affirmed, "Creativity now is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status." Yet, where is the space reserved for creativity if students are not taking the time to solve "problems" such as how to print a document?

For teachers, it often is a knee-jerk reaction to swoop in and solve a student's "problem." Arguably, this is not helping but enabling. How do we expect students to think critically and create solutions if we are not providing them the necessary time and space in which to do this?

Baby steps. As teachers who want more than anything else to prepare students for today and tomorrow, we must become more conscious and hold fast to our principles.

Further, vital to our definitions of learning is the role of student agency. Which begs the question: How much agency do students really have? I'm not talking about whether or not they have the freedom to opt for band over art. Rather, are we providing them a buffet through which they can meander and discover? Or are we asking them to queue up for a linear fast track to university and into the workforce? We need to create an environment in which op-

portunity and varied experiences are cornerstones, as students are empowered to determine their course of study. Where passions are followed both inside and outside school walls. Where balance is central, and unscheduled time is safeguarded.

One attribute of the International Baccalaureate (IB) profile is "understanding the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others." This looms large as students are pushed and pulled, the various competing forces and pressures to get high marks in seeking to set themselves up for the next steps, for futures that are moving targets.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 65 percent of grade-school children will end up in jobs that have yet to be created, professions being born out of the ether.

Consider a recent study by McKinsey Global Institute. "By 2030, up to 800 million of today's jobs could be replaced by automated technology." This beckons a necessity not only to question curriculum and what is being taught but also how we are teaching. Are students being asked to inquire in order to extend their learning? And is the expectation for students to create solutions and communicate their learning effectively to others? Not just in science or a design technol-

ogy course, but across subjects? It seems essential that we do so, in order to ensure student readiness for whatever the future might hold.

Years ago, a viral YouTube video titled "Stuck on an Escalator—Take Action" presented a humorous yet ironic truth, as two people stood stuck on an escalator. Instead of stepping forward, they remained standing, awaiting "rescue" as they screamed out for help. The pair was frozen, expecting others to solve the problem for them. As entertaining as the example might prove, it exemplifies just how common the aversion to problem solving is, whether in our classrooms, schools, or society at large.

Though we might not be escalator mechanics, we certainly know how to solve the problem of being stuck on an escalator. Do we stand still? Do we google, "How to get off stuck escalator?" Do we scream out for help? Or do we simply walk on up?

This is our zeitgeist challenge: to prepare students to confidently step forward into a future where inquiry, solution creation, and transference are imperative. ●

Matt Piercy is a middle school social studies teacher at International School Bangkok (ISB). He was inspired by ISB's actionable definition of learning.

Mindful Class

... continued from p. 22

discussions of how we can better process what we see in our world today and focus on one thing at a time gave birth to our mantra: This moment... what is important *now*?

In search of additional resources and knowledge on the topic, I stumbled upon another discovery: The Calm Schools Initiative, offered by calm.com, which provides "mindfulness tools and resources to teach students this important skill." Through this site, we began our journey towards short, guided meditations at the start of class. We used the various images and sounds available through calm.com to create sensory experiences in our classroom.

Grade 8 students discovered that working in a virtual storm with the lights turned out and listening to the rolling thunder actually improved their focus and helped them relax. Other times they preferred to work in a colder environment with the sounds and scenes of a snowstorm, or in a toasty classroom, before a virtual crackling fire.

One student noted, "The calm.com app really helps me calm down and think through things like what to write about and how

to explain myself. It creates an atmosphere I like and I enjoy working in. That's how mindfulness helps me in the classroom."

Soon these mindfulness practices became an important part of our routines, and students rushed to class to request meditations or sensory experiences to help them relax and recharge before class.

With my Grade 6 students, mindfulness similarly began with the process of getting ready for class. First, we established the routine of preparing one's materials, writing down the date and goals for the class. Then, during the first five minutes of class, I introduced the idea of discussing a question or quote and connecting it to ourselves, a text, or the world.

Later, we moved from discussing our thoughts to writing them down, eventually integrating the practice of mindful coloring. Students chose a drawing and had five minutes of mindful attendance to color while they learned about the benefits of mindfulness, listened to a review of the previous class, or were given an introduction to one of our class objectives.

Once a drawing was completed, students practiced mindfully cutting out the picture so that it could be displayed on our "Join the Mindfulness Movement" door decoration project, which illustrat-

ed the benefits of practicing mindfulness and the various ways one can incorporate the practice into a busy daily life. Eventually, Grade 6 students were ready to listen to guided meditations and podcasts during these five minutes of mindful coloring, which also fostered mindful listening skills.

With the addition of "brain breaks," mindfulness extended to test-taking practices to help us learn to pay attention to the need to rest. I marked our clock at every fifteen-minute interval and chose the best time to pause. For two minutes we engaged in alternative practices designed to give our brains a break. During these times, at least once during the 90-minute block, we flipped pencils, played hand-clapping games, learned new dance moves, or teased our brains with right-left brain challenges.

These mindful stops provided a reset in our practices and gave students a chance to relax, recharge, and refocus on the activities at hand, which in turn yielded more productive use of classroom time and an overall improvement in the quality of assignments.

In the end, mindfulness in both classes showed similar results: students were more relaxed, focused, and committed to completing their work more carefully. Students and teachers both seemed happier.

more receptive, and less stressed about academic demands.

When asked "How does mindfulness help you in class?" one Grade 6 student responded, "Mindfulness helps me in class because I get more concentrated and I am more efficient. It helps me to get calm and focused more on what's important (and it keeps my brain active). While drawing or coloring my brain gets in a state of calm and peace."

As for me, mindfulness has given me an opportunity to notice the small moments: a blank stare, a puzzled look, a worried smile—all so obvious, yet unnoticeable moments if one is not mindfully present. Mindfulness has changed my

teaching perspective, reminding me that I can only truly control now, what happens in a given moment.

Almost a year ago I approached mindfulness hesitantly. Today I am grateful I chose it as a goal. I am convinced that mindfulness is a great vehicle for building healthy habits, self-regulation, resilience, and tolerance. Joining the mindfulness movement has rekindled my love for teaching, allowing me to be more present with my students in this beautiful process we call learning. ●

Julia Serrano is a Middle School English Teacher at Uruguayan American School.



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College Counseling

HBCUs Open Their Doors Wider to International Students

Historically black colleges and universities are bringing in foreign students to give their campuses more international flavor, and help with the bottom line

By Delece Smith-Barrow

When Fahad Alharthi traveled from Saudi Arabia to southern California in April of 2015, by himself at 20 years old, he knew no English. But he did have a scholarship guaranteed by the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, to use to learn English and then attend a U.S. college.

Over 18 months, he lived with American host families and friends, studied English at a language school and at California State University, Long Beach, and took the International English Language Testing System exam. On a scale of 0 to 9, he scored a modest 5, but he was accepted at three colleges.

Alharthi chose Tennessee State University (TSU) in Nashville, a historically black university—where his classmates are black Americans, Egyptians, Kurds and Somalis as well as other Saudis.

In 2008–09, Tennessee State had 77 international undergraduate students. By the fall of 2016, the year before Alharthi enrolled, it had 549—8 percent of its undergraduate student body of about 7,000. Other historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are sparking similar rapid growth in their numbers of international students—for the same reasons.

In addition to the tuition money they often bring—many foreign students pay the full sticker price, often aided by their home countries' governments—there are benefits for the HBCUs' American students. Many are from low-income families and cannot afford study-abroad programs. Having international classmates exposes them to cultures very different from their own. Also, when they graduate, they will join an increasingly globalized workforce, and could benefit from understanding the perspectives of their international peers.

"It is important to have different cultures on a campus because we can't send all of our students to study abroad, so we find unique ways to bring the world to them," said Jewell Winn, executive director for international programs at TSU.

The spike in international students is also happening at Morgan State University in Baltimore and Howard University in Washington, D.C.—institutions similar in size to Tennessee State—and at some smaller HBCUs, like Central State University in Ohio.

Among HBCUs with 10 or more international students, as of the 2017–18 academic year, Morgan State had the most, with 945 stu-

dents; Howard was second with 920; and Tennessee State third with 584, according to the Institute of International Education. The three campuses are similar in student population as well as size — at least 70 percent of their students are African American and about half receive federal Pell Grants (usually given to undergraduates whose annual household income is less than US\$40,000).

But those demographics are changing, as more foreign students bring their languages, cloth-

"It is important to have different cultures on a campus because we can't send all of our students to study abroad, so we find unique ways to bring the world to them."

— Jewell Winn
Executive Director for
International Programs,
Tennessee State University

ing and customs to majority-black schools. And while some African American students question whether the culture of their campuses is changing too much, others welcome the chance to interact with foreigners.

As Tennessee State's Winn pointed out, "When they leave this campus of an HBCU, they're not going to work at an all-black Nissan or an all-black Deloitte or anything like that. It's going to be a very diverse workplace."

The influx of foreign students to HBCUs includes a large number from the Middle East, thanks in part to government-funded scholarships. Indeed, Saudi Arabia is fourth among the top places of origin for international students in the U.S., according to the Institute of International Education. (China is first, followed by India and then South Korea.)

"Having an international student who is fully funded, whose government guarantees their tuition, is the best-case scenario for any university trying to attract a student who pays out-of-state tuition," Yacob Astatke, Morgan State's assistant vice president for international affairs, explained. In many cases, the foreign government pays full-fare room and board costs as well.

An out-of-state student from California, however, might still need financial aid from Morgan to cover some of the cost. With every out-of-state student the uni-

versity tries to attract, Morgan has to think carefully about how much aid it is willing to give them. Not so with international students whose tuition payment is guaranteed — "a big plus for our institution," he said.

Astatke said Morgan State's president, David Wilson, focused on boosting the international student numbers, and that between 2014 and 2017, international enrollment tripled, from about 300 to 900 students — "mainly from Saudi and Kuwaiti students," he said.

Morgan recruits through the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission scholarship, and also hosts meet-ups for Saudi students from colleges throughout the D.C.-Baltimore region. Most of its international students study engineering; the university recently increased the number of engineering classes offered during the summer to help international students graduate within their scholarships' timeline.

"Between 2014 and 2017, international enrollment at Morgan State University tripled, from about 300 to 900 students; this demographic is also rapidly growing at other HBCUs."

"In the last five years, we have offered more summer classes than the last 20 years combined," Astatke said.

In Saudi Arabian culture, there has been a push for citizens to become more educated, in general, and to obtain a more Western education, in particular, said Marybeth Gasman, the director of the Rutgers (formerly Penn) Center for Minority Serving Institutions.

"Once word gets out about an

institution, and if students are having a good experience, then I think that you're going to get more people attending," Gasman said. "Those kinds of communities of who goes abroad are fairly small in other countries. And they're very connected."

At Tennessee State, where many Saudi students get the government scholarship that Alharthi got, their numbers grew so large that in 2017 the Saudi Arabian scholarship program stopped sending students to TSU, Winn said, fearing that living among so many fellow Saudis could dilute their English-immersion experience. (But in April, the scholarship program allowed its students once again to apply to TSU.)

Other historically black colleges are beefing up resources and increasing staff to better recruit international students, which often involves a little bit of luck.

... continued on p. 32

Teachers On The Move - Maintaining Educational Standards



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News From Schools

Understanding by Design

ASV shapes long-term educational objectives for students at every grade level with a focus on transfer

By Carlos Minuesa

The 21st-century school aspires to teach through comprehension, but how do teachers know when students have understood a topic? What indicators reveal an effective and practical acquisition? There are various types (interpretation ability, implementation, perspective...) and schools like the American School of Valencia (ASV) are using them in order to renovate their academic programs and to respond to challenges in contemporary education.

"Traditional education is a transfer of information, but these days students can google the content," explains Elizabeth Imende, expert in the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework who has been leading professional development workshops at ASV. "What is important is, can they use that information when there is a real challenge or problem?"

The implementation of the UbD environment entails a detailed review of the academic programs and their horizontal and vertical sequencing, that is, grade to grade and for each of the subjects. The process has always as its focus the transfer goals (long-term learning), according to Imende. "We have spent six months working at the math core level to really think about what we want ASV students to be able to do after they leave school. And then eventually we get into the design of the day-to-day lessons. But it is important for teachers to think about the long term."

Understanding by Design is consistent with ASV's philosophy

of "teaching for comprehension and critical thinking." Schools that apply this method learn to "map the curriculum around big ideas and essential questions," which helps students to "develop the 21st-century skills of critical thinking, communication, creativity, and collaboration," explains Dr. Ann Kox, Preschool and Elementary School Principal and Curriculum Coordinator.

Updating the contents of the curriculum also implies a change in assessment methods. It is here where performance tasks come in. These tasks must be "enriching," Kox and Imende state. "Teachers should design a task around an interesting and genuine question or challenge; it should admit different approaches and encourage cooperation and group work. By completing it, students learn to analyze, interpret, and be perseverant," Imende says.

The workshops held this year were focused on transfer goals—that is, long-term objectives—and cornerstone tasks (key tasks in each subject and grade). The educator invited by ASV encourages parents to trust the process: "Education is changing, and we know that the accumulation of information is not the only way to prepare students. American School of Valencia has done incredible work coming up with transfer goals and explaining what they want the students to do in the long term. I can say from my perspective that you are in good hands. Encourage teachers, and ask them about these transfer goals!" ●

From the International Space Station to the International School of Prague



NASA astronaut and educator Ricky Arnold touches down in the Czech Republic to inspire the ISP Community (photo: ISP).

By Tony McLaughlin

NASA Astronaut and educator Ricky Arnold and his wife Eloise, who is also an educator, spent an entire week at the International School of Prague (ISP) in October, sharing their fascinating experiences with the ISP community and beyond. Fittingly, their visit coincided with the first anniversary of Ricky's return to Earth after his last mission to the International Space Station. The couple received a rapturous reception from the ISP community.

As a science teacher having taught in international schools in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Romania, Ricky informed ISP students, faculty, staff, and parents that their environment is a lot like the one he experienced living and working at the International Space Station.

As Ricky put it to the ISP community, "You always want students who are global thinkers, global citizens who are prepared to help our global community meet the challenges of the next generation. That is kind of how the Interna-

tional Space Station works, too. Global leaders came together and agreed that the high ground of space was something worth exploring, and it's worth doing it together, collaboratively."

Ricky had a packed schedule while at ISP and gave the entire extended community the opportunity to hear about his experiences. In a series of fascinating presentations, Ricky recalled his two journeys into space. His comments largely focused on working

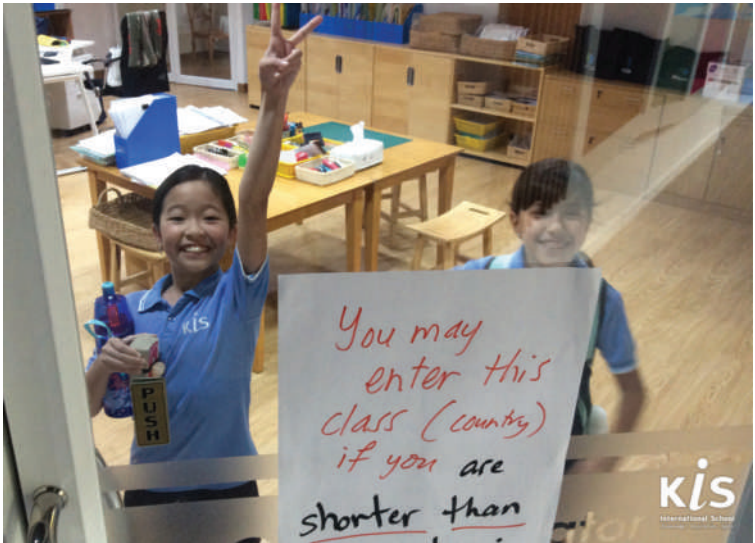
... continued on p. 29

Simulating Human Migration at KIS

By Linda Belonje

Students in Grade 5 at KIS International School in Bangkok, Thailand, did a unit on migration. They welcomed guest speakers who were able to provide first-hand accounts representing different perspectives on migration, including one of KIS's teachers who was a child refugee from Vietnam, a representative of an NGO working with refugees, a KIS staff member who worked at a refugee camp, and a parent who has helped at an immigration detention center.

To gain a more in-depth personal understanding, the Grade 5 teachers developed a simulation in which the students were unexpectedly locked out of their classrooms one afternoon and told to find a new place to go. The catch: all available rooms had conditions of entry. In one, only those wearing glasses



were allowed to enter. In another, students had to speak a specific language to gain entry. Other rooms posted requirements related to students' religion or height.

Through the experience of seeking entry and being turned away, students were better able to empathize with the plight of refugees.

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ASV is redesigning the curriculum using the framework "Understanding by Design" and with a focus on transfer goals and cornerstone tasks (photo: ASV).

The Kindergarten Connection: Building Emotional Intelligence Together

By Nicole Neutzling

When people think of how well educated a person is, many typically think in terms of academics. How smart is the person? How well did they do on their standardized tests? Were they a member of the National Honor Society? As we move further into the 21st century, we are realizing that students' IQs and academic skills are only a part of what makes them successful.

Recent research indicates that "soft skills" such as emotional intelligence, creativity, and collaboration, are crucial factors in student success. In particular, emotional intelligence, or how well we handle ourselves and our relationships, turns out to be a huge predictor of a student's future success. No matter the socioeconomic status or cultural background of a student, if they are taught the skills needed to regulate their own emotions and understand the emotions of others, they end up more successful as adults.

The Uruguayan American School (UAS) community recognized the importance of building emotional intelligence and included it among the five competencies outlined in the UAS Learner Profile. But how do a teacher and a class take on the challenge of developing these important skills?

Neurologically speaking, our ability to regulate emotions resides in our prefrontal cortex, an area of the brain that is last to develop. The average upper-elementary student is still developing the neural connections needed to control her emotions, build strong relationships, and perform other executive functions. The growth of these neural connections is dependent on experiences; hence, the phrase "neurons that fire together wire together." With the concept of neuroplasticity in mind and the goal of creating empathy-inducing experiences, the Kindergarten Connection was born.

Grade 5 teamed up with Kindergarten in order to create frequent experiences in which students could demonstrate empathy and self-awareness, allowing them small "at the moment" success with their partners.

Each Thursday, the Grade 5 students head to the library and select books for themselves and also books likely to make a Kindergarten smile. On Friday mornings, the classes join and the older and younger students form reading partnerships. As the Grade 5 students read to their buddies, their mirror neurons constantly sense the younger students' emotions and respond to them. Have they chosen an appropriate book? Do



Emotional intelligence is a big predictor of a student's future success (UAS).

they have the attention of their buddy? How can they get the younger student to listen better?

In this way, Grade 5 students are challenged to understand their younger counterparts' interests and needs. They then adjust and adapt in an effort to build a stronger bond with their partners. By repeating these positive experiences and continually working to build a stronger relationship with younger students, Grade 5 students develop the connections in the brain necessary for emotional intelligence.

What have been the results of the Kindergarten connection?

Grade 5 students that typically shied away from reading have blossomed. They are better able to control the feelings of frustration that typically crept into their heads when reaching for a book. Instead, they appear more relaxed and focused on the fact that they are helping someone else learn. Second, students who are at times distracted or occasionally disruptive in class become more engaged through this process, finding comfort in the fact that someone else's needs take precedence over their own. Most Grade 5 students agree that our literacy sessions with kindergarteners are not easy, but every one of them has walked away with a sense of accomplishment, pride, and stronger neural connections for cognitive control.

"Kindergarteners make me remember what it was like to be small," one student mentioned as a huge grin spread across his face. "I have to think like they would, and it's really wonderful."

Kindergarten and Grade 5 plan to continue to expand their collaboration for the rest of the year. Next semester, the older students will design lessons and activities

based on topics in the curriculum that are common to both grades.

Good things come in small packages and sometimes the biggest lessons do too! ●

Nicole Neutzling is a Grade 5 teacher at the Uruguayan American School in Carrasco, Montevideo, Uruguay.

Migration

... continued from p. 27

gees and engage in reflection on the ways in which human migration affects communities, cultures, and individuals.

To conclude this Unit of Inquiry, students were asked to demonstrate their increased understanding through various forms of reflection. Some chose to write fictional diary entries from the perspective of refugees. One is featured below:

When night fell, I waited until my dad and the stranger fell asleep; I wanted to be alone and in a quiet place for some time. I looked up at the starry sky, it reminded me of how my mom used to cuddle me in my bedroom. The breeze swept onto my face, and suddenly, I saw my mom with my sister waving at me. I ran to them crying with my arms opened for a hug, but a force pulled me back. My sister and mom were going further away from me when I suddenly woke up to see my dad's face. I looked around for a sign of mom and sister, but they were nowhere to be seen. The little hope that was in me was drained out immediately. Sadness overcame me and I stood up; we were on land with nothing but wood on the floor. I knew we had arrived. –Fang Fang. ●

ASM Unveils New Auditorium

The ultramodern, 500-seat facility will showcase student talent

By Sara Griffith

The American School of Milan (ASM) kicked off the 2019–20 academic year by inaugurating a brand-new auditorium, an addition to the school's already modern, state-of-the-art facilities. The auditorium is fully equipped for a wide range of events with the latest presentation technology and recording capabilities. Special features include acoustic paneling, a full digital touch-control booth, specialized scenic lights, a cluster sound system and, on the roof, solar panels. Music and theater classes have begun using the new space for daily instruction, and the auditorium has already hosted several large gatherings.

The start-of-school orientation and grade-level assemblies produced a collective "wow" as students and parents were welcomed

into the new space. New ASM Director Wayne Rutherford proudly stated, "We look forward to the auditorium hosting everything from student performances, talent shows, class and parent meetings to choir, band, and orchestra concerts, not to mention the fabulous ASM musicals and our annual graduation ceremony."

The auditorium will welcome two major events during the first semester: International Child Protection Advisors' Child Safeguarding Workshop for international educators, which ASM hosted in November, and ASM's first international Model United Nations Conference to be held 5–7 December. The latter will include over 200 high school students from 15 schools in nine countries discussing topics ranging from the proliferation of

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ASM's new auditorium was completed on time and to budget (photo: ASM).

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International Space Station

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in partnership with colleagues from other countries at the International Space Station.

Ricky directly addressed and interacted with students and faculty from all sections of the school, from Early Childhood to Upper School, giving students an unforgettable learning opportunity by taking part in classes ranging from IB biology and mathematics to elementary school science.

Ricky and Eloise also headlined two events aimed at adults, pri-

marily ISP parents and other invited guests, presented by aspiring senior-year female scientists. To huge excitement, Ricky also presented to over 300 young students who were invited from local Czech schools. At one event, Eloise spoke passionately about her husband following his dream. She said: "Try to find things that you are passionate about, and don't put limits on yourself because something is hard. It's a phrase we overuse, but just follow your dreams."

Ricky and Eloise's visit to ISP was directly related to ISP's mission, to Inspire, Engage, and Empower, and will live on in the school's collective memory.

Arnie Bieber, Director of ISP (and

one-time Director of the International School of Bucharest, Romania, who once hired Ricky Arnold as a science teacher) said, "To say that Ricky and Eloise's visit was inspiring is an understatement. How often does a school community get to spend an entire week with someone who has flown on the Space Shuttle and the International Space Station? My personal highlights from Ricky and Eloise's visit were, firstly, the wonderful 'rock-star' welcome they received from our entire community on their first day here. Secondly, it was magnificent to see the joy and excitement of the invited students from local Czech schools who came complete with their own rockets!" ●



Ricky and Eloise Arnold received a rock-star welcome at ISP and enjoyed meeting students and parents from local Czech schools (photo: ISP).

NASA Astronaut Visits Cairo American College



From left to right: Omar Samra, Clayton Donhauser, Mohammed Sallam, Jay Gramolini and Ricky Arnold, who most recently served as Flight Engineer on the International Space Station for Expeditions 55 and 56 (photo: CAC).

By Diana Shanaa

Through the second week of September, Cairo American College (CAC) had an incredibly interesting guest visit with NASA astronaut and international educator, Richard (Ricky) Arnold II.

The Maryland native began his professional life working in marine sciences and later on as a biology teacher in his home state, before moving on to international schools. Ricky taught in countries such as Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia. Later on, in 2004, he was selected as Mission Educator Specialist for NASA, where he completed his candidate training. Arnold worked on various technical assignments until he was assigned to the STS-119 spaceflight, where he accumulated 12 days, 19 hours, and 29 minutes in space. The mission objective for the Space Shuttle Discovery was

to deliver the final pair of power-generating solar array wings and a truss element for the International Space Station. While onboard station, he conducted 12 hours and 34 minutes of spacewalks. Arnold most recently served as Flight Engineer on the International Space Station for Expeditions 55 and 56.

During his three-day visit to CAC, Arnold met with high school, middle school, and elementary school students, talking with them about space exploration and about his personal and professional experience as an astronaut. Students were thrilled to meet him and had countless questions for him during the three assemblies. Needless to say, being an international educator for years before embarking on his career as an astronaut gave Ricky great insight and compassion when answering students' questions.

On his last day at CAC, Arnold took part in an open panel discussion with renowned Egyptian figures Omar Samra and Mohammed Sallam, both of whom are partners in Make Space Yours, a student-based competition that aims to inspire and encourage young students to nourish their interest in space and to consider it a valid career option. The panel discussion was brilliantly moderated by another international educator, Jay Gramolini, and also featured on the panel a CAC senior, Clayton Donhauser. Clayton has always had a great interest in space and was thrilled to have been chosen to represent CAC on the panel.

It was an eventful week for CAC faculty and students, and everyone is thankful for this opportunity that offered our students and panel attendees a very enlightening experience and will hopefully serve as an inspiration for all to pursue their dreams. ●

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Investigating Banned Books and Censorship through PBL

By Natalie Gilbert

What role does censorship play in society? At the American International School of Lagos (AISL) in Nigeria, students faced this driving question and posed dozens of their own "Need to Know" queries: What is censorship? What does censorship look like in different countries? Why do people feel the need to censor things? How are books, music, and movies censored? How does the media censor the news? What does our school censor? Who is most affected by censorship? How does the government determine what is censored? These questions laid the foundation for deeper exploration and investigation that carried the project from start to finish.

Since 2016, the American International School of Lagos (AISL) has been working towards integrating project-based learning (PBL) at all grade levels. The end-of-year

showcase features at least one project per grade, where students present final products to an audience of peers, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members.

This year, AISL developed a combined Grade 9 English and social studies class taught through a PBL lens. Early on, one student declared, "Having English and social studies as a combined class is new for many students, but structuring the class this way has made learning both more interesting and helps connect concepts. Rather than learning standard English reading/writing techniques, or history in social studies, the combined class incorporates both into a project that requires students to use different skills."

The first project was inspired by the American Library Association's annual Banned Books Week and was further situated within the larger global context of censor-



Students in AISL's combined Grade 9 English and social studies class explored what censorship is, and what it looks like in various contexts (photo: AISL).

ship. During the project launch, students rotated through four stations, each containing two pieces of literature, such as *Little Abigail* and *the Beautiful Pony* by Shel Silverstein, *Voyage* by Carmen Tafolla, *ID Card* by Mahmoud Darwish, and *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros.

With only the clue that each piece shared a common thread, students attempted to figure it out. Working through each station, students conversed about theme, symbolism, characterization, and plot. They presented their solutions to the class, making many educated interpretations.

However, the one similarity that tied the literature together was that they have all been challenged or banned by schools, parents, and/or libraries. That sparked the first conversation about censorship and led to the students' "Need to Know" questions.

As the PBL approach focuses on student-directed learning, students were not told what to think about banned books. Instead, they were encouraged to form their own opinions by studying the widely challenged and frequently banned classic, *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. While reading, students analyzed the novel for evidence of why it would have been challenged, which led to important discussions about racism, sexism, misogyny, and oppressive language. They also learned about the historical context of the book's setting.

Students drew their own conclusions about whether or not the book should be banned and if there is educational value in reading outdated and/or controversial literature. Based on their individual opinions, they were divided into groups to prepare for a classroom debate, arguing for or against banning the book at AISL. Judging these debates were our school librarian, Sarah Bakulski and high school Principal, David Schult.

Concurrently, students explored other examples of challenged and banned books in the United States, as well as other instances of censorship around the world. Based on their own interests, they each chose one aspect of censorship that exists in society, and researched the ways in which it affects citizens, the government, the economy, or the media. Their selected topics varied from censorship in North Korea, China, Eritrea, Vietnam, and the United States, to censorship at major media outlets such as Fox News and censorship on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. After investigating, students formed their opinions and argued for or against various types of censorship in their individual persuasive essays.

Throughout the project, students learned skills that would prepare them to successfully create their final products: literary analysis, persuasive essay writing, MLA format, research strategies, as well as debate and public speaking skills. Students were regularly provided with formative feedback and supported throughout the process, as it was their first experience with full-time PBL. One student, Oriane, enjoyed the project because, "Despite being given guidelines, we were given control and space to think for ourselves."

At the end of the project, another student, Nandita, reflected, "I personally enjoyed project-based learning. It allows students to apply knowledge learned in class but use it creatively and in a way that shows different perspectives on a topic. It involves creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication; these are skills that can be applied in most other classes/fields of work." ●

Natalie Gilbert teaches English and social studies at the American International School of Lagos.

USM's New Auditorium

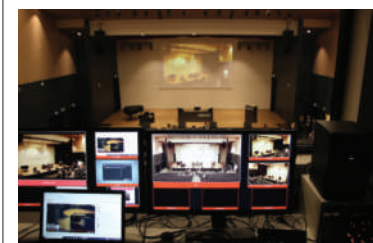
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weapons in East Asia to the right to privacy in the digital age.

On 4 September, ASM held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to inaugurate the facility. Present and past members of the Board of Trustees, ASM leadership team, the project and construction teams, and representatives from the municipality as well as the U.S. Consulate were on hand for the opening ceremony. These honored guests, along with members of the ASM administration, financing banks and many others, were profusely thanked by ASM Board of Trustee President, Mrs. Alessandra Piccinino, for helping to complete the project on time and to budget.

She remarked, "The auditorium, a final component of ASM's Strategic Expansion/Facilities Plan, is designed to increase the quality of our music and art programs, provide a dedicated space for our 50+ school events each year and continue to offer more opportunities for our talented students and performers." ●

Sara Griffith, Director of Admissions and Advancement at the American School of Milan.



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Internationally Hired Teacher “Term Limits”

By Jeff Trudeau

One of the greatest resources we have at the American International School of Monrovia (AISM) is a stable teaching team that worked with both me and our community through the EBV Health Crisis of 2014.

This turning point forced us to delay the start of the school year; AISM became the only international school on the August–June calendar to ever conduct a February school opening. It could have only been accomplished through creative problem solving and having the firm and unwavering support of our school’s parent community, alongside a committed and dedicated faculty.

This was a challenging time. The Board of Trustees and I had to take actions and communicate tough ideas in ways that were both considerate of and appropriate to our school community. It was hard for the faculty as well, who were needed in place to launch our program mid-year.

As I started looking for my next administrative opportunities and networked with colleagues in the same job pool, we have identified an area to which we all have given a good deal of thought: internationally hired teacher term limits.

I was intrigued to rediscover that during my years as a teacher

in Latin American, two of the five schools I worked for had a policy whereby “Full Overseas-Hired benefits apply through year [X], with loss of flights and housing in year [Y] and [Z] respectively.”

Understanding that both our mid-year opening in 2014 at AISM and our current students’ academic success reaffirm that anything is possible and achievable for all students when they have appropriate support, and recognizing that students’ primary source of support is a stable faculty, I wondered about the judiciousness of such term limits.

How widespread, exactly, was this practice? I did some further investigating by asking my colleagues from the Academy of International School Heads (AISH) if their respective schools had a policy whereby overseas hires lose benefits over time.

Of the more than 50 responses received, 70.4 percent of schools queried did not have this policy, while 29.6 percent did. A range of regions were represented, including Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East.

To those school leaders having responded to the survey, I sent five follow-up questions in order to identify reasons why such a policy exists. Generally, it appears that the more stable a country or situation is, the more likely a school operat-

Schools by Region With and Without Overseas-Hire Term Limits		
REGION	NO LIMIT	LIMIT
Middle East	3	0
South America	5	6
Asia	20	1
Africa	6	3
Europe	3	4

ing in that country is to have such a policy in place. In this regard, it became clear to me that, were AISM to adopt and enforce such a policy, we would effectively disincentivize our faculty from retiring and remaining at our school given our present context in Monrovia, Liberia.

Responses from the 29.6 percent of schools queried that have this type of policy in place are summarized below. Most of the reasons provided relate to host country “expat” status. Of those that implement this policy, the primary reason was:

The country of [X] will only allow foreign hire visas for [X] number of years before tax and other benefits are lost.

Other reasons were as follows:

- Generally, businesspeople on boards tell us that their overseas hire status and benefit pack-

age end after a certain number of years, after which a hire can stay and work for less or relocate elsewhere with the same company. That period is generally 4–10 years.

- Many teachers, particularly in nice settings with a high quality of life, come as international teachers, marry, settle down, buy a house, start to feel a part of the community and go “local.” Boards sometimes feel that these teachers who never leave are no longer “overseas hires”—either in reality or in their thinking—after about 10 years or so. But changing that is usually prompted by financial pressures, as the fallout among the teachers can be substantial.
- A sure sign by which teachers signal that they are no longer from overseas is when they stop going “home,” buy a home locally, speak the local language increas-

ingly, and give no evidence of having any intention to retire to their home country.

- Many international schools whose student body is made up mostly of children from the local population (as opposed to expat children) are really “independent,” not so much “international” schools. When that occurs, boards become very local themselves and are reluctant to spend money to bring in overseas-hire teachers due to concerns over tuition.

In our context, we are very fortunate not to have such a teacher term limit policy in place. In other contexts—throughout Latin America, in particular—this type of policy seems to be the norm.

If you would like to read all responses to this survey, which make up five pages highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of an internationally hired teacher term limit policy, email me directly at jefftrudeau@aismonrovia.com. The results and comments have been of more interest than I initially thought, with regional associations asking for a further breakdown. ●

Jeff Trudeau has worked in international education since 1993, as a teacher, principal, and director. He is in his eighth and final year as Director of the American International School of Monrovia.



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HBCUs Welcome International Students

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In 2016, the vice chancellor of a two-year college in Nigeria, who was an alumna of Prairie View A&M University in Texas, asked Prairie View's president, George Wright, to come to Nigeria and speak at graduation. Wright used the visit as an opportunity to recruit, taking a handful of Prairie View school leaders with him.

Prairie View has since had a surge in Nigerian student enrollment, from 47 in the fall of 2015 to 106 in the fall of 2017, according to Eveadean Myers, executive director for international programs. The university's overall international enrollment grew from 184 students to 279 from fall 2013 to fall 2017.

The university is establishing partnerships to continue to boost the number of students from abroad, according to Myers.

In March, Prairie View signed a memorandum of understanding with Equatorial Guinea's Ministry of Mines and Hydrocarbons, under which the ministry will help Prairie View recruit and enroll students from the small west African nation.

Prairie View has about 8,000 undergraduate students, more than half from low-income families; the vast majority are African Americans from Texas. Thanks to the international recruitment, "They are getting exposed to different cultures," said Evelyn McGinty, international student advisor at the university.

Fisk University in Nashville is recruiting in Nigeria, having hired a dean of global initiatives in 2017. About 3 percent of its undergraduates come from abroad. At Southern University in New Orleans,

only 1 percent of undergraduates are from overseas now, but the school is actively working to increase that number.

In 2018 and 2019, school leaders and students recruited in Australia and Israel. Central State University, in Wilberforce, Ohio, forged a relationship with the Bahamas Ministry of Education after its football team played a game in the Bahamas against another HBCU in 2014. "We always are trying to increase our enrollment numbers, like most universities," said Maria Potter, program coordinator for the university's Center of Global Education.

At Tennessee State, the administration started working on international enrollment in 2011. Today, its international students find a campus of about 500 urban acres, with hills at almost every turn on the walk from the campus center to the wellness center, or along the plots of land adorned with Greek letters to honor black fraternities and sororities. It's in a hub for African American higher education that can take you from a B.A. to an M.D.: Fisk University is across the street, and Meharry Medical College, a historically black institution for health professions, is a five-minute drive away.

Tennessee State is the youngest of the three, having opened in 1912. In 2012 it opened an office for international student enrollment and study abroad opportunities.

This initiative, too, had an element of serendipity. After completing her doctoral research on faculty and administrators of color, Winn started thinking about diversity more broadly.

"I wanted to see if there were other universities with offices operating at the intersection of diversity and international affairs," she said.

The school's interim president at the time, Portia H. Shields, was mentoring Winn, and gave her



Fahad Alharthi is a recipient of the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission scholarship, which covers his educational costs at Tennessee State University (photo: Delece Smith-Barrow/The Hechinger Report).

the green light to put together a central office focused on international affairs, including student enrollment and study-abroad opportunities.

Winn took a grass-roots approach. She would ask international students on campus, "What would it feel like to have more of your friends and family members come to the university?" And she would challenge them, asking them to urge two or three of their friends to come to TSU.

"Well, I didn't think that was going to happen, but it did," she said.

After having had great success at increasing its international student population, Tennessee State saw a big drop starting around the fall of 2016. The number of international students fell to 413 people, just 5 percent of undergraduate and graduate enrollment in the fall of 2018. This mirrored the trend in international student enrollment throughout the U.S. Between 2011-12 and 2015-16, new international student enrollment grew steadily, from 228,467 students to 300,743. Since fall 2016, it's been on the decline, and in 2017-18 it dropped to 271,738.

Some higher education leaders attribute that recent decline to Washington politics. In 2017, President Donald Trump issued several executive orders banning most citizens from Syria, Iran, Libya, Yemen and several other countries

from traveling to the U.S. Although the bans were challenged by lawsuits, the Supreme Court upheld the final one.

"Trump and his administration have caused a lot of issues for universities across the country," Winn said. "We're all suffering from the new administration's rules and possible rules."

On campus, HBCUs strive to make international students feel comfortable. They usually host a special orientation and connect the students to faculty and staff members who can help them navigate life on and off campus.

At Tennessee State, the Office of International Affairs is the starting point for students from abroad. Clocks on the office wall show the time of day in cities thousands of miles away, such as Medellín, Colombia; Lagos, Nigeria; and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In a horizontal display case, there's a "Greetings from Ghana" oval plaque decorated in Kente cloth, alongside a feathered headdress, a box decorated in Asian symbols and other international artifacts.

But some students say not all of these changes are conducive for a campus cultural melting pot.

"Diversity is great," said RoNae Evette Marshall, who graduated from Tennessee State in May, but "sometimes it's hard for the staff to take care of home first."

Marshall, a 22-year-old African American from Kansas City, Missouri, entered TSU in 2015 at the height of its international student surge. The Office of International Affairs, she said, can be more helpful to international students than domestic students who want to study abroad, even though its mission is to serve all.

She also said the number of white students on campus has students questioning the HBCU character of the institution. The university is 12 percent white.

"It's like almost gentrifying the campus a little bit," Marshall said.

For the students from other countries, the adjustment is to American culture overall. Some cultural notions have surprised them.

Chukwuebuka "Ebuka" Ajagu, a 22-year-old Nigerian native, joined the African Student Association at TSU, and has attended club events where black Americans and black Africans hold discussions about the differences and similarities in their cultures. At one, Ajagu said students asked if African people run around naked.

"How is this a college and people are still thinking like this?" he later asked.

Upon arrival, one challenge for him was understanding American slang. For example, "Fool" can be a term of endearment, which he didn't immediately understand.

"The first problem I had was just easy communication," said Ajagu, a mechanical engineering major.

He believes the Office of International Affairs supports students as best it can but has limits.

"They don't actually do the integration, you know," Ajagu said. "I think that is left for us to figure out."

Tennessee State employees are also figuring it out.

A faculty member once told a Middle Eastern student to take off her hijab in class, not realizing the cultural significance of the headwear, Winn said. Another time, she said, a group of Latino students came to visit her office, and another TSU employee assumed the women were maids.

And, she said, some in the TSU community have asked her, "Why are you trying to change an HBCU? We need to help our people."

But she stands firm in her belief that a global campus is what's best for students.

"This is helping our people," she said. "Internationalizing our campus is helping the domestic black students more than anything."

Alharthi, now 24 and studying respiratory therapy, said people sometimes ask him why he chose a predominantly black university, but for him, race wasn't top of mind in the college admissions process.

"In our culture, and our religion too, we say there's no difference between colors," Alharthi, who's Muslim, said. "We are all human."

His university friends are from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Somalia and other countries, and many are black Americans.

Alharthi said his sociology class was all black, and he couldn't have been more comfortable.

"The way they treat me, I loved it," he said. ●

Delece Smith-Barrow is a senior editor for higher education at The Hechinger Report.

This story about HBCU international students was produced by The Hechinger Report, a nonprofit, independent news organization focused on inequality and innovation in education.

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Creating Offices of Educational Research in International Schools

By Steven Carber
and Paul Magnuson

Since 2008, Leysin American School (LAS) has hosted Endicott College's Master of Education (M.Ed) in International Education programs during the month of July. Over the past few years, the M.Ed program has begun to interact with LAS's Office of Educational Research (LASER), including the participation of two faculty members in the LASER Visiting Scholar Program during the regular school year. While other potential articulations between LASER and the Endicott master's program remain under construction, the authors of this text recognized through their collaboration the following key points, worth sharing with the wider international school community. First, educational research centers of this sort are of great benefit to international schools, including to their professional development. Second, more schools in our global community need offices of educational research in order to support educators seeking to implement graduate-level or personal research projects.

On the first point, the upside to an educational research center is significant, yet the expense is not. One can argue that keeping professional development largely in-house is less expensive than the registrations and travel costs

of off-site conferences. Further, we know from literature (Dufour, R., & Dufour, R. 2016, among others) that effective professional development shares attributes easily supported by work in-house. Good professional development is ongoing, collaborative, autonomous, and classroom-situated—in other words, best done right at home.

The core of LASER is professional development for the school's own teachers. The bulk of the school's professional development is in-house, managed by the office of educational research in a nonhierarchical structure that encourages teacher autonomy and self-direction. Required programs for a faculty member's first two years at LAS include participation in a self-regulated professional learning community and enrollment in Teaching ESL Students in Mainstream Classes (TESMC). Additionally, and optionally, a number of LAS faculty members have availed themselves of the on-site Endicott Master of Education programs.

Instructors in the M.Ed program are constantly looking for ways to make learning real, moving tasks from the perfunctory assignment completed to satisfy requirements, to genuine, applied work that will enrich M.Ed students' practice and help their K–12 learners. This points to how an educational research office or educational research officer at any international school, not just

LAS, could help teachers generate ideas and research questions that are of current significance to their setting. For example, the ongoing instructional interest at LAS in leveraging notions of "scrum" and "agile," still found mostly in the IT world, would be a rich area for study at the early graduate school level. A project exploring agility in the K–12 classroom might be far preferable to yet again comparing, say, cooperative learning to whole-group instruction.

Students in the international education master's specializations write a quantitative research proposal for one research methods class and a qualitative or mixed-methods proposal in another course. In order to transform these proposals into actual implemented projects during the school year, on-site support (above and beyond an instructor emailing from another continent) would be indispensable. If educational research could be conducted with on-campus assistance, with even minimal coordination with the university programs, then graduate students' hard work would stand to be of greater benefit to schools, while providing real context for the student.

Localized offices of educational research will also be able to respond to trends such as the new European data privacy laws, which will directly impact international schools and individuals seeking to

implement educational research projects. How many educators are sufficiently aware of data privacy laws in order to correctly implement research in schools, and how many give up at some point in the permission phase because the barrier in making sure everything is in order seems too high?

A partnership between universities (and/or university instructors) and a localized office of research can help overcome and respond to these perceived barriers. An internal review process and subsequent support process might become a shared collaborative effort between the school and the higher education institute, if applicable. And what about projects that arise without the involvement of a college or university?

Schools that espouse inquiry-based instruction or that seek to become what Peter Senge (2006) has called a "learning organization" should be constantly asking and investigating questions about how students best learn and how teachers best teach, right? Should such school-based projects be conducted without some on-site person who has studied the ins-and-outs of research and of data privacy, who can then assist and encourage practitioners?

Schools have IB coordinators and curriculum coordinators. Now the time has come for educational research coordinators. This need

not be a full-time position, certainly not in every school—at least not at first. Perhaps readers would like to bring up the idea in future planning meetings, board meetings, or conference presentations. With patience and persistence, the existence of school-based educational research offices might soon become a hallmark of quality international schools.

Some programs that LAS Educational Research has learned from and worked with in the past include the Centre for Inspiring Minds at ACS and the Tony Little Center for Innovation and Research in Learning at Eton College. There are certainly many more. LAS and the Endicott College international faculty from Madrid are happy to assist in taking the initial steps toward the creation of your own educational research center. ●

Steven Carber, Endicott College, USA & Spain.

Paul Magnuson, Leysin American School, Switzerland.

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Joyful Language: Bringing Passion and Play Into the Language Classroom

By Lori Langer de Ramirez

"It is astonishing how much enjoyment one can get out of a language that one understands imperfectly."

—Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve

Most of us got into teaching pursuing a passion—for our subject matter, for kids, or just for education. Suffice it to say, we don't come to the teaching profession for the fame, the glamour, or the money. Those of us who teach language do it because it gives us joy to see our students thrive and grow to love the languages and cultures that we teach. Many people who are very successful at their professions claim they have the best job in the world, or that because they love their work so much, they never really "work" at all. Why, then, should it be any different with the "work" of learning languages?

In his research into second language acquisition, linguist Steven Krashen describes what he calls the Affective Filter Hypothesis. In this theory, Krashen posits that affective variables (things like motivation, anxiety, and self-esteem)



can prevent input from reaching the "language acquisition device." He believes that a "filter," or block, can stand in the way of successful language learning.

Krashen has researched and documented what language teachers—and language learners—know to be true intuitively. As learners, when we feel stressed, unsafe, or distracted, it is harder for input to enter our brains. For our students, this has major implications in their journey towards language proficiency. Especially for adolescents

or stressed-out college-bound high schoolers, their affective filters could potentially be set at high, which means that the most well-designed lessons, with great activities and solid pedagogy behind them, won't get through as effectively as we might hope.

Conversely, we all know that we work hard at things that interest us. Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi coined the term "flow," meaning "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; Content is copyright protected and provided for personal use only - not for reproduction or retransmission.

the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it." Those of us who get carried away with a project, become deeply engrossed in reading, or lose track of time while creating a piece of artwork, know the experience of flow.

When we are engaged in something, we tend to seek out extra exposure, more contact, and more time on task. In learning languages, it is this low affective filter, engagement, and flow that make for joyful language learning. How can we make sure that our language classrooms are spaces in which students can find this joy, absorb it, and carry it with them long after they leave our schools?

Joyful language learning is well worth our attention as teachers and curators of language curricula, pedagogies, and classroom spaces. Since the language teacher's affect is often just as important as the students', we can do a lot to set the tone in our classrooms and spark that joy that is so frequently just under the surface of that surly teen or kid with senioritis. Psychologist and parent educator Haim Ginott states, "As a teacher I possess tremendous power to

make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or de-humanized." A joyful teacher can make more truly joyful—and effective—language learning.

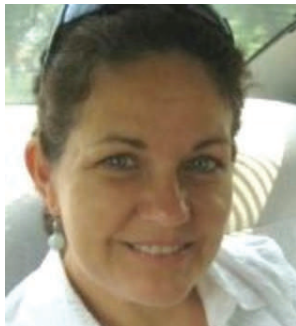
Since language learning is a life-long endeavor, it is imperative that students not just learn grammar and vocabulary during their brief time with us, but that they develop a passion for the languages and cultures we teach that extends into their next class, college, and their personal lives beyond.

In my experience teaching languages for over 25 years, I have found some ways that have proven effective with my students. As is always the case, each child, school, and teacher is different, so I invite you to find the techniques that work in your unique context. Below are several ideas that have brought my students and me joy, along with links to resources and materials to continue exploring the ones that bring you joy as well.

... continued on p. 37

Appointments

Due to surging demand and our own editorial constraints, please note that only head of school- and administrative-level appointments are listed here. All other international school staff appointments will be featured online; for more appointment news, and to share your own, please visit <http://www.tieonline.com/appointments.cfm>



Myna Anderson is the new Director of Banjul American International School. She has taught, collaborated, and led in excellent schools in Myanmar, Uzbekistan, Oman, Sudan, Nepal, Zimbabwe, Turkey and Pakistan.



Natalie Barboza has accepted the Director position at QSI's school in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She has served as an administrator since 2015 and has worked in the U.S., China, and Trinidad & Tobago.



David Boehm is now Director of Technology at The British School in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He comes to the role after 8 years at the Inwood Academy for Leadership, where he served as Director of Finance & Operations.



Amanda DeCardy is now serving as the Director of Level 5, the creativity and innovation hub at International Schools Services, China. She has extensive experience working with international schools as a data consultant.



Christy Kerr has accepted the role of Academic Coordinator at QSI International School of Zhuhai. She has 13 years of teaching experience in the U.S., China, and Taiwan.



Tim Macmillan is now Academic Coordinator at QSI's school in Yerevan, Armenia. He has been employed with QSI since 2007 at schools in China, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Slovenia.



Shary Marshall has been appointed Deputy Head of School at Bavarian International School gAG in Haimhausen and Munich, Germany. Previously, she served at Walworth Barbour American International School.



Jennifer Osborne has accepted the Academic Coordinator position at QSI International School of Haiphong, in Vietnam. She has served in Korea, Japan, Indonesia, and the U.S.



Chantelle Parsons has been appointed PYP Coordinator at Beijing City International School after teaching Grade 5 for three years at the school. She previously worked in an IB setting in Kiev teaching Grades 2-4.



Holly Reardon is the new Executive Director of Learning at International Community School Addis in Ethiopia. Holly joins ICS this year from the International School of Eastern Seaboard in Thailand.



Barnaby Sandow has been appointed Head of School at ACS International School Cobham in Surrey, U.K. Previously, Mr Sandow was Principal at Jerudong International School in Brunei.



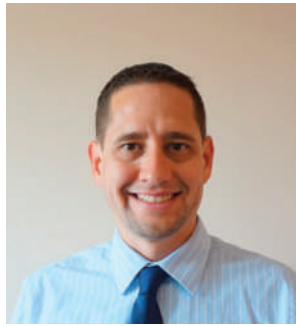
Ann Wardwell joins Hong Kong International School as its Chief Advancement Officer. Ann comes to HKIS from The Fay School in Southborough, MA, USA, where she served as Director of Advancement.



Mike Warren has accepted the Director of Instruction position at QSI's school in Shenzhen, China. He has worked for QSI as a teacher and administrator since 2015 in Azerbaijan and China.



Craig Williamson has been appointed Head of School at ABA in Oman. Currently, he is the Head of School at the International School of Riga in Latvia. He has held various other teaching and administrative roles over the past 18 years.



Mike Wood is now Academic Coordinator at QSI's school in Tirana, Albania. This is his first position in administration after working in China, Albania, and Hungary.



Mark Exton is now serving as High School Principal at Lincoln Community School, Accra, Ghana. He joined LCS in July 2019 from Rabat, Morocco where he served as Secondary Principal and Deputy Head of School.



Jitka Stiles is now serving as Head of Admissions at Lincoln Community School, Accra, Ghana. She was previously at the Canadian International School, Czech Republic, where she served as school principal, K-12.



David Gray was appointed Principal of Brummana High School in Lebanon at the beginning of 2019. Previously, David had been Principal at Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools in Scotland between 2000 - 2018.

We at TIE encourage heads, teachers, counselors, students, and other staff to submit stories on any topic relevant to the international education community. Send us your school news—write-ups about your big events, your achievements, your vision—along with articles and opinion pieces on curriculum and instructional strategies, professional development, counseling, community involvement initiatives, student projects, or other related topics. **Format:** submit your work as a Microsoft Word file by email to editor@tieonline.com or mhillley@tieonline.com. Maximum word count is 800.

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In Memoriam: Dr. Stefanos Gialamas



From the ACS Athens website:

“We, the ACS Athens family, are deeply saddened by the loss of our beloved President, Stefanos Gialamas, who died unexpectedly on October 18, 2019, while preparing for a keynote speech at the Alliance for International Education conference, where the launching of the International School Journal was also scheduled.

Stefanos Gialamas left behind an exemplary educational legacy. His strong belief that education is just as much about cultivating character as it is about gaining knowledge and skill, and should result in the highest form of giving back to society, was admirable. His vision will remain etched in our minds and hearts as we remember him with love and respect.

Stefanos Gialamas' inspiring leadership and love of children and of those less fortunate have marked his time at ACS Athens. He has touched many with his kindness and contributions. His continuous pursuit of excellence and personable approach provided mentorship to many individuals across the globe. His infectious laugh and warmth touched the hearts of people of all ages. The gap he has left in our hearts is momentous.

The leadership of ACS Athens is committed to the vision that was jointly created under his leadership and though heartbroken, we know that the best way to honor him is to continue this work.

Rest In Peace, beloved President Gialamas. ”

Dr. Stefanos Gialamas was President of the American Community Schools of Athens, Greece. He passed away in his sleep on 18 October 2019, prior to his keynote speech at the Alliance for International Education (AIE) Conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

Dr. Gialamas held a BS, an MA, and a Ph.D. in Mathematics (Knot Theory). Prior to his arrival at ACS in 2005, he served as the Provost of the American College of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Throughout his career, Dr. Gialamas served as University Professor, Department Chair, Dean, and Provost. He taught graduate and undergraduate mathematics, computer, management, and leadership courses at universities in Kansas, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Greece.

His professional work included research in leadership, faculty development, innovative approaches in teaching and learning, Knot Theory, mathematics and arts, the history and philosophy of mathematics, and mathematics education. He published more than 100 articles in both English and Greek languages, three books, a chapter book, and many other manuals.

“A visionary of education and a lifelong learner, Stefanos Gialamas believed in serving humanity and was a mentor to many individuals that came across his path. He will always be remembered for his inspiring and exemplary leadership, for his love of children and of those in need, and for his innovative approach to education; but most importantly for his deep belief that education must result in the highest form of giving and demonstrating kindness to others.”

The Often-Forgotten Emotional Aspect of Second Language Learning

By Bonnie Billak

Successful ESL teaching involves much more than simply teaching vocabulary and grammar. There are also strong emotional factors that must be addressed in order to ensure student success. Since these factors are often overlooked, lesson planning should state both the academic material to be taught as well as the path to be taken to develop these important emotional factors during the lesson at hand.

First, it's imperative that you get to know your students to identify their personal strengths—that is, their interests and the areas in which they feel strong. By identifying these strengths, you can find each person's power zone. Connecting your English lessons with the student's power zone engages students and leaves them feeling that the English lesson has personal meaning.

Research studies have shown that the more we use our individual strengths in our work and/or learning, the happier and more productive we become. When we feel more secure, fear and insecurity regarding learning disappear, resulting in greater risk taking. This, in turn, increases the possibility of success as language learners.

Secondly, take care to focus on what students are doing correctly rather than on what they are doing incorrectly. No one enjoys having their shortcomings or mistakes highlighted; students in distress will shut down, not listen to what you are saying, limit risk taking, and may even give up on trying. Instead, flip through the student's notebook and show pieces of work that were well done, taking into consideration his or her English proficiency level. Explain to the student why you chose those pieces of work and how the skills used to produce that work can be used as building blocks for the new and more difficult challenge at hand. The student will find this quite motivating and feel proud, thus generating a sense of power to face the new work.

Lastly, nurture your students' abilities to work as a team. Make sure that they understand the class is like a team in which every member has individual strengths to contribute. Place emphasis on creating an environment in which students feel safe to take risks. Most importantly, make sure they understand that you have zero tolerance for teasing or attacks on one another's efforts in English. Also, in this day and age, it's very important to teach ways to deal



Bonnie Billak is an EAL Specialist at the International School Nido de Aguilas in Santiago, Chile. She also does consulting work related to the field of ESL teaching and program design and/or evaluation.

with stress and anger so that the classroom environment will be safe for all.

Although it is generally considered that academic expertise and motivation are key to language acquisition, these factors alone will not ensure successful language learning. An emotional foundation must be created and continuously nurtured for maximum success. In most cases, this can be accomplished by means of careful lesson planning during the first few weeks of school and further developed throughout the course. ●

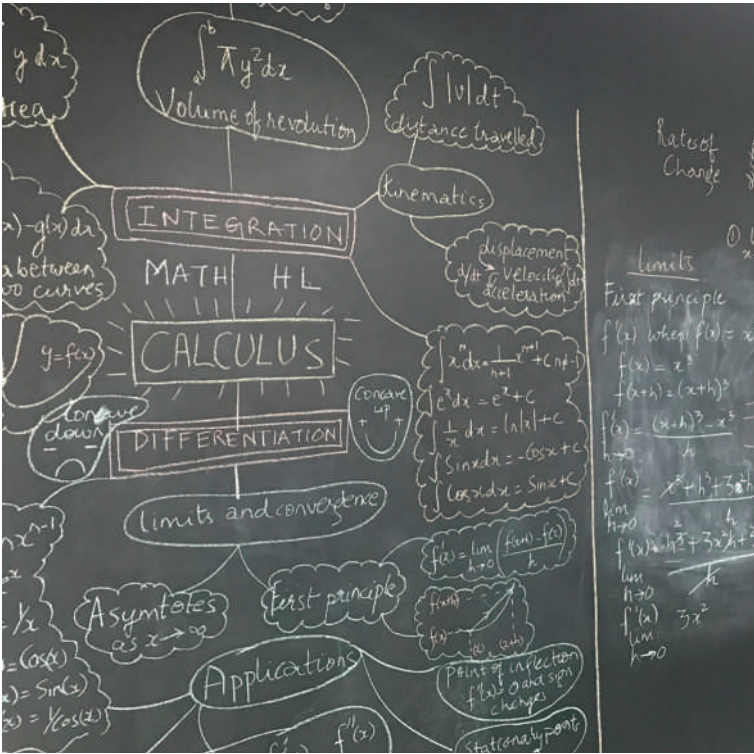


Students at Mont'Kiara International School of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, came out in force to join their peers around the world in demanding climate action in September (photo: M'KIS).

The Art of Visible Thinking

By Shwetangna Chakrabarty

Education is retooling for the fourth industrial revolution. Teaching approaches have to adapt to this change, making learning an effortless, seamless, organic process that helps the learner to integrate the digital revolution. What all this means for educators is that we need to reduce our dependency on content and explore the possibilities around enhancing metacognition. After all, machines can learn content better than humans can, but humans can make better connections and have the ability to think creatively and critically. As such, there is a huge push to implement metacognition into everyday teaching and learning. Metacognition, or exploring one's own thought process, can be achieved through visible thinking. Visible thinking helps students to reflect on how they learn in order to make deeper connections with their own thought process. In a nutshell, visible thinking routines help learners to reflect on existing knowledge and make new connections with their own intel-



Twenty-first-century learning is the art of visible thinking, according to the author (photo: Chakrabarty).

lectual development. This translates into students being able to challenge existing theories and practices, deconstruct learning to construct meaning, derive meaning from abstraction, agree to disagree, and finally, prepare to face the digital renaissance period.

As the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) coordinator, one of my leadership strategies is to integrate visible thinking seamlessly into teaching and learning. Apart from teachers discussing visible thinking in their classrooms and making posters, there is a need for innovative ways to make thinking more accessible to students. Here are a few strategies that I have put in place as a teacher and a coordinator.

A thinking gallery in every classroom

Allow students to express their understanding of an abstract concept on a wall, both physical (as seen in the pictures) or digital, thanks to tools such as Padlet. A thinking gallery project is very simplistic in its ideation but key in making thinking visible. All secondary students (Grades 6–12) are given a brief description of this project and asked to create a thinking gallery or wall in their classrooms while they are introduced to difficult concepts. The artwork created by students represents their interpretation of the concepts or how they know what they know. This project was done over a period of time by all grades; now each classroom has a thinking gallery that not only informs us teachers about the way the modern learner thinks and constructs knowledge but also provides a stimulus for further classroom discussions. Surprisingly, this has opened up many cross-disciplinary discussions in secondary classrooms. Many students also learn by building on what they glean from the gallery.

opment opportunity for many teachers new to international teaching. Suggestions included asking beguiling questions that can be used as starters, plenaries, or exit tickets to trigger critical and creative thinking. Students should also be encouraged to think outside of the box by opposing each other's claims or creating counterclaims for open-ended questions. This discussion has not only equipped our teachers, it has also led to enriched discussions during collaborative meetings.



Case study: IB Theory of Knowledge project

In the spirit of international mindedness, students travel to various destinations as a part of their study tour, exploring curriculum links through these experiences. They get to experience new cultures, develop life skills, and learn new art forms they can bring back to school. Theory of Knowledge (ToK) is a mandatory subject for students taking the IBDP; it helps them to reflect on knowledge and make deeper connections into the origin of knowledge by asking them to reflect on how they know what they know. Students were asked to further explore visible thinking through a ToK project, where I set a task for students to showcase the Ways of Knowing (WoKs) with the art form they learned during their study tour. They created graffiti art to explain the different WoKs; this serves as a visual learning tool for all students in school and gives insight into how students perceive the subject. Their art forms now adorn the walls of the school campus in Dar es Salaam International School, Tanzania. Here are a few works that express students' thinking in relation to various abstract concepts.



Visible thinking in collaborative meetings

In another strategy, teachers share visible thinking ideas with one another during weekly collaborative meetings. This has led to many interesting discussions and has strengthened understanding of the concept of metacognition. This has been a very successful move towards peer learning and offers a solid professional devel-



Shwetangna Chakrabarty is now IBDP Coordinator/University Counselor/Business Management Teacher/IB Examiner at Guangzhou Nanfang International School in China.



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An Unlikely Partnership Between School Librarian and School Counselor



Graeme Boyd is Learning Resource Specialist and Anna Vierling is Primary School Counselor at Berlin Brandenburg International School (photo: Boyd).

By Graeme Boyd

The collaborative relationship between the school counselor and the school librarian has for the most part been vastly overlooked within international schools. Both these positions are pivotal for a successful learning environment but are often viewed as separate roles within their own departments.

In the Primary library department at Berlin Brandenburg International School we have been

working with the school counselor on a short monthly library session exploring central themes related to wellbeing, feelings, emotions, interpersonal skills, relationships with others, and attributes of the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile.

This exercise, our own form of "bibliotherapy," has been very well received by students, especially by newcomers to the school and those experiencing learning difficulties.

An example of this exercise might be centered on the theme of empathy. The counselor would inform the librarian of that week's chosen theme, or they would discuss it together. A clear objective could then be established—building empathy, for example, or the ability to identify another's feelings by their facial expression or body language.

The librarian would then choose a selection of books to highlight this theme, or use books recommended by the counselor. For example, *Early Education: Join in and Play* by Cheri Meiners; *Grade 1: Hooray For You!* by Marianne Richmond; *Grade 2: The Way I Act* by Steve Metzger; *Grade 3: Carla's Sandwich* by Debbie Herman; *Grades 4 and 5: Sorry!* by Trudy Ludwig.

The counselor would then physically visit the library, read a selected story, and then discuss with the students in groups key questions and overall themes, such as: Did you see anyone's face at recess that showed sadness, anger, frustration, worry, or shame? How did this make you feel? Can

you share an observed feeling that happened today? Did anyone notice? or care? How did you know? What can we do together?

At the end of the exercise, the librarian and the counselor offer their own personal opinions and conclude by asking students to take time to reflect and evaluate what they have learned during the exercise and to think ahead for the next month's theme.

The school counselor plays a unique role similar to that of the school librarian in that both are supportive roles, facilitating student learning, creativity, and imagination. The role is indirect, flexible, and relies on a different chemistry compared to the traditional teacher-student dynamic.

Perceptions about the work of school librarians and school counselors contrast sharply with reality. Both roles are increasingly mobile and require a ubiquitous presence throughout the school. The library should not be centralized but rather diffuse throughout classrooms and departments, whose reserves should be constantly refreshed and restocked according to the

climate, locale, and school profile. By collaborating with the librarian, the school counselor becomes a visible public face with whom students will hopefully connect.

Using the Library Management System (LMS), the librarian can tag keywords while cataloging to create a bibliography for easy reference. Hence any parent, student, or teacher should be able to search the LMS remotely or on-site using keywords such as empathy or loneliness or any of the Learner Profile attributes. This is very useful to complement the units of inquiry within the PYP, especially when it comes to fiction books. Part of the Librarian's role is to be familiar with the stock so that they know what themes occur in each book. Through effective cataloging this then becomes a permanent reference. ●

Graeme Boyd works at Berlin Brandenburg International School as the Learning Resource Specialist in Primary.

GOT PEDAGOGY?

Joyful Language

... continued from p. 33

- **Play:** Use floor maps to play geography Twister, or play Scrabble in the target language. Incorporate other toys and props to help support language use (<http://miscositas.com/play.html>).

- **Simulations:** Re-enact historical or cultural events like "El Grito," the Mexican call to independence, with students taking on the roles of historical figures (<http://miscositas.com/protest.html>).

- **Culture and celebrations:** Celebrate holidays such as Día de los Muertos with folktales, picture-books, food, music, and cultural comparisons between Halloween and the Day of the Dead (<http://miscositas.com/culture.html>).

- **Fantasy trips:** Travel around the world without leaving school grounds! Make and use play passports, learn about food and art traditions, listen to music and explore cultural products, practices, and perspectives by taking a virtual trip (<http://miscositas.com/fantasytrips.html>).

- **Folktales:** A good story can open doors to cultural explorations while providing students with the opportunity to play, act, and pretend. Use puppets, props, and costumes to re-enact folk-

tales, myths, and legends from the target culture (<http://miscositas.com/folktales.html>).

- **Social justice and action:** Explore cultural heroes like the Biblioburro, a man in Colombia who brings books to children in rural areas. Students can raise funds to buy books to donate to the cause, with each student sending a personalized letter in Spanish along with the donated book.

Doing good work that has a positive impact on others has been linked to feelings of happiness and efficacy (<http://miscositas.com/biblioburro.html>). ●

Lori Langer de Ramírez teaches *World Languages* and serves as *EAL Consultant* at *The Dalton School*, in New York. She can be reached at: lori@miscositas.com.

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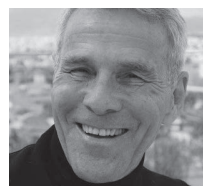
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Accreditation News

Learners need “Agency” and Academic Achievement

New England Association of Schools and Colleges
Commission on International Education



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By Darlene Fisher, Ed.D.
International Accreditation
Leader, NEASC Commission
on International Education

Over the past two years I’ve worked with more than 25 schools taking on the NEASC ACE Learning Protocol. These schools are exploring ways of developing capacity within the community and engaging with the 10 Learning Principles at the core of ACE. Of course, with growth comes the occasional growing pain, but the challenges of this new process also bring very visible positive results that provide the impetus for continuing.

For instance, many schools have struggled with the challenge of balancing demanding curriculum requirements with the desire to develop students’ capacity for self-directed learning and increase their voice and choice (agency), while working on ACE Learning Principle 5: Learner Engagement and Autonomy. However well-intentioned, educators

need to remind themselves that students learn more and better when they are deeply engaged with their learning, rather than when they are mainly receptors of instruction.

There is no easy, one-size-fits-all way to increase agency, but it is important to start exploring how. Even one small trial extending choice and responsibility in one area of learning, in a particular class or unit, is worth exploring as a learning community. This first step can provide the immediate benefits of developing understanding and capacity among learners, both by the students of their learning, and the teacher of their pedagogy—a win-win situation.

Increased student achievement—however that is defined—is worthy of effort and thus there can be no excuse for not exploring ways to improve learning. Providing learners with the skills and competencies to use their agency and voice and choice in positive ways that help them increase their achievement will provide rewards not only while they are in school, but for their future also.

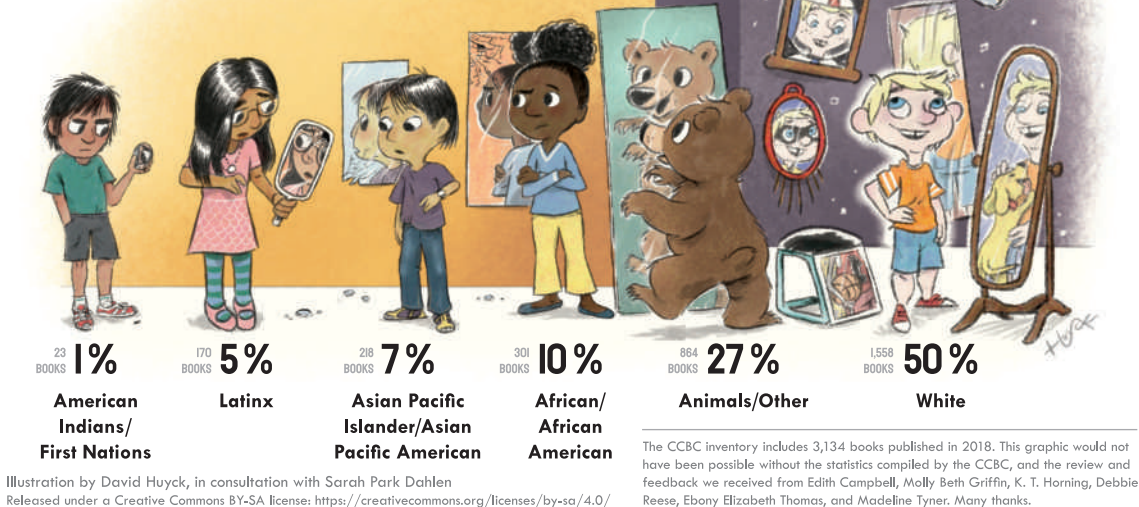
The NEASC ACE Learning Principles and Accreditation Protocol provide a philosophy and structure that engage schools in discussions focused on quality learning and achieving the very best impacts for their learners. Developing learners’ agency is only one area of growth enabled through work with the ACE protocol.

Join us at a NEASC-CIE information session so you can learn more about how this can help your learners and their achievements ... for life! ●

Picture This: Diversity in Children’s Books

DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN’S BOOKS 2018

Percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds based on the 2018 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison:
ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp



In 2016, David Huyck and Sarah Park Dahlen published the infographic “Diversity in Children’s Books 2015,” which soon went viral.

Today, they share their updated infographic, posted with a Creative Commons BY-SA 4.0 license so that anyone working toward equity in children’s literature publishing may freely use it.

As with the earlier infographic, the team relied on multicultural publishing statistics compiled by librarians at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Education Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) that tracked representation of particular populations in children’s literature: American Indian/First Nation, Latinx, African/African American, and Asian Pacific Islander/Asian Pacific American.

“One important distinction between the 2015 and 2018 infographics,” the authors write, “is that we made a deliberate decision to crack a section of the children’s

mirrors (Rudine Sims Bishop, ‘Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors’ 1990) to indicate what Debbie Reese calls ‘funhouse mirrors’ and Ebony Elizabeth Thomas calls ‘distorted funhouse mirrors of the self.’ Children’s literature continues to misrepresent underrepresented communities, and we wanted this infographic to show not just the low quantity of existing literature, but also the inaccuracy and uneven quality of some of those books.”

“We hope that this infographic, along with Lee & Low’s Diversity Gap blog posts, Emily Midkiff’s CCBC data graphs, Debbie Reese’s blog American Indians in Children’s Literature, Edith Campbell and Zetta Elliott’s blogs, Maya Christina Gonzalez’ ‘Children’s Books as a Radical Act’ blog posts, Malinda Lo’s LGBTQ blog posts, We Need Diverse Books, Reading While White, Research on Diversity in Youth Literature, and other

diversity initiatives, can help push forward important conversations and lead to real change in children’s literature publishing. We encourage you to study these and other sources to better understand the context in which these numbers exist.” ●

Reference:

Diversity in Children’s Books 2018. sarahpark.com blog. Created in consultation with Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffin, K. T. Horning, Debbie Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner, with statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison: <http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp>. Retrieved from <https://reading-spark.wordpress.com/2019/06/19/picture-this-diversity-in-childrens-books-2018-infographic/>.



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- NEASC workshop participant, Spain

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Around the World in 18 Years: 60 Stories From a Curious Cyclist

A Foreward
By Matthew Blake

I remember the first time I went riding with Matt.

We had been discussing how the snow was melting and the fact that, despite having lived there for four months, I still didn't really know my way around Tashkent. Matt suggested we take advantage of the unseasonable warmth to go for a ride the next day.

The following morning, we met at my apartment and set off for the surrounding countryside. I was more than happy to let Matt navigate, especially as his experience of the city meant he knew how to quickly get out of town onto the quiet rural roads. A mist had descended overnight, but I had faith in Matt and he appeared confident in his route... at least for the first hour.

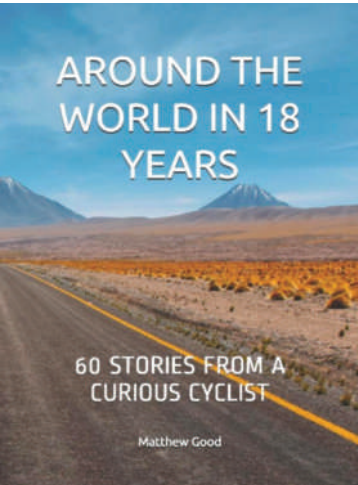
After an hour and a half of riding, having covered about 30km, it became apparent he wasn't too sure where he was, so we agreed to stop and check his GPS. At some point we had taken a wrong turn onto a ring road and, instead of cycling out to the quiet of the countryside, had completed a full 180° and were now heading in the opposite direction. Looking up, the mist cleared slightly and I was able to make out the amusement park where we'd been driving go-karts the day before; we were 3 kilometres from my front door. I instantly liked riding with him.

Whenever I saw Matt over the following eighteen months it was clear that all he wanted was to hit the road around the world on his bike with Niamh. He would ride on weekends, would always ask questions about various routes and, at parties after everyone else was asleep or passed out, would stay up watching YouTube videos of other peoples' adventures on two wheels. There was never any doubt that he would complete his journey.

This book covers not only this journey, but also the evolution of how someone can—over time—continually build up a collection of experiences across the globe, all powered by two wheels and a desire to travel. It is an insight into not only the challenges and difficulties a cyclist will come up against, but also how eye-opening, educating, and frequently humbling the world can be when experienced at a snail's pace.

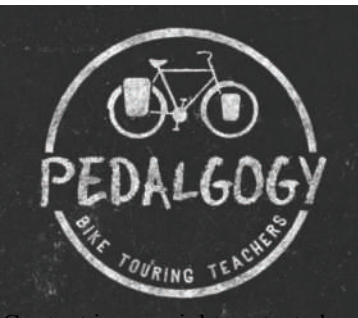
But above all, this collection of stories will hopefully make the reader want to dust off their bikes and go out for a ride. The only advice I can add to this is, if the mist rolls in, make sure you check your map before cycling further. ●

Matthew Blake, cyclist and author of I'll Be Home Just After Christmas: Stories from Four Years Around the World on a Bicycle.



“A truly inspirational read, full of adventure, grit, and determination. From meeting Matt in Uzbekistan, to closely following his epic journeys worldwide, I'm in full admiration of his positive attitude shown in times of adversity and his 'get up and go' attitude to life. This book ultimately couldn't be for a more worthwhile cause and will inspire others to explore new parts of the world.”

— Henry James Evans
Polar explorer, founder of Magnificent Oceans



“It's been 18 years since my first tour, and the world has changed a lot in that time. I have now finished The Grand Tour—the circumference of our planet at its widest.”

Author Matt Good and his wife Niamh Conway are international school teachers who met while working at the British School of Lomé, in Togo. They later moved to Uzbekistan and spent each summer exploring another slice of the world by bike. The pair just completed a two-year bicycle world tour and have settled back into teaching, this time at the International School of Phnom Penh. Their Pedalgogy website features a blog and a photo gallery, while providing advice and maps for those interested in planning bike tours. As the touring teachers traveled the world, they created an educational resource for global citizenship, The Ted Web (www.tedweb.org). They have also been fundraising for the Prader-Willi Syndrome Association U.K. and blogging for TIE.

From the Introduction
By Matt Good

Around half of my pedal-powered lap of the earth was ridden with Niamh. During this leg we have been raising awareness and money for the Prader-Willi Syndrome Association (www.pwsa.co.uk), which will receive all proceeds from the sale of this book. My nephew has this rare genetic condition and the treatment and support you will help provide by buying this book will make a real difference. I've written more about this on our Pedalgogy site at www.pedalgogy.net.

I have finally written down some of the stories from my rather long bicycle ride of 40,100 kilometers through 60 countries. Some tell of times that were meant to be a little bit of fun but turned out shockingly bad. Others might be sad on the face of it, but are really rather funny—in hindsight at least. Many are just things that happen on a tour; the kindness of strangers, the thrill of the ride, musings or thoughts that have struck me along the way. There are stories of desperation and diamond moments, sometimes in the same ride.

Now that the ride around our world is complete, it is the knowl-

edge of what the earth looks like, at street-view, that will stay with me as one nice visual bubble of information, made up of millions of data points and pedal strokes. For me, exploring has become more about the land and less about the country I happen to be in. People and cultures blend, the earth ebbs and flows from pastures to desert, mountains to jungle, rivers to oceans.

Over the course of my adult life I have visited 73 countries. In 13 of these, for whatever reason, I didn't get on a saddle, so the memories in this book are from the 60 I have pedaled across. ●



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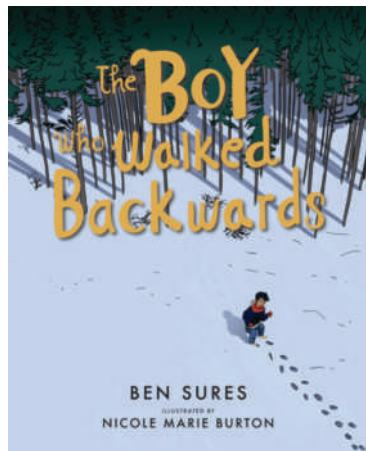
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Book Releases and Reviews

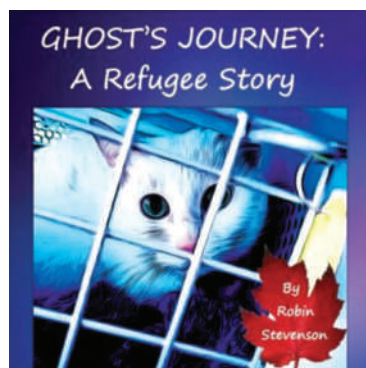
Children's book author Margriet Ruurs recommends books for classroom use and young readers.



Little Libraries, Big Heroes, by Miranda Paul. By now most of us are familiar with the often very cute tiny libraries that have sprung up around the world. Free books to trade or return. Books to encourage young readers, to serve those in need of literature, or to sate those just looking for a fun read. But how did this movement get started? This book shares the story of Todd Bol and his wild idea to honor his mom by providing books to others. A great read that can only inspire more people to start their own Little Library (ISBN 978-0-544-80027-4).



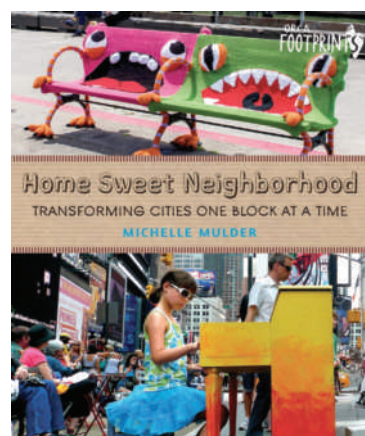
The Boy Who Walked Backwards, by Ben Sures. Published by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (Canada), this is the fascinating true story of a Ojibway boy who, like all children in his village, was forced to attend residential school and give up his native customs. Home for the holidays, Leo solves the dilemma of having to return to school by walking backwards into the woods so that the nuns cannot find him (ISBN 978-1-927849-49-1).



Ghost's Journey, A Refugee Story, by Robin Stevenson. Lovingly told through a cat's eyes, this is the touching true story of how a gay couple fled the life they knew in Indonesia for the safety of Canada, bringing their cat Ghost along with them. Well written and beautifully illustrated, with digitally rendered photos (ISBN 978-1-7753019-4-3).

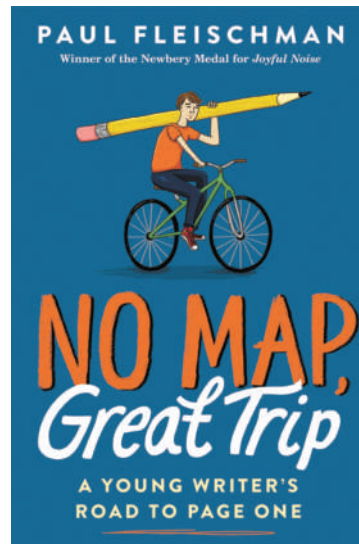


Fatima the Spinner and the Tent, by Idries Shah. Gorgeously illustrated by Natasha Delmar, this is a teaching story based on ancient folklore. In this title, Fatima travels from Morocco to Egypt to Turkey to China, learning important skills along the way (ISBN 978-1-883536-42-8).

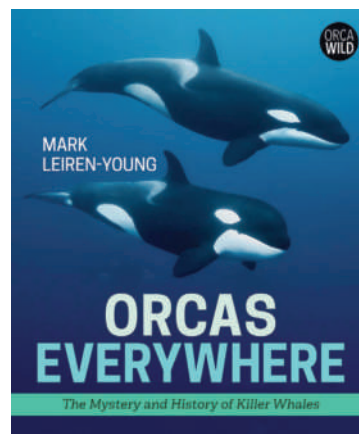


Home Sweet Neighborhood, Transforming Cities One Block at a Time, by Michelle Mulder. "Let there be peace and let it begin with me" could be the opening quote for this book. If neighbors got to know each other better, the world would be a more peaceful place. This book is full of ideas for achieving just that. Ranging from street painting in Thailand to potlucks in Denmark, from little libraries to knitted trees, there are plenty of ideas for how kids can make an impact in their own neighborhood (ISBN 978-1-4598-1691-6).

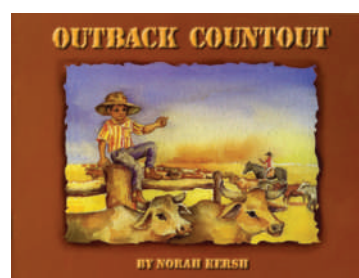
Margriet Ruurs' book **Stepping Stones, A Refugee Family's Journey** has been translated into many languages. She conducts author presentations at international schools. www.margietruurs.com



No Map, Great Trip, by Paul Fleischman. Aimed at encouraging young writers, this book is equally enjoyable for adults who like to write. More an autobiography than a how-to manual, this title shows how the Newbery Award-winning author wove his childhood memories and personal experiences into each of his stories. It's a fun, entertaining, and encouraging look at the life of a writer (ISBN 978-0-06-285745-3).



Orcas Everywhere, by Mark Leiren-Young. This gorgeous volume has lots of historical information on orcas and fascinating facts about their social lives and communication skills. This is the book for budding marine biologists (ISBN 978-1-4598-1998-6).



Outback Countdown, by Norah Kersh. Counting from zero (no eggs from the lazy chook!) to ten (stars in the big sky) this simple book gives a good idea of what it is like to live on a homestead in Australia's wide ranging outback (ISBN 9-780864-392107).

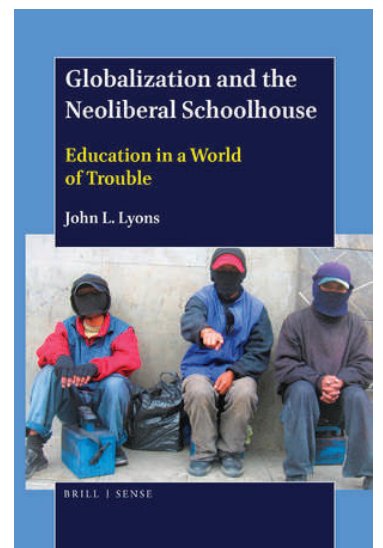
A Role for International Schools in Planetary Progress

Excerpted from Chapter 13 of *Globalization and the Neoliberal Schoolhouse: "Extinguishing the Flames of Our Village Burning"*

By John L. Lyons

Education can and should be (re)invigorated to effectively address the most pressing problems of our time. As with the adverse consequences globalization has had on education, such a project is not only worthy and needed, but urgently so. The emerging field of international education can serve a vital role as arbiter of the progressive change needed to rescue our planet and its inhabitants from an increasingly likely demise. The context for this manner of progressive education is an expanding system of international schools. That is, as unregulated, free market globalization and its incumbent distortions build momentum (Stiglitz 2002), so too does a parallel, symmetric system of mostly independent, mostly private, largely affluent, yet loosely coordinated K-12 international schools (Pearce 2013). While a precise definition of what constitutes an "international school" remains somewhat contentious (see Hayden & Thompson 2008), the accelerating growth and presence of K-12 schools claiming some form of "international" identity is striking (Brummitt & Keeling 2013). It has been estimated, for example, that by 2020 there will be 10,000 international schools worldwide with 5.2 million students and nearly a half-million teachers (Keeling 2010). Located in capital cities and burgeoning hubs of trade and commerce around the globe, these schools cater to the needs of the local elite and the children of relatively privileged and geographically mobile expatriate families. Many seek to provide English-medium preparation programs as gateways of admission to reputable universities in the metropolises of Europe, Britain, Canada, Australia, and the United States (Matthews 1989; Hayden & Thompson 1995; Sutcliffe 2001; Hurley 2006; Lauder 2007; Canterford 2009).

Despite the relatively elite status of the vast majority of international schools, and despite the fact they are products of the precise types of educational privatization and marketization the author has sought to critically weigh from the outset, paradoxically the potential of these schools to play a meaningful role in promoting planetary social progress vis-à-vis some form of critical international education is enormous. That is, although far from constituting a homogenous




John L. Lyons. *Globalization and the Neoliberal Schoolhouse: Education in a World of Trouble*. Brill/Sense Publishers, Boston & Amsterdam, November 2019.

educational "system," international schools represent a growing worldwide assortment of parallel sites of learning, often with similar (internationally oriented) curriculum and (multicultural) student and staff demographics. These schools, if given over to progressive, socially engaging principles and practices, could positively transform international education as we know it, and, in the process, impact and change social conditions in local communities worldwide.

International schools remain at the edge of, yet integral to, global civil society. The creation of a shared process-based, critically reflective social and pedagogic activism within these schools could work to establish "nodes of civic transformation" at key geographic and educational intersections around the world. Each of these ongoing local-global nodes of connectivity could eventually be broadened to engage other points of reception and transmission for progressive lines of communication and coordination. What is being pointed out here is that international schools, or schools with strong programs of international education, can potentially work to unleash on the world successive generations of international activists, poised to move forward together with broad, inclusive, democratic campaigns for planetary change and progress. ●

John L. Lyons is an international educator, author, activist, and consultant. He is currently traveling across Asia and Africa.


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Makhlouf Ouyed, General Director
email: makhlouf.ouyed@cat.mx
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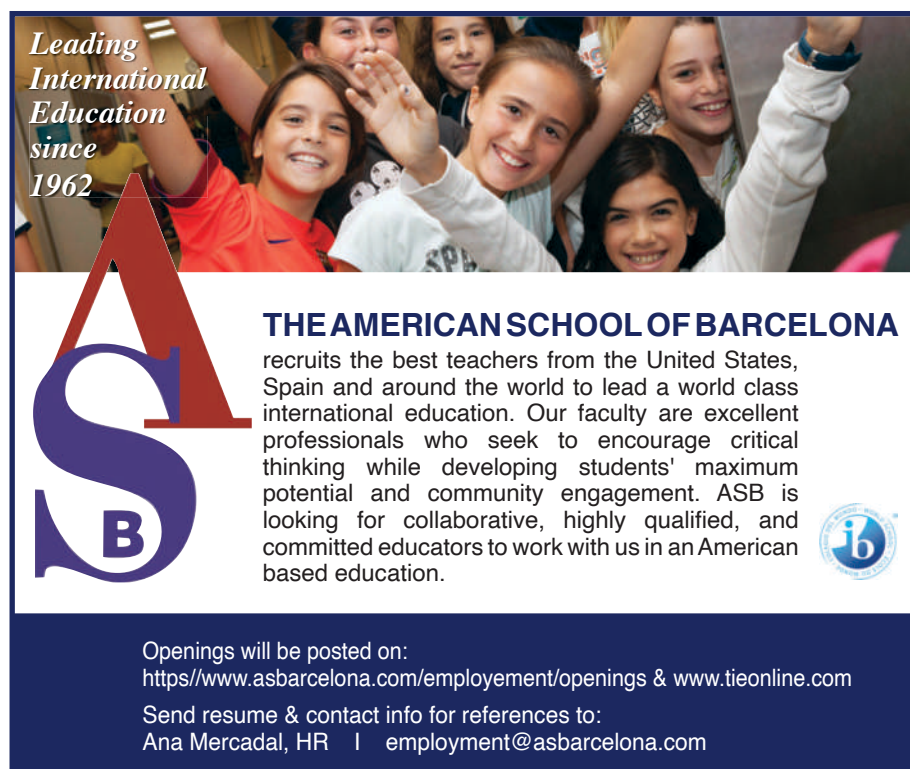
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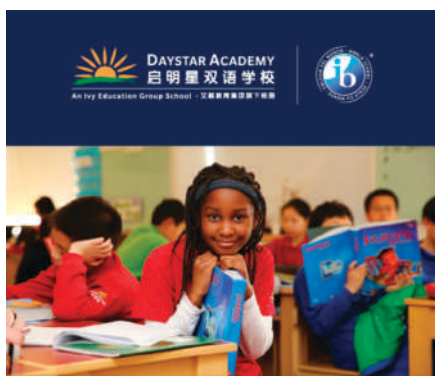
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The year is 1959. 12 countries just signed an international agreement to preserve Antarctica. Alaska and Hawaii just became the 49th and 50th U.S. states. *Bonanza* is the first weekly TV series broadcast completely in color and *The Sound of Music* just opened on Broadway.

Russia's *Luna-2* has landed on the moon, becoming the first man-made object to reach the moon's surface, and Volvo just released the modern seatbelt.

The "inch" just became more globally aware and was adjusted by 2 millionths of an inch, making it equal to exactly 25.4 millimeters. In September, 234 students of international expatriate and embassy families in Vienna also

became more globally aware. The American International School · Vienna opens with students of 17 nationalities and quickly grows to capacity, encouraging us to find a new campus to accommodate our student body in order to offer the best opportunities available. Administrators look to the greenery of the Vienna woods.

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One thing that hasn't changed: students are at the center of everything we do. Their journey and growth give us purpose. The AIS core values -- nurture, include, challenge, and respect -- guide us in ensuring that our students develop intellectually and interculturally, while internalizing the commitment and leadership necessary in today's globally-minded world. Our story is theirs; could our story be yours?

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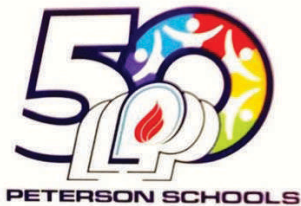


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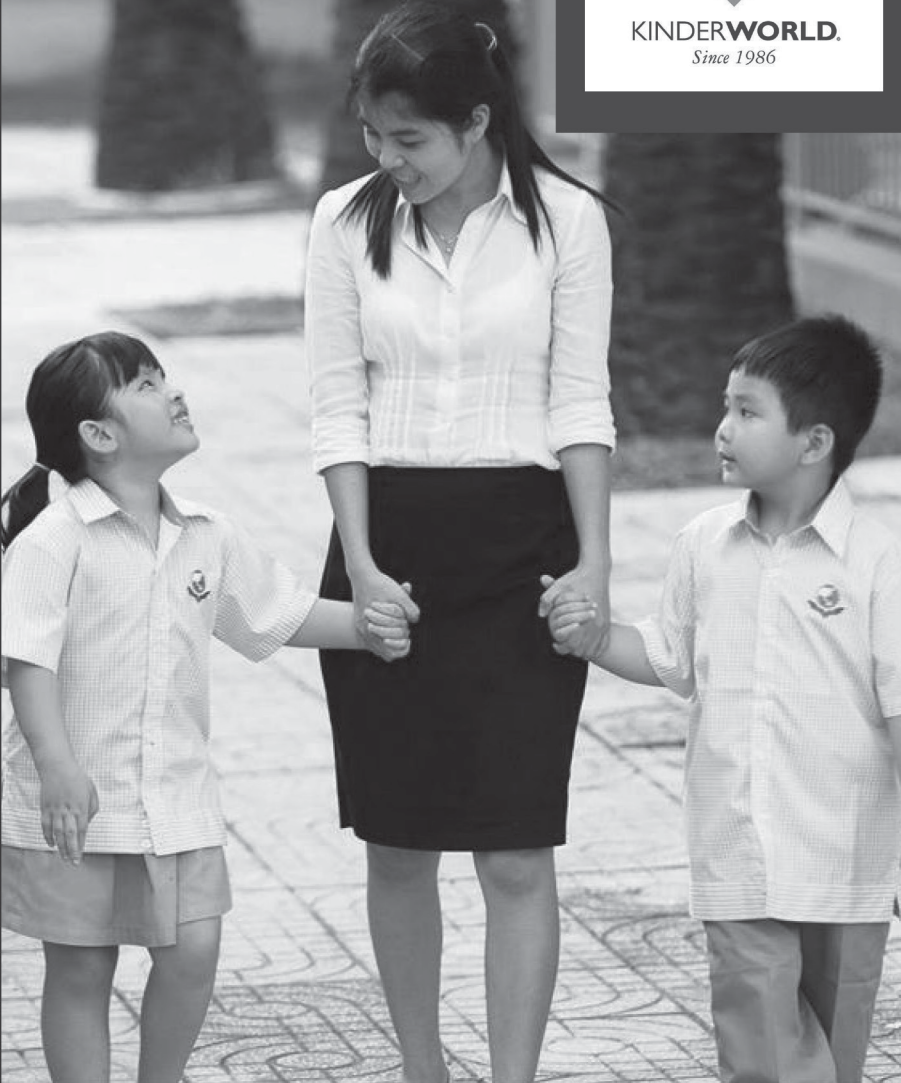
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Beijing World Youth Academy
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Beijing World Youth Academy offers professional, experienced teachers the opportunity to grow their careers within our dynamic and innovative learning environment. BWYA teachers have a superb understanding of their subject, are excellent communicators with strong organisational skills and thrive on finding opportunities for personal growth in the problems they encounter. In short, our teachers have a genuine empathy towards our students and their co-workers and are outstanding role models for our community. If you believe yourself to be a good match with our teacher profile we would like to hear from you. To apply, please send the following to jobs@ibwya.net

1) A cover letter indicating the post you are interested in and why you feel you are well suited to the post.

2) A detailed curriculum vitae.

3) The name and contact details of at least two referees, one of whom should be your current employer.

4) A recent photograph.

For more information visit www.ibwya.net



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Leading international school in Valencia (Spain) accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Vacancies and application process described on bit.ly/CareersASV

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The Job Hunter's YEAR

SEPTEMBER

Prepare or update your resume. Gather written recommendations from current and past supervisors. Start working on your basic letter of application. Develop your own statement of philosophy of education.

OCTOBER

Start sending out applications to schools advertising specific or general vacancies in TIE.

DECEMBER

Apply to schools posted at TIEonline.com and advertising in December issue of TIE and follow up on contacts made. Research schools, countries in which you are interested.

JANUARY

Make plans to travel in February to the Job Fairs or other interviews arranged directly with school heads. Practice your interview skills.

FEBRUARY Interviews

MARCH

Follow up on interviews. Be patient.

APRIL

April issue. These may be the same schools advertising new vacancies, or different schools with new needs. Pursue all the options.

MAY

Be available at regional job fairs.

JUNE

If you've already accepted a position, be sure to confirm in writing your understanding of all contractual arrangements. Start to plan your departure.

JULY Pack up, ship out!

AUGUST

Enjoy your new life in the exciting world of international education!



COLEGIO MAYA

The American International School of Guatemala

Colegio Maya is a small dynamic international school in Ciudad de Guatemala. Colegio Maya is accredited by AdvancED, SACS, CASI. We offer a challenging college prep program with fully developed Advanced Placement classes.

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ISA The International School of Amsterdam

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Among the ISA faculty are leading voices in the international education arena, many of whom have led the development and implementation of programmes now used in international schools around the world.

A member of Harvard Graduate School of Education's Project Zero, the school was the very first in the world approved to offer all three International Baccalaureate Programmes. ISA serves 1350 students from over 50 nations. If you are truly committed to international education and looking for a school that will challenge and support you, consider the International School of Amsterdam.

For vacancy listings please visit us at www.isa.nl/employment

ISA is Accredited by the Council of International Schools and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and complies with the recruitment screening and assessment practices for the International Task Force on Child Protection.



TEACHING AT WBAIS

Joyous. Engaged. Connected. International. These are some of the words that describe the Walworth Barbour American International School (WBAIS), here in Israel. If working at WBAIS is a future professional goal, check our website for openings, and send your resume and cover letter to wbaisemployment@wbais.net, or follow us via ISS, SEARCH, TIE and UNI. Due to USA/Israel governmental agreements, only US citizens will be considered for overseas hire positions.

Thank you for your interest. All positions for the 2019-2020 school year, commencing August 1, 2019 have been filled.



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An independent non-profit school serving the local and international community of Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. We welcome applications from well qualified, experienced and dynamic professionals. IB and international experience is greatly preferred.

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