

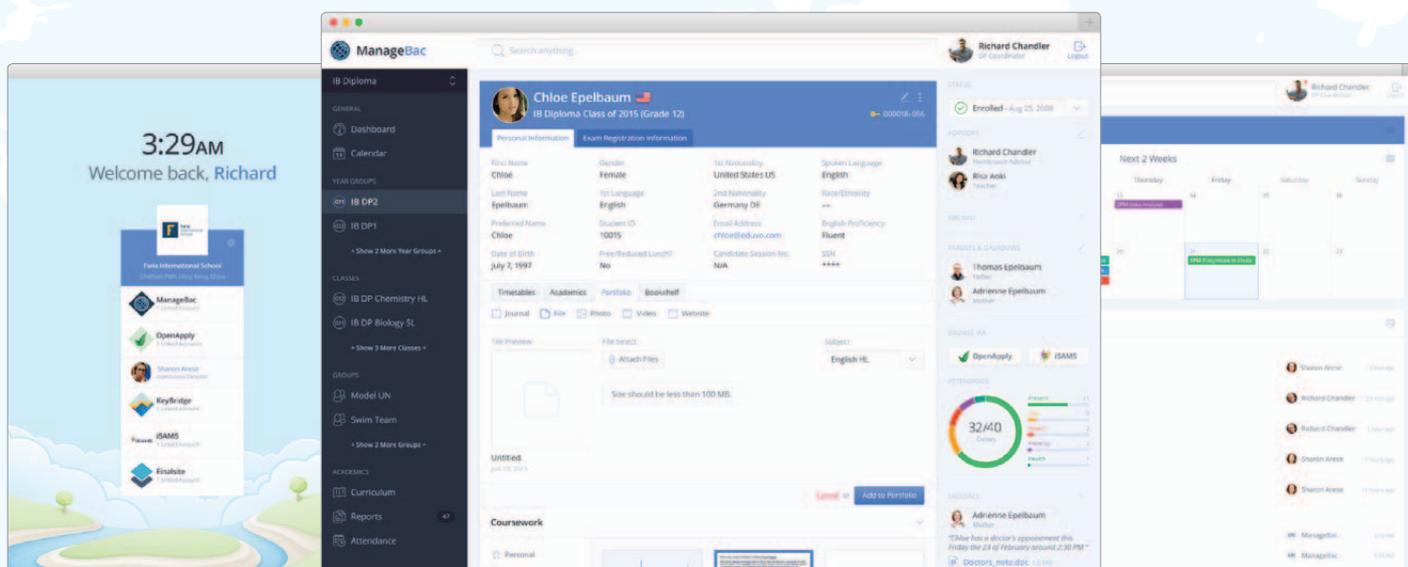


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Why ‘mindedness’ is as meaningful as ‘international’

George Walker explores a ubiquitous phrase

The expression ‘international mindedness’ is now commonly used to describe the ultimate goal of international education. It has much to commend it, not least its brevity and the double sense of the word ‘minded’ meaning both cerebral and motivating (as in the rather old-fashioned phrase ‘I am minded to do something’).

It was probably the Conference of Internationally Minded Schools meeting under the aegis of UNESCO in 1951 that made the earliest use of the term (Hill, 2013: 11), defining it as furthering world peace and international understanding through education. That was several generations ago, when the concept of world peace had been shaped by the experience of the Second World War and its nuclear legacy. In 1951, furthering world peace and international understanding would not have seemed a wholly unrealistic challenge to the world’s educators. Today we are less confident, and the greater complexity of the 21st century’s globalized, digitalized and terrorized world is reflected in Hill’s description (2012: 259):

International mindedness is the study of issues that have application beyond national borders and to which competencies such as critical thinking and collaboration are applied in order to shape attitudes leading to action which will be conducive to intercultural understanding, peaceful coexistence and global sustainable development for the future of the human race.

Notice how ‘international’ has been replaced by ‘intercultural’; how the sustainability of a shared planet appears in the list of priorities and how Hill, perhaps drawing on the International Baccalaureate’s (IB) learner profile, suggests certain key attributes – critical thinking and collaboration – that will underpin the concept of international mindedness.

In a study commissioned by the IB, Singh and Qi (2013: 1) describe international mindedness as:

an understanding that by working together individuals can improve their knowledge of the world through developing a shared understanding of local/global realities and accepting responsibility to take appropriate corresponding actions.

Significantly, both this and Hill’s description include a reference to action, perhaps seeking to head off the obvious charge of utopianism.

The IB has invested heavily in the concept of international mindedness, and the IB learner profile (IBLP) can be seen as its deconstruction into elements that will then provide the reference points for the design of international curricula:

The IB learner profile is the mission statement in action; it is central to the IB definition of what it means to be internationally minded, and it directs schools to focus on learning. (IB, 2008: 3)

Thus, for practical purposes – and, one hopes, for intellectual purposes as well – we can regard the learner profile as the key document in the IB’s interpretation of ‘international mindedness’. The document is not uncontested. Wells, for example (2011: 177), writes of the ten attributes making up the learner profile that:

they sound inspiring and there may be validity in claiming that the attributes and the values they embody will enable students to become internationally minded. My point is that there should be rigorous justification to substantiate the premises on which the values for the IB learner profile were chosen.

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Halls of Residence

During the revision of the IB learner profile one question was dominant. Were the ten learner profile attributes too Western oriented? This has long been a source of IB guilt, first confessed decades ago by the then director general, Roger Peel. Nowadays concern is usually voiced by experienced IB heads in China, and there is perhaps a degree of irony here because one suspects that many Chinese students see the IB as a reliable passport to the English language and to western universities, and will happily trade in Confucius for Socrates.

I wrote about this issue in 2010 under the title 'East is East and West is West', borrowed from Kipling's famous poem – rather tentatively, I might add, because a knowledge of Eastern cultures was remote from my own experience. The article (Walker, 2010) has been widely read, reflecting the high level of interest in this particular debate. In passing, let me encourage a more careful study of Kipling's iconic poem *The Ballad of East and West* which concludes (for those who bother to read beyond the first line) that, given the right conditions, it is indeed possible for East and West to meet 'though they come from the ends of the earth!'

I came to the conclusion that:

There is little doubt that, with its strong emphasis on individual inquiry, personal responsibility and independent critical thinking, the IBLP is embedded in a Western humanist tradition of learning.

Let me move onto different ground: the International School of Geneva (Ecolint), which educates some four thousand students of around 130 different nationalities. Just think of the multicultural opportunities present in a typical Ecolint classroom! But it is a particular group I will focus on: the 20% of students from local French and Swiss families who want an international education; they want to become internationally-minded. But they wanted it, in my time as director general, on their own terms, demanding teachers with impeccable Cartesian backgrounds; counseling which required a detailed knowledge of the French and Swiss university systems; respect for the very different styles of assessment in French and Swiss schools; and everything, of course, in French, the local language.

I spent eight years negotiating the assimilation of this group into the school's mainstream and in doing so I learned about the real challenge of international education. Because here was a group, in a minority yet powerful enough (with strong local support) to make its voice heard, reminding me on a daily basis that they did things differently. But if the French do things differently, then why not the Japanese, the Swedes, the Iranians and all those other cultures, which are too small in group size to have that powerful voice and are diverted into the circulating mid-Atlantic cultural holding pattern that contains most international schools?

It is impossible in practice to structure a lesson in a way that recognizes the cultural origins of every student participating in the learning. We must be realistic and seek compromise, and this is where Paul Tarc is helpful. He writes (2009: 121) that:

The IB affords critical resources for students to develop 'reflexivity' ... reflexive individuals recognize their own cultural and political

predispositions and the epistemic position from which they speak and negotiate cultural differences.

Surely here we have an attribute that favours neither East nor West, and Tarc goes further to identify the IB's Theory of Knowledge course and the Primary Years Programme as examples of students' learning that encourage reflexivity. He might have added the extended projects that form a part of each IB programme, or world literature, or the arts of narrative, or the Model United Nations: all examples of learning that will 'encourage individuals to recognize their own cultural and political predispositions'.

I have already noted the double meaning of the word 'minded'. First, it suggests that the issue in question can be taught, can be studied, can be developed in the student's mind by choosing a suitable pedagogical strategy. Second, it implies a powerful element of motivation and action: being minded to do something. But there is a third meaning illustrated by the sentence 'She really minded being described in that way' – in other words she objected, she disagreed. International mindedness must encompass the possibility of disagreement and this is indeed acknowledged by the IB (2012: 6):

IB programmes foster learning how to appreciate critically many beliefs, values, experiences and ways of knowing.
(my underlining)

The challenge lies in the word 'critically' because one culture's beliefs, values, experiences and ways of knowing may well prove to be incompatible with those of a different culture – in which case we are into the very difficult business of conflict resolution.

If the concept of international mindedness is to make a helpful contribution to the development of international education we must understand that 'mindedness' is just as meaningful as 'international'. It implies the capacity to learn, the motivation to act and the courage to disagree.

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Global citizenship – the need for ethical distinctions

Gautam Sen examines differing approaches to a universal issue

Surveying the state of the world halfway through the second decade of this century can be an unsettling experience. As a supposedly intelligent species, we are simultaneously living through catastrophic wars in several different regions, the destruction of biodiversity globally, economic policies that widen social disparities, and the onset of anthropogenic climate change threatening the existence of many coastal communities all over the world. We seem to have consigned our grandchildren to a bleak and destructive future by our collective inability or refusal to reverse any of these crises.

Why should educators be concerned about this? After all, if we have already begun to hurtle over the cliff of self-destruction, then all discussion is futile. If, on the other hand, there is still the smallest chance of recovery, can the survival of the human and other species be the responsibility of the teaching profession alone? Yet as teachers and adults, we cannot disown responsibility for equipping future generations with the intellectual, social, and cognitive tools with which to improve their world.

In this brief article, I will start from the more optimistic of the two assumptions mentioned here, and argue that global citizenship is an essential ingredient of an education for future survival and recovery. But this global citizenship needs to be informed by a moral sensibility that enables distinctions to be made between its benign and destructive versions.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) defines international mindedness (hereafter IM) as both a teaching approach and a learning disposition. As a teaching approach, it is characterized by a focus on human diversity and its underlying unity, using both local and global contexts and perspectives (IB, 2015:19). Elsewhere (IB, 2013a: 6-7), the IB defines IM in terms of the three dimensions of Multilingualism, Interculturalism and Global Engagement. The learner becomes aware of human diversity through the study of more than one language. But the deeper conceptualization of this diversity through interculturalism – *ie* intercultural inquiry and understanding inside and beyond the classroom – reveals the underlying unity masked by human diversity. Finally, while engaging through action in the real world with global problems in their local manifestations, global engagement deploys this deeper understanding provided by interculturalism to work for a better world.

As a learning disposition, IM is characterized by a commitment to (and capacity for) multilingualism, intercultural understanding and global engagement (IB, 2013), as noted above. In Table 2 (overleaf) I have tried to describe IM as a learning disposition by its behavioural correlates, using the traits of the IB learner profile, mapped into the triad of Action, Inquiry and Reflection that constitute the three pillars of an IB education (IB, 2013a:4).

I would define global citizenship (hereafter GC) as a demonstrated capacity and commitment to translate the learning dispositions of IM (listed in Table 2) into action through global engagement. Table 1 (overleaf) proposes two contrasting types of global citizenship, based on an underlying presumption that the actions listed in the ‘Solidaristic’ column are ethically preferable to those in the ‘Hegemonic’ column, because they would lead to a better world. I do not attempt to justify this presumption here for lack of space, but the state of the world is evidence enough to support the presumption.

So far, discussions of the planetary problems mentioned at the outset have mostly ignored the role of educators in solving them. But the size and urgency of the problems require action on a commensurate scale. Hence, I would argue that GC as defined here should be an essential objective of any education, not merely of international education, or indeed of an IB education.

However, there is an important respect in which the discussion of GC among educators seems to have remained incomplete. There is probably an unexamined presumption that global engagement – say, as evidenced by the actions listed in Table 2 – would be enough to result in a fairer, more peaceful world. The real question is: how do we ethically evaluate the actions of global actors? The inability to make these distinctions may blunt the effectiveness of global engagement as a way of acting on the world to improve it.

The crux of my argument here is that GC satisfying the IB’s own definitions does not on its own, or automatically, result in a fairer, more peaceful world. Consider the most visible and powerful global citizens in the world nowadays – global banks, hedge funds and corporations, as well as many governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. All these entities engage globally throughout the world, in multiple languages and with a finely nuanced understanding of the cultural differences that divide or unite

TABLE 1 – TWO CONTRASTING TYPES OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

(Sen, 2008)

| | Hegemonic | Solidaristic |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Economic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business practices driven by the desire for profit maximization, international competitiveness, and domination of markets • Institutions, policies and rules governing trade and capital flows driven by interests of private and unaccountable corporations, implemented by what have effectively become their agencies in the organs of the state • Primacy accorded to GNP growth • Disempowering and environmentally destructive technology • Arms trade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business practices that build trust and enhance and enrich social capital besides adding to economic wealth • Institutions, policies and rules that encourage accountability, responsiveness, transparency and popular participation in economic decision-making • Primacy accorded to growth and enrichment of social and material capital with redistribution of its benefits • Empowering and environmentally benign technology • Fair trade movement |
| Political | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of democracy as instrument for legitimating capitalism • War presented as a peace-process and/or a means to preserve freedom and democracy, but becomes a permanent condition • Atrophy of the state and the public sphere for the public interest • Cooptation of the state and the public sphere for private interests • Political action and behaviour driven by cost-benefit thinking • Political discourse as moral “sheep’s clothing” • Media as stenographers to private and state interests • There is no alternative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of democracy as instrument for full participation in public life • Peace and peaceful resolution of conflicts is the main motive force. • Social equity is a central concern. • The public sphere is nurtured through a variety of institutions, not just the state. • Politics is an extension of morality in the public sphere. • Media as forum for public discussion and dialogue and for holding accountable those whose actions affect the public, or who act in the name of the people • Open to institutional innovation and alternatives |
| Social-cultural | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethos of possessive individualism • Materialistic and ecologically destructive lifestyles • Cultural inferiorization through education, work • Destruction of languages and cultural diversity • Marginalizing and exclusionary practices and technologies of education, health, work, leisure and social control • Tourism and travel that seeks to replicate culture of travelers • Fostering clash of civilizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation of well-being enhancing social and cultural practices • Open to social and cultural innovation through cultural fusion and diffusion • Widening and inclusive networks of participation in community life • Search for human universals in cultural diversity • Tourism and travel that affirms culture of host and is hospitable to travelers • Fostering dialogue of civilizations |

TABLE 2 – BEHAVIOURAL EVIDENCE OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

| | Action | Inquiry | Reflection |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| IB learner profile traits | Courageous, Balanced, Principled, Communicator | Inquirer, Open-minded, Knowledgeable | Thinker, Reflective, Caring |
| GLOBAL CONTEXT | | | |
| Multilingualism | Engages with other communities in advocacy or activism, using different languages. | Accesses sources of data and relevant literature, and formulates inquiry approaches, in more than one language. | Shows sensitivity to nuances of language in communicating in another language. |
| Intercultural understanding | Shows resilience and resourcefulness in overcoming barriers to understanding. Advocates positions on the basis of principles of shared humanity rather than cultural or national loyalties. | Uses knowledge of different cultural origins, adopting different cultural, temporal and disciplinary perspectives. Strives for balance between different cultural, disciplinary and value perspectives. | Shows awareness of one's own cultural heritage and biases in dealing with members of another culture. |
| Global Engagement | Collaborates with local and non-local groups or learning communities in principled, responsible action. Shows strong concerns for those affected by or involved in issues or problems of interest. | Connects local problems to global issues. Analyses events, problems and issues based on rigorous conceptual grasp and reasoning, and a balance of local and global knowledge. Generates options for action creatively, and evaluates them critically from different perspectives. | Evaluates own actions, plans and strategizes for the medium to long term, shows ability to discern the effects of historical change. Expresses a strong sense of concern and agency in attempts to understand and take ameliorative action. |

References to the IB learner profile traits are modified from Figure 10, page 11 in IB (2013b)

References to Action, Inquiry and Reflection, as well as Global Context, Multilingualism, Intercultural Understanding and Global Engagement, are taken from IB (2013a).

the many countries where they operate. In fact, the actions listed in Table 2 almost all accurately describe the actions of these entities, especially in the case of corporations engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility projects to 'enhance the quality of life in their communities'. Yet, with some exceptions, the forms of global engagement often exemplified by these most powerful global citizens are more likely to be listed in Table 1 on the Hegemonic side, and often constitute a significant threat to human communities and the natural environment. But to see this, it is necessary to pierce the veil of morally bland and neutral language, and critically scrutinize the deceptive ideological framing in which these global citizens communicate their claims to the public.

In conclusion, global citizenship requires a critical and skeptical stance towards the claims of beneficence made on behalf of globally significant actors, such as global corporations, NGOs, governments and intergovernmental organizations. Furthermore, the ethical dimensions of global engagement need to be made much more explicit, if there

is not to be a risk of conflating reality with its carefully engineered representation (for instance, wars of choice with humanitarianism). Ultimately, global engagement needs to be recognized as a moral and political project, but one that is aimed at the rescue and recovery of the world for future generations in all their diversity.

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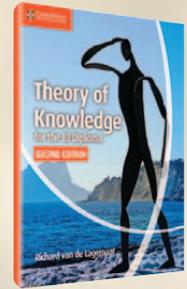


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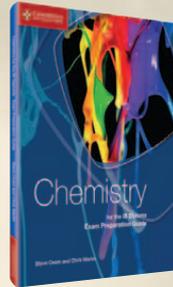
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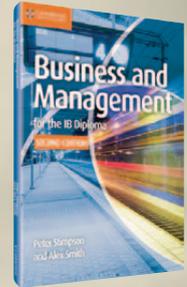


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In 2013-14, Dubai had 77 public and 158 private schools



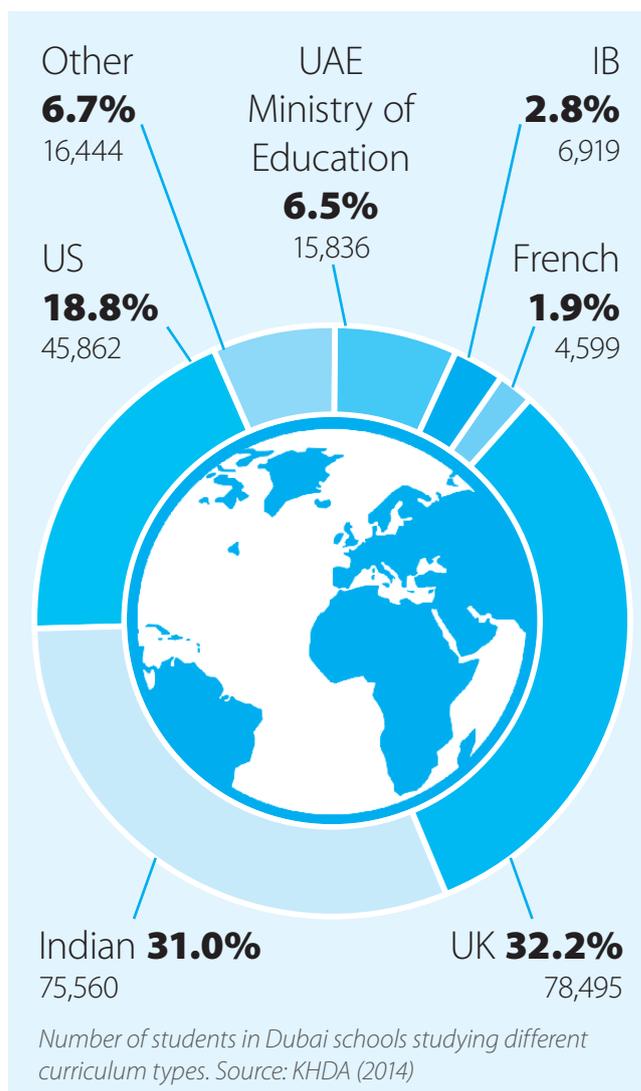
A thought experiment

Ziad Azzam looks at the changing face of independent education in Dubai

Ten years ago, I helped to found a Dubai-based educational company with the ambition of addressing two distinct concerns: (1) the shortage of high quality schools that are international in their outlook and yet have a healthy respect for local culture and language, and (2) the lack of opportunities for investors to plough their funds into strengthening the long term outlook of the region by investing in educational ventures. I have often reflected upon those two driving forces, which at first glance may seem totally unrelated – indeed, some might argue, contradictory. After all, it could be said that ‘good schooling’ should be altogether divorced from the concept of financial return on investment. Surely, education should answer to a higher calling!

I would argue that the answer to this question depends on context. In most countries the state takes the lion’s share of responsibility for the provision of education. Invariably this service is universal and offered free of charge. The system allows for the existence of independent schools that account for a small percentage of the total educational provision in the country. Independent schools may be run as charities, or not-for-profit.

In Dubai and its neighboring Gulf countries, the picture is very different. The state does offer free education but, with limited exception, only to children who are UAE citizens. A few long-standing not-for-profit independent schools have existed in Dubai. These schools were originally established to serve minority sectors of the expatriate community at a time when few alternatives existed. With limited reach and ambition, this is not a model that would have kept pace with the exponential growth demanded by the market. With more than 80% of its population expatriate, to whom public education is largely inaccessible, Dubai needed to develop its private school sector on a per-capita scale and at a pace unparalleled in the world.



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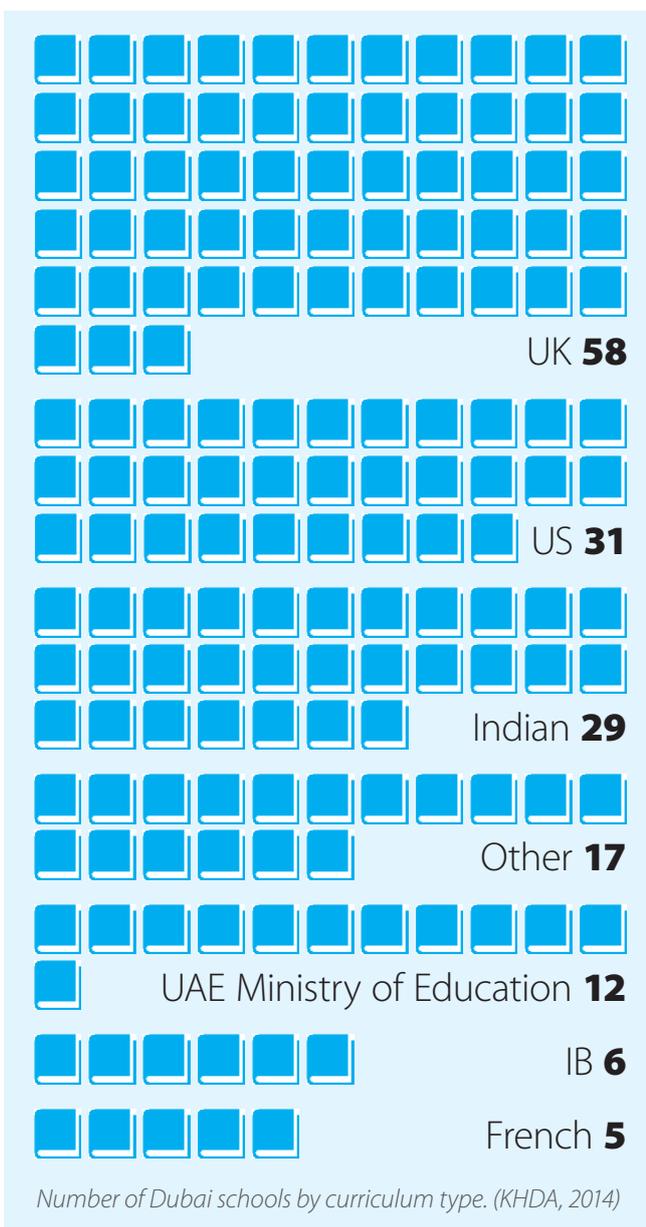
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It is noteworthy that the total population of Dubai in 1953 was estimated to be 20,000 people and a single formal school was in existence, with six teachers and with 230 students on roll (Dubai Statistics Centre, 2011). Compare that to 2013-14, when Dubai had 77 public and 158 private schools, approximately 18,000 teachers (16% of whom worked in the public sector) and student enrolment in excess of 270,000 (only 10% of whom attended public schools). In 2013-14, Dubai private schools offered 13 different curricula, and charged annual tuition fees ranging from AED 1,725 (or US\$ 470) to AED 98,000 (or US\$ 26,600) (KHDA, 2014). All but a few of Dubai's private schools are operated on a for-profit basis.

So, the question is – has it worked? The answer is not a simple 'yes' or 'no'. Those in favour of free market ideology would point to the availability of choices suitable for every budget, and would argue that competition for students has helped develop an efficient system. They are quick to draw attention to the fact that no direct correlation exists between the level of fees charged and school performance, as measured by the Dubai School Inspections Board (DSIB). Countering this argument are those who contend that families on limited budgets are restricted in choice, and even if they are fortunate to find high-performing low income schools (which are heavily subscribed), the experience their children have will be less holistic than it is for those experiencing education at the top end of the market. The result, similar to that found in the US and the UK, is an educational system which reinforces socioeconomic inequalities. Whereas in the US and UK, school choice is dependent on zoning, with the affluent enjoying the best schools, in Dubai zoning has been replaced by parental gross income or employment benefits.

The critical thinker in me likes to daydream of a scenario where Dubai would nationalize its private education sector, and to imagine the various consequences of such a novation. Measures would have to be put in place to safeguard the interests of the lowest income groups of course, and investors active in the sector could be compensated through rental income on their school assets. A clever zoning system, utilizing some form of lottery or rota, would have to be devised to avoid socioeconomic segregation, and specialist secondary schools would somehow have to feature in the new system, offering any of the 13 popular curricula currently on offer. Does this present a better alternative to the current situation? I wonder. Answers on a postcard, please.

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Ziad Azzam worked at the International School of Choueifat, first as a teacher and then as head of school, before a three year stint as a consultant with McKinsey & Co. He subsequently founded and was Chief Executive Officer of Beacon Education (now Taaleem), a school management company that develops and manages high quality international schools in the Middle East. Email: ziadjazzam@gmail.com

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How I was able to make a difference

Jenna (Soo Hyun) Jung 정수현 on her experience of the International Women's Academy (IWA)

I think of myself as a typical high school student, motivated to work hard and achieve the grades I need to go to a good university and lead a successful life. I know that part of the formula for success lies beyond academic achievement alone so, just over a year ago, I began a different journey, motivated by the desire to have something additional to offer that would make my profile more attractive in the tough world of university admissions. To my delight, I have since discovered that the role I have to play in life is so much more significant. The simple truth is that the more I give, the more I receive, and I hope that sharing my story can inspire and encourage others to benefit in the same way.

When I first encountered the International Women's Academy, I discovered an organisation refreshingly different. The motto 'Imagine, Connect, Empower' effectively captures the spirit of IWA. Not simply content to raise funds for a worthy cause, it seeks to create and provide a network of clubs in schools and universities around the world, all working in many different ways to support girls in less privileged communities. It is an environment where girls and women of all backgrounds can develop leadership and entrepreneurial skills and gain access to education by making real connections through the power of networks and projects that empower. The work that the organization had already started in locations such as Afghanistan, Thailand, China and Tanzania gave me hope that I could be a part of other girls' lives and help them to achieve their dreams.

I began by establishing an IWA Club at my school and tried to figure out a truly effective way to help girls in another IWA Club called CIWA Club in Ghana. I formed a team of really enthusiastic students at my school (Yew Chung International School, Shanghai) and we began to raise money in creative ways that not only brought financial results but also improved and developed our own skills. For example, I wanted to develop a better understanding of event management. Through a talent show, our new club raised 5800 CNY (approximately 930 USD). These funds went to CIWA Club in Ghana to help purchase furniture for a new computer classroom that IWA provided last year. When you are connected to real people who need your help, it is amazing how motivated you become to achieve the best results.

After the success of our school's IWA Club activity, I was offered the role of Student Creative Director at IWA. I thought about how I could help IWA clubs and at the same time benefit by developing the skills that I needed to be an actual Creative Director in the future. Through our activities, I have been able both to develop a better understanding of



Jenna with Alice Phillips, Head of St Catherine's School in the UK

my role and to greatly increase the awareness of IWA at our school. Other students have been encouraged to showcase their talents productively in a creative and positive way, in many cases surprising themselves and others by their achievements.

It is sometimes difficult to know how you can make a difference when faced with the scale of human tragedy on our planet. IWA has helped to steer me in the right direction. I was inspired to see how other girls in clubs around the world were contributing to create real opportunities for their peers in underprivileged areas. One feature of IWA that appealed to me was the expectation that no matter how poor or remote a club is, every girl shares a responsibility to help others, whether it be on a local level or beyond. The idea that anyone who benefits from being a part of IWA should continue to give back to others is consistent with the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate and lends itself to the CAS (Creativity Action Service) activities that we need to complete as part of the IB Diploma Programme. This whole process definitely requires some creative thinking on the part of the organizer. Engaging in activities through action, and providing service to those less fortunate, it certainly was the



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I was inspired to see how other girls in clubs around the world were contributing to create real opportunities for their peers in underprivileged areas.

most ideal CAS activity to form part of my IB program.

As Student Creative Director, I was given an amazing opportunity to promote IWA at the conference of the Association of State Girls' Schools in London. This is a big annual conference where Principals from girls' schools gather to discuss important issues. I was going to be the only student at the meeting, and admittedly I was very nervous at the prospect. I prepared extensively for the speech, going through the presentation again and again in an effort to consider the best way to reach such a distinguished audience. With the mentoring and speech coaching that IWA had provided, I was able to deliver the speech successfully and received positive feedback from numerous teachers! As a result, I helped launch the first two IWA clubs in the UK and gained so much confidence from my achievement that I overcame my fear of public speaking. I felt the difference when speaking in front of my peers in class and at school assemblies.

IWA has changed me. I have improved in so many ways and become more of an independent woman. When problem solving, I think differently and consider how to benefit others, not just myself. I feel so proud of my achievements, all for a

good cause, and I cannot describe how rewarding it feels to see a complete classroom in Ghana, the result of our IWA Club efforts.

I was recently introduced to the idea of 'The Invisible Hand' by Adam Smith. Used to describe the unintended social benefits that result from an individual's actions, it seems a good way to describe my journey with IWA. Of course, now I am wholly committed to supporting the organization and encouraging others to contribute in their own ways. It is massively exciting to imagine what IWA can achieve and I hope that you too will feel inspired to become a part of this journey and make a huge difference to the lives of girls in their communities. Together we can help IWA become the invisible hand that benefits both ourselves and the wider world.

Jenna (Soo Hyun) Jung 정수현 is an IB Diploma student at Yew Chung International School, Shanghai and Student Creative Director of IWA. The Founding Directors of IWA are Peter Le Masurier and Matt Simmons. [www.iwa-education.com] Email: information@iwa-education.com



Jenna's IWA club formed a partnership with a club in Ghana, and helped raise money for computer equipment



ISZL students took on the role of being a mentor to a child aged 6-11 for a period of eight months

Giving real meaning to service learning

Victoria Wasner says it's possible for students to make an impact in their own community

How can an experience be meaningful? Is there a way of defining this in real, tangible terms? When referring to service learning experiences, Cathryn Berger Kaye emphasises that they become meaningful when students 'identify, investigate, learn about, and articulate a genuine, recognised community need' (2010: 14). One dilemma that faces many international schools is in fact how to find meaningful links with the local community, and the International Baccalaureate (IB) motto of 'think globally, act locally' is often challenging, as it can seem a struggle to find a local project that arises out of a genuine need in a community. In Switzerland there is a common perception amongst international school students that communities that would benefit from student engagement do not exist; students feel as though they are powerless to undertake any meaningful local service, particularly when there is a language barrier that prevents them from doing so. All too often the perception is that one needs to look far beyond Switzerland and the continent of Europe to find communities in need, and one can easily fall into the trap of creating service opportunities to satisfy one's own desires and wishes, rather than those of the communities

in question. When considering service opportunities, it is important to ask ourselves who is in fact being served (Stoecker and Tryon, 2009). This article outlines one project at the International School of Zug and Luzern (ISZL) that has contributed to changing the perception that there are no societal needs right under our noses, to seeing that one only needs to search in the right place and be prepared to take on the challenge.

The organisation MUNTERwegs (www.munterwegs.eu) was founded in 2009 as a non-profit organisation to provide an intercultural and inter-generational mentoring programme based in Central Switzerland. The aim of MUNTERwegs is to promote opportunities to underprivileged children, adolescents and parents in the fields of education and German language development, and to improve their quality of life. Many of the families who register their children for the project are immigrants to Switzerland, and are interested in their children being able to integrate into Swiss society. The project also has as a main objective the building of bridges between generations and cultures, and improving connections amongst all members of the community.

“My biggest achievement has been contributing to an existing social programme within my local town of Zug and being able to offer the knowledge that I have gained from growing up as a ‘third culture kid’ to a young child undergoing a similar process.”

The first time that adolescents as young as 17 or 18 took part in MUNTERwegs was in the Spring of 2014, when a group of ISZL students took on the role of being a mentor to a child aged between 6-11 for a period of eight months; this in fact turned into an IB Diploma CAS (Creativity, Action, Service) project for them. All of these students were studying German as part of their IB Diploma programme, and were motivated to sign up as mentors after they found out that some of their German teachers were mentoring children through the organisation. As a mentor to a child myself, I can understand how anxious the students must have felt at the start of the project, and how much courage and commitment it took them to accept the responsibility of a child's welfare. Through the months that passed, it was a pleasure to see how the IB students were rising to the challenge of their role as mentors. Amongst some of them, there was a noticeable change in attitude and maturity, as they became aware that they were having an important influence on the lives of their mentees; being a role-model was something that they had not experienced before. Reflecting on the project, one grade 12 IB student recalls the challenge that the project presented him with, yet how much he now values it:

“The biggest thing that I'll be taking away from these two years is the experiences I've had and the relationships I've built during my long-term CAS project with MUNTERwegs. Not only was this project both foreign and daunting



to me, it was also something that required a lot of perseverance and commitment. ... [T]he relationship and contact that I have established with my child and his family is something that I treasure very much, and I will no doubt continue to maintain it.”

Another student talked about how his own personal experiences helped him in his role as mentor:

“My biggest achievement has been contributing to an existing social programme within my local town of Zug and being able to offer the knowledge that I have gained from growing up as a ‘third culture kid’ to a young child undergoing a similar process.”

A third student's thoughts refer again to the fact that the project was a challenge, but also reveal how clearly she was able to see the purpose of what she was doing:

“The MUNTERwegs project taught me to stay patient and to never give up when things seemed difficult. There were short moments during these 8 months that there was a ray of light and I realised why I was doing it; it was my attempt to try and help a young little boy feel more comfortable in a foreign land.”

If, therefore, meaningful service learning experiences involve students coming to an understanding about how the quality of life in the community can be improved by their own participation and their ability to respond to authentic needs (Berger Kaye, 2010), such student reflections make the possibly utopian and seemingly hard-to-define word *meaningful* in fact very real and tangible indeed.

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Global food literacy – food for thought!

How a twin-sister team is creating programs to increase the culinary awareness of educators

Within their lifetime, today's youth will face a world of increasing challenges related to food. A growing crisis looms where feeding humanity sustainably will become a most pressing global issue. It is becoming a planetary emergency with deep ramifications that the world is only just beginning to understand. The interlocking causes are created by the complex and interacting constraints on the food system as the world pushes the limits of the planet's natural resources, while the demands of humans continue to increase. A rising world population, an increasing demand for food that outweighs the available supply, climate change that reduces crop production, water shortages, increasing energy costs, economic and political obstacles, and more, contribute to this human-made crisis. Concurrently, another crisis of epic proportions – that of childhood obesity – is spinning out of control, with alarming statistics emerging from North America and spreading throughout the world. Populations are choosing western diets rich in high fat, over-processed, nutrient-weak food. That, combined with a loss of cooking skills and food knowledge in our societies, has helped to fuel this epidemic.

Global organisations have been alerting us to the disturbing statistics and setting goals for the future. The World Health Organisation estimates that, in 2014, more than 1.9 billion adults (age 18 and above) and over 42 million children under the age of 5 were overweight or obese:

Once considered a high-income country problem, overweight and obesity are now on the rise in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in urban settings. In developing countries with emerging economies (classified by the World Bank as lower- and middle-income countries) the rate of increase of childhood overweight and obesity has been more than 30% higher than that of developed countries.
www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs311/en

The World Health Organisation Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health calls upon all stakeholders to take action at global, regional and local levels to improve diets and physical activity patterns at the population level including, where appropriate, through the introduction of policies and actions aimed at promoting healthy diets and increasing physical activity in the entire population. Consequently, governments have recognised the need to



Students making sushi in Spain at a Food Revolution Day

disseminate these ideas and create action plans. In Canada, for example, research carried out by the Conference Board of Canada has highlighted the crucial role that food education needs to play in creating positive change:

Improving food literacy in Canada will support healthier choices in diet and nutrition and better food skills, leading to improved nutrition and health outcomes. Information and education are crucial, but must be presented using strategies that engender lasting behavioural changes.
www.conferenceboard.ca

It is becoming increasingly critical for the world's students to develop Global Food Literacy in school. This is important not only in order to address the health issues ballooning in our societies, but also to develop the understanding required for them to become the kind of mindful food citizens that the world will need if we are to ensure the sustainability of our cultures, environments, and global food systems. Providing students with opportunities to become literate about food in a nutritional, environmental and socio-cultural sense gives them the capacities to make better decisions when purchasing or consuming food. Experiencing how to grow, taste and cook food will lead to enhancements in their health and well-being. Food is such an integral part of our emotional well-being. Why should

Around the world, excellent programs are emerging to make improvements in various areas such as health education, ecoliteracy, agricultural literacy, culinary skills and food literacy. These ideas are becoming more mainstream as evidenced by the number of celebrities taking up specific causes and advocating for change.

it not be part of our shared learning experience at school?

Around the world, excellent programs are emerging to make improvements in various areas such as health education, ecoliteracy, agricultural literacy, culinary skills and food literacy. These ideas are becoming more mainstream as evidenced by the number of celebrities taking up specific causes and advocating for change. Jamie Oliver for instance, a celebrity chef in the UK, is advocating for healthier food menus in school cafeterias with his 'Feed me Better' and 'Food Revolution' campaigns. California Chef Alice Waters' 'Edible Schoolyard' program is focused on creating school gardens in order to help children reflect on the connections between food choices and their health, and the health of the environment. Michelle Obama, America's First Lady, has launched an initiative called 'Let's Move' to encourage nutritional and physical health reforms in American schools with the goal of reducing childhood obesity. Jacques Puitsais, France's leading gastronome, has created sensorial taste education for children that has been implemented in French schools including a week focused on taste and gastronomy called 'La Semaine du Goût'.

In response to the aforementioned issues and a belief that educators need to react, Canadian identical twin sisters Catherine and Sarah Copeland, one an international educator and the other a gastronome and master chef, are creating professional development programs for educators called 'TASTE Global Food Literacy'. The motivation to create the 'TASTE' program arose from a concern that existing initiatives were focused only in singular areas of concern as examples of good practice. In their research into the current state of food education in schools, the Copelands found that many effective practices are emerging from different regions of the world. Often, these programs focus solely on one or two aspects of food education, with nutrition at the forefront. Following their research, they have resolved to strengthen and enhance the links between the many topics of Global Food Literacy and other subject areas in Primary and Secondary international curricula. TASTE research has

suggested that in order to build the skills that our students will need in the future, a more in-depth, broad and cross-curricular approach to food literacy learning is needed.

To address this need, 'TASTE' has created a definition to describe this new concept of Global Food Literacy, which encompasses many complex topics that are interconnected through the broad study areas of history, politics, economics, social sciences, physical sciences, health, philosophy and the arts:

Global Food Literacy describes the understanding and knowledge needed to analyze and make well-informed choices about food for healthy lifestyles, whilst becoming global stewards of sustainable food systems and empathetic learners of intercultural practices related to the nourishment and enjoyment of eating food.
www.globaledgeeducation.com

International schools are the ideal platform through which Global Food Literacy can be developed, due to the vast diversity and intercultural nature of their students and communities. Educators could work towards introducing global perspectives into learning about food as a horizontal, interdisciplinary theme. In exploring global citizenship, schools could embed Global Food Literacy as an integral element of cross-disciplinary study. This will contribute to finding solutions for many of our pressing global problems through developing globally food-literate citizens, capable of effecting positive and healthy changes for themselves, their environments and their communities – both now and in the future.

**Catherine Copeland is an international educator and the Director of Global EDGEducation. Sarah Copeland is a Grand Chef of Le Cordon Bleu Paris and the Programme Director of TASTE Global Food Literacy of Global EDGEducation. (www.globalEDGEducation.com)
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In bloom! Could plants be the key?

Kenneth Freeman discusses the positive impact that greenery can have on student development

Educational establishments are constantly under pressure to perform. Schools are continually striving for better results but, while primary schools appear to be performing well, in England Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) has warned that the progress of secondary education has 'stalled'. What if the simple addition of greenery and vegetation into a school could make a positive difference to the performance, attention and productivity of children?

Poor air quality, especially related to particulate matter (or air pollution) is associated with increased school absenteeism and poor health – both of which have impacts on educational achievement and attainment. Urban vegetation, especially low-hanging greenery, is effective at reducing particulates and absorbing other pollutants. Integrating green walls, live pictures and green screens (desk dividers made out of plants) can make a big difference to the indoor air quality of a school, as well as relieving some of the symptoms associated with sick building syndrome (SBS)

in classrooms. SBS is a situation whereby people experience symptoms of ill health that seem to be linked to spending time in a particular building. If educational institutions adopted more of a 'green approach' the benefits could be significant in the long run, and for just a small percentage of their building and maintenance budget.

Attentiveness in lectures and classroom situations has been shown to improve when interior plants are present, and students themselves have also reported a difference. Feedback has shown that learning experience and teaching quality is better when plants are installed or if there are natural views of greenery through windows. One example is the Leigh Academy School in Kent, UK, which in its prospectus places emphasis on broadening students' understanding of the world around them. Leigh Academy students are actively involved in a variety of community projects relating to protecting and conserving the environment. The school believe that happy staff make for a happy learning environment, and allow both students and staff to generate

Attentiveness in lectures and classroom situations has been shown to improve when interior plants are present, and students themselves have also reported a difference. Feedback has shown that learning experience and teaching quality is better when plants are installed or if there are natural views of greenery through windows.

new ideas and get involved on all levels. It is not only primary and secondary schools that are noticing the difference: studies have shown that university students are less stressed when working in a green environment.

A recent study entitled 'The Relative Benefits of Green versus Lean Office Space' found that workers in green offices (those decorated with plants) were 15% more productive than those in lean offices (those with no plants). Improved air quality, better concentration and increased workplace satisfaction were also added benefits. Even though these findings arise from an office context, they clearly demonstrate that those individuals working in green spaces have a more positive attitude to their environment. Theoretically, the same idea should translate into schools.

Another factor which can be improved with plants is noise. Clearly more of an issue in urban areas, where schools are often close to busy roads, noise can arise from nearby traffic or roadworks and can be extremely distracting and disruptive in lessons. Green screens in classrooms can be effective at absorbing loud sounds, resulting in a 50%–75% reduction in perceived sound reported.

Past research has shown that health and wellbeing can be improved when people are exposed to nature. Simple pleasures such as a walk in the woods or a visit to a park have been shown to reduce stress and feelings of anxiety. Our need for nature was identified by the American biologist, Edward O Wilson, who developed a concept called 'Biophilia', which he defined as the 'innate affiliation people seek with other organisms and especially the natural world'. When given the choice, people tend to gravitate towards natural views of water or landscapes.

Creating a healthy and green learning environment in educational institutions can pay huge dividends in terms of wellbeing, productivity, attention span and teaching quality. It can deliver a real return on a relatively small investment for the school, and can make a massive difference to the most important years in a student's development

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The value of guidance for young people

Never underestimate it, says Luke Addison

Put simply, 'guidance' is the helping hand that can guide a person into a working environment in which they are happy, comfortable and successful. The need for vocational, educational and personal guidance in today's world is substantial. Our children want to be old beyond their years, but how can they really know which path is right, or which way to turn? One way in which they can be helped to make such decisions is through effective guidance.

The importance of guidance can be overlooked, if it is assumed that because children go to school, and perhaps onto higher education, they will know what they want and their future will be set out for them from the moment they sit at their first desk. But the truth is, for a young person the future can be a scary and overwhelming thought. Within every young person is the potential to reach their goal, learn new skills and make an impact on the world – though they may not know this – and sometimes it just takes an intervention of help, support and encouragement for them not only to realize personal goals, but also to become self-aware: self-aware of their strengths, but also of their weaknesses, which will help them to be realistic with respect to the extent to which their goals and ideas are attainable.

From foundation to fulfilment, guidance is the key to a life well-lived and to becoming the best that you can be. Proper guidance has the power to direct a student to long term well-being, to experiencing the motivation and encouragement that will lead them to become self-confident, innovative and even insightful. When an individual knows what they want to achieve, and how they are going to do it, they are motivated to push further and even aim higher – and that is where guidance can be most effective. Guidance is not simply about sitting an individual down and saying "You suit this particular type of work; here are the steps to it". Appropriate and effective guidance is about working closely with an individual, discussing passions, beliefs and interests, and really learning everything there is to know about that person before a collective decision can even begin to be crafted, and a path to be followed can be made. During this process they never forget that paths are not always straight lines, and that is where appropriate guidance is most effective – in understanding that every young person is different. Circumstances change, opinions change and sometimes, as a result, entire lifestyles can change. Effective guidance prepares young people for adapting, and remaining approachable and understanding throughout the process.

One way of providing practical, and therefore useful, guidance is not just through acknowledging that everyone is unique and has different needs, but also through taking steps to ensure those needs are fully understood. For me, this has been the most important aspect of the guidance I have



Luke Addison with Archbishop Desmond Tutu at the PeaceJam conference

received. It was only when my own needs and aspirations were understood, and even challenged; only once I was asked questions such as 'What do you want?', 'Describe your own qualities' or 'Where do you want to be in ten years?' that I really began to feel confident, and motivated as a result. Guidance can also involve a focus on an individual's 'emotional intelligence', aiming to understand what sort of person they are, through asking questions such as how certain situations make them feel, how much they care about something, or even how much stress a scenario may place on them. This is what is meant above about not only acknowledging individuality but also fully understanding the individual.

An effective system of guidance can be complex, given the vast differences between individuals. For young people who may not have any idea of where they want to go, it is important to choose an educational guidance system which seeks to help individuals, which can help to identify strengths and weaknesses in comparison with other people, and which fully appreciates the needs of the individual. Effective, and positive, guidance can make the difference between a happy, fulfilled life and one plagued with regrets and 'what ifs'. The effect of good guidance should never be underestimated.

Luke Addison was an organiser of the University of Winchester March 2015 conference of PeaceJam: an international peace education programme which aims to help teenagers to become active citizens and advocates for peace, justice and human rights.
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Making the IB learner profile visible

Gareth Jones on the importance of students striving for key attributes

Just under 50 years ago a group of international educationalists decided to take a risk. Knowledgeable of their internationally diverse students' needs and caring about how to help their students gain entry into their home nations' universities, these educationalists set about the thought-provoking conundrum of developing an international curriculum, which would need to be open to a number of different educational backgrounds and styles. The stories of the educationalists are well told in publications such as Peterson's (1987) *Schools Across Frontiers: The Story of the International Baccalaureate and the United World Colleges*. However, the attributes that these educationalists exhibited would not be explicitly developed by the organization that they founded until 30 years later. At this point a programme that started as the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma for 16 to 19 year old university hopefuls became a continuum of international education for students aged 3 to 19 years.

The IB learner profile was first born in 1997 as the 'student profile' and part of the Primary Years Programme (PYP) that joined the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme to complete the IB's continuum of education. However, it wasn't until 2005 that members of the IB community started to see the attributes of the 'student profile' as an integral part of the continuum, which would help articulate the IB's aim 'to develop internationally minded people' (IB, 2013). It was at this point that the learner profile was incorporated into the PYP, MYP and Diploma. It is now an expectation that not only IB students but also IB educators will demonstrate and develop the learner profile attributes. As such, IB learners strive to be:

- Inquirers
 - Knowledgeable
 - Thinkers
 - Communicators
 - Principled
 - Open-minded
 - Caring
 - Risk-takers
 - Balanced
 - Reflective
- (IB, 2013)

It is clear that these are the holistic attributes that most universities and employers seek in a potential student or employee. Demonstration and mastery of the attributes will help people to get on in the world and enable them to adapt

to its fast changing nature. They are also the attributes of a lifelong learner. It is to the IB's credit that they have made the learner profile central to what holds the continuum together. I was recently asked, at a panel discussion on 'Why is an IB education relevant today?', whether an education concentrating on the development of the person is only found in IB schools or if it can also be found in all good schools. The answer I gave is yes, it can be found in schools outside of the IB, but the IB programmes provide the framework to facilitate success.

In 2013 I began working as a founding teacher at Halcyon London International School. The school's vision sets out to 'educate' the potential of its students, and the school's mission states that it wants to build 'on the foundations of the IB' (Halcyon London International School, 2013). The school, through its MYP coordinator Lori Fritz, decided to demonstrate lifelong learning by developing a Teacher Learning Project (TLP). This innovative idea allowed teachers to work towards developing an area of their practice, and feedback to the whole staff on their developments. My TLP involved making the learner profile a visible element both of my own lessons and in the school through active and regular self-reflection on the students' personal development of the learner profile attributes. This was inspired by discussions in which Hare (2011: 53-54) describes how to use descriptors surrounding the person profile (a tool developed by Hare, similar to the learner profile) for the self-assessment and peer-assessment of students so they can see how they are developing in each area.

My TLP involved students explicitly using the learner profile to reflect on their development over a term. Students at the end of the first two terms would reflect on the question 'How have you developed your IB learner profile this term?' They would then be able to select three of five categories to reflect on: Academic Success, Academic Improvements, Service as Action, Personal Learning Periods (a period of learning choice in which all students work towards their own goal), and Extracurricular Activities. Students then discussed the areas they chose in relation to a learner profile attribute, discussing how they developed the attribute or how they could further develop it. In the final term the students conducted a similar exercise but reflected specifically on the learner profile in relation to Service and Action. To do this, students were provided with the attributes together with descriptors and questions relating to each attribute; the descriptors and questions were created by myself and the Service and Action Coordinator (Noelia Zago) using ideas adapted from Snowball (2013: 135-136). Snowball links

Curriculum, learning and teaching

the learner profile attributes to an older and now unused element of the MYP course: community and service. Below are two examples of descriptors and questions:

Example 1:

Inquirers: you have developed your skills of observing, questioning and interpreting by exploring roles and relationships within your own and other community(ies).

How have I investigated local and global issues to help me take action?

Example 2:

Risk-takers: you have been courageous in acknowledging and defending the rights of others and in being active members of your communities.

Whilst taking action did I stretch myself beyond my comfort zone in order to achieve my goals?

The reflections made by the students varied in depth, but many students showed self-awareness beyond their years and a will to develop their learner profile attributes. Examples of reflections include a grade 9 student discussing their experience of a Model United Nations conference:

“When I was in the conference I was able to interchange ideas for the resolution that was going to be debated. This helped me communicate my ideas and work with others to achieve my goal, which was to finish the resolutions for the conference. I think this also shows how I was a risk-taker, by communicating my ideas to people I wouldn't usually.”

and a grade 10 student discussing the challenges of the MYP personal project and how this has helped them develop different learner profile attributes:

“My biggest challenge this term has been my personal project. I've found the planning of this difficult because it's the first time I've had to set solid deadlines for myself, even though this will help me with completing the project faster. The learner profile has helped me improve is being both principled and balanced, as it means I can focus on my workload and understand what I'm doing. Being balanced will help me organize myself with personal project and other academics.”

The level of reflection demonstrates students engaging with the learner profile. Students discuss how developing their learner profile can help them both in classroom learning and in the world around them. These reflections form the first page of Halcyon's termly report card. This allows students to look back at their reports throughout their school career and see their own development of the learner profile. It is also a useful tool for writing applications to universities or for work experience placements.

The self-reflection is an important element of the student-centred education provided at Halcyon, helping students to 'educate' their own potential and set goals for the future. It is

At Halcyon London International School, there is a drive to incorporate the IB learner profile into every lesson



hoped that, as the school moves forward, the learner profile will be internalised by the students and the attributes will be seen and celebrated throughout the school. If these goals are achieved, the school will develop internationally-minded students who can go forth and make a difference – just like the educational pioneers who developed the curriculum they study.

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Evaluating cultural impact

Does an IB education work for African American and Latino students in the US? asks Gwendolyn Willis-Darpoh

International Baccalaureate (IB) programs are recognized as being academically rigorous, highly challenging and universally beneficial to students who participate in them. After attending my first Alliance for International Education conference in Mumbai, India in October 2014, which discussed amongst other topics the merits of IB programs, I became curious about whether IB programs could positively impact the test results of African American and Latino students in America's public schools.

During the past two decades, public education in America has been challenged in previously unimaginable ways. A growing number of students are living at or below the poverty level, with adverse consequences on student academic achievement. As a result, increasing numbers of students are arriving at school unprepared for academic success, traumatized, exhibiting social and behavioral problems, as well as undiagnosed and/or untreated mental health issues. Responding to events including the Columbine High School Massacre in 1999 and the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shootings in 2012, school safety procedures have become a paramount concern. All of this is occurring within the context of increasingly tougher academic standards designed to respond to greater global requirements for 21st century students.

According to the 2008 US Census Bureau, the projected rate of change in America's public school population was as follows for the period 1995 to 2015:

| Student Population | Change |
|---|--------|
| African American | +19% |
| Asian American/ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | +74% |
| Hispanic/Latino | +59% |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | +17% |
| White/Caucasian | -3% |

In 2011, 47% of public school students were African American and Latino, with 24% being Latino (Pew Research Center, 2012). By 2036, Latinos are projected to make up 33% of the nation's children aged 3 to 17. Furthermore, the Department of Education projected that in the school year 2014-15, public school enrollment will be 49.7% White and 50.3% students of color. Nationally, 22% of children between the ages of 5 and 17 speak a language other than English at home (Kids Count, 2013).

Regarding student achievement in public education, current academic performance measures have been considered. Asians are outperforming African Americans, Latinos and American Indians by a substantial margin on standardized tests in every subject followed by Whites (ACT, 2012). Only 52% of African American males and 58% of Latino males graduate from high school in four years, while 78% of White males finish high school in four years (Schott Foundation, 2012).

The IB website reported the following 2009 Diploma candidacy demographics in the USA (DCDS, 2015; see also IB, 2010):

| Percentage | IB Diploma Candidates |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 59% | White (non-Latino) |
| 15% | Asian |
| 12% | Latino |
| 10% | African American |
| 4% | Other |

So, why are these student demographic data important and what do they have to do with IB programs and student achievement? The answer is simple – data-driven decision making. The 'numbers' impact what we do, as well as why, when and how we do it. The student population changes presented earlier have far-reaching implications for the delivery of instruction to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

Many believe that public education in the US is failing our students. States, school districts, schools and teachers are under increasing pressure to raise standardized test scores, particularly among under-represented groups. As a result, many school districts have been exploring pre-packaged curricula that claim to provide high quality learning opportunities that will result in whole-school improvement. IB programs are among those being implemented in many districts with the hope that high-poverty low-performing students, as well as students from families affected by economic hardship, will be able to benefit from high expectations and a rigorous curriculum. Furthermore, according to O'Connor (2011), federal and state governments are providing funding to increase the participation of under-represented student populations in IB programs as a way to close the achievement gap.

Unfortunately, there is a dearth of research regarding whether or not participation in the IB program improves

Design thinking and making across the curriculum

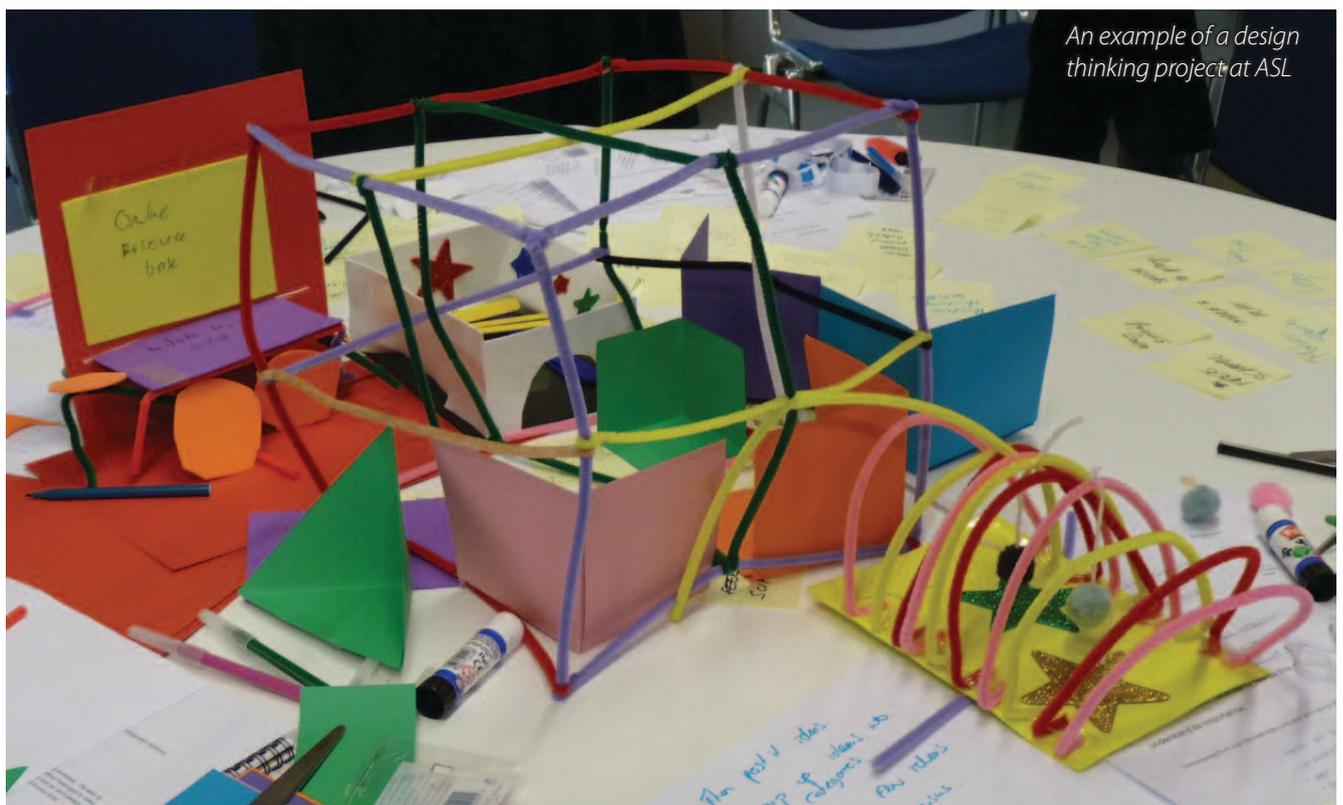
Mariam Mathew, Elizabeth Perry and Christine Wilson on a creative and innovative approach

Design Thinking is a creative approach to problem solving which puts human experience and empathy at the center of the solution process. As a named process, Design Thinking originated at the international design firm IDEO, where CEO Tim Brown defines it as 'a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success'. Design Thinking is taught at Stanford, used by engineers at Google, and has spread through K-12 education in the US and beyond. As people progress through the steps of Design Thinking, they empathize, define, ideate, refine, prototype, test, reflect, and iterate.

Beginning with a question to investigate, students gather information to discover and empathize with other people's needs. Creative brainstorming processes help them reach a possible solution. Then students create a *very* rough prototype with inexpensive materials. The prototype is immediately tested with real users, and their responses are

used to refine the idea, or scrap the parts which are not working and develop new ideas arising from the hands-on testing. A new prototype is made. More tests are conducted. At any point in the process, the investigators may decide to repeat any of the steps.

At The American School in London (ASL), Design Thinking has been used at all levels, from faculty and staff professional development workshops to projects in all three K-12 divisions. In the Middle School an entrepreneurial club, Marketplace Mania, gives students a taste of the excitement of conceiving, producing, and selling an idea. With many lessons along the way, both explicit and implicit, students learn the risks, challenges, and excitement of making a profit from a good idea. The core principle behind the club is to teach students a professional code of behavior: respecting team-mates and customers, following through, and listening when others are speaking, while at the same time trying to persuade others to buy a product line that is home-grown, hand-made, and team-developed and marketed.



An example of a design thinking project at ASL



Christine Wilson has run the program for the past two years and found that incorporating Design Thinking concepts in the second year really made a difference for students in the process of developing their product ideas. The 'empathize' step created an environment in which students were listening deeply, while the 'ideate' step allowed students to really push the edges of what they considered possible. Finally, the most powerful part of the process was receiving feedback on their prototypes (the 'testing' phase) in order to improve the product. Students sold their final products at a special event and donated the proceeds to charity.

Classroom applications

Teachers in all divisions at ASL have experienced Design Thinking as an approach to their own work, training themselves and others, and are finding it effective both in the classroom and beyond. As the rest of the world is approaching Design Thinking as an effective way into creative and analytical problem solving, ASL is already exploring how we can use Design Thinking across the curriculum.

In Lower School, students in the after-school Inventors' Workshop practice elements of Design Thinking, with a particular focus on activities involving empathy (designing a name tag for another student) and lots of joyful prototyping and testing. Students in a High School course, Technology and Culture, used a Design Thinking protocol to develop ideas for a Kickstarter campaign. They found that, through the process of ideating, they were given the freedom to develop a variety of ideas, including ideas that were not polished or seemed unlikely to succeed. It proved a very powerful concept for high school students to experience, at an age when they most feel the pressure to come up with the 'correct answer'. The requirement to put down ideas on multiple post-it notes, whether considered or not, plausible or not, provided students with the power to think beyond preconceived notions. While some students found this process uncomfortable, being counterintuitive to what they are often taught, most felt they had entered a new world which allows for the flow of creativity and revelation.

Two captains of the school FIRST Robotics team, who had experience with Design Thinking in their coursework, incorporated aspects of the process to benefit their team. One of the biggest challenges in the season is leading a large group of high school students to develop and agree

In real classroom projects, we have found that the Design Thinking process can be spread over several class periods.

upon the robot's design. The student leaders found that the Design Thinking process let the team focus their ideas more effectively.

Resources for bringing Design Thinking to your school

How can you try out Design Thinking? If a specialized workshop, course, or conference session are not in your immediate future plans, online options are easy to use.

Stanford shares many resources for K12 teachers at:

www.designthinkingforeducators.com

We have also found helpful this short video introduction to brainstorming:

https://youtu.be/W1h5L_OrFz8

To get started today, try the online video crash course:

<http://dschool.stanford.edu/dgift/>

All that's needed is an even number of colleagues and some simple supplies. The workshop handouts are downloadable, and the entire process – including debriefing – takes 90 minutes.

In real classroom projects, we have found that the Design Thinking process can be spread over several class periods: empathizing and defining in one session, brainstorming and prototyping in another, and then testing and iterating throughout the length of the project's development phase. Students have commitment to projects they have defined in this way, yet are more open to revision and refining when they see it as a natural part of a cycle of testing and iteration.

Above all, Design Thinking in the classroom is best approached with its own philosophy in mind. Don't reduce it to a fixed recipe. Keep the student's needs at the center. Get hands-on early, try things out, and don't be afraid to change things around to make them work better in your particular learning environment.

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A tool for promoting intercultural understanding

Gladys Landers on the power of world literature

International mindedness, intercultural understanding and global citizenship are some of the current buzzwords found in the ever-changing and constantly evolving world of education. However, the more one delves into a concept such as international mindedness the more problematic defining it becomes. This article is based on the premise that intercultural understanding is a significant component of being internationally minded. *Prima facie* it appears that intercultural awareness denotes an understanding of and respect for diverse cultures and cultural differences. Nevertheless, one crucial aspect of intercultural awareness that might be easily overlooked is the knowledge and appreciation of one's own culture/s while accepting those of others. It is important to value the local flavors while also being open to more global perspectives. In this article I will probe the scope that the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) English A domain offers to promote international mindedness and intercultural understanding in an Indian setting – the context in which I teach.

It is imperative that the adults of tomorrow know their own culture in all its diversity at the same time as appreciating the

cultures of others, and the IBDP offers many opportunities for educators to facilitate this aspect of intercultural awareness with their students. It has been my experience that when I ask my (mostly Indian) students to write a creative piece, invariably most of them end up choosing a foreign location as a setting. Characters are Jim and Cathy studying in New York, and never ever a Raj or Mira living in Mumbai. In a country like India, layers of cultural understanding are needed – in terms of ethnic groups, regional cultures, language groups and religious preferences, to mention a few differentiating factors. This is evident in the great variety apparent in dialects of a language, festivals celebrated, dress, food and so on.

So what do we have at our disposal to promote and achieve intercultural understanding? Needless to say, the taught curriculum is the most effective tool to achieve our objectives in class. The curriculum could also become a vital tool to break down cultural barriers. The IBDP Language A curriculum affords educators a wide range of authors and texts to choose from. Two components of the program – Part 1 entitled 'Works in Translation' and Part 4 'Options' – encourage teachers to choose texts from diverse cultural

Knowing your student body and gauging the cultural richness in the group can be used to advantage in class.

backdrops. Instead of preferring the tried and tested texts that might have been successful for years, it would help to experiment with new texts from within and around the students' local culture. For a school in India this would mean selecting texts from the Middle East and South East Asia in addition to the Indian sub-continent.

In selecting texts, one factor that could be considered is the possibility of discussing global and universal themes through local texts. Two such themes are as follows:

Relationships: Almost all literature deals with relationships of some sort. In fact, literature mirrors the nuances of a gamut of relationships effectively, namely the evolution of a relationship, the internal and external conflicts involved, the maturation of a relationship and, oftentimes, the decline in intimacy. Some of the relationships explored are familial, others could be friendships, and some are illegitimate and socially unacceptable. Beyond a doubt, relationships are a universal theme.

To cite an example, Khaled Hosseini's 'The Kite Runner' is set in Afghanistan and traces the troubled relationship between an Afghani Pashtun and a slave Hazara, the Pashtuns and Hazaras being major ethnic groups in the country. Students from the Indian context relate well to the text as social distinctions are equally pronounced in the class-ridden society here. However, our class discussions went beyond that. In an interesting scene, the protagonist finds a book in his mother's study that relates the country's history through a Hazara perspective – something the protagonist had never even heard of since all known history was written from the Pashtun, or victor's, perspective. This led to discussions of censorship in India – many politically controversial novels have been arbitrarily dropped from schools and colleges because they somehow showed a political group in a questionable light.

Growing up: This is another common theme and texts dealing with it often allow students to look at family structures and their impact on individuals no matter where they live. 'The God of Small Things' by Arundhati Roy, for instance, is narrated from the perspective of a child who lives through a divorce and ends up in an incestuous relation with her twin. This was culturally shocking to the student and parent community here in India, but the beauty of the writing is that it does not force the reader to be judgmental.

In the English A Literature course, a lot of what we cover as curriculum is hidden and unplanned – but that sets

the tone for interesting intercultural discussions. Debates, discussions, interactive orals and reflections can lead to a greater understanding of different cultures. The IB has now changed, for instance, the way students approach the Works in Translation essay. Previously they studied the texts and wrote an essay. Now they have important stages to cover, the first being engaging in an interactive oral that must focus on cultural aspects of the setting. Students must be able to write 300-400 words explaining how their understanding of cultural and contextual considerations was enhanced through the oral. We had a mock trial as an interactive oral for Fiel's Child for instance, a novel that traces a coloured woman's struggle in Apartheid South Africa to achieve legal adoption rights of a white child. The white family claiming ownership of the boy were Dutch immigrants, part of a small white community surviving under harsh conditions in the middle of an African forest. The task helped students to assume roles and comment on the cultural aspects of the two communities, and in doing so broke many stereotypes.

Additionally, at times we need to take risks that may result in surprising outcomes. My choice of a Japanese novel in the Works in Translation led to an interesting discovery. One of the more reticent members of the class, an apparently typical Indian student (whose last name suggested that she hailed from one of the southern Indian states), was suddenly excited and participative in class. To my surprise, it transpired that this girl had lived 11 years of her life in Japan before her family relocated to India. She proved to be a real asset through the discussion of the novel. Cultural extensions of symbols took on a new meaning. She went so far as to bring kimonos for other girls in the class and held a dramatization of a Japanese tea party!

Knowing your student body and gauging the cultural richness in the group can be used to advantage in class. For instance, many are so-called third culture kids or global nomads. While these terms sometimes have negative connotations, an open-minded teacher will be able to envisage their experiences as an asset. These students are 'multi-rooted' and their experiences can be used positively in class. One of my students, for instance, whom I have been teaching for the past year in the Diploma Programme, was born to an Indian father and a South American mother and has spent most of his life in London. When he joined my class, I noticed the restlessness that often seems to characterize such students. He could barely survive through the first text that was set in an Indian village. I decided to add a text in the World Literature element that related to South America. To my surprise, not only was he actively engaged and involved in class; he was also able to comment on the relevance of the Spanish names given to characters. This changed the attitude of the other students towards him, and I could see a mutual rapport developing between him and his peers.

There will always, of course, be challenges in the implementation of any plans to promote the development of intercultural understanding. Being conscious of the need to include raising intercultural awareness in our objectives is, though, a step in the right direction.

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Learning through the eyes of our learners

Steven Mark believes that observation is the key to great teaching and learning

"Today, academic knowledge has become the sole interest of many schools, and few teachers are daring enough to abandon the exam rat-race for the job of creating thinking, adult individuals."

(Christa, age 16)

"Just as a subject has become absorbing and interesting it is locked away until the next lesson and the mind is switched to a new wavelength for the next subject. ... In tomorrow's school the work will be continued until it is finished."

(Janet, age 16)

"I don't think I would get on very well in my ideal school because I am too used to being told what to do."

(Frances, age 15)

Do these comments seem familiar? Perhaps from the school you work in today or from your own experience of being a student? For me, Janet's comments in particular strike a chord. I loved my history lessons at school. I had a great teacher who inspired and enthused. Yet after 50 minutes, just as we were debating democracy or the French Revolution, the bell would go and we would all have to troop off to another subject. My brain was still wired to the history lesson, yet now I had to switch to some other subject.

Interestingly though, these students are now over 60 years old as the comments arise from a competition run by the UK-based Observer newspaper (Blisshen, 1969) in December 1967. How little or how much has changed in education since that time?

This article is not, though, about 'student voice', which I would argue is vitally important, although others may take a different view (see, eg, Bennett, 2013). Instead it is an argument about leaders, and indeed all educators, seeing learning not only through their own eyes but also through the eyes of the students. What does it feel like to be a student in your school? How many of us can answer that question honestly? What evidence do we have? Yes we may have a student council or similar, but is that organisation really telling us what we need to know about our school, or perhaps just telling us what they think we want to hear?

Many years back as a student teacher I attended a lecture exploring student shadowing as a means of seeing the learning experience through the students' eyes. This idea has stuck with me, and I only wished I had the time to be able

to do it. Imagine spending a day observing what a student experiences from 9am till the close of day. How much could one learn from that observation? Sadly that chance did not come to me until much later in my career; so much observation time recently in classrooms around the world has focused not on the learning but on the teacher.

Few can doubt the importance of quality teaching as critical to effective learning (Hattie and Yates, 2014), but as professionals we need to restart the process of seeing learning through the students' eyes. What is it really like for them to spend a whole day or week in your school? The idea of looking at learning through students' eyes came back to me recently when I came across an article on Grant Wiggins' blog (2014), written by an anonymous teacher who had the privilege to shadow two classes as part of a new job she was undertaking (and let's never forget it really is a privilege to watch fellow professionals in action). So when the opportunity arose to do the same, I grabbed it: a full two days to see learning through the eyes of the learners.

The whole experience was quite resonant with that of the anonymous teacher in Wiggins' blog. I learned more about the learning of those students from doing a full shadowing exercise than I would have done in spending the more usual 15–20 minutes in 'normal' lesson observations. One of the many things that stood out from the student perspective in Wiggins' blog was the amount of lost learning time and lack of real engagement. Let's imagine that a student has a 50 minute maths lesson 3 times a week, but some lessons start late or finish early, and students who finish their task early have nothing to do. The actual Academic Learning Time (Hattie and Yates, *ibid*) will usually be much less than the 50 minutes intended:

[L]earning takes time but one of the teacher's roles is to maximise the efficiency of the time available ... and to ensure time is spent on learning and not merely doing 'something'.
(Hattie and Yates 2014: xvi)

The lesson for us here is that lessons are for learning. From start to finish. That's our job.

My former and very inspirational boss, Martin Skelton, once described (2012) a teaching colleague, Johan Kriel, who finished his lessons with the question to students "have I wasted your time today?" How brave is that?

How many of us finish lessons thinking "how did that go for me?" rather than "how did it go for the students?" But actually to ask students "have I wasted your time?" is fantastic. Probably scary for a lot of teachers, but completely essential if

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we really are aiming to create true life-long learners.

Of course some teachers are reluctant to have their lessons observed, especially given the teaching observation culture that has evolved in recent years in schools around the world, where blame and shame may be the norm. This is where leadership for learning comes in:

[T]he real turn around will not be teacher resistance, but your own resistance: resistance to stepping foot in people's classrooms far more often, getting out of your office and so on. That is the heart of the turn around and that is something you can control.
(Hattie and Yates: 101)

Here are a few questions it may be helpful to consider:

- How much time do you spend observing learning? (not observing teaching, not just walking round the school, but actually trying to see learning from a student perspective)
- How many students do you speak to each day about their learning? (in addition to hearing from the formal student council, who may or may not give you the answers you want to hear)
- How much time is allocated to talking about learning in staff meetings?

- Ultimately, learning is, as Skelton (2012) said, the "star of the show". Let's make a start by seeing learning through the eyes of the learners.

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Forthcoming Conferences

October 6-9: Australian International Education Conference, Adelaide, Australia

October 8: ECIS Admissions Conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands

October 23-24: COBIS EYFS Conference, Ankara, Turkey

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

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

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

November 20-21: COBIS Conference for Bursars, Business Managers and HR staff, The Hague, Netherlands

November 22-25: Canadian Bureau for International Education, Ontario, Canada

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

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A model for 'great learning'

Ian Piper shares his school's definition

Danube International School Vienna (DISV) has been delving into learning over the past two years, as we feel the true mark of an excellent school is the quality of its learning – not the buildings, the endowment fund, the teachers' salaries or the size of the student body.

Initially, the DISV School Community Committee – which comprises three students, three parents, three staff, three leaders and the Director as a non-voting chair – worked on an outline of the school's own definition of Great Learning, concluding that "Great Learning is of an excellent technical quality, with an understanding of the individual, that is ethically pursued and socially responsible and learning that is engaging, enjoyable and feels great." Subsequently, the school developed its own Great Learning (GL) model to help guide DISV towards meeting its vision to be a world leader in international education.

The concept of Great Learning was heavily influenced by the work of Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon, who proposed the concept of GoodWork (GW), as well as by the subsequent work of the GoodWork Team and the GoodWork Project Group. The term GoodWork is currently formally defined by these three principal investigators as work 'that is of high quality, socially responsible, and meaningful to the worker.' (The GoodWork Project: An Overview, 2011). However, the definition that has had the greatest impact on Great Learning was developed by Gardner in 2007.

The GoodWork team developed a model based on a number of controls that push or pull (force or attract) individuals to carry out good work. The team noted four different sources of good work: the individual worker, the domain, the field and sources beyond the profession. The general construct of the GoodWork model and its related controls were transitioned into the DISV Great Learning model.

The approach of Stafford Beer's Viable Systems Model is reflected in that various systems of learning exist within other learning systems. This is particularly noted where classrooms are nestled within the school and the school is nestled within various external controls, such as local education authorities.

The design of the DISV Great Learning model involved several iterations with individual feedback and the structured involvement of academic staff. The model was presented at conferences of CEESA (Central & Eastern European Schools

Association), the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the European Council of International Schools (ECIS). Conference participants provided further suggestions for improvement.

Our GL Model categorises elements into four groups: external controls, personal standards, institutional effects, and outcomes, as shown in Figure 1.

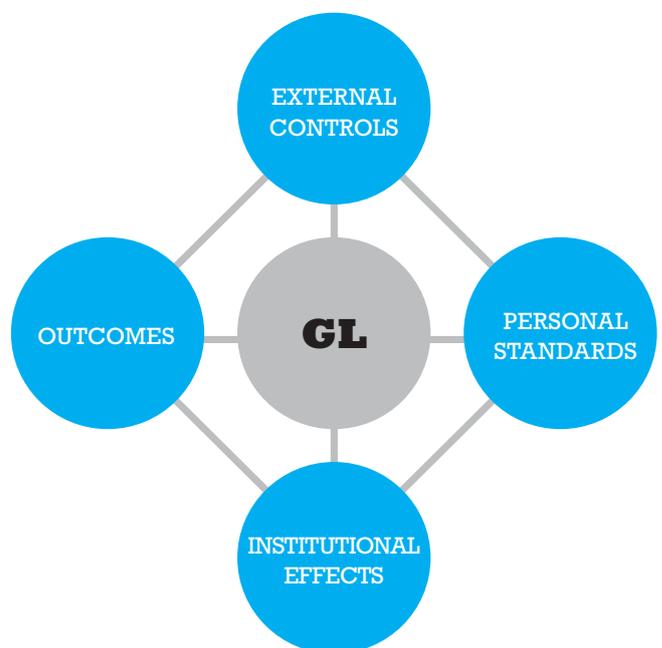


Figure 1

Elements that affect Great Learning are organized into groups. The selected elements and the aspirations we strive toward are possibly unique to our school. Each element has been defined, along with specific aspirations for our school. We also provide counter-examples. Each individual element has been chosen based on research and its potential impact on our definition of GL. However, as we are practitioners, not researchers, our thinking can be further updated by newer literature or developments in this field.

We believe that when elements within a school and external controls are positively aligned, Great Learning is more likely to occur, even if it cannot be guaranteed. We do not claim that Great Learning cannot take place under a misalignment of elements, but it is much less likely to occur and more challenging to achieve.

A different definition of Great Learning would offer an alternative set of elements and aspirations to enable Great Learning. We are mindful that, while our own definition, set of elements and set of aspirations may not yield the optimum or perfect model, the journey of exploring these ideas is invaluable as we strive to improve learning at our school.

**We feel the true
mark of an excellent
school is the quality
of its learning.**

| EXTERNAL CONTROLS | PERSONAL STANDARDS | INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTS | OUTCOMES |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Culture | Core Values | Accessibility of learning | Learning Activity |
| Curriculum Provider | Creativity | Codes & Agreements | Assessment |
| Educational Agencies | Empathy | Curriculum Design | Data |
| Funding Source | Ethical Approach | Decision Making | Extrinsic Motivation |
| Labour Laws | Mindfulness | Emotional Environment | Feedback |
| Parent Community | Mindset | Learning Strategies | Growth |
| Physical Environment | Self-Image | Internal Culture | Intrinsic Motivation |
| | | Roles, Tasks & Routines | Learning Focus |
| | | School Design | |
| | | Teams | |
| | | Traditions | |
| | | Vision & Purpose | |
| | | Visual Environment | |

Figure 2

Our GL model denoting the various elements in each group is shown in Figure 2.

External Controls: These elements exist outside of the direct influence of the school and we must adapt to meet the given constraints. The school does, however, have an influence when initially selecting its curriculum provider, has constant communication with the parent body and initially selects its local physical environment.

Personal Standards: In education, the personal standards of leaders and teachers have a massive impact on student learning. The adage ‘actions speak louder than words’ rings true, as leaders and staff members of a school must serve as examples for students, ensuring alignment with the aspirations of the GL model. As education also relies on the interactions of students with their own learning, the personal standards of the students themselves also have an enormous impact. One significant difference between the GL and the GW model is that the GL model places more importance on empathy within the learning environment.

Institutional Effects: This grouping of elements is the largest in the GL model, as it includes the various learning operations of the school and the classroom, and it is the major driver of the type of learning taking place. These operations range from the overall school vision to the individual classroom agreements between the learners and the teacher.

Outcomes: These characteristics are directly or indirectly linked to the learning product, which involves both students and teachers. For example, the motivation to complete the learning activity, the nature of the activity itself, the assessment of learning and the feedback associated with learning are all included.

While any element may affect any another in a multi-dynamic way, the grouping of elements brings similar attributes together in order to simplify the GL model. The elements are also layered, applying to the individual, the group, the class or the school as a whole. For example, an approach developing in individuals the skills of cognitive empathy (an element in personal standards) will benefit not only the students, but also their friendships and learning groups. The development of cognitive empathy will enhance interactions throughout the school. Students will be more aware of the host culture (external controls), give better peer feedback to one another (outcomes), and perform more effectively in collaborative teams (institutional effects).

The GL model is not designed for use with individual students, but rather is used at DISV to guide the school planning process and thereby improve the quality of learning at our school. We seek to achieve the aspirations for each element. One major positive effect of developing the GL model so far has been the learning conversations it has encouraged amongst our faculty at DISV.

If you wish to embark on a Great Learning journey, a complete description of our GL model can be found at piper_choo/wix/greatlearning. Remember to have fun as you embark on a GL journey – we try to.

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**The development of
cognitive empathy
will enhance
interactions
throughout the school.**

Making PD targeted, direct and relevant

Darlene Fisher introduces a new online academy to provide focused support

Teachers in schools around the world are being expected to differentiate their classroom practice in order to engage all students in learning in ways which are meaningful for them. Schools have, however, been slow to provide the same opportunities for teachers – yet professional development (PD) can take up significant chunks of a school budget and is a focus of considerable expectation for teacher improvement. The development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in schools has been one of the most significant changes in school-provided professional development over the past decade. Boyle *et al* conclude from their research on professional development and potential impact on teaching practice that:

- Observation of colleagues and sharing practice were the most common longer term professional development activities for primary and secondary teachers. However, 'Coaching' and 'Research Inquiry' were found to be the most effective PD activities.
- The majority of teachers participating in longer term PD activities reported changes to one or more aspects of their teaching practice.

(Boyle *et al*, 2005: 20)

Important questions with respect to this style of PD are: Where do the ideas to focus on come from? How do teachers or leaders know what should be the basis for sharing observations and practice or coaching and research inquiry? In addition, what should be the focus areas for individual teachers? Many schools are developing blended PD provisions, including whole school, department, and individual access to PD relevant for the specific needs of each school, department or individual at any particular time. This appears to be a most effective way of covering many needs.

The question then arises of how such PD provisions are presented to teachers. Schools have long presented in-house workshops for teachers at the beginning or end of a school year, or through in-service days during the school year. Bringing in invited speakers to inspire teachers in different skills can be at a significant cost and impact on a school year, but unless there is continued support for the ideas and practices shared by the speaker, take up of new ideas can be less than effective. Professional development can be enhanced by the coaching and research inquiry methods referred to above and incorporated into effective PLCs. Research by Lamos *et al* (2014) indicates that there is a correlation between a strong PLC and a department

with higher student achievement. Allen and Lewis (2006), meanwhile, claim that virtual learning communities also impact teacher effectiveness and pedagogy, promoting the potential benefits of PLCs as a means of supporting teacher development. It is not always obvious, however, what teachers can focus on in their own individual PD and how they can access it.

One way of providing PD relevant to individual teacher interests is now available through the on-line training on many different aspects of teaching and learning offered by the ECIS Academy (www.ecisacademy.org). The online academy provides a multitude of courses. Some support teachers starting out in their careers: for example modules outlining how to manage student behaviour and student-led discussion. Other courses are aimed at those who wish to develop specific high level skills, perhaps with reference to assessment or developing student engagement to a high level. These courses are available mostly online and on demand. Some are cohort-based and can help develop online communities of practice; for instance the Blended and Online Teaching and Learning Courses where teachers and leaders work in groups to enhance their skills of developing online courses for their students. All these courses are now available online wherever the internet can be accessed. The courses can supplement a school's overall general professional development, providing access to PD which can then be followed up and enhanced through effective professional communities which provide ongoing peer support. Thus, not only are teachers now differentiating their own classroom practice; schools now have much improved opportunities to provide their teachers with differentiated professional development, so better meeting the learning needs not only of students but also of the teachers themselves.

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Five tips to freedom from email

D Marvin says you need to log off and focus on the classroom – and here's how you can do it

Are you in the classroom enough, coaching your teachers? Do you feel tethered to your office answering a continual profusion of emails? Assuming you are an ardent instructional leader – which means your main duties require you to be an instructional resource, a resource provider, a communicator, and a visible presence – you have an obligation to get out of your office. Finding yourself buried under email will keep you away from teachers and students for a substantial chunk of the day.

Following these tips will curb the affliction of email and get you back into classrooms, focusing on coaching your teachers and paying attention to the impact you have on learning.

Tip #1

Recognize the limitations of email

Do not be duped into thinking that you are accomplishing remarkable feats of educational prowess by answering and sending emails. Our compulsive checking and writing of emails unfortunately gives us a false sense of success.

The author Sherry Turkle, who wrote *Alone Together*, sums up its limitations quite well as she states that “e-mail tends to go back and forth without resolution. Misunderstandings are frequent. Feelings get hurt. And the greater the misunderstanding, the greater the number of e-mails, far more than necessary” to solve any issues, or come to any conclusions.

Often, email is too open to interpretation as the people involved are missing vital elements of successful communication – reading facial expressions, hearing intonations in voices, and agreeing upon closure at the same time.

Tip #2

Turn off your auto-check function

Email programs are set to check automatically for any incoming messages. Upon receiving an email message, you may hear a pleasant sound indicating that there is a message awaiting your attention. This pleasurable jingle, regrettably, is intended to interrupt whatever you are doing at that moment. As Nicolas Carr stated in his book, *The Shallows*, “It is not unusual for [workers] to glance at their in-box thirty or forty times in an hour. Each glance represents a small interruption of thought, a momentary redeployment of mental resources; the cognitive costs can be high.” These email “dings” beg you to switch between tasks.

A constant interruption to your work by incoming emails is certainly an invitation to multitask. Eliminate this disruption by turning off your auto-check: schedule a time to read, review and organize your emails. In fact, if you have a laptop in your office, close it when it is not in use. If you have a desktop, turn off the monitor.

Tip #3

Only send emails during the scheduled workday

This tip requires forbearance on your part. We know that administrators often work far beyond the “scheduled” time to work; however, we do not want this reality to shout in the face of teachers and stakeholders. Emails sent at absurd hours come laden with the time and date stamp and an unintentional invitation that you are always available and ready for the next “urgent” matter. Receiving a message from a principal sent at 9 pm on a Saturday night will elicit various beliefs about what acceptable work times are. A teacher may reasonably wonder: Should I be working this late? Am I expected to answer this now? Should I send emails at this time to show that I am working hard?

Defer replying to emails immediately. Wait at least 24 hours. If you are answering emails instantaneously, the implication is that you have treated the email as an emergency. You may later find that some of the emails do not need a response after the deferment, because either the person has solved the issue themselves or they have communicated with you in person.

Tip #4

Check your email only three times per work day

Students and teachers are to be engaged in learning with one another. As an instructional leader, you are to ensure this is happening. It may be difficult if your day is spent multitasking with email as a constant interruption. A conscious effort to close off the desire to anxiously check email is important. Do this by scheduling time to “work” with email three times a day. Schedule all the rest of your tasks (visiting classrooms, reading professional materials, etc) around your email work time.

Tip #5

Draft clear expectations for teachers' use of email

You cannot protect instructional time if you expect teachers to be checking their email account throughout the day. To avoid sending hurried messages to your teachers requires



thoughtful planning on your part. Any message that needs to get to a teacher urgently should be communicated by telephone call or a visit to the classroom. Remember to keep that sense of urgency at bay for your teachers and for yourself.

Protecting teachers from parents' "crisis" emails is a bit trickier. Start by clearly stating how often teachers will be checking their email accounts. For example, here is a statement pulled from a sample handbook: "Teachers are not expected to check email during the school day. Any messages that require an urgent response should be sent via telephone call to the School Office".

Following these tips will result in more time spent in face-to-face conversations. The more time you spend in conversations within your team's presence, the more positive the outcomes will be. Your commitment in seeing someone in person expresses your commitment and interest in what they have to say. Your messages are more likely to be

interpreted clearly and you can respond and react in the moment, according to your recipient's body language and facial expressions.

Email has been labeled as an efficient way through which to communicate. Efficient? Sure. As in yes, you did send a message. But do you know if it was read? Do you know how it was read? Do you have confirmation of understanding? Is the issue resolved? This we may not know until we can actually see the person, face-to-face, to confirm.

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Alliance for
International
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World Conference

Bangkok, Thailand
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Engaging with Difference

Finding Ways Forward



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Alliance for International Education

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Engaging with Difference *Finding Ways Forward*

AIE conferences, held in alternate years, aim to bring together those involved in the promotion of intercultural understanding and international education, including researchers and practitioners at every level of education throughout the world. The 2016 conference programme will include keynote presentations by distinguished speakers, and a series of related strand sessions based on small group presentations and discussion around a range of strand topics. There will also be opportunity for those with common interests in the differing age-related phases of education to get together to share experiences, as well as a host of other informal opportunities for the exchange of views and experience around the overall conference theme of **Engaging with Difference**. All participants will be members of one of the strand groups, and those who wish to make a presentation within one of the groups should submit a proposal via the AIE website, as outlined below.

Call for Proposals

To submit a proposal, please upload to the conference website an abstract of the proposed presentation (not exceeding 300 words), together with the name(s) and full contact details (telephone number and e-mail) of conference presenter(s), by **no later than 16 November 2015**. Proposals will be peer reviewed and you should receive feedback within four weeks of submitting your proposal.

Each presentation will last for a maximum of 20 minutes, followed by 25 minutes of discussion. Presentations must relate to the overall conference theme (**Engaging with Difference**) and may be based on completed research or other projects or on ideas for innovative schemes or topics for future exploration.

We welcome proposals in the following areas, from which the strand themes will be devised:

- Curriculum implications for engaging with difference
- Leadership and Management of engaging with difference
- Global Citizenship
- Professional development of teachers for engaging with difference
- Recognizing different forms of success
- Schools and their wider communities: engaging with difference
- Engaging with difference in teaching and learning
- The role of technology in engaging with difference

Register to participate in the conference via the AIE website: www.intedalliance.org

To submit a conference proposal, go to 'Call for Proposals' on the AIE website:
www.intedalliance.org

The perils of being in a majority

E T Ranger says we could all benefit from being a little more uncomfortable

Minority status is an experience that all expatriates know, though from a privileged position. It has some, but not all, of the challenges facing the immigrant minorities of our home countries: needing friends, housing, power and money, as well as the accustomed necessities of familiar diet, language and role.

All these changes happen when we go abroad, so much and so upsettingly that Anglophones around the world have founded the classic international schools, to build an enclave where they can once again be in the majority, and life can be normal. Yet sometimes it is being in the majority that is hard.

It starts with language. The International Baccalaureate, to its credit, sees speaking a second language as one of its elements of 'international-mindedness'. In the slice of the world served by international schools, English is clearly the most widely shared language, and certainly the most frequent second language. This is a two-edged sword for mother-tongue Anglophones. They can be understood widely, and often accurately, but given such a privilege they need to hear the argument for learning a further language time and again, at home and at school.

The consequences go much farther than the place of language in the curriculum. Anglophone countries are generally islands. Even the USA, despite its long land borders, is so vast a country that most citizens have little chance to meet a neighbouring alternative national culture. From infancy we are encouraged in the belief, like all humans, that we know how things ought to be, and we should be careful not to speak to strangers. It is this conviction of our own normality that is challenged by living overseas.

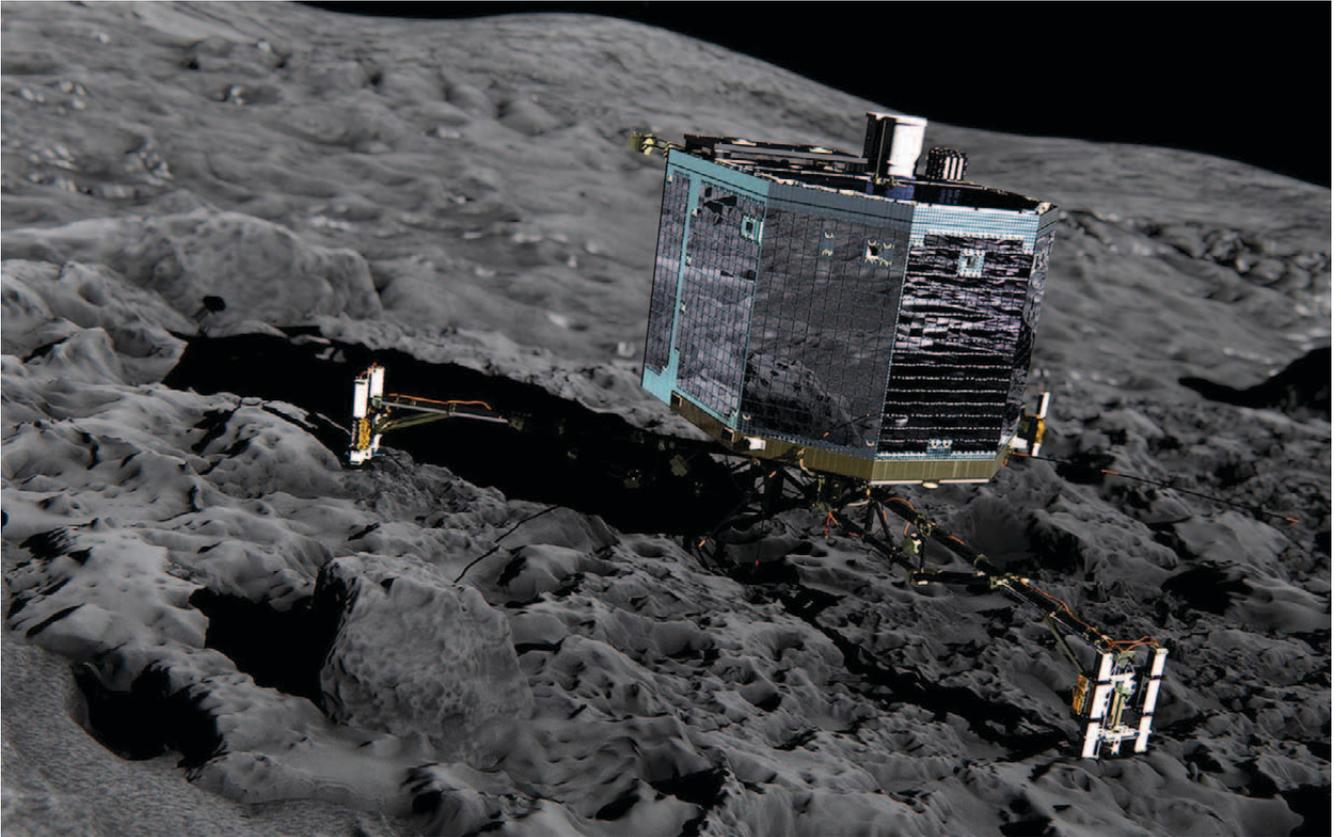
I believe that a bit of strangeness in childhood is a good thing. Cultural confrontations remind us that other people matter even if they have funny ideas, and what precious discoveries are happening in our schools! The stereotypic 'intercultural' encounter is at the lunch table, when each child opens their lunch box and discovers that the new friend they have been sitting next to is being fed weird things by her mum. Other oddities that attach to national labels will follow, but with luck the child will come to realise that even if the friend has another national label, they have enough in common to be treated just as a person. And we, ourselves, are also all a bit different.

Perhaps this is the lesson international schools can give: that the national label is not necessarily the most important thing about a person. Not that it doesn't matter; it obviously does, in many ways. But 'culture' (which is often linked in our thinking to nationality) and 'personality' (which is commonly seen as an individual quirk) are just kinds of difference.

But here is the hidden problem; all of these discoveries need to start from conversation, and that needs language. If we have no trouble expressing ourselves, how can we appreciate the effort that the other is making to understand and to be understood? As we lean towards one another in conversation, they are the ones who have to stretch to bridge the language gap. We may assume that we are meeting half way, but the second-language speaker struggles to communicate, handicapped by an internal predictive text which operates in their mother-tongue. In fact we are meeting very much on our turf and on our terms; a small step for the English-speaker, a great leap for the other.

So here we are, poor little Anglophones, denied the thrill of managing to succeed in another language, unaware of the frustration of having feelings to express and no words to express them, oblivious of the commitment and effort made by another in order to reach across to us. While others in our school have lived an intercultural life, and have learned so much about humanity, what have we gained? I suggest that international schools should practise the art of being comfortable – but not too comfortable. Are we sure that our English-speakers are uncomfortable enough?

I believe that a bit of strangeness in childhood is a good thing. Cultural confrontations remind us that other people matter even if they have funny ideas, and what precious discoveries are happening in our schools!



An artist's impression of Rosetta's Philae on Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko (ESA)

A welcome 'awakening'

Richard Harwood celebrates a breakthrough 300 million miles from earth

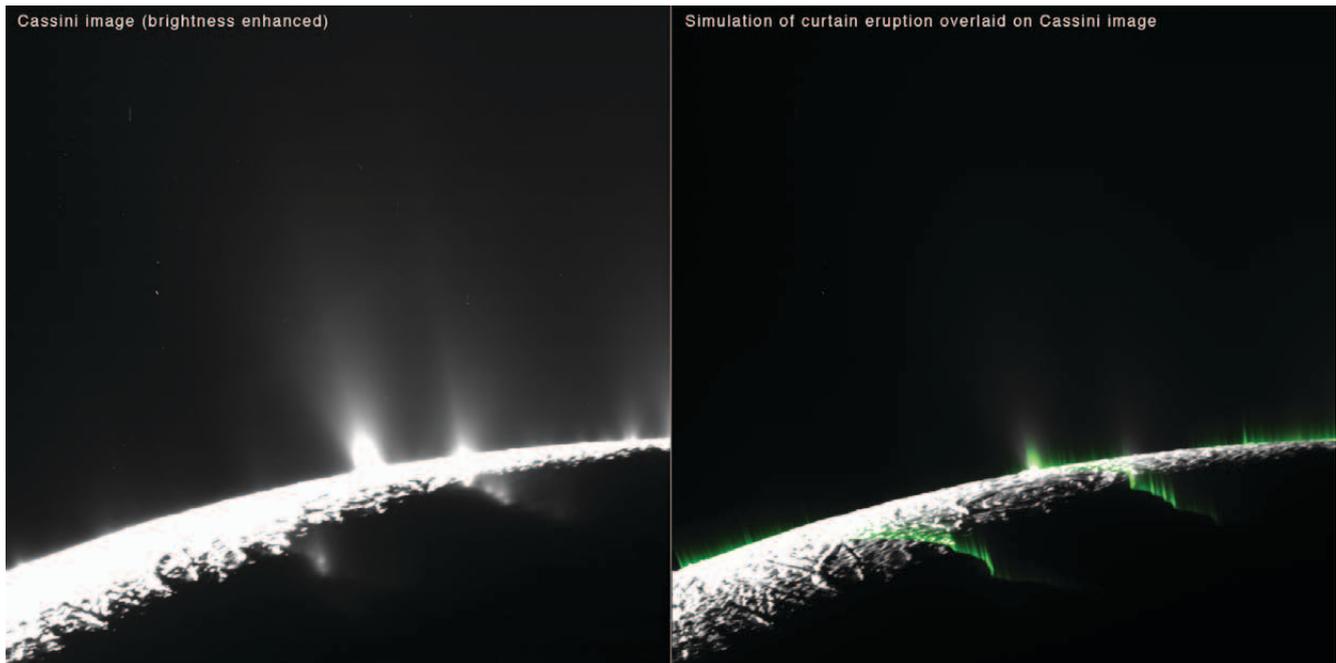
The euphoria that greeted the news in June 2015 that the first spacecraft to land on a moving comet was back in communication was something of a social phenomenon. Was it general desperation for 'good news', or an affection for the 'small' in an immense and seemingly over-powering context? Whatever the reason, the news was certainly scientifically welcome, and extended the usefulness of this project that continues to amaze with the technical complexity of its achievements. Simply the feat of rendezvousing with the comet and landing the probe was an achievement that has captured the imagination – the lander is some 300 million miles from Earth, on a comet travelling at 84,000 mph.

Philae became the first spacecraft to touch down on the surface of a comet, the duck-shaped piece of rock known as 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko. After initial communications to Earth via its Rosetta mothership, it had to switch to hibernation mode because of its awkward landing site. Philae has woken up after seven months in that hibernation and made contact with Earth. The European Space Agency

announced the contact: 'Incredible news! My lander Philae is awake!' This jubilant tone was echoed at the German Aerospace Centre in Darmstadt, and on social media – with scientists excited that the historic Rosetta mission to analyse rock, ice and gases on a moving comet could resume activity.

In what seems a piece of serendipity, the fact that the probe landed at an angle close to the wall of a crater or cliff – and not where originally intended – may in fact have turned out to be advantageous. Originally thought to be restricting to the experiment because not all the solar panels upon which the lander relies to keep itself charged were facing the Sun, it now seems that the sheltered position has protected the probe, and that if it had been on a more exposed site it would have been burnt out.

Scientists are now aiming to continue communication with the lander in order to send instructions via Rosetta and to download more of the information already accumulated. Before powering down, the probe had detected water, methane and hydrogen as well as rarer molecules such as



Cassini images of the geyser-like jets in the southern hemisphere of Enceladus (NASA)

methanal and hydrogen cyanide; findings that could indicate whether comets were involved in delivering such vital ingredients of life to the early Earth.

Editors of the journal *Science* (the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science) voted the Rosetta mission the most significant scientific development of last year, and the re-awakening of Philae brings extra scope to the mission.

Origins?

Much of the interest surrounding projects and missions such as that of Rosetta and its probe is focussed on the origins of life: how it arose on Earth and whether it could have been sustained on other planets and moons, within our solar system and/or beyond. Hence the modern interest in the search for Earth-like exoplanets (the NASA Kepler mission) and studies of possible sub-surface oceans such as that which appears to be present on Enceladus.

Enceladus, discovered in 1789 by William Herschel, is the sixth-largest moon of Saturn. Little was known about it until the two Voyager spacecraft passed nearby in the early 1980s. The Voyagers showed that the diameter of Enceladus is only 500 kilometers (310 miles) – about a tenth of that of Saturn's largest moon, Titan – and that it reflects almost all the sunlight that strikes it. It is mostly covered by fresh, clean ice and the surface temperature at noon only reaches -198°C .

In 2005, the Cassini spacecraft started multiple close fly-bys of Enceladus, revealing its surface and environment of this icy world in greater detail. In particular, Cassini discovered a water-rich plume venting from the south polar region of Enceladus. Cryovolcanoes near the moon's southern pole shoot geyser-like jets of water vapor, other volatiles, and solid material, including sodium chloride crystals and ice particles, into space. Over 100 geysers have been identified. Some of the water vapor falls back as "snow"; the rest escapes, and supplies most of the material making up Saturn's E ring. In 2014, NASA reported that Cassini found evidence for a

Before powering down, the probe had detected water, methane and hydrogen as well as rarer molecules such as methanal and hydrogen cyanide.

large south polar sub-surface ocean of liquid water within Enceladus with a depth of around 10 km.

Speculation is rife that such subterranean water environments may be suitable for simple microorganisms to exist and flourish, giving us insight into the origin of microbial life on the Earth itself. Such ideas feed into the notion that life – and even advanced life – could, in all probability, arise quite frequently in many places in the known Universe. An interesting and well-argued antidote to this view is provided by David Waltham's 'Lucky Planet' (Icon Books, 2015) in which Waltham argues that the Earth is a much more peculiar planet than one might think. With an epilogue that directs readers to other books examining the issues from different angles, Waltham provides a skeptical response to ideas of the inevitable evolution of intelligent beings among the stars, suggesting that we may, after all, be lonelier than we might have thought.

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Students take the lead

Oyindrilla Mukherjee assesses the benefits of her school's student-led conference

A student-led conference is organized early in the month of February every year in our school, Ecole Mondiale World School in Mumbai. At the conference, International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP) students present the work they have completed during the first semester. Until 2013, students compiled their work in a hard-bound portfolio. They would choose two pieces of work, include rubric and reflection, and present it to their parents at the conference. Based on feedback received over several years from teachers, students and parents, the format of the portfolio has evolved and has now moved from a hard-bound document to e-books and e-portfolios. Students have been provided with the choice of presenting their work on Google sites or using iBook author.

Students prepare the agenda for the conference and 30 minutes are allotted to each student. To guide the students, a tentative conference agenda is provided. Letters are sent to parents requesting them to confirm their appointment slots. On the day of the conference, students arrive with their parents at the pre-determined time and present their portfolio to them.

There are three fundamental aspects of the MYP: communication, holistic learning and intercultural understanding. The student-led conference helps students to

showcase these fundamental aspects through compiling and presenting their portfolio. The conference is a platform that enables students to develop and display several attributes of the IB learner profile. As communicators, they communicate their present academic and non-academic status to their parents. The preparation and presentation also helps them to reflect on their performance—identifying strengths, weaknesses and ways to improve their performance—and in doing so sharpens the attribute of being reflective. The conference is the perfect platform for students to showcase how they have developed as a learner through the semester. Students set goals for themselves at the beginning of the semester and track their progress throughout the semester. At the conference they inform their parents of the extent to which they have met the goals they set for themselves. In this way, they are able to communicate their progress to their parents. The best part of this process is that the student starts to develop the characteristics of an independent learner. This is a life skill that the students begin to develop and further hone as they move from MYP to the IB Diploma Programme and then to university and beyond.

The portfolio of a student also comprises some elements that are beyond the sphere of the classroom—the non-academic aspects. Students highlight the events such as MYP



Ecole Mondiale World School in Mumbai holds a student-led conference in February every year



'On the day of the conference, students arrive with their parents at the pre-determined time and present their portfolio to them...'

trips and the service activity they are engaged in. They reflect on these events and in their own individual way understand the holistic aspects of education that go beyond the realm of the classroom and encompass their interactions with their immediate environment. As the students engage in service activities and share a wide variety of their experiences during their trips outside the city, they also comment on the intercultural understanding they are exposed to through these events and activities.

Approaches To Learning is about how best the students understand their individual process of learning. Students are enabled to understand their learning style and to identify a variety of other ways in which one can learn. During the student-led conference, the students are provided with a template that lists various aspects of learning, such as collaboration, thinking and communication. The students identify the different ways in which they have learned through the first semester, by completing this template. Through this process, they are able to understand their own process of learning and to figure out the approach they are most comfortable with and any approach they are not confident about. This opportunity takes them a step closer to developing their own ways of learning and applying them to their regular lives. This is another tool which helps students to become independent learners.

Another significant impact of the student-led conference that I have observed in eight years at my school is the bonding of students with their parents. As a student presents her achievement portfolio, she shares with her parents her goals, her achievements and her struggles. Through this process, parents are able to understand the student better. As a teacher who observes a student leading her conference, I can sense the growing confidence of the student and the mutual respect between parent and student. At the end

of the conference, the parent(s) is(are) asked to complete a feedback form regarding the conference. Most of the responses are positive, and they reinforce the point that the conference provides the parents with a platform to understand their child better. Some parents have described feeling emotional at the maturity and growing confidence of the students, and some note that the conferences are helping students to develop life skills. However, responses are not always positive. There are some over-critical parents who judge and discourage the child right through the 30 minute conference. In such situations, the teachers are advised to step in and move the conference towards a more positive focus, helping the parents to appreciate what the student has achieved so far.

Despite the positive characteristics of the student-led conference and the far-reaching positive impacts on the students, organizing the student-led conference brings its own challenges. Some members of the teaching faculty and some students do not see the benefits of preparing for the conference and presenting at it. A few faculty members and a few students consider conference preparation to be an added burden on top of their regular work at school. So, a deficit in motivation can mean that some conferences are not as successful as others. Overall however, the student-led conference is beneficial for the student community as it helps them to become confident communicators, and reflective and independent learners who set goals for themselves and track the progress of their goals to the best of their abilities.

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A magical mural

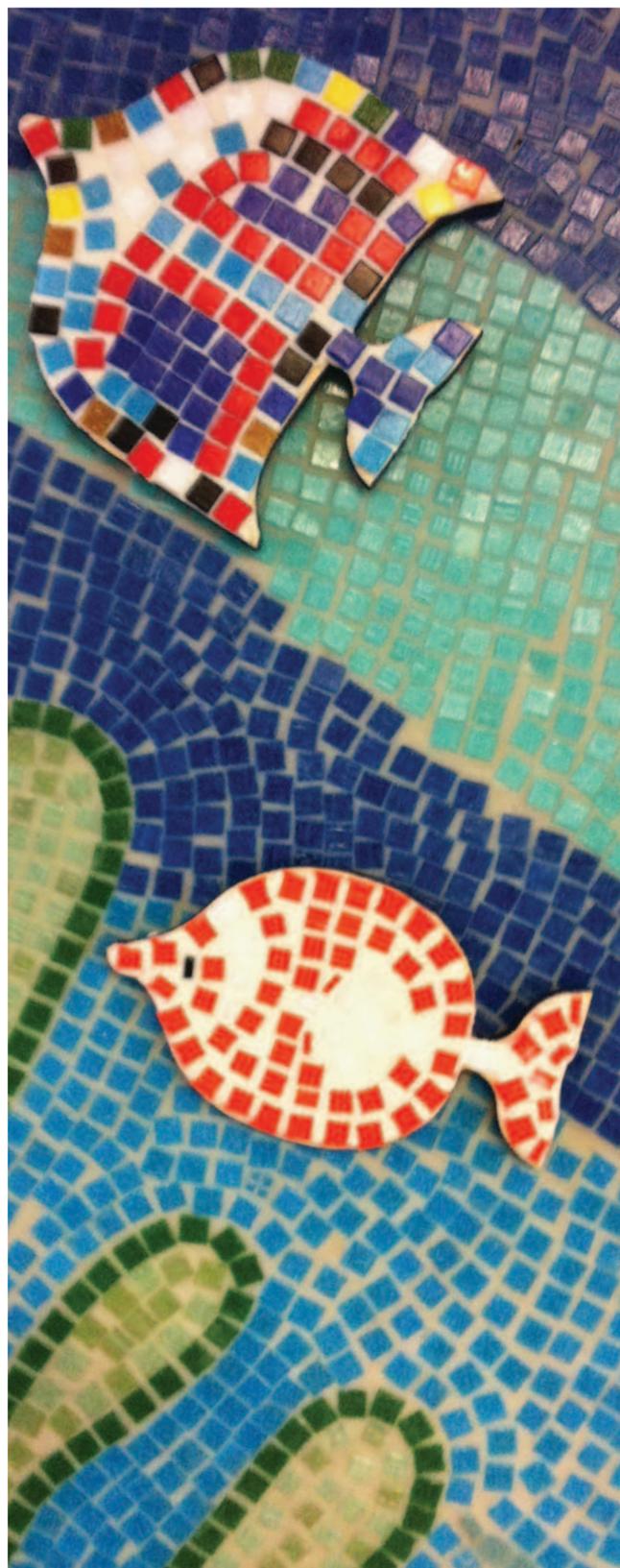
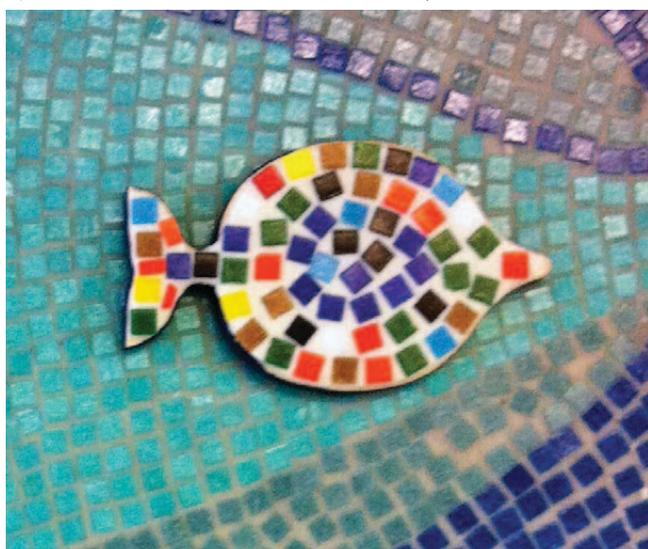
Stacey Wilson-McMahon reports on a project aimed at a worthy cause

It is not often that conference attendees get a chance to collaborate on a piece of art work that will be given to children in need. In November 2014 at the ECIS Conference in Nice, France all attendees and exhibitors were invited to glue mosaic tiles on to the different panels that made up the 4.5m x 1.5m mosaic mural that was to be donated to a local pediatric oncology ward. This wonderful team-building event is a typical art collaboration project of a new American 501c3 (tax exempt) non-profit organization called 'apatchworks' and a wonderful example of how they use art as a tool to help others. In keeping with a tradition started in 2012 by then ECIS Executive Director Jean Vahey, ECIS's current Executive Director Kevin Ruth glued the first tiles to symbolize the partnership between apatchworks and ECIS.

It was amazing to see people from all walks of life sitting around tables, sharing their stories and gluing tiles. At times you could hear several languages being spoken, and at other times there was silence, as the universal language of creating art together needs no language. Conference attendees were joined by Dominique Bouvet (president of a local French volunteer group, The Blouses Roses) and some of her team.

The mural depicting a sea scene and titled 'Under the Sea Mosaic Mural' was made using over 60,000 beautiful glass mosaic tiles donated by the world's leading glass tile-making company Bisazza. The finished mural was then donated to the pediatric oncology ward of the CHU-Archet 2 Hospital in Nice, France and hung on the wall in December 2014 – just in time for Christmas.

Once the mural was in place the children of the pediatric oncology ward began their work, creating mosaic sea creatures and fish to go into the sea, allowing them to watch the sea come to life little by little. Working closely with Dr Christine Soler, her medical team, and The Blouses Roses, apatchworks founder/director Stacey Wilson-McMahon



People and places



wanted to create a mosaic mural that could somehow give children with cancer a positive reason to return to the hospital for their treatments.

What is the magic?

When I arrived at the hospital to add the first fish to the sea, I was greeted by Wasma, a six-year-old girl being treated for cancer, who wanted to meet the lady who had made the "sea mosaic" and check to see if the starfish she'd made a few

weeks before was ready to be added to the mural. She gave me a big hug when I showed her that her starfish was ready, then left with a smile on her face and told her mom she couldn't wait to come back to the hospital to see her starfish in the sea. In speaking with Carole Sauvaigo of The Blouses Roses, who coordinates the weekly mosaic workshops with children, she explained how excited everyone was about the mural and how children of all ages can't wait to make mosaic fish each week.



Stacey Wilson-McMahon and her team were tasked with creating a mosaic for a pediatric oncology ward at a hospital in Nice



Carole Sauvaigo, Vice-President of Les Blouses Roses of Nice, Stacey Wilson-McMahon, and Blouses Roses volunteer Mireille Bovas

While I spent the afternoon adding mosaic sea creatures to the sea, children and their parents came to chat, look at the mural and see if the mosaic fish they had made had been added. I watched and listened in amazement as children left the hospital with great enthusiasm to come back, to make a sea creature or check to see if the one they'd made had been added to the wall. I realized that this mural made by many hands had in fact not only improved the quality of life of children in this hospital, but had also magically given them something positive and creative to look forward to on their visits to the hospital for their cancer treatment.

The name apatchworks means many things. When you separate each word it literally means a patch works – or a bandage can help. APATCH is an acronym for Actively Providing Art To Children in Hospitals. The last meaning of apatchworks is linked to my quilt-making ancestors who left me with the legacy of using patchworks to creatively change the lives of others. I founded apatchworks after losing my mother to breast cancer in 1995 and my father to pancreatic cancer in 2010, and after myself being diagnosed with thyroid cancer in 2013. I have been cancer free since December 2013. It is my personal goal to spend the next 50 years of my life using my skills as an art teacher and facilitator to help improve the quality of life of children with cancer and children in need.

We at apatchworks are committed to providing collaborative art experiences that go beyond borders, cultures and languages for children with long term hospital stays, children who are challenged by social difficulties and children who desire to help other children by actively

providing group art experiences and installations. We provide collaborative art experiences that generate global awareness and provide children with an understanding of different communities by using art as the tool for individual and collaborative expression. We believe in making children smile and laugh while participating in art experiences. We believe that a patch works.

Our community service projects provide unique hands-on creative opportunities for students in international schools, IB Diploma CAS (Creativity Action Service) and Round Square programs. Please join us to help change the lives of children with cancer, one patch at a time.

Stacey Wilson-McMahon is Founder/ Director of apatchworks [www.apatchworks.org] Email: apatchworks@gmail.com





Preparing today's students for tomorrow's world

Ann Puntis and Jeffrey Beard looks at what schools are doing to prepare young people for future success

Today's top students aim high from a surprisingly early age. Aspirational teenagers as young as 15 and 16 are already planning their way to the top universities and a future career with the big name multinational corporations – none more so than students in China, South Korea, Taiwan and several other Asian countries who make it their priority to reach their full potential at school in preparation for the best university and career opportunities. Their parents' choice of an international school education sets this expectation from a very early age. These students know that in today's competitive and interconnected society, having not only the academic knowledge, but also the right language and skills to succeed anywhere in the world will give them a competitive advantage. No longer are UK, US and Canadian students the privileged few because of location and language; many of their international peers put them to shame when it comes to aspiration and achievement.

Right now the targets of these high achievers are the leading English-medium universities, mostly in the UK and North America, and from there the multinationals in the

financial services, new media and the creative sectors whose activities currently define our daily lives. According to CNN Money's 2013 survey of the 'World's Top Employers For New Grads', firms such as Google, Ernst and Young, Goldman Sachs and PWC top students' rankings. And in turn, corporations such as these ratchet up their hiring criteria as they select their new recruits from no longer just their own country, but from the global talent pool. As the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) commented in 2013, with today's goods and services manufactured and distributed worldwide, so employers look for those individuals who have the skills and attributes to work on an international stage. Competition is intense amongst top graduates from leading universities, with prospective employers searching worldwide for their best young candidates.

There's a distinct consensus among universities and employers when describing the type of applicants they are now seeking. Strong academic performance might get applicants through the first stage of selection but no longer clinches a degree place or an employment contract.

A trawl of the world's top employers' websites, and discussion with higher education recruiters, places new emphasis on capabilities that have become known as '21st-century' skills.

Traditional interest in the breadth of a student's school experience continues to play a significant part – it tells a recruiter much about an applicant, not least the ability to balance priorities and manage time effectively. Goldman Sachs, for example, looks back to an applicant's school record for evidence of extracurricular activity: 'We look at the types of activities that candidates have been engaged in through school, such as team sports, events or group projects; or even outside school where they may have volunteered for a charitable organization', says the Goldman Sachs Careers Blog.

But a trawl of the world's top employers' websites, and discussion with higher education recruiters, places new emphasis on capabilities that have become known as '21st-century' skills. These are skills that relate to new ways of working and thinking in our rapidly changing global society, and they're no longer simply-defined skills. The long-standing interest in an applicant's problem-solving skills, for example, has moved to a new focus on an applicant's expertise in working collaboratively to solve problems.

Collaborative problem-solving and intercultural understanding

Collaborative problem-solving reflects the way in which projects are tackled within higher education and academic research, and how work is progressed across a multinational company. It brings together effective knowledge

management and the ability to look at an issue from multiple perspectives and skill-bases, and with a global perspective. There's widespread recognition that 'silo' mentality (and this refers to taking a purely national, as well as functional or organisational, perspective) inevitably results in narrow and constrained solutions to a problem. Top university and business recruiters are now seeking to avoid this in their candidate selection.

Deloitte's recruitment guidance for applicants, for instance, emphasises this: "People who do well at Deloitte communicate well, are excellent team contributors, are results-focused, and are highly motivated to serve clients with distinction" says Deloitte's Global Director of Recruitment, Kent Kirch. Similarly IBM stresses that "Creativity, curiosity, and strong collaborative skills are valued in would-be recruits", while Stacy Savides Sullivan, Google's Chief Culture Officer and Director of Human Resources puts it like this: "I would characterize the culture as one that is team-oriented, very collaborative and encouraging people to think non-traditionally".

In fact, collaborative problem-solving is now so widely regarded as a key skill in the 21st century that, starting this year (2015), the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) will carry out an international survey of the effectiveness of different educational systems in developing this skill.

In one sense, we could argue that the need to be

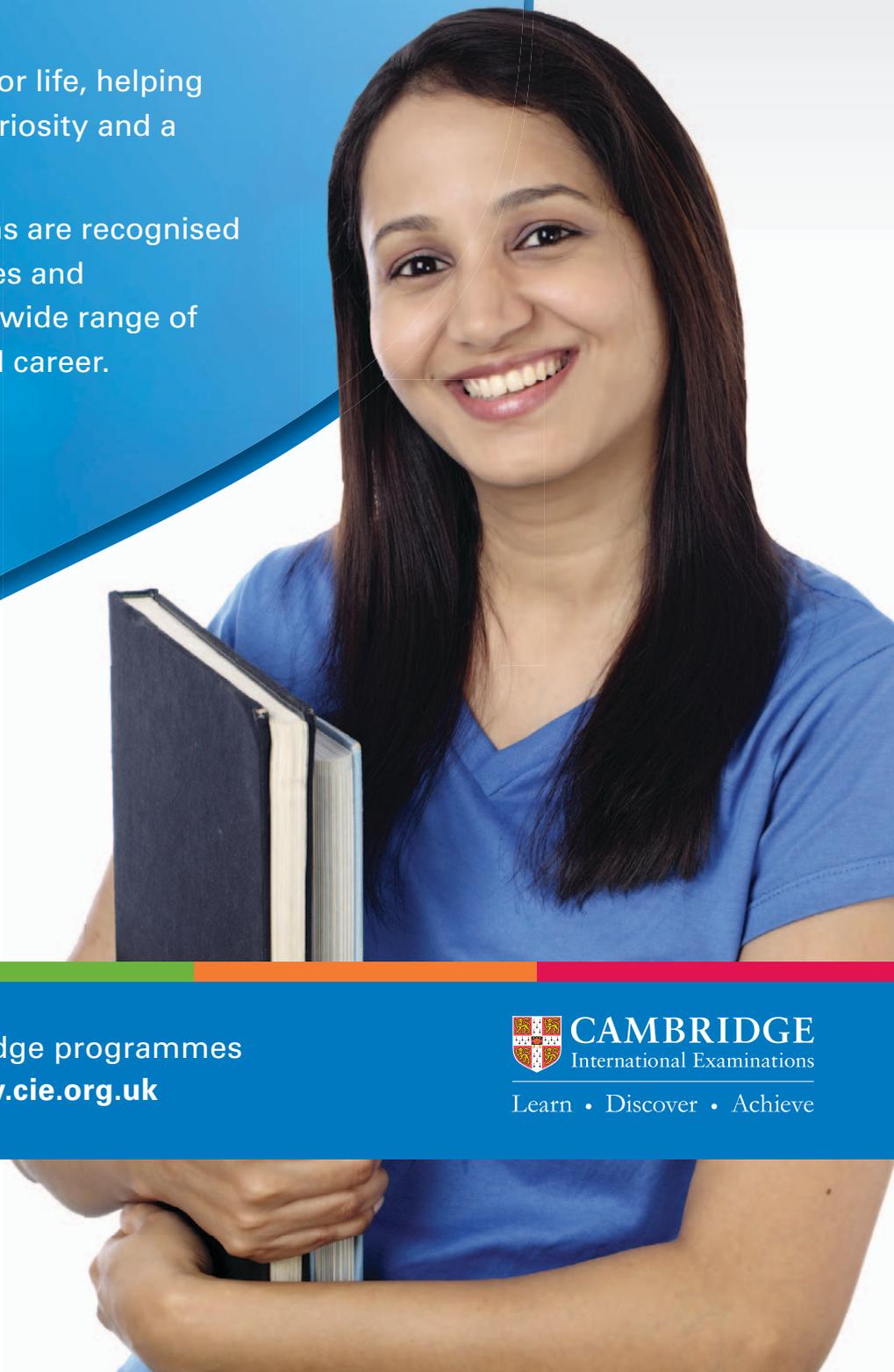


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an effective collaborator is nothing new. The ability to communicate, co-operate, respect and support peers in the learning environment and colleagues in a workplace team has long been sought after. But what's different today is the recognition that such groups will be diverse in make-up, international in focus and, at times, virtual in composition. It's not just about being a competent team-player. Today it's about whether applicants can evidence levels of intercultural understanding and be excited, challenged and responsive to differences in perspective.

Shirley Jackson, Global Lead for Recruitment at Ernst and Young, comments that a global mindset is key: 'Recruiters look for team players who can ... work effectively with people who have diverse backgrounds, skills and perspectives.' BMW picks up on this trend, stating that 'international experience, such as a term spent abroad or participation in a student exchange programme, is often an advantage.'

Structured international study programmes and exchanges have been a well-established and valued feature of higher education courses for many years. But now high school students, aware of the vital importance of demonstrating these skills for university and job applications, are increasingly looking to such experiences, or to focused skill development programmes beyond their core school curriculum, which are explicitly designed to build capabilities of most interest to recruiters. Students who can demonstrate the ability to think and act as global citizens are very much in demand; what Google calls 'being Googley' (being able to 'innovate in a fast-paced environment, thrive on small teams, excel in flat organizations, and care about making the world a better place'). These are qualities valued by the academic establishments and business organisations in which aspirational, career-minded students most want to carve their future success.

Making progress

So how are high school students – the recruits of tomorrow – addressing these challenges? They're getting involved in international study exchanges all over the world, and signing up for leadership and enterprise programmes that complement and enhance the core curriculum they're studying in school. These are programmes for the aspirational; purposely designed to help young people develop intercultural understanding, global perspective, highly specific skills, and bringing them together with other aspirational young people from all over the world to provide first-hand experience of collaborating and problem-solving across borders and entrenched cultural perspectives.

And what are schools doing to support them in these aspirations? They are actively participating in international exchanges, identifying and promoting best potential opportunities to their students and parents, championing extra-curricular skill development, and helping their young people to understand the challenges and opportunities that they'll soon face within our increasingly flat world. The best and the brightest from around the world will find their way to the most desirable positions – be they the best degree programmes at the world's finest universities, or the best jobs in the world's leading organisations. Their commitment to meet the challenges of a new agenda is inspiring and we should be supporting it wherever we can.

Jeffrey Beard served as Director General for the International Baccalaureate Organization from 2006 to 2013, and Ann Puntis is the former CEO of Cambridge International Examinations. They have both been instrumental in creating Global Study Pass, a study-abroad organization aimed at secondary years students. [www.globalstudypass.com] Email: ann.puntis@globalstudypass.com

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Embracing the ‘mindful revolution’

Anne Winter explains a project to focus on the benefits of living in the moment

The classroom is in semi-darkness. Sitting at desks are figures with their eyes closed and their backs straight. No one talks; in fact the only sound is breathing. Some are following the outline of their fingers whilst others have their hands resting in their laps. It’s hardly the interactive, collaborative, dynamic experience we often see here at Alice Smith School. However, amidst the questioning and critical thinking a Mindful Revolution is taking place. Teachers and students are taking time to quieten their minds and pay attention to the present moment. Alice Smith School is embracing the practice of Mindfulness; alongside organisations as diverse as the US Marines (Washington Times, 2015), UK Parliament (The Mindfulness Initiative, 2015) and Google (Business Insider, 2015).

In line with a new skills-based curriculum that includes being ‘Happy and Healthy’ as a Learning Attribute, Alice Smith has been introducing Mindfulness with a two pronged approach; giving exposure to both the students and the staff. The initiative at school is still in its infancy, but already results are promising.

Some students have been participating in trial Mindfulness ‘lessons’ using the .b curriculum from the UK-based Mindfulness in Schools Project. This course has been designed specifically by teachers for use in the classroom. Now taught in more than 20 countries with a curriculum translated into numerous languages, co-founder Richard Burnett hopes that mindfulness meditation will one day be taught in all schools ‘just like reading and writing’.

The differences in the classroom have been small but significant. One teacher reports that “The kids enjoy Mindfulness. When they see we are going to have it they may cheer or say ‘Yes!’. I have noticed a change as we have been doing it. After practising for about 40 minutes, for 6 weeks, students who had found it difficult to concentrate found they could concentrate for much longer. One said ‘I can count 10 breaths now’. Another boy initially found it very difficult; when he was asked to go into his private ‘bubble’ he would constantly seek attention from the other boys, laughing and making faces. But as the weeks have gone on he’s really settled down. Now he will shut his eyes and keep inside his own space”.

This self-reliance is a powerful tool; it can develop into decreased feelings of anxiety and build intrinsic motivation. Focusing inside can also lead to greater focus elsewhere, which can lead to better results. Mindfulness increases both children’s self-esteem and their performance in class. In 2012 Katherine Weare, Emeritus Professor at Exeter and Southampton universities, conducted an academic study which considered the impact of mindfulness on children and young people (Weare, 2012). The study found that mindfulness helps to develop cognitive and performance skills. In turn, this then leads to children becoming more focused in the classroom and paying closer attention to their studies. These positive results are echoed for teachers. Research has overwhelmingly highlighted the many benefits of Mindfulness for adults, including enhanced performance,



A mindfulness lesson at the Alice Smith School, Kuala Lumpur



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improved emotional management and reduced workplace stress, inspiring even more workplaces to implement mindfulness training programs (Huffington Post, 2015). Mindfulness is even recommended on the UK National Health Service (NHS) website (NHS, 2015).

Sixteen teachers at Alice Smith have begun an 8 week Mindfulness course. The course runs over 8 weeks in 2-hour evening sessions. A day of mindfulness practice is included in week 6, when participants have the opportunity to experience a whole day of practice in order to notice its effects. A trained mindfulness instructor runs each course, teaching the meditation practices and supporting the participants' learning; group discussions are an important part of this process. The course aims to assist teachers in taking better care of themselves and in getting the most out of living. According to Bangor University (2015):

'The majority of people completing the programme have reported lasting physical and psychological benefits including:

- an increased ability to relax
- greater energy and enthusiasm for life
- heightened self-confidence
- an increased ability to cope more effectively with both short and long-term stressful situations.'

What will happen? We can only hope. But with teachers experiencing these benefits and students becoming more focused and less anxious, and paying closer attention to

their studies, we are anticipating that Mindfulness will go a long way to making Alice Smith School an even happier and healthier place to study and to work.

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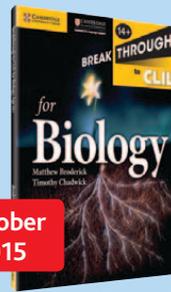


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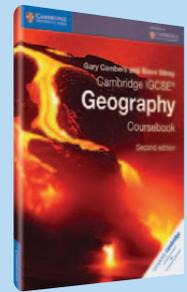


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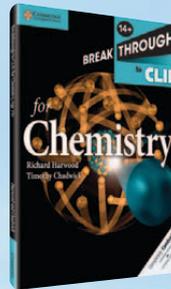


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Theatre in a container

Sarah Tudge celebrates a sell-out performance with a difference

A few months ago the city of Erlangen built a container village close to our school. This temporary accommodation is providing housing for asylum seekers waiting to be processed through the German system, and the school has been working with the local community to try to assist in any way we could. As I walked past the container village every day, I kept wondering about the stories of the people who would live there: Where would they come from? What had they been through to get to Germany? How would they feel when they arrived? And then I stumbled upon Claire Bayley's gripping play 'The Container'. The play tells the story of five refugees, traveling across Europe in a container, trying to find refuge to make a better life for themselves. This was a story begging to be told to our school community, so that perhaps we would stop and think about the people who were soon to fill the containers down the road.

I took the play to my International Baccalaureate Theatre class and they were on board. We obtained the rights from Nick Hern books and I made email contact with Claire Bayley, who was utterly supportive of our project. We signed up for the play to be part of the International Week Against Racism that takes place in Erlangen. We were ready to go ... but where would we perform? Our school theatre is plush and lovely, but doesn't give the feel of being in a container. We looked at designs of how to change our gym, or even build a structure on our stage. We started rehearsing in our school truck, for the students to get a feel for the claustrophobia the characters would feel. Then our Deputy Director managed to persuade a local building company, Mauss, to loan the school a container for two days. The play would take place in the container, there would be audiences of 40, and we would stage multiple performances.

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Bart van Straten
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Scenes and rehearsal from the performance of 'The Container'

Meanwhile the rehearsal room was rather fraught. My talented IB Theatre class were struggling. This was a tough play, they were telling stories that were foreign to them, and they were trying to do justice to accents they found very difficult. This is where working in an international school is amazing; we were able to ask parents and staff to come and help us. From our community we had Turkish, Ukrainian and Syrian accent coaches available. The students worked tirelessly, the coaches were kind.

Then came the day when the container arrived. At 6.30am it was placed in the front of our school entrance. Every member of our community had to walk past the venue for this play. We had twenty four hours to rehearse and for the students to get used to the space. It was an intense time and the students were pushed to their limits. We had to check that there was enough air for 40 audience members, and that there was enough light as all light was provided by torches. The school and the community were buzzing. Why was this container in front of the school? Who were those exhausted students and crew appearing in and out of the door? What was happening?

All shows were sold out; there was a fantastic mix of high school students, staff, members of our community, university students and officials. All proceeds went to Amnesty International. The actors delivered an unbelievably brave performance; they told the story with maturity and honesty. The audience was visibly moved and grateful to get out of the container into the fresh night air – but as they walked to their cars they saw the container village and perhaps thought differently about the people who would live there.

Sarah Tudge is Head of Drama at Franconian International School, Germany
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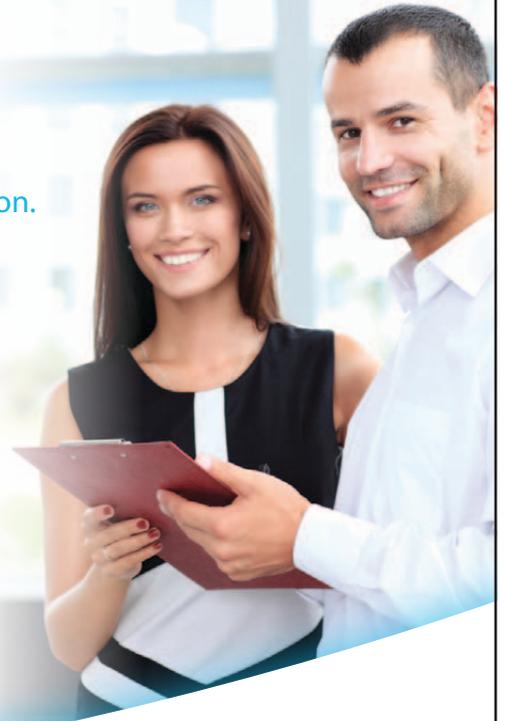
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Re-evaluating our philosophies

Peggy Pelonis and David Gleason share the results of an insightful survey into student ability

International education aspires to develop internationally minded students who are global citizens, able to belong and make meaningful contributions in the world. These students are multi-taskers, technology savvy and assumed to be incredibly resilient. Indeed many students in international schools try to rise to these adult challenges, often forgetting that they are still children. The skills and abilities required for students to become internationally minded global citizens can certainly be stimulating, but educators might want to reflect on the costs involved.

To this end, a group of teachers, counselors, learning specialists and administrators were presented with the following questions at workshops for the European Council of International Schools (2014) as well as the Central and Eastern Europe Schools Association (2015): (1) What are the external abilities of students who are considered internationally minded, global citizens? What do they look like? (2) What are the assumed internal capacities, skills, and psychological capabilities of these students? (3) What then are the implications for teachers, counselors, administrators in international schools?

To the first question teachers, administrators, counselors and specialists suggested that students should benefit from being problem solvers, lifelong learners, culturally sensitive,

tolerant, responsible, empathic, creative, and balanced. These are external abilities that should be recognizable in any situation by any observer. The second question brought about the following responses as desirable traits: resilient, adaptive, confident, open minded, flexible, dignified, they learn from failure, autonomous – they take care of themselves. These are the desired internal abilities that will support children through their life span.

Yet the academic and co-curricular demands of institutions that define success according to the highest ranking higher education establishments can put demands on students that may tax their natural abilities to cope. Therefore, the next question for consideration was 'In light of the demands we put on these students, how do we know if they're actually achieving these external and internal abilities?' In fact, 'what are we actually doing/not doing in our schools every day that may get in the way of helping students develop this important internal and external balance?'

Responses included the following points: We seem to over-schedule our students; We 'cover material' and then 'teach to the test'; We define our students by numbers and grades; We don't allow our students to be self-advocates; We focus too much on the quantitative vs. the qualitative aspects of teaching; We resist 'going off topic' because we don't want that to get back to parents.



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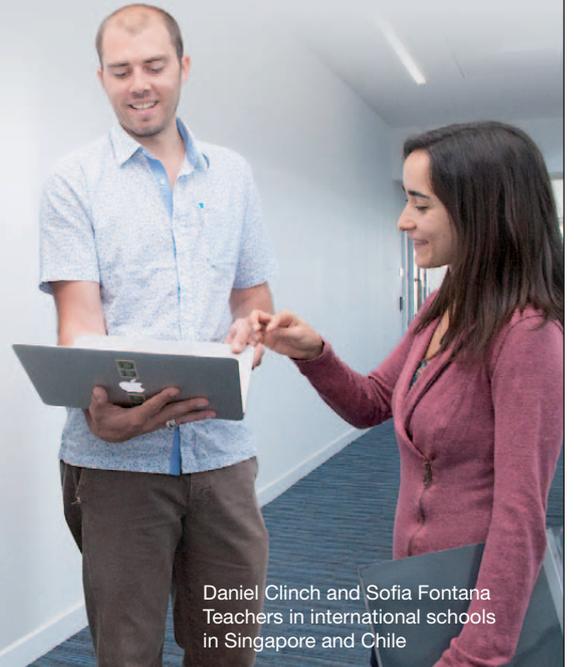
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Further, when we asked participants to identify what fears or worries might arise were they to consider engaging in the opposite of these behaviors, their responses included the following: We worry that we'd compromise the intellectual rigor of our school; We're afraid that parents wouldn't see us as an academically challenging school and our enrollment would do down; We worry that if we didn't focus on the quantitative measures – on numbers and grades – then we wouldn't be helping our students compete as effectively in their college application process.

We concluded these workshops by acknowledging our collective quandary: that while we are aiming to educate our students for 'international mindedness' and 'global citizenship', and wanting to instill in them many 'qualitative' abilities such as being culturally sensitive, tolerant, responsible, empathic, creative, balanced as well as adaptive, confident, open minded and flexible, we also seem to be inhibited by our need to protect ourselves, our schools' reputations and our students in their college application processes. Now that we can acknowledge these tensions, how can we change so that we can focus less on 'the quantitative' and more on 'the qualitative?'; how can we work toward maintaining a healthy balance of both?

This may call for a shift in mindset as well as change that permeates all levels of the institution. The challenge of coping with and navigating change, however, is remarkable because while change is everywhere and an inevitable part of life, it is still something we resist on multiple levels (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Today, socio-political and technological changes take place at unprecedented speeds. This is especially true for children of international schools where coping with different cultures, languages and experiences is a daily part of students' lives. International schools aim to educate students to become global citizens; able to understand, tolerate and appreciate different cultures, languages and highly sophisticated ways of being anywhere in the world, while successfully navigating the competitive world of education and beyond. Parents send students to international schools for an optimal educational experience that will prepare them for a productive future almost anywhere in the world. The rate of change, however, undeniably taxes the already difficult development of adolescents today because, in addition to the surrounding changes, the greatest challenge of change they face is within themselves. Change can be exciting but it can also be threatening because it challenges two basic human needs: belonging and safety.

Children and adolescents need to belong and to feel safe (Mosak & Maniaci, 1999). They thus will seek and find a place of belonging in almost any situation. When they feel threatened they may retreat into a place of safety within themselves and may often distance themselves from the outside world in the process. What we see on the outside and may interpret as insubordination, passivity or incompetence could also reflect their current best attempt to cope. Therefore, when children and teenagers face too much change too quickly, they feel frustration, anger, fear and shame, and their coping abilities suffer. For some of these students, feeling overwhelmed and, at times, disillusioned may lead them to act out their feelings in a variety of behavioral ways. Some develop persistent symptoms of anxiety and depression. Others 'shut down',

refuse to do their schoolwork, and/or exhibit previously non-existent symptoms of learning and attentional disorders. Many students turn to alcohol and other substances for intermittent relief, while others lash out, using physical aggression or social exclusion to offset their own underlying vulnerability. Some students starve themselves or develop chronic bulimic behaviors while others repeatedly cut or burn themselves. Tragically, some commit suicide.

In an over-pressured environment, kids may feel unable to cope effectively. While many international schools have on-staff counselors and learning specialists who are available to react to, or to 'treat', these students' emotional and/or academic problems, many of the students' problems are simply too severe and, sometimes, too chronic for school professionals to manage on their own. Furthermore, given the global scale of these student problems, we have to wonder, 'Have we considered looking closely at what we are doing that might be contributing to our students' difficulties? Rather than remaining only re-active to our students' problems by providing counseling and learning support services, is it possible for us to be more pro-active by working together to develop more creative solutions to these problems? Are there changes we should be making that would help our students to feel less pressured?'

Until very recently, most of our educational practices have been based primarily on theories about human growth and development. Now, however, thanks to advances in neuroimaging over the past ten to fifteen years, we can see – noninvasively – inside the living brains of our children and adolescents. While the theories that have guided us for decades have certainly been helpful, every one of them lacked the precision – the neurobiological facts – that neuroimaging can now provide. With ever-increasing exactness, we know more than ever before about children's and adolescents' brain development. With these new and extraordinary insights, we now know too much not to be acting in ways that are more developmentally empathic and 'in sync' with human brain development.

In light of these extraordinary scientific insights, schools can become mindful of their tendency to overwhelm kids and push them beyond their actual developmental capabilities. We must consider re-committing ourselves to educating kids in developmentally healthy, holistic ways; considering mind, body and spirit. Honoring and respecting the development of students in competitive secondary schools requires a challenging shift in mindset.

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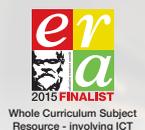
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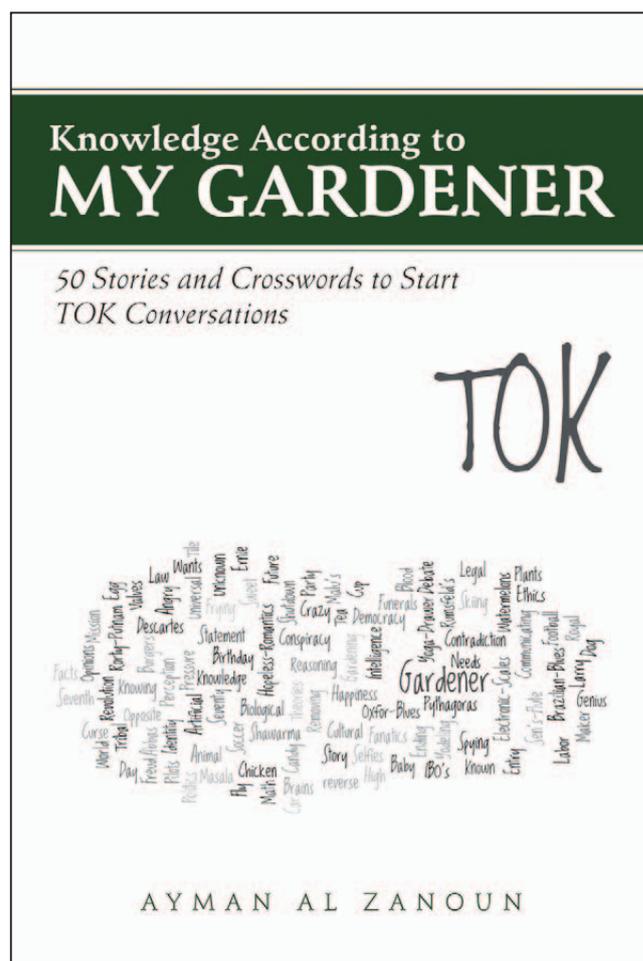
Knowledge According to My Gardener

50 Stories and Crosswords to Start TOK Conversations

by Ayman Al Zanoun (2014)
Lulu Publishing Services
Reviewed by Justin Laleh

For the majority of teachers around the world it is most likely the case that they will be encountering the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Theory of Knowledge (ToK) course for the first time when they come to teach it. This is not to say that they will have had no prior engagement with epistemology, or any of the 'meta' fields associated with their own branch of academic investigation (be it critical theory, historiography, logic, philosophy of science and so on). Rather, it is that the precise aims and methods of this proprietary IB course are something new. Unlike the other courses that one will have to teach, there is no immediately discernible field of objects towards which the Theory of Knowledge course intends, in terms of either specification or a determinate set of phenomena in need of questioning. For mathematics we have number and other mathematical objects, for biology we have the organism, for English the text. Regardless of the specific paradigm within which we sit, there are relatively uncontroversial standards and solid basic intuitions which allow us to ascertain what it is that our subject 'is about', so to speak. As such, coming to an understanding of what we as ToK teachers are trying to achieve can be the most demanding, but equally the most rewarding, aspect of delivering this course.

In this regard, one of the aspects I found most interesting was the preface in Ayman Al Zanoun's *Knowledge According to my Gardener* wherein he retells his own journey on the path towards a mature grasp of ToK. Wherever ToK teachers gather in significant number one is bound to find a higher than average proportion of philosophers. We philosophers (yes I admit it, I am one too!) seem to be the default "go to" for ToK, but if we are the rulers of the ToK world it is most certainly a *de facto* regime. Al Zanoun's story attempts to draw out the fundamental problems associated with the overly academic-philosophical approach, which is to say that one focuses too much on abstract theoretical concerns and does not engage the students. For our students ToK is compulsory, so we cannot rely on a latent concern for the ends of philosophy. If we could, or indeed should, then Philosophy Higher Level would be a requirement. Al Zanoun argues this point forcefully and therefore deliberately opens up the space for meditation on this matter. On this point, whilst there is much of value in *Knowledge According to my Gardener*, in my estimation its key contribution lies in



forcing the reader to reflect on how his/her own academic background will play itself out in approaching the course. As much as Al Zanoun attempts to attain a critical distance from his analytic philosophical background, his own concerns continue to ineluctably play themselves out across the 50 crossword tasks which comprise the body of this work. I am not offering this as a criticism of the book, as it raises an important knowledge issue for us as educators; to what extent can we, and perhaps more importantly should we, as teachers distance ourselves from what we find compelling about our studies?

The basic premise of the book is reminiscent of the pedagogic tales of Mullah Nasr ud-Din, where we follow a central character (the eponymous gardener) whose encounters with others reveal his startling folk wisdom and

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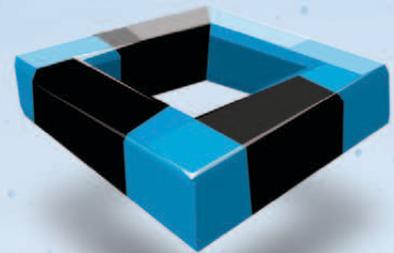
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It has a great deal of merit as a resource of interesting anecdotes to either guide the teacher in starting a conversation, or to use ‘out of the box’ as it were, in the class itself.

encompass a wide range of knowledge issues. The brief tales of the encounters themselves, anecdotal in nature and fifty in number, are engaging and interesting. In my estimation they, in themselves, provoke a good deal of thought regarding cultural modes of story-telling as this style may not be so familiar to the western reader. Equally, they offer a rich source of real-life situations from which one can derive and develop knowledge questions (the core skill demanded by the various modes of assessment in the Theory of Knowledge). For example, story number four opens up an excellent issue surrounding the possibility of there being a truly authentic chicken masala – is it possible to identify an essence of masala and to what extent is access to knowledge of this essence limited by one’s cultural background? This story plays out as a conversation between the gardener and his Somali room-mate which, whilst accessible and interesting, remains highly hypothetical. One of the central issues in differentiating for a class in ToK, on my read, is not straying too far into the philosophical canon, and trying to stay firmly within the lexicon of their studies and lives. By this I mean that more often than not a real-life situation should be precisely that: real. This is not to say that there is no value in the hypothetical approach – just that it should be used sparingly.

The tasks and main intended use for these stories are to complete a complementary crossword for each anecdote. These crosswords are not limited to a comprehension task, but aim to equally extend readers and direct them to sources of further study. The author explicitly advocates the use of internet devices to assist in this activity, which provides a good balance between the traditional modes of story-telling and crossword solving, offering an intriguing approach to the challenges and potentialities of the modern

technological classroom. Each crossword is differentiated in terms of difficulty, from comprehension and recall to comparison, logical extrapolation and research. As an activity this is intended as a starter, which means that its scope in terms of learning objectives is well judged – the story raises issues, the crossword will acquaint the student with potential examples and theorists. However, for the amount of time it takes for the student to solve the crossword (more than the standard allotted 10 minutes) one might want a more varied task which incorporates more learning objectives, i.e., analysis and evaluation. Again, this is not to dismiss the value of the text, but rather to emphasise that it has limits.

In conclusion, whilst I would not recommend this book as a week to week guide in the course, I do not think it is intended as such. It has a great deal of merit as a resource of interesting anecdotes to either guide the teacher in starting a conversation, or to use ‘out of the box’ as it were, in the class itself. The crosswords could well be of use, but I would imagine that the weaker members of a class might find them a little too stretching. My favourite aspect of this text is the more meta-analytical questions it raises regarding its approach. As an American-educated philosopher of Arabic descent, Al Zanoun draws equally on the Socratic tradition and the Near Eastern folkloric traditions. Accordingly, this work may not have universal appeal and applicability, but then anyone studying ToK should be well aware of the dangers of claims to universality.

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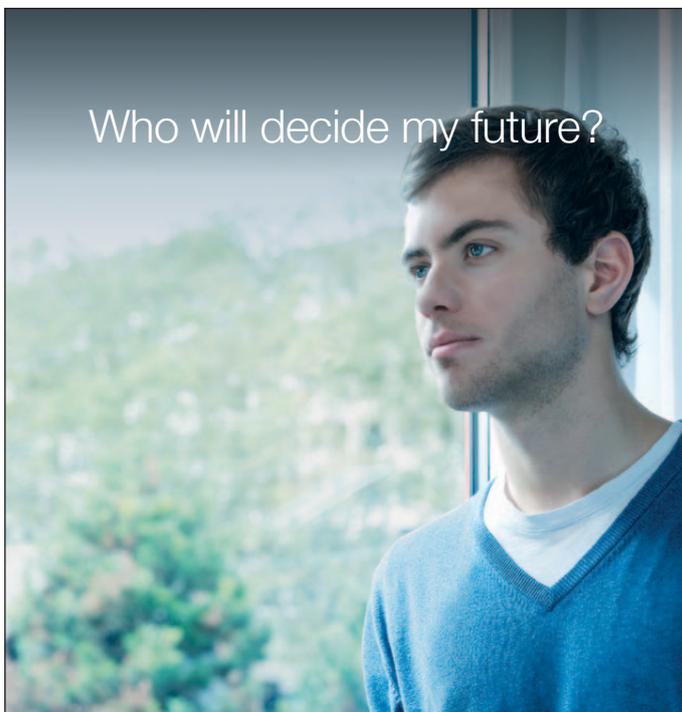
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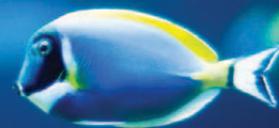
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Safe Passage

How mobility affects people and what international schools should do about it

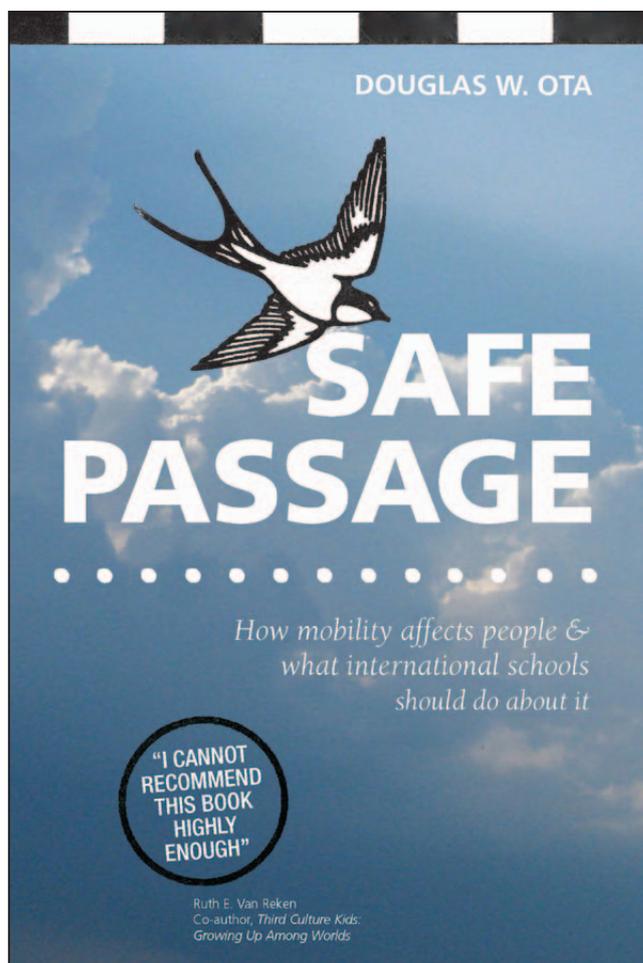
by Douglas W Ota
Summertime Publishing (2014)
Reviewed by Mary Langford

Those who have known Doug Ota in person or by reputation will know that he is a leading authority on international school transition programmes. Doug Ota is one of the architects behind the Safe Harbour programme at the American School of The Hague (ASH) – the programme which manages how students, families and staff are supported through the practical and emotional challenges of moving internationally – when they arrive, as they settle, and as they prepare for departure. Any international school educator who has explored this area will have heard about Safe Harbour, as Doug and his ASH colleagues have been offered many opportunities to speak about the development, the management and the benefits of the programme as it has been embedded into the fabric of ASH.

The long-promised and eagerly-awaited story of Safe Harbour is at long last available for all those who want to know how to create a comprehensive and strategic transition programme for their international school. Between the covers one finds the background to Safe Harbour – how and why it came about – the importance of approaching the task in a strategic way, breaking down the tasks, delegating responsibility, engaging multiple stakeholders, assessing successes or areas for improvement, and sustainable management of the whole business. The book emphasises the need for successful transition programmes to be embraced by the entire school community.

This is no 'idiot's guide to transition teams in 10 easy steps'; the book contains a lot of good food for thought and useful information, but navigating it is not all that easy. It begins with several credible testimonials and the usual Acknowledgements and Preface, then 'How To Use this Book', and then Ota's 'Six Laws of Transition', followed by the 'Introduction' – when at last, about one fifth into the text, begins Chapter 1 and so on. Then follows an 'Afterword' by Rick Spradling, current Chair of CIS (Council of International Schools), and various Appendices followed by the Bibliography. The author offers some guidance in the 'How to Use This Book – Quick Start Guide'; a sort of literary speed-dial device that refers the reader to different chapters for specific purposes.

Carrying on the nautical theme of the Safe Harbour programme Ota, analogist extraordinaire, carries this theme throughout the book he entitled *Safe Passage*, dividing it into three parts: (1) 'On the High Seas', (2) 'Building a Safe Harbour', and (3) 'Ensuring Safe Passage', with similarly nautical chapter titles such as 'Finding the Ship's Log',



'Building a Safe Harbour', and so on. The Appendices include Ota's 'Messages in a Bottle' directed at every stakeholder in the school community, ranging from Board members to HR managers to students and so on, explaining why transition programmes are relevant to each specific group. These, along with the 'Quick Start Guide', will be helpful to those who are not inclined to tackle the whole book.

For those interested in the Third Culture Kid (TCK) experience, Ota's book brings much-needed theory that was lacking in Pollock and Van Reken's *Third Culture Kids: Growing up Among Worlds* (published in 2000) – still regarded as the TCK bible. Using the psychologist's lens, Ota incorporates research and theory including a variation of Maslow's hierarchy (from the perspective of transition), Visible Thinking, Attachment Theory, Neuroscience – including MRI evidence assessing the brain's response to social exclusion and activity in the Pre-Frontal Cortex (PFC), plus scientific theory and evidence about the effects of grief on humans, not to mention Social Baseline Theory. This information is

Ota is a most elegant writer whose superb use of language reflects the highly intelligent and sensitive person he is, and that is what will motivate many to stay with *Safe Passage* till the final pages.

sprinkled throughout the book and those who stay the course will be much better informed on the Pollock and Van Reken TCK characteristics and experiences that were underpinned by essentially anecdotal evidence. Unfortunately, there is no index – which would have been helpful given the rich body of this theoretical and scientific data, not to mention the many interesting quotes sprinkled throughout. Ota's 'Laws of Transition' are also thought-provoking and would form a good basis for a professional discussion for international school stakeholders.

Those who know and admire Doug Ota may agree that he is one who tends to wear his heart on his sleeve. It is Ota's undeniable passion and compassion for people experiencing transition associated with the international mobility that characterises many international schools that has fuelled his ambition to publish this book, to teach and to discuss this theme whenever he finds the opportunity to do so. Snippets of Ota's autobiographical input, particularly at the early stages of the book, serve to explain his motivation for writing it. However, there is a lack of reference in this text to the role of languages, specifically the significance of mother tongue or home language, in the transition equation. The bibliography does not refer to any of the international school 'gurus' in this area, such as Carder, Gallagher, Sears or even Cummins and Baker. Yet surely the whole question of sustaining the language that research suggests enables international students to enhance their cognitive skills, as well as the important role language plays in fully accessing the cultural heritage represented by the mother tongue, is something that should feature as part of any holistic transition programme.

Ota believes, and many would agree, that 'schools with any degree of turnover have a moral obligation to do better than 'survival of the fittest' policies or practices surrounding mobility across cultures' (p 70). Ota has gone so far as to draft standards for a new 'Section H – Mobility Across Cultures' for consideration by international school accreditation agencies such as CIS and NEASC (Appendix C).

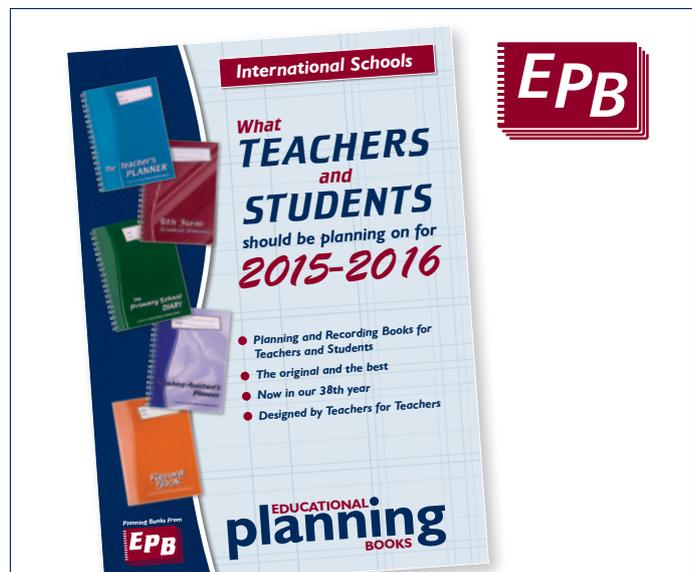
Ota's choice of Summertime Publishing, which focuses on 'people living abroad', is curious; perhaps in order to reach a niche readership market. Yet this is an issue relevant to thousands of educational contexts, not merely international school communities, and the highly academic content of this book would have been enhanced by the engagement of a robust editor of academic texts. Nonetheless, Ota is a most elegant writer

whose superb use of language reflects the highly intelligent and sensitive person he is, and that is what will motivate many to stay with *Safe Passage* till the final pages. Doug Ota is to be commended for sailing in these hitherto uncharted waters.

Mary Langford, a TCK who attended 8 schools in three languages before university, is a London-based education consultant working with internationally-mobile families. She is currently Admissions Director at Dwight School

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