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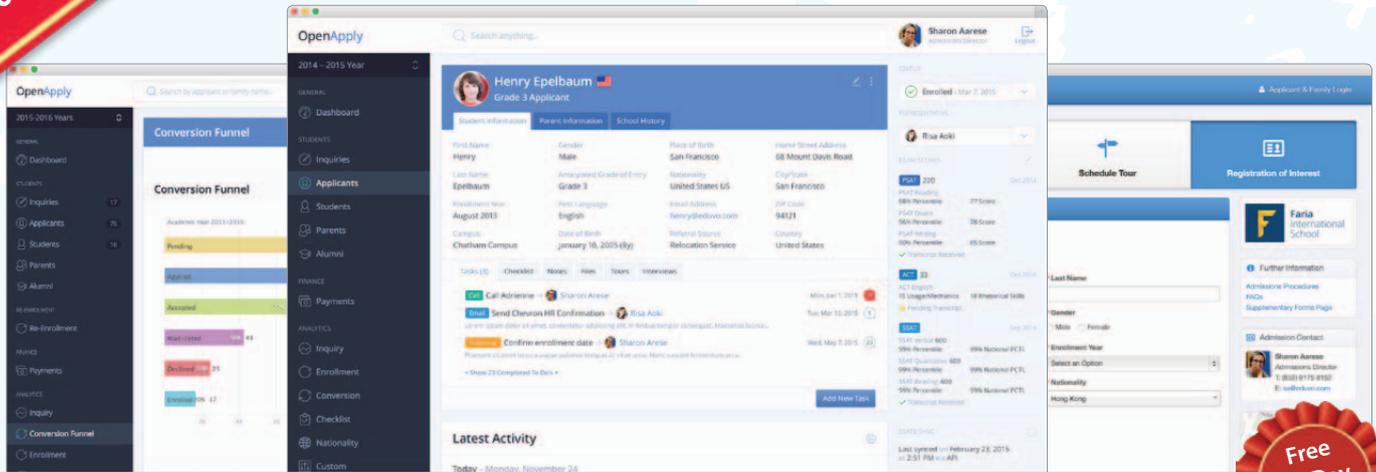
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Most teachers on the international school circuit cannot fathom why anyone would teach anywhere else.

Corinne Wolfe, see page 32

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How should we react to the Syria crisis?

We would like to feature your initiatives for supporting refugees

Few can fail to have been moved by the images of those fleeing the current atrocities in Syria. Whether sympathetic to their plight or feeling threatened by the potential effects of such *ad hoc* mass migration (or both), it would be almost impossible to be unaware of the drama unfolding before our eyes while other countries struggle with deciding how to respond to it.

Issues raised by this tragic situation are clearly not only political, cultural, geographic and logistical but also moral, and challenge us all – often uncomfortably – at the most fundamental level. For many international schools, such issues can be particularly relevant and particularly challenging. Though for many such schools the notion of educating globally mobile students is not a new one, offering education to this quite different type of mobile young person raises an additional set of questions.

In networking opportunities during the February 2016 conference of the Alliance for International Education (see article elsewhere in this issue), attended by participants from international schools, universities and other educational organisations worldwide, questions raised included how international schools should respond to the Syrian crisis, and what international schools could/should be doing to reach out to refugee children and provide support for them. Clearly many schools are already engaging in discussion of these thorny issues, organising fundraising activities to support relevant charities and, in some cases, setting up schemes to offer refugee children international school places to allow them to continue their education in an environment safer than the one from which they have fled.

Having ourselves participated in such discussions during the AIE conference, and through other contacts and networks, we are aware that a number of international school initiatives are already in place and that others are being considered. Ideas we have heard discussed include the possibility of non-refugee teachers going to work in schools set up in refugee

Clearly many schools are already engaging in discussion of these thorny issues ... it would be helpful to share schools' developing initiatives.

camp, universities offering professional development and postgraduate qualifications for refugee teachers, and the creation of links between an international school and a school in a refugee camp. What seems evident though, to the best of our knowledge, is that no clear picture exists of where and how such initiatives are emerging globally. We propose, therefore, that it would be helpful for such a picture to be drawn – with a view to these initiatives being shared more widely with others who might find them informative and supportive.

As a first step, we invite readers who are aware of any international school initiatives aimed at supporting refugees in this present crisis to contact us via Dr Caroline Ellwood (Cellwood@johncatt.com) with a brief statement of the initiative(s) in question. Though currently uncertain what this might lead to, we hope to be able to provide an update – and perhaps a number of articles about particular initiatives – in a future issue of *International School* magazine (deadline for next issue 10 June), and in this way to make a contribution, albeit small, to responding to this terrible crisis.

Caroline Ellwood, Mary Hayden and Jeff Thompson

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Determining the language profile of an international student

Students should not be expected to ‘park’ their languages at the door, says Susan Stewart

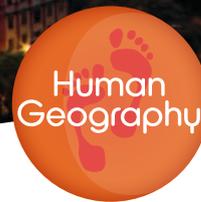
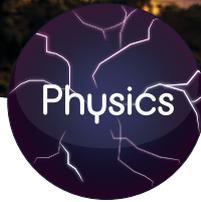
Globally-mobile students frequently have complex linguistic needs, determined by previous schooling, current needs and future academic requirements. The curriculum language of most international schools is English, but previous schooling in another country or home country may have been in another language. The language spoken at home may also be a different language to that of the school, or the student may be planning to pursue further education in yet another country. Frequently, globally-mobile students do not know what their future language requirements will be.

One specific feature of many international school students is their diverse linguistic profiles. This linguistic diversity is evident even within the same family, with siblings carrying the traces of previous exposures, at differing ages, to a range of languages. Children are rarely carbon copies of their own parents, who might never have needed another language, or have not needed one until adulthood. The source of

languages in a linguistic profile might be from the parents or grandparents, from schooling, from the surrounding community or from nannies and child-minders. A language profile is dynamic, with different languages dominating at different times in a student’s life, depending mainly on exposure to the language, and the motivation and need to use the language.

The International School of London (ISL) in Surrey, UK strives to meet the diverse linguistic needs, both present and future, of all its students. The curriculum language of the school is English. We are known for our languages, and this ambitious goal is achieved by offering first-class, student-focused, English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision, alongside tuition in a child’s mother tongue language, as an integrated part of the curriculum. For students with English as their first language, our aim is for them to develop fluency in another language.

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Currently there are 27 languages offered within the ISL Group (ISL London, ISL Surrey and ISL Qatar), and languages are added as needed with the arrival of new students. Literacy in a child's mother tongue is developed side-by-side with literacy in English, with the child's (current) dominant language providing a foundation of support for the development of the other language(s). This Languages Programme begins at age 3 and lasts until the end of schooling at age 18.

In order for such an ambitious mother tongue programme to be offered successfully and to tailor language provision to every student, it is vital to understand the student's current language profile, including levels of English and other language(s). The first consideration should be an understanding of the parents' language profiles. In the case of multilingual parents, which language is each parent using with the child and why? Are there nannies or other carers, grandparents or extended family members who speak different languages and impact the child's linguistic learning? Following this, we study each child's previous schooling and, finally, look towards the child's future – which language will be needed for future schooling? For university? For military service? The language specialists in school work closely with the Admissions Department to begin the dialogue with parents from the first time they are in contact with the school.

In working with our international population, we have found three basic language profiles:

The 'new-to-English' student

For this student and possibly the parents, it is likely that this is the first experience away from their home country. They will be immersed in English at school and, depending on the location, English or another language in their new home community. ISL Surrey supports the acquisition of English through a blend of in-class support and specialised English as an Additional Language (EAL) lessons. In addition, all students attend lessons in their mother tongue language from age 3 as part of their regular curriculum. The benefits of this for social, emotional and linguistic levels are invaluable. Children are able to 'be themselves' once a day, whilst strengthening their dominant language, thereby supporting the development of their subsequent language, namely English.

Central to the success of a student's language development is ensuring that all stakeholders (students, parents and teachers) are on the same page in terms of expectations and understanding the process of new language acquisition. ISL Surrey holds regular workshops for parents that include members of the local community. This ensures that any individual counselling with parents is done within a framework of common understanding of the principles of language acquisition.

The 'never/rarely-live-in-home-country' student

International schools are also frequented by 'veteran' expatriate families. Many of these students have had limited experience of living in their home countries. They might also fall into the 'third culture kid' category of expatriates who do not have a link to one specific culture, in particular if their parents come from two different cultures and languages.

They might have fluency in a language but are unfamiliar with the culture of the home country. Providing the opportunity for these students to develop their mother tongue language to an academic level within the school curriculum means that it should be possible for them to return to the home country at a later stage for personal, academic or professional reasons.

The 'monolingual-Anglophone' student

Much attention is given to multilingual students within international schools. In many international schools, monolingual English speakers are in the minority. Within the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP) curricula, however, all students must study at least two languages. Without previous language experience, monolingual speakers can find second language learning challenging. At ISL Surrey, MYP monolingual students take Linguistics as their third language option. In Linguistics, these students deepen their knowledge and understanding of language in terms of phonetics, graphemes, morphology and syntax. A multilingual child will inherently have an understanding that different languages use different structures and sentence order to compose phrases. By explicitly teaching some linguistics basics to monolingual students, they can go on to apply this understanding to the study of a second language. To further enhance their language acquisition skills, ISL Surrey also uses native speakers in game-based lunch clubs to provide monolinguals with authentic language exchanges.

The departing student

International schools generally value multilingualism. But what happens when a student moves to the next school, possibly returning to the home country? Will the student's multilingualism be valued, or viewed as a problem? Many schools might only look at the proficiency in one language, perhaps disregarding the student's current dominant language. It is of vital importance that a child's literacy is understood by considering their proficiency in both languages, with the general rule being that what a child can achieve in one language can also be achieved in another language, given exposure to that language.

Language experts at the International School of London will often liaise with the student's new school in order to build a more rounded understanding of a child's proficiency in all their languages. This ensures a smoother and less stressful move to the new school, country and language environment.

Conclusion

Students should not be expected to 'park' their languages at the door. By bringing their diverse languages and experiences into the new school, the linguistic web of the school is strengthened and all students develop their unique multilingualism, which will open so many future doors – be they personal, academic or professional.

***Susan Stewart is Head of Languages at ISL Surrey. She has lived in seven countries, speaks five languages and has raised two bilingual children.
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Students at a mother tongue class at a school in Singapore



Do we need to change our approach to mother tongue?

Eowyn Crisfield looks at how schools embrace (or neglect) students' language and culture

Across all sectors of education, increasing attention is being paid to the issue of students' mother tongue in schooling. In the world of international education, research and writing is turning the spotlight on the role mother tongue plays in the successful development of a new language (see, for example, Ballantyne & Rivera, 2014; Carder, 2007 and Cummins, 2001). In the world of local education, organisations such as UNESCO are drawing attention to research that demonstrates the link between access to mother tongue education and school attendance and academic success (see, for example, Benson, 2014). As noted by Bismilla *et al* (2005):

It is hard to argue that we are teaching the whole child when school policy dictates that students leave their language and culture at the schoolhouse door.

International schools are by nature multicultural and diverse. Within the schools themselves, however, we can observe a wide range of approaches to supporting cultural and linguistic diversity. In no area is this more apparent than in that of mother tongue. On the one hand, there are still schools that observe a strict 'target-language only' approach in classrooms or in the school as a whole. On the other end of the spectrum are schools that embrace and support the languages of all their students, and consider that development of the mother tongue is as important as the development of the school language. Most schools fall somewhere in between these extremes in both policy and practice.

Although the actual implementation of models varies between schools, overall there are four approaches a school can take regarding the issue of mother tongue. The first is a

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Schools beginning the journey towards an inclusive approach to languages will often use different approaches along the way, and the final program may also be a combination of approaches, in order to best meet the needs of students in diverse schools.

'no approach' approach. This is clearly the easiest method for schools, as it absolves them from any responsibility for the mother tongue growth of their students. Conversely, this approach is likely to have negative effects on the mother tongue, depending on the level of support for mother tongue growth outside the school from family and community, and may also have a negative effect on the development of the school language.

The second model is an 'extra-curricular' approach. Many schools choose this option as it is fairly easy to implement, and often implementation is left to parents and community groups. Common issues with this approach are related to quality control of teaching, matching pedagogy to the school model, and student motivation. The last is an important point, as offering mother tongue as an extra-curricular activity tends to send a message to students that it is 'optional' and therefore not as important as the school language.

The third approach is the 'parallel' approach. Schools that use this method timetable mother tongue lessons into the school day. Normally this is done only for the major language groups represented in the student body. Students do not get 'credit' for these lessons, and they are outside the official curriculum. This method has many benefits, the main benefits being that qualified teachers are used for the mother tongue lessons, and that the school is visibly supporting the role of mother tongue in education. This means that the students are more likely to value and continue with their own language, and the teaching level will permit them to become academically proficient in their mother tongue as well.

The final approach is the 'integrated' approach. This method is again generally only used for a small number of well-represented mother tongue languages. In this approach, mother tongue lessons are a part of the core curriculum, assessed by the school and often accredited by an outside organisation. In some cases, this may involve students obtaining a bilingual diploma; in others the accreditation is linked to the education system in the 'home country' of the language. This method has the most potential for positive results. In addition to the quality of teaching, the links to core curriculum and accreditation send a very clear message to students and parents about the value of mother tongue and the usefulness of graduating with two 'academic' languages.

While each of the three latter methods has benefits, they also of course have drawbacks. These are mainly to do with cost and ease or difficulty of implementation and staffing. Schools beginning the journey towards an inclusive approach

to languages will often use different approaches along the way, and the final program may also be a combination of approaches, in order to best meet the needs of students in diverse schools.

LanguageOne is a non-profit organisation that has been providing mother tongue teachers for the Dutch community abroad for over 30 years. Over the years LanguageOne has worked with many schools and different approaches. Jaap Mos, Director of LanguageOne, says: "It is encouraging to see that a growing number of international schools acknowledge the critical role of the mother tongue in the learning of their students and are seeking support in this."

While the challenge is great – each school is unique and has a student body with unique language needs – international schools are in a position to take the leadership of this important issue and address the language needs of their students. The increased interest on the part of many schools signals an important shift in attitudes, and hopefully eventually in policy. Whatever method or approach individual schools take, the 'no approach' method is one that needs to be eliminated in international schools if they are to live up to their mandate of creating global citizens and supporting identity in diversity.

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Creating an inspiring environment for language learners

Julian Edwards on the steps his school has taken to support language education

NIST International School, Bangkok has always been a complex languages environment. The school was founded in 1992 with a strong belief in providing a broad language offering, and currently offers 15 different languages within the curriculum. Since August 2014 a number of initiatives, including the development of the learning environment and curriculum, have led to a strengthening of our beliefs and values about language education.

Environment

As part of a phased renovation, the world languages centre at NIST was developed with input from a design team under the leadership of Kate Grant and Maija Ruokanen. Both had been involved previously in the successful design of the elementary school building. Their aims were to inspire with

space, promote collaboration and a sense of community, and increase the versatility of the world languages centre. NIST has 1300 language learners, aged from six to eighteen, studying fifteen languages in class sizes ranging from one to over twenty. Furniture of different levels, flexible walls and large collaborative 'break out' spaces were included in the new centre in order to provide choice for teachers and students. The absence of doors was a deliberate feature to open classrooms to each other, although understandably required adjustments for some classes, particularly for older IB Diploma (DP) students. Observing the centre in action has provided us with a deeper understanding of the different needs, in terms of use of space, of students from the Primary Years Programme (PYP) to the Diploma. It will be no surprise that, for example, older students are expected to spend



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more time than younger students on extended writing in language. So in addition to de-privatizing the spaces, we also recognized the need to respond to the varying demands placed on our learners by the IB programmes. In the second phase of development, the language space will be extended to refine the provision for older students whilst maintaining its valuable features.

Practices, beliefs and values

Although the new learning environment has promoted the aim of shared practice and collaboration, discussions about such topics were already prominent within the world languages team. It had been some time since we reviewed curricula and, reflecting the ambition of the new space, world languages teachers were keen to create curricula which were open, collaborative and flexible – shared frameworks with common expectations, regardless of which language was to be learned. The curricula needed to be concept-driven and to focus on the commonalities between the Languages 'A' and 'B' in both the PYP and Middle Years Programme (MYP). The curriculum reviews were also inclusive of English as the language of instruction, so reached beyond only the world languages department. As a result of highly collaborative, time-consuming work, initially from steering committees but also involving all teachers, NIST students now benefit from a series of connected core languages curricula.

We were fortunate to have the right people in the right place at the right time to support what amounted to four separate curriculum reviews (across two IB programmes and in Languages 'A' and 'B'). Outside facilitators also enhanced

the process by asking the right questions. The world languages team was already highly collegial, but as the curriculum reviews focused on establishing shared outcomes the conversations took the form of deeper, collegial inquiry. Questions were asked about what really matters in Languages A and B for learners of different ages, and moved away from themes and topics to deliberate discussion around deeper understandings, transfer and inquiry. There was a mutual desire not only for greater coherency and consistency but also for shared meaning.

Learning

Although the project is still in progress, there is much to celebrate and share. Developing languages curriculum around concepts forces discussion to the level of belief and values, whilst also driving practical discussions about assessment and unit planning. This kind of review takes time and strong collaborative norms, and we expect to revisit the curricula over the next two years, refining them through application. The discussions during the review have been inspiring and, perhaps more important, meaningful. As a team we continue to strive for a curriculum that supports our language learners in both their language ability and agility. It is not only the language space that is fresh and challenging boundaries at NIST; it is also our continuing practice as language educators.

**Julian Edwards is Head of Learning at NIST
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IB Primary Years Programme learners moving rods representing characters in a restaurant



‘The Silent Way’ to language acquisition

Fanny Passeport advocates an approach that gives students space and time to learn

The Silent Way (SW) is a pedagogical approach to teaching foreign languages invented by Caleb Gattegno in the late 1950's. The language teacher using this approach strives to ‘subordinate teaching to learning’ by being silent most of the time and therefore providing more space for the learners to express themselves.

The silence of the teacher is one of the main characteristics of this approach, but a SW teacher can also speak a lot in class. The ultimate goal of any SW teacher is not to hinder the learners’ expression and to ‘let them learn’. Teachers focus on the students’ learning rather than on their own teaching: they do not explain, but immerse the learner in situations that are visual and tangible and where the meaning can be naturally constructed via investigations, experiences and explorations.

Pedagogical posture

The SW is not a ‘method’ following strict steps, but an approach which is strongly learning-focused. Teachers can anticipate learning blocks, but cannot know all of them in advance as each learner’s pathway is individual when

acquiring a new language. In this regard, the SW promotes personalized learning and continuous differentiation. The teacher constantly observes the learners and provides immediate feedback to guide them. This feedback is given, for instance, in the form of gestures, short verbal feedback or mimes.

One of the prerequisites of being a SW teacher is to be reflective. Most of the time, the teacher does not ‘lead’ but facilitates learning. However, after each class, the teacher ‘post-pares’. ‘Post-paration’ is a sort of a backward planning. Teachers focus on what the learners did and what problems they encountered. They reflect on how they can help the learners to overcome their obstacles the next time they meet. Usually, teachers prepare situations based on the learners’ needs. The SW is a powerful approach which engages the teacher’s creativity and reflexivity.

Visible and tangible learning

There are some materials that can be used by the SW teacher such as Cuisenaire rods: colored sticks that can be used in various ways: to create manipulable situations, to represent

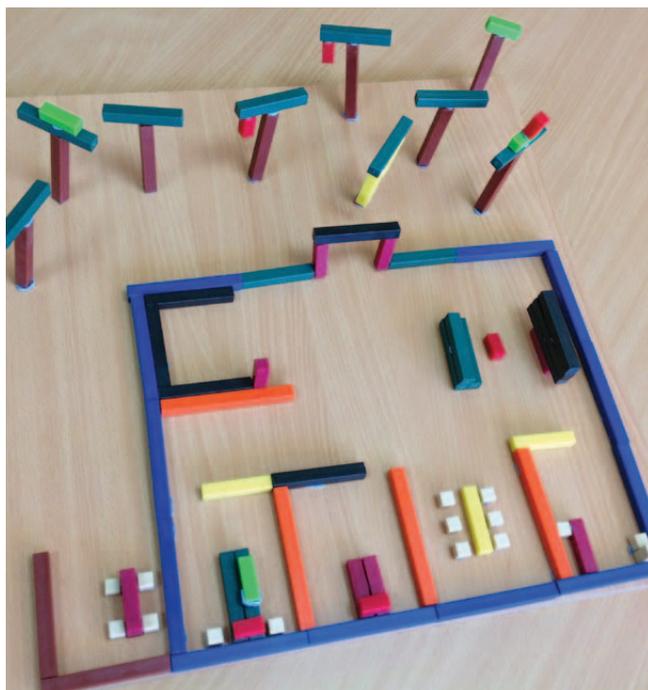
concepts (a grammatical category for instance) or characters, or even just as 'rods' (to learn prepositions for instance: the red rod is on/under/in the box). The SW teacher can use the rods to present authentic contexts to the learners. Unlike a drawing, the teacher and the students can modify and move the elements to demonstrate change in space and time.

Students can describe this situation by using position words (the garden is **in front of** the house, the car is **in** the garage), domestic vocabulary (house, garden, table, bed, living-room), basic sentences (I can see a sofa in the living room) and, with a character (an extra rod to be moved around the house), can learn routine actions (Mr Green **wakes up, brushes** his teeth, **eats** breakfast) that can be recalled later with past forms (he **woke up, brushed** his teeth, **ate** breakfast).

Learners making connections

In a SW class, the learners slowly construct conceptual understanding by developing inner criteria for self-correction, and so become more and more autonomous while learning the language. Since in a SW class the learners are actively engaged, they cooperate a lot among themselves and take charge of their learning. The SW works very well for all students because it relies not on competition but on collaboration. The learners are intrinsically motivated and do not work 'for the teacher', 'for the test' or 'for their parents', but 'for themselves'. They genuinely take ownership of their learning, feel good about themselves when they achieve something, and show they are proud of themselves.

They start their learning with challenging experiments which help them discover, practice and master new concepts. They are engaged in trial and error explorations where 'mistakes' have a positive role and are even considered 'gifts to the class' (as Caleb Gattegno used to say). Since errors are accepted – and even expected – the learners are used to



A plan of a house which can be used with students at various language levels

Learners in a SW class demonstrate responsibility because they take control of their learning ... they can decide what they want to learn based on their interests, passions or feelings.

taking risks and overcoming obstacles such as shyness or lack of self-confidence.

The learners in a SW class demonstrate responsibility because they take control of their learning. They can decide what they want to learn based on their interests, passions or feelings. Learning is immediately enhanced when learners are in charge and when they are driven by their own choices and goals. In such an environment where curiosity and autonomy are nurtured, the teacher and students are all functioning as 'learners' and equal partners.

Blending the Silent Way and the International Baccalaureate

Considering the roles of the teacher and the students in a SW class, it is clear there are connections between this approach and the IB Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme. The nature of the SW approach is inquiry-based and learning-focused, while it promotes the IB learner profile attributes, attitudes and the Approaches to Learning and Teaching.

Teachers who have had contact with this pedagogy find it in agreement with the IB framework as it makes the learners' thought processes visible. This approach can solve problems of student disengagement and also of heterogeneous groups. In addition, it promotes the growth of more inclusive classrooms where differentiation and personalization are constantly part of the classroom atmosphere and where students are leaders of their own journey of discovery.

Silent Way YouTube Playlists:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9ojSRYs3pA&list=PLC8f0sArzKjSAHSrrkAI-EloOr6jAtTNw

www.youtube.com/user/donaldecherry

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Expanding the vocabulary of teaching and learning

Educators should look to explore new opportunities, according to Bradley A Ermeling and Genevieve Graff-Ermeling

The limits of my language are the limits of my world. All I know is what I have words for. (Wittgenstein, 1922)

This profound quote from Wittgenstein has important implications for education. Working as international educators has taught us that the limits of language can also limit one's understanding of teaching and learning. Conversely, the exposure to other languages can richly enhance our knowledge and practice.

In the English language, for example, there is no single word or term that represents classroom teaching and learning as a reciprocal or bi-directional process. The separation of the two reflects a deeply held cultural assumption – that the act of teaching naturally causes student learning and that learning is simply the result of teaching. In contrast, for Russian educators teaching and learning are conceptualized as a bi-directional process – teaching influences learning, learning influences teaching. This dynamic, mutually dependent relationship between teaching and learning is captured in one Russian word – *obuchenie* (Weiner *et al*, 2003). Adopting this terminology into our teaching lexicon expands our vision of classroom practice and deepens our appreciation for the complexities of teaching.

Another illustration of how language influences teaching and learning is the extensive vocabulary Japanese teachers possess for describing classroom practices. While working as international educators at a Japanese national school, our exposure to this unique vocabulary helped expand our instructional repertoire and deepen our understanding of effective teaching. Below are two examples.

Kikan Shidō – Teaching Between Desks

Teachers in classrooms around the world spend hours of class time each week roving between desks during student activities, group projects, pair work, or individual practice. Japanese educators have a specific pedagogical term for describing this mode of instruction called *kikan shidō* (between desks instruction).

We first learned of *kikan shidō* while participating in Japanese lesson study (*jūgyō kenkyū*) – a form of school-based teacher collaboration widely practiced in Japan and recently introduced to Western educators as an alternative to

traditional professional development. The central feature of lesson study is the observation and analysis of live classroom research lessons collaboratively planned by a group of teachers (Ermeling & Graff-Ermeling, 2016).

During one lesson study project hosted at our school, the English department prepared a detailed lesson for a ninth grade oral communication course and asked one of us to teach the lesson for the scheduled observation. During the post-lesson reflection meeting, one observer suggested a more systematic approach to the use of *kikan shidō*, pointing out that most of the between-desks instruction focused on a few pairs of students who were struggling with the assigned exercise, while intermediate and advanced students received virtually no guidance or support. The observer suggested a shorter length of time with each pair focused on brief episodes of concise feedback. Based on our specific lesson goals, he emphasized the value of leveraging *kikan shidō* during this lesson segment to gain a global perspective on the progress of all students.

Our experience with this project and subsequent video analysis of our own classroom lessons opened our eyes to the importance of *kikan shidō* as part of regular lesson preparation. The video footage illustrated in sharp relief the unplanned, cursory exchanges we came up with 'on-the-fly' to assist or monitor student work, which mostly reiterated previous instruction and seldom advanced students toward deeper learning. Learning the term and learning to practice *kikan-shidō* taught us that teachers' interactions and decisions during students' independent or collaborative 'work time' – choosing what to focus on, how much time to spend with each team or individual, what to say or not say – has a crucial instructional value.

Bansho – Board Writing

In the winter of 2014, while observing and recording classroom lessons at several Japanese schools, we discovered Japanese teachers also have a specific vocabulary for describing board-writing practices (*bansho*) and board-writing planning (*bansho keikaku*).

Math and science teachers used large geometric drafting tools as guides to draw perfectly symmetrical diagrams and tables on the board. Language arts and social studies



teachers used a variety of chalk colors, each with a consistent meaning and precise purpose related to grammatical terms, literary themes, or systems of government. Others used magnetic timers on the board to pace activities, and posted magnetic labels of student names to assign work space for whole-class demonstrations. Teachers carefully preserved a lesson story line as they progressed across the board. They added elements in a strategic sequence that helped bring coherence to the lesson.

Learning the term and discovering the practice of *bansho* taught us that a chalkboard (or whiteboard) can be used for much more than simply displaying information or solutions. Teachers can use the board to summarize, organize, and link a sequence of lesson events. Many Japanese teachers carefully map out board diagrams as part of lesson planning, choosing locations for previously assigned work, new problems or tasks, student contributions, and culminating remarks.

Learning about *bansho* also revealed the importance of choosing technology that effectively supports lesson design and learning opportunities. Whether it's a chalkboard or a smartboard, a tablet or web-based app, it's essential to understand the nuances of each device or application in relationship to specific lesson content, complexity, and goals.

Conclusion

Language is powerful. It can both restrict and expand our vision of teaching and learning. The international setting provides a unique opportunity to move beyond the limits of our own language and practice. This can happen through partnerships and exchange programs with national schools.

It can happen by learning from colleagues who were trained in different countries and cultures. It can also come through studying classroom videos, such as the extensive digital library available from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (see www.TIMSSvideo.com).

International educators should take time to explore these opportunities, expand their teaching vocabulary, and broaden their horizons of practice. As Gallimore and Stigler (2003) explain, 'seeing that something can be completely different is one of the most effective ways of opening eyes to the ubiquity of cultural practices and creating the circumstances for change' (p.27).

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How you can support students' mother tongue development

Caroline Scott offers some advice for teachers in assisting development

Mother tongue or 'home language' is a heavily discussed topic in schools these days. The big question in the past, and still in some schools, is 'should my learners be allowed to use their mother tongue in class?'. It's a topic that raises strong feelings, especially amongst parents who are from the host country of the school, speaking the host country language with their child and sending their child to an English-medium school largely because they want their child to learn English. They often feel that they don't want their child to speak anything other than English during the school day as they receive enough exposure to their home language at other times. In some cases, teachers have tended to agree with parents as they see children who are quite able in English, but are using their home language so much that it appears to be to the detriment of their development in English.

However, we are teaching our learners to be bilingual not by offering one language at the expense of the other but by actively supporting the development of both. Research findings show that the use of home language is an essential part of a bilingual education. 'Students will not suffer academically either as a result of bilingualism itself nor as a result of spending less instructional time through English. If optimum academic development of bilingual students is the goal, then students must be encouraged to acquire

a conceptual foundation in their L1 in addition to English' (Cummins, 1996). Additionally, as noted by Sears: 'it ensures that students' cognitive development continues alongside the learning of the new language'. (2015)

Using a home language is an essential part of learning a new language. Imagine yourself plunged into a new country with limited grasp of the language spoken. You have such a good grasp over your own language that you would naturally translate. What if someone told you that you shouldn't translate? How would that make you feel? What effect would that have on your learning in the short and long term? With that in mind, how do we adjust our practice in schools to ensure we support each learner's home language when, as a teacher, we often don't speak their languages?

Here are some ideas to get you started in better supporting students' mother tongue development:

1. Translators (Google Translate, translation pens, dictionaries). These days, all you have to do is use an app and glide the camera of an iPhone or iPad over text to get an instant translation to the language of your choice or, even simpler, speak into the app and your translation appears. If iPhones or iPads aren't an option, translation pens or Google Translate on laptops do the same.

Using a home language is an essential part of learning a new language. Imagine yourself plunged into a new country with limited grasp of the language spoken. You have such a good grasp over your own language that you would naturally translate. What if someone told you that you shouldn't translate? How would that make you feel? What effect would that have on your learning in the short and long term?



2. Set homework for learners to discuss curriculum topics at home with parents so that the learners get a fuller understanding of the topic and develop the vocabulary in their home language. The role of parents should not be underestimated. Parents need to try to promote academic development of their child's mother tongue at home.
3. Pair students by home language so they can discuss the topic in their home language before being asked for responses in English.
4. Teach learners' home language – lessons can be offered to those speaking majority languages or, at the very least, suggestions could be provided on where to continue to learn their home language.
5. Ask learners to use a 'remember book' which shows vocabulary in both English and mother tongue. Teach the learners how to use it by looking, covering, saying and checking.
6. Encourage students to translate new vocabulary and language structures in class and write in the home language in their books to help them remember.
7. For fast vocabulary learning, provide learners with flashcards (and useful ways to use them), populated by themselves in English and their home language.
8. Learners can share work completed in their home language with other learners, with parents or with the class in both languages.
9. Pre-teach language structures and vocabulary with significant emphasis on translation from mother tongue.
10. Ask learners to compare specific language structures with their mother tongue and identify the differences. These differences help them to be more aware of how both languages are formed and to use both more accurately.

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Mattie Jackson with MYP1 Language and Literature students

Is your school ready for a mother tongue programme?

Mattie Jackson outlines the benefits and challenges

My experience of engaging with other international educators and attending workshops and conferences suggests that international schools are beginning to accommodate mother tongue language learners. International Baccalaureate (IB) philosophy attributes the success of its programmes to a 'rich development of language and literacy for all learners'. The question facing schools is how to set up and implement a mother tongue programme. The five points presented in this article are equally important and necessary, and have been compiled after regularly hearing the same concerns and being asked the same questions regarding mother tongue programmes.

The first point is the visual impact of the school entrance. What first impressions does the school convey to the outside

world? Is English the only language facing students on every notice board, on every sign, on every banner? The identity of mother tongue language learners at any school will be supported through the visual and cultural images that embrace them as they conduct their daily lives on campus. A warm 'welcome' in all the languages representative of the school should be displayed in order to build a sense of belonging in all students.

The second point addresses the need for curriculum coordinators and school administrators to value the importance of a mother tongue programme. With their support it is possible to train and encourage mainstream teachers in supporting mother tongue language learners.

It should go without saying that all international school teachers are language educators. Yet without proper training how is this possible in a science classroom or a math classroom? Multilingual conferences are organised with this issue in mind so as to address these concerns. Yet they are often not frequented by either subject teachers or school administrators. Such conferences provide the perfect opportunity for acquiring effective strategies suitable for language learners in all subject areas and for administrators to develop understanding of their role in implementing a strong mother tongue programme at their school.

The third point centres on educating parents in the importance of allowing students to use their mother tongue language in order to gain access to the school curriculum. Often parents are reluctant to embrace this. They want their child to learn English and believe that reading, writing and speaking only in English is the most efficient way of ensuring this. At times, parents can see education as a competitive area. Conducting parent information sessions will assist parents in understanding the cognitive and academic research that supports the necessity of having a strong foundation in the mother tongue language in order to learn a new language. Parents must adopt good language policies at home in order to help their children develop good literacy skills in their mother tongue language. The importance of additive bilingualism – acquiring one language while maintaining another – must be instilled in the parents in order to support a strong mother tongue programme.

The fourth point focuses on school libraries, which should shelve books rich in the diversity of the languages of the school. Every student must feel that literature written in their mother tongue language is valued enough to be represented in their school. The parent community could be a valuable resource in suggesting literature suitable for all

ages in their mother tongue language. They may also wish to donate reading material. Purchasing for the school library popular literature translated into the languages represented in school is another supporting element of a mother tongue programme.

The final point encourages the appointment of a Mother Tongue Coordinator. This role sends a strong message to the school community of the value the school places on mother tongue language learning. A Mother Tongue Coordinator's numerous responsibilities include sourcing competent tutors, developing a rigorous programme and ensuring tutors maintain high standards of instruction. The Mother Tongue Coordinator should play a key role in fulfilling the four previous points. This in itself is a challenging position, yet a valuable and rewarding one in any international school.

The benefits of providing a rigorous mother tongue programme far outweigh the challenges of setting one up. The cornerstone of a student's identity and sense of belonging relies on their knowledge and use of their mother tongue language. Building strong communities relies on the empathy created through student pride and acceptance of their own culture and the cultures of their peers.

Further Reading

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Forthcoming Conferences

May 7-9: COBIS Annual Conference, London, UK.

May 22: IB Educator Certificate University Conference, Kent, Ohio, US.

July 3-9: IB World Student Conference, Bluche, Switzerland.

July 14-17: IB Conference of the Americas, Toronto, Canada.

July 18-24: IB World Student Conference, Denver, US.

July 19: IB Building Learning Communities Education Conference, Boston, US.

October 6-9: IB AEM Conference, Barcelona, Spain.

October 16-19: AISA Educators Conference, Johannesburg, South Africa.

October 27-19: EARCOS Leadership Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

November 4-7: FOBISIA Heads' and Senior Leaders' Conference, Bangkok, Thailand.

November 18-19: ECIS Educators Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Like, get over it

Nicholas Alchin wonders if we are over-precious about punctuation and grumble too much about grammar

In 1680, the English King James told architect Christopher Wren that the newly-completed St Paul's Cathedral was 'awful, artificial and amusing'. In 1680 'awful' meant 'awe-inspiring'; 'artificial' meant 'artistically made' and 'amusing' meant 'amazing'.

The graphic below illustrates a very similar point – and I am sure many of us have had a similar experience, one way or another.



These flippant examples may seem a bit obscure – but a quick internet search for funny grammar images shows that the issue of correct or incorrect language raises strong emotions. And I was marking Theory of Knowledge essays from my grade 12 class last week, and wondering to what extent I should correct split infinitives, or allow sentences (like this one!) to start with a conjunction. More importantly, I was wondering if examiners would see through informal writing to the genuinely profound ideas in the essays – and so perhaps there is actually a more serious point here. Outside of a language acquisition course, there is nothing in most IB/IGCSE marking criteria about good grammar – and when we have so many students being examined in English as a second, third or fourth language, that's got to be right. On the other hand, accuracy in communication is important, and grammar facilitates that. As a child I was always taught

that 'breaking the laws of grammar' is a bad thing. So do these laws of grammar matter? I have come to think that the answer to this centres around what we think about the nature of laws, and I am reminded about how much we construct the world around us, rather than simply find it, already made. I think there's actually a moral point here too.



We sometimes tend to think that breaking the laws of grammar is a little like breaking the laws of a country; if you go through a red traffic light then whatever your intention, you have broken the law – fact. Mrs Eyegouger, my Primary School teacher, felt much the same about my errors with apostrophes. I have come to think differently, and that the laws of language are more akin to the laws of physics than the laws of the land. Suppose we found an object which hovered in mid-air, and did not fall when dropped; what would we do? We could declare the object illegal, lament and take appropriate punitive measures (Mrs Eyegouger) or we could revisit our understanding of the laws of physics. The latter seems more sensible. It's impossible for an object to break the laws of physics (apologies to the warlocks among you) because the laws explain how things behave. Similarly with language – the laws of grammar are descriptions of how things are, not how we would like them to be.

So my visceral disgust at double negatives may not be without logical reason, but the fact is that people do say "I ain't done nothing wrong" and we all know what they mean, n'est-ce pas? Similarly, the word 'like' has recently evolved into an all-purpose linguistic Swiss-army knife, capable of remarkable flexibility. King James would have thought that was awful; to me, it's awesome – and we both know what we are talking about. Languages change, and there's nothing we can do to stop them. What's more, language drift is a

I have come to see that rather than correcting students' work (which can be perilously close to telling them how to conform to arbitrary social mores – hardly the right message) I am seeking to sensitise them so they can make the right choice to convey their message to their audience.

one-way current (for more on that see Guy Detacher's The Unfolding of Language: An Evolutionary Tour of Mankind's Greatest Invention) or watch this short TED talk: www.ted.com/talks/erin_mckean_go_ahead_make_up_new_words.

As linguist Cukor-Avila said, "I tell my students, eventually all the people who hate this kind of thing are going to be dead, and the ones who use it are going to be in control". While that may not be the most uplifting sentiment, it is surely accurate.

Does that mean we don't bother correcting students' written work from infelicities? Of course not. Some styles are better suited to some occasions than others – and using "c u l8 r" in an English examination is a choice; probably not a very good one (see www.ted.com/talks/john_mcwhorter_txtng_is_killing_language_jk). So we need to be aware of the various universes of discourse that are available to us.

I have come to see that rather than correcting students' work (which can be perilously close to telling them how to conform to arbitrary social mores – hardly the right message) I am seeking to sensitise them so they can make the right choice to convey their message to their audience. In most cases, that will look like traditional correcting, but I think there's a world of difference. Literally.

I remain your humble servant

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This article appeared originally as a blog post at UWCSEA

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Ragne (IB1) and her brother Tobias (IB2), students at United Nations International School Hanoi, logging in to Skype Kari, their tutor in Cambridge for their weekly SSST Norwegian A lessons.

Mother tongue support within the IB

Mary Langford reflects on the IB's School-Supported, Self-Taught Language A

The importance of continued study of the mother tongue has been acknowledged by the IB Diploma Programme since its inception. One of the six core subjects of the Diploma has always been 'Language A', the student's mother tongue or 'first' language. 'Mother tongue' may be defined in simple terms as the first language learned, the student's native language, or the predominant academic language. Increasingly IB educators are familiar with the work of Dr Jim Cummins and others who have dedicated themselves to research about bilingual learners, the importance of additive bilingualism, and the negative consequences of subtractive bilingualism.

Recognising the importance of maintaining the mother tongue, how in practical terms do international schools facilitate this when they may have IB students who speak a wide range of mother tongue languages? How can schools justify recruiting and employing suitably qualified teachers if

only a very few students are in need of a particular language for a subject which only represents less than one sixth of their IB programme?

It seems that IB schools are responding in a variety of ways. Schools located in cities with a presence of diplomatic missions, universities, media outlets or other global commercial or cultural organisations may find suitably-qualified language specialists capable of teaching IB Language A on a very part-time basis. The IB has, for situations where this is not feasible, created an alternative means within the IB Diploma to facilitate mother-tongue study: 'Where no teacher is available, a student may be allowed to study his or her particular Language A as a school-supported self-taught Language A: literature student.' (SSST) (IB, 2009).

There seems to be no pattern to the number of mother tongue languages taught in schools. The International School of London, for example, boasts the availability of eighteen

languages, while other schools with larger student numbers may offer as few as three, and it seems that up to half of these mother tongue languages can be taught as SSST courses. The most obvious Language A offerings are the language of instruction – often English – and the host country language, such as English A and Italian A at the International School of Milan (ISM), or English A and German A at the International School of Zug and Luzern (ISZL). Additional Language A courses are added as SSST options when required. This clearly represents an additional commitment on the part of the school to managing these students, and the added challenge of supervising the coursework in a language that no-one on the staff understands!

Yet schools do make this commitment to SSST Language A for a variety of reasons. Silke Fox, IBDP Coordinator at International School of Schaffhausen, Switzerland, explains: 'As we have students whose English skills are not developed to an extent that they can follow English Language A, it is important to offer the course in their mother tongue. We only offer English, German and French'. Of the 9 mother tongue languages available, six are offered as SSST. Ian Carter, Head of Modern Languages at Aiglon College, Switzerland, says 'We recognise that there is a danger the students will lose touch with the [home] language and culture given that they spend so much time in Switzerland; we try to avoid that in order to maximise the students' IBDP options'. Martin Peel, Assistant Principal–Pastoral at ISZL, writes: 'This (SSST) is a really important element of the programme for students who are taking it as it allows them access to their home universities. Students who take SSST tend to need it to support a university application to their home country where it is not possible to study in English.'

The 'drivers' behind the mother tongue SSST programmes also vary from school to school. IB Diploma Coordinators, English Language A Coordinators (who may be first to recognise the limitations of the second language speakers who may struggle with IB English Language A), Curriculum Coordinators, and even the IB Middle Years Programme Mother Tongue Languages Coordinators are all named by different schools as advocates of SSST Language A, and the persons charged with responsibility for supervising the SSST Language A programme within the school.

The IB recommends that 'in the likely event that the supervisor is not a native speaker of the self-taught language, then the use of a mother-tongue tutor is highly recommended. This tutor, either working online or within the community, must be able to provide the support that the school cannot provide. Ideally, the tutor will have Diploma Programme Language A1 experience, but this cannot always be guaranteed' (IB, 2009).

Tutors come from a variety of sources. Silke Fox explains: 'As this is our first year for SSST, we were struggling regarding the organization. Families request the support, but school organises (the tutor) at this point'. Susan Round, IBDP Coordinator at the International School of Basel, says 'Some (come) through students who have moved here part way through the IBDP programme and kept working with a language teacher in their previous school. Then having made the contact, I have used these tutors again. Some come through the International Language and Literature Teachers' Cooperative (ILLTC). At UNIS Hanoi, IBDP Coordinator Nick

Whatley will allow the family to propose a tutor, but the school reserves the right not to give approval if they feel the nominated person is not suitably qualified, in which case the school will try to find a different tutor. ISZL adopt a similar approach. At International School of Hanover Region (ISHR), Naomi Resmer says 'We often recruit tutors we have used previously: there have been cases where families also know of potential tutors through their own networks, and the Association of German International Schools is a network I have used to find potential tutors'. ISM Secondary Principal Iain Sachdev finds tutors 'primarily through the International Language and Literature Teachers' Cooperative, unless the student/family have a suitable tutor – perhaps from a previous school'.

Tutors may be either funded privately by the student, or in some cases the school sets a budget to engage tutors, and in other situations the school pays but then includes the cost in the school tuition invoices sent to the family or sponsoring organisation. The advent of the internet and applications such as Skype and Facetime have improved the process, and Susan Round finds that managing contact with tutors via email is easy. Still, Ian Carter adds 'For the more "exotic" languages, we have not found an ideal solution'.

In May 2015 66 Group One languages were examined by the IB, from Amharic to Vietnamese, and 28.51% of the IB Diplomas awarded were Bilingual Diplomas. An additional two languages – Siswati and Afrikaans – were amongst those examined in the November 2014 examination session, where 36.56% of Diplomas awarded were Bilingual Diplomas (IB, 2014, 2015). According to the IB website (IB, 2016a), Language A Literature is available in 55 languages, suggesting that 13 Languages examined in November 2014 and May 2015 were offered by special request.

It is important that IB Diploma Programme schools reflect on how effectively they serve the needs of their multilingual students. The IB's policy of mother tongue entitlement 'promotes respect for the literary heritage of a student's home language'. It is also fundamental in realising the IB mission 'to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect' (IB, 2016b). As the IB points out (2009), acknowledgment of and support for each student's language(s) are essential starting points in promoting such intercultural understanding.

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Above and below right: English B HL/Literature A SSST students hosting International Language Day, 2015.

Who am I?

Students' sense of identity and belonging is an important consideration in language teaching, says Alexa Nijpels

Two questions every international student can relate to as the most perplexing and difficult to answer are 'who am I?' and 'where do I come from?'

In today's extremely mobile societies, our students may be born in one country, carry dual citizenship, speak one or two languages at home and have a different learning language at school. Is it any wonder these questions are so baffling? Encouraging students to take pride in their language and culture reinforces their sense of who they are as individuals and their place in the 21st century. As educators we recognize the need to help and support our students' mother tongue development, but how do we approach it?

Understanding the concept of international mindedness goes beyond international food fairs, international language days and national costume days. A mother tongue program should not only be an after school activity for students; it should be integrated into their academic programs. International educators recognize this pedagogically as well as intellectually. The problems of integrating mother tongue policies into school programs, however, mean that we often fall short of the mark, with budgets and time often cited as reasons for non-implementation of such programs.

Many schools view a mother tongue program as problematic in terms of financing and time management. Ironically, there lies the real problem. Budgets and time management can be manipulated. Yes, it is harder in small schools, and yes, it is difficult when administrators are

held accountable to strict budget lines. However, they correspondingly need to understand what mother tongue programs contribute to student learning and the success of their academic programs.

We are often told that parents are the reason for mother tongue programs taking a backseat to academics. Some parents perceive their children's futures being based on their English fluency, but that should not preclude developing their mother tongue. If that were the case, these same parents would be speaking English at home instead of their own languages.

If a small school like the Rotterdam International Secondary School (RISS), in the Netherlands, can run a successful mother tongue program with fewer than 300 students from over 45 countries, possible for any school to be creative in developing one.

RISS offers academic programs in the Foundation Course, the IGCSE and the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP). Inherent in the IGCSE and the IBDP are provisions which support the school's mother tongue program.

The main aspects of the implementation of our mother tongue program are as follows:

- A language policy where EAL and mother tongue are the cornerstones of implementation; this policy is not incorporated with a Learning Support or Special Needs policy;

- Implicit in the policy is an inclusive approach while learning English, and students being allowed to speak their own languages outside the classroom;
- Development of an IGCSE and IBDP strategy set-up for self-taught languages supporting students; this reinforces the value of their cultural identity through language and literature;
- An information program for parents at the admissions point of entry and at information evenings throughout the school year, to support understanding of the importance of continued mother tongue language development; evidence-based data to reinforce this argument is transparent from our IGCSE and IBDP results;
- In the Foundation, French, Spanish and Dutch languages are compulsory; assessments are completed at the beginning of each school year and the language groups are differentiated according to skills. IBDP students sharing languages with Foundation students act as mentors, tutoring students during their 'free' periods;
- The IGCSE offers a multitude of first languages that our students take as 'self-taught' in addition to Dutch and English. The school provides support and, where feasible, IBDP students tutor in that language and earn CAS recognition. This may not be ideal, but ten years of results have shown it is do-able and successful.
- In the IBDP the Literature A School Supported Self-taught (SSST) is combined with English B HL, or with English B Higher Level (HL) and Dutch A Language and Literature HL/Standard Level (SL) for our repatriated Dutch students. Often repatriated students have difficulties adjusting to their "home" language after living overseas for many years. Offering Language and Literature supports students who have weaker writing and reading skills in Dutch; this approach can be utilized for repatriated students in any country;
- The SSST is essentially taught three periods a week in the second year as a sort of anticipated' subject (in IBDP terminology). In the first year, works are selected and read in preparation for instruction in IBDP second year;
- In English B, the students are taught many of the skills required for literary criticism and analyses through the English B HL requirement of 2 works of literature; this creates a foundation for the students and provides time for translating the required literary terminology for Literature A SSST.
- In the SSST, the students are taught Parts 1 and 4 in English and their own language; this is an exercise in linguistic skills development creating an impressive understanding of language, nuance, reflection and critical thinking; in Part 4 the students work in both languages in study groups with mutual areas of interest to support preparation for the Individual Oral Presentation.
- Likewise for Part 2, SSST students deconstruct the questions provided by the IBDP for their Individual Oral Commentary and share ideas and reflections from their works; this provides them with feedback for "ways to improve" and "best practices" they can apply to their own works. An additional benefit is learning the importance of socio-cultural, economic, and historical contexts, which is essential for Literature A!

The entire philosophy of this approach is based on reinforcing mother tongue (MT) development where all languages have equal value. Ideally it would be fantastic to have language tutors but, as we all know, they are not always available for the myriad of languages our students speak. However, we refuse not to provide opportunities for our students to develop their MT language to a high academic level, and our approach is a work in progress!

In four out of the past five years, our Literature A SSST and English B HL students have been the top students with their overall points. That is a remarkable success story for our students and reinforces the necessity of encouraging our students to continue pursuing their MT development.

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Should I stay or should I go?

What do teachers consider when planning their next move? Corinne Wolfe writes...

Suicide bombers and shootings led to a lockdown of the international schools in Jakarta shortly after the start of the spring term this year. While staff calmly awaited the go-ahead from the embassies to send children home on the school buses, discussions amongst teachers invariably led to thoughts of other dramatic moments in their international careers. These included bombings in Mumbai, the floods and riots in Bangkok, revolution in Egypt and civil war in Ukraine.

It might be assumed that such experiences would be major factors when considering recruitment and retention in international schools. The reality, however, is much more mundane. Dramatic events may have a short-term impact, but the bigger picture is one that teachers would recognise the world over.

International school teachers may experience a more transient lifestyle than teachers in national education systems, but the major factors causing teachers to move schools because they are unhappy on the international circuit seem to be just the same as those making teachers unhappy in national school systems – workload, not feeling valued within the school, and lack of support from senior management.

It is a shame that, despite the absence of pressure from governments, too high a teaching load and too much inspection, assessment, target-setting and reporting may also be found in many international schools. It would be interesting to know if such issues are managed more benignly in other school systems and, if so, whether this causes less division, alienation and demoralisation than is found in some international schools.

Away (often) from the financial constraints experienced in the home country, and (depending on the context) with time saved in not having to maintain and run households or to take care of day-to-day wider family responsibilities, teaching overseas can feel like a holiday. Just spending foreign currencies, eating different foods and being surrounded by different sights, sounds and smells heightens the sense of being disconnected from 'real life'. The feeling of 'being on holiday' may in some part explain why workload often appears in the top list of reasons for expatriate teachers wishing to leave their current posts. If teachers are happy to work hard for their students and meet the high aspirations of both students and parents, teaching abroad can be very rewarding. However, teaching will always be a demanding job the world over, and workload is something for which responsibility has to be taken not only by senior managers but also by teachers and line managers. This doesn't change just because we're abroad.

International teachers may also have a secondary, lesser set of reasons for packing up and shipping out, which are nevertheless significant in their decision-making. These are considerations of living in a particular country or city, which may include pollution (a huge concern in China) or traffic (much reported in Jakarta). A large rise in the cost of living is tough everywhere, but it can be much worse if, for example, the value of the currency in which a teacher is paid drops – as happened recently in Japan, and suddenly the amount being sent home to pay the mortgage is much less than before.

As always when living far from home, ties to family and friends pull teachers back, whether they be ageing parents who need more support, children getting married and having babies, or a partner who wants to settle down. Inevitably too, in some contexts the imbalance in single male teachers seeking local girlfriends while single women seek expatriate boyfriends can lead to a small proportion of female staff packing up and heading off to greener pastures!

Reasons to stay may be just as varied as the reasons for leaving, but the most substantial reasons in Asia seem to be financial. The overall package, not only the salary, is what keeps expatriates faithful – in particular to the big Asian and Middle Eastern cities. In these countries the package often includes perks such as free school places for children, free housing, private medical insurance, relocation expenses, annual flights home and a 20%-25% annual gratuity in lieu of a pension. Marry this with a lower cost of living and it is not unusual to see international teachers heading to a sumptuous hotel brunch at the weekend, relaxing by the pool in the sunshine and having a maid to look after the house, do the cooking and do the laundry – or even having a nanny to care for the children.

Also among the reasons for staying, many staff cite the children we teach. Teachers in international schools have often left behind the need for any in-service training on behaviour management. In Vietnam, for instance, the traditional Vietnamese saying 'My king, my teacher, my father' makes clear the esteem in which teachers are held. The attitude throughout most of Asia is one where teachers are respected and honoured. Korean students thank teachers for the lesson as they leave the room, and Asian students are pleased to honour their teachers with small gifts or even, at a Singaporean school, with performances on 'Teachers' Day'. This attitude inevitably rubs off onto the students from other cultures and in turn raises levels of behaviour, respect and motivation across international schools.

Teaching children who are open to new ideas, who are motivated to learn and who are polite and respectful is very

Most teachers on the international school circuit cannot fathom why anyone would teach anywhere else. The mix of nationalities, backgrounds and religions can make for a charming cohort of students who, in the main, tend to be very accepting; welcoming of newcomers, adaptable and eager to share their stories.

seductive. Most teachers on the international school circuit cannot fathom why anyone would teach anywhere else. The mix of nationalities, backgrounds and religions can make for a charming cohort of students who, in the main, tend to be very accepting; welcoming of newcomers, adaptable and eager to share their stories. They are usually happy to try new ideas and trust the teachers as the professionals they are.

The opportunity to travel in every school holiday to different countries around the region, or just to hop away for weekends, may also be on the list of reasons why expatriate teachers stay in their posts. The need to see 'everything' and go 'everywhere', in case this is their last year abroad before some hypothetical family emergency pulls them home, heightens most teachers' need to fill every holiday, at least for the first few years of this nomadic life. Many teachers will push further and further around the region until they are satisfied they have made the very best of the particular posting. Indeed, a considerable amount of time in the staffroom is spent swapping ideas, tips and travel highlights.

Finally, there are reasons for staying that are linked to family and friends. Teachers' children often keep staff in post longer than they might otherwise stay, making teaching couples with children attractive hires for an international school, despite the expense of the often free school places provided. If their own children are doing well, why would teachers move schools until after the children have finished Year 6, their IGCSEs, IB Diploma or A Levels? Similarly, once staff are in long-term relationships or marriages with local partners, or have settled and had families, this can bind them to a school or country for the indefinite future, potentially providing excellent stability for the school.

Advertising in national newspapers can be pricey, as can – in the case of larger schools – contributing to expenses for people to fly out to interview, and the cost of renting space to meet candidates in larger hubs such as London, Bangkok or Dubai. Fees from recruitment agencies and recruitment fairs, and flying out senior management for interviews that may last for days: these are costs that can run into many thousands of pounds. Add in expenditure for relocating new staff including shipping, visas and medicals, days spent on in-service training and the months before they are fully up and running, and the costs involved increase considerably. Indeed an American study of retention put the cost of replacing a staff member in money, time and lost experience

at between a fifth and a half of an annual salary, depending on the seniority of the teacher.

So – is it possible to cut these costs dramatically? If management practices in schools have the biggest impact on retention, however challenging the city or poorly resourced the school, then the answer is yes. Senior management can make staff feel valued by taking the time to get to know them, rewarding their efforts with a kind word or note rather than just a pay check, and allowing greater autonomy in their teaching. By protecting and maximising their teachers' non-contact time for planning and collaboration rather than wasting it with unnecessary meetings or administration that could be done by someone less skilled, management can send a clear signal about how highly they regard their teachers. When treated as professionals, staff are valued and listened to for their depth of knowledge and experience, and are given access to worthwhile professional development and opportunities for internal promotion.

These are the messages received over and over again from teachers in international schools. Levels of retention vary enormously even within the same city and so, before schools look to external factors – to the bomb scare, the pollution or the traffic – maybe they need to first look in the mirror. With small shifts in management culture, simple changes can be made which may save thousands of pounds on the costly process of recruitment, keeping in the classroom the high value commodity that is the international school teacher.

Further reading

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The maid phenomenon – messages for educationalists

Gail Bradley shares some research on the impact on children of ‘substitute mothers’

A hunched and lone figure, let’s call her Anna, darts along the desert highway. A car stops. Relieved to see a female driver, Anna gets in, explaining that she is fleeing to the city. She has been employed as a domestic worker-cum-children’s maid for the past six months. Thin and drawn, she has triangular shaped burns on her arm, which go some way towards symbolizing the abuse that she has endured at the hands of her employer. With no passport, Anna is desperate to get to her embassy in the hope of finding support.

This is not an isolated incident. A recent report from Amnesty International (2014) suggests that, although working as a foreign domestic worker overseas can be financially lucrative, it is not risk free. Often isolated at home, these women risk exploitation and gender-based abuse. In certain countries, due to antiquated sponsorship systems, employers hold considerable power over individuals in a situation where the legal system often fails them. Many have been deceived before arriving in the country: a deception related to salary and working conditions which in reality can mean seven day, 100 hour working weeks, and can include harsh restrictions on freedom of movement and communication, as well as verbal, physical and sexual abuse.

This appalling and shocking situation is, in most people’s terms, unacceptable. However, a different concern for educationalists is the impact that this significantly widespread practice might have upon children: in a previous article (Bradley, 2014), I explored this relatively ‘new’ phenomenon, children in the charge of female foreign domestic workers, or maids as they are commonly known.

Throughout my 26 years’ experience as an educator overseas, I have encountered considerable concern amongst colleagues in the international context. Concern has also stemmed from parents. As a consequence, I set about carrying out small-scale research based in two very different international schools in the Arabian Gulf. Both schools operate within an international context and adopt typical international school curricula.

Interestingly, findings suggested that maids frequently carried out typical maternal duties, although they tended to believe that their role is to ‘do everything’ for the children. In general, maids were inclined to function as the main

performer with the child adopting a passive role, and a lack of verbal interaction in the maid-child partnership was suggested. There was evidence that the maid phenomenon potentially changed children’s behaviour: differences appeared to exist between children with maids at home and those without, with implications for areas of learning amongst ‘maid-children’.

In essence, perceived consequences of using maids as substitute mothers included:

- Child dependency upon adults in order to function
- A lack of independence, self-help and self-regulatory skills
- A lack of independent cognitive skills such as making choices and asking questions
- A deficit in risk-taking skills
- Difficulties operating in the classroom, due to poor skills which promote independent learning
- Poor acquisition of developmentally appropriate skills
- Low motivation
- A passive learning style
- Presence of a learned behaviour which mirrors learned helplessness
- Restricted interaction/language issues: possibly through lack of verbal interaction and maids’ limited language in the child’s native tongue
- A style of operating which can be carried into adulthood

These consequences can be worrying, especially when we consider that most international schools’ students require certain skills, attitudes and dispositions to fully access programmes such as those of the International Baccalaureate or the International Primary Curriculum. Nationally-linked programmes, too, aim to prepare students for the 21st century. Currently, for example, in the UAE there is a fervent drive towards developing 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking.

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Nevertheless, it is not all dismal news. Although the maid phenomenon could be potentially detrimental for a child’s development, key stakeholders including teachers, administrators and parents believe that there are ways of reducing the potential for problems. They suggested some practical ideas, many of which have been used with success, including:

Schools operating as an agent of change through:

- offering information sessions, training and guidance for parents and maids during induction days, workshops and information packs
- handbooks and orientation material explicitly notifying parents of skills required for children to function appropriately in school
- a life skills programme for children
- a parent support system particularly for expatriate parents

Rule changes in schools:

- Schools could refuse homework completed by maids and offer homework clubs
- Refusal to allow maids the opportunity to stay in school

School organization:

- Rules encouraging independence and responsibility should be adopted, such as checklists for children, enabling them to establish their own independent routine
- Consistency throughout the school regarding high expectations of independence skills
- Tracking and monitoring signs of dependency and including them in school reports; following through related issues with parents
- Student reports that reflect the acquisition or lack of independence skills
- Practical resources which encourage independence skills: eg. water pipes for hygiene purposes, checklists as prompts for independent functioning
- Increasing the number of Teacher Assistants who encourage independent behavior
- Domestic workers employed by the school being used purely for operational reasons and not as children’s aides
- Helpers’ Day: an annual day dedicated to acknowledging helpers. Helpers (maids/drivers) are invited to school and served drinks/food by children

- Information included in new staff orientation programmes; staff need to be aware of dependent behavior vs a ‘laziness’ trait
- Exploring a whole school policy to work with dependency issues which fits the context of the particular school

Classroom organization:

- Encouraging specific responsibility roles e.g. line leader, water monitor
- Using peer encouragement to complete tasks independently; buddy system
- High expectations of independence in class and consistency amongst staff
- Praising independent behaviour
- Providing emotional support and time for children who are developing independence skills in order to break the pattern of reliance
- Increasing open-ended tasks and implementing an inquiry-driven programme
- Employing classroom techniques which require critical thinking skills and embedding them into everyday practice; teachers can turn instructions into questions, for example

The study I undertook also highlighted hired help as a necessity which will without doubt continue: maids, together with their embedded practices, appear to be culturally entrenched. Although educators are not in a position to condemn such practices, for schools that operate with children’s best interests in mind, one solution might be to work with the main carer – and acknowledge that for many children this could, in fact, be a maid.

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Seven steps to make your service project ethical

Tom Brodie offers some guidance on working ethically in developing countries

Many international schools are either based in developing countries or want to help in one – or both. It is a noble goal to help those less fortunate than ourselves, but how do we know we are working ethically, and not causing more problems than the one we hoped to solve? I've been running international service projects now for over 10 years, and during that time have made mistakes, seen good practices and seen less than ideal ones. What follows is my list of 7 steps to help you develop an ethical service project.

Step 1: Find an in-country partner

Assuming you have already identified an issue that you want to try to help solve, your first step must be to find an in-country partner to support and implement your vision. It is doubtful that you have the expertise or the experience to evaluate and structure your project properly, so don't

put the pressure on yourself to try and achieve all that. Find help! NGOs or other schools in your chosen location are the ideal choice. If picking one from scratch, my advice would be to go for a small, grass-roots organization that shares your concerns. Beware of large charities with large costs, or companies selling a service project. For my last two projects I have worked with Lamdon School, in Leh, capital of Ladakh, and Bill Kite at 7 Brothers Trekking (kitemandu@gmail.com) as well as with Mountain People (www.mountain-people.org). Both of these organizations (Bill Kite and Mountain People) have zero costs and ensure that all of my work gets multiplied not divided before it reaches the recipients.

Step 2: Establish a real need

Handing over an abstract amount of cash is never a good idea. Establish a project goal and work towards it. This

could be a new school roof, a medical project, opening a library, or dental equipment. If you have completed step 1 correctly your partner will be able to identify physical goods, fundraising targets or other goals that can be the focus of your project.

In 2007 Skagerak International School (SIS) took to Ladakh 4,000 brand new toothbrushes, donated by a manufacturer to help launch a dental health programme, along with 50 pairs of ice skates to launch an ice skating programme. Along with Rotary International, in 2014 SIS established an ionized salt distribution project to help reduce birth defects and other diseases in remote Nepalese Valleys, and contributed 10,000 Euros towards building the Mountain People Refugee, Education and Health Centre in Kathmandu.

Step 3: Fundraise, fundraise, fundraise

I am well aware that many schools are re-evaluating the way in which they raise funds (see my article ‘Not another bake sale’ in Issue 18 (2) of this magazine). Here are some other points to consider.

Look for commercial or other charitable partners that would like to meet your goal: this can be a real shortcut to meeting your fundraising target.

Looking to construct a well in Africa? Send a delegation of students to the local drilling company to give a presentation to the CEO and ask for a donation. Companies are more than aware of their Corporate Social Responsibility and are often very happy to make what is for them a small, but for you is a large, donation in return for having their name

associated with the project. Promote this partnership over time and it could bring real dividends. Make sure you go back afterwards, provide photos of the project and take a company flag or logo with you. If you have parents with responsibility for a company’s finances, they may be able to make a tax-efficient donation to the project too. Rotary or Lions clubs also have access to funds that the local chapter may be willing to donate to your project, especially if you work together on developing the project in the long term.

In 2012 Skagerak International School and Rotary International raised matched funding on the basis of Rotary International matching 3.5 times SIS funding. So every Euro we raised at SIS counted for more than triple (up to 15,000 Euros maximum).

If your school is a member of the European Council of International Schools (ECIS), you could also apply for an ECIS outreach grant. This requires completion of a simple form, and at SIS a successful application added 2,000 Euros to our budget in 2014.

An important ethical element to fundraising is the creation of a specific fundraising account, as well as publishing what is going into it and what you are spending out of it. Having a fundraising target that is communicated to the community is very important. We all remember those fundraising thermometers or graphs – they do work and are worth the time it takes to organise. If you meet your target early you can re-evaluate, but you should also know when enough is enough.

My goal when fundraising is for 150% of the money



On the way to Kongmaru La, Ladakh.



Local children in Nepal, pictured during SIS's trip to the country

we raise to make it to the final stage; in other words the funds raised are supplemented by contributions from those participating, either in our country or in the country in which we are working. For example I will buy materials for a school if a village provides the labour to build it. An important point here is that all the money we fundraise goes to the project. I pay for my own flight and hotel, and expect the students to do the same. If they are fundraising then the funds are for the project. If they want to go on a trip, parents or grandparents need to pay for it – or the students need to get a job to pay for it themselves.

Step 4: Be clear in your vision

Your vision needs to be clear and SMART targeted. How will you know when you have achieved it? Will the school be built? Will the infrastructure be in place? Will the child be sponsored? Also be aware of your limitations. We can't solve all the problems of world poverty, and sometimes global issues overtake even our small ideas. We can all, though, think globally and act locally.

When I have run projects in the past they have often started with the idea of a foreign trip and then the service has built up around it. There is nothing wrong with that. When I was based in Norway there was very little local poverty or real issues – Norway is a very lucky country – so I felt that fundraising was a good place to focus our service efforts. Our partners could then use that money well in the countries we were visiting and we could visit, checking and supporting their efforts. I also think it is a very good thing for students to get their hands dirty and undertake service projects where they construct or provide help. However, I often have unease about some of these projects. Firstly because I wonder what students know about painting, or building, or tree planting

in another country, and how we can be sure what we are doing is ethical. Secondly, because I see some businesses taking advantage of this perceived need, charging schools to come in and paint a building or room and then a month later having another school do the same thing. Thirdly, because if we are undertaking a physical job we are taking work away from local people, when it may have been better to use our own skills in our own country to raise funds that would pay wages for a year and provide a skilled workman, thus multiplying the effect in the community.

Step 5: Look for the positives and the negatives

Don't wear rose-tinted glasses. Your project will have positive and negative aspects to it, like the example above. One of the huge positives of any project that includes a foreign trip is taking students out of their comfort zones and into a different cultural context. Look for ways to develop that. Don't stay in hotels – ask for homestays; do see the cultural sights; do undertake a trek in the mountains and or raft on the river; do research the country and respect the way of life. One of the negatives is the cost. Not all students can afford to go on a trip, but that does not mean they can't be part of the project.

Step 6: Make your project school-wide, long term and non-person-specific

If you want your project to survive then you must embed it in your school. Look for ways to develop it into your school culture and have all the students, whatever their age group, involved at their own level. Perhaps the final trip is only for 10/11 graders. But can the school embed it in the curriculum across the age-ranges? For instance, for the Primary Years Programme (PYP), fundraising for an Economics

Unit of Enquiry could go to the project, or a Sharing the Planet Unit of Enquiry could focus on where you intend to help. Considering other cultures could look at the cultural context of your visit. In the Middle Years Programme (MYP), investigations into Language could consider the language of the country you visit, geography units could consider the geography of the area and the MYP final project could have this as a focus. In the IB Diploma Programme, Extended Essays might consider the outcomes of the project, while World Study Extended Essays could consider issues relevant to the project focus. In IB Diploma Theory of Knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge Systems as an Area of Knowledge, create a case study focused on the area you visit. Considering the Ethics of Service in the Ethics ToK AoK also opens up an opportunity to explore this area in the classroom.

The advantage of this approach is that, if the project is embedded across the school and the age range, then your project is likely to last. Students will work towards their chance to join the trip. Students who have been on the trip can come back, reflect, and share their experience, while students in the lower age groups will be more attached and motivated towards their current learning and projects.

The project will last and create a far richer experience for all parties as the relationship develops over the years. This is a journey that takes time, effort and commitment. Your project is also now non person specific and won't die if the lead teacher (possibly you) leaves the school or retires.

Step 7: Create a communication line, Evaluate and Re-evaluate

Key to ethics is communication. If you are working with

ethical partners they will demand communication, and rightly so. Communication starts with a working plan and a realistic budget. This must be time-constrained and make clear the roles and responsibilities of all the parties. Within this plan there must be staging points, with an opportunity to stop and evaluate your progress and whether your plan is still realistic. And when you have completed your goal, stop and re-evaluate with all your stakeholders: what went well, what didn't go well, and what you can learn for the next time.

And finally

Don't wait. Commit and do it. The world is a broken place and we can't fix it all, but we can help our students to see that with effort they can make a difference. Hopefully these 7 steps will be helpful – but remember that you can't hope to achieve them all in the first year of a project.

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A video of activities referred to in this article can be viewed via www.youtube.com/watch?v=z98hMCqYeZs&feature=youtu.be



Using classroom walls to create a thinking-rich environment

Eoin Lenihan explains why our surroundings are so important



Take a look at Photo A and Photo B. Which Elementary classroom do you think is preferred by its students?

You may be surprised to hear that the students of classroom B were happier with their room. I recently conducted a survey of student attitudes towards their school community in six schools in Ulm, Germany. I surveyed more than 600 students. One of the questions on the survey was simply "Do you like your classroom?" Students answered on a scale of 1 (Not at all), 2 (It is nothing special), 3 (It is quite nice) and 4 (I like it very much). The students of classroom A gave their classroom an average rating of 3.0 while the students of classroom B gave it an average rating of 3.2. Both sets of students felt that their room was 'quite nice' but, as you no doubt noticed, these two rooms are aesthetically quite different.

The difference that emerges when these classrooms are considered, together with all the other classrooms studied, is that there tends to be two types of wall display in schools: the teacher-arranged room and the student-arranged room. In the former, the teacher will often invest a great deal of energy in 'presenting' the room at the start of the school year,

making it an interior decorating project, the results of which will be aesthetically pleasing but owned by the teacher and not by the students. It is common to see colourful decorations labelling student profiles, neat arrangements of grammar charts and mathematical rule posters that come free from company booksellers. It looks good to visiting parents; a principal or colleagues will see order, neatness and 'things' happening, and assume that this must be a good teacher. However, check back at Halloween or Easter and you are likely to find the exact same wall displays. According to the walls, students are still learning the same grammar and their student profile has not changed – as though they themselves have had no personal and social growth in the intervening months. In such instances, classrooms are aesthetic things only: they do not change and they do not support deeper learning and social growth.

In Photo B, though there are no colourful displays and only minimal thought has been given to the whole aesthetic experience, the work is unmistakably that of the students and for that reason above any other, students liked this room more. Ideally, teachers should aim to have the walls of their



classroom be both aesthetically pleasing and supportive of deeper student understanding and social interaction.

In 1987, Creekmore identified the importance of classroom walls, or the fixed architecture of the classroom, in supporting student understanding. Creekmore recommended that each of the classroom's three walls (the fourth usually being a source of natural light) should serve a specific function, naming them the 'Acquisition Wall', 'Maintenance Wall' and 'Dynamic Wall'.

The wall to which students are exposed the most, reflecting the dominance of Direct Instruction, is the wall with the board on it. This should be the Acquisition Wall. Creekmore argues that it is on this wall that all new and difficult concepts should be displayed so that they are continually reinforced throughout the teaching of a unit of study. The Maintenance Wall is usually the wall opposite the windows. This wall is of secondary importance and should display information which students should remember into the future, either for task completion or for summative assessment. Finally, the back wall (in a Direct Instruction classroom) becomes a Dynamic Wall, one that changes regularly to reflect the social interactions and successes of the students. This wall is the social hub of the room.

I would recommend using Creekmore's model with some minor but important alterations. Firstly, to complement Creekmore's room layout, teachers should use the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Visible Thinking routines to turn the classroom into a thinking-rich space. Too often, walls of classrooms are full with posters and blocks of texts about various units of work and projects that students have undertaken. These are invariably end products. At best, these serve to remind students of key information for future assessment. At worst, they are simply aesthetic things. Even in the case of the former, these simply act as oversized flash-cards for test preparation and are of no higher-order cognitive value.

For example, it is not enough for the Mathematics teacher to place Pythagoras's Theorem on the Acquisition Wall and leave it there until the end of unit exam. Instead, by using

a Compass Points thinking routine, students are asked to interact with the Theorem. In this routine, students are asked to think about Pythagoras's Theorem using the letters of the compass. N = 'Need to Know', S = 'Stance or Suggestion for moving Forward', E = 'Excited' and W = 'Worrisome'. By asking students to make their feelings and thoughts about the Theorem visible on the Acquisition Wall at the beginning of the Unit, the teacher hooks their interest by making it personal and, importantly, provides a place for them to return and reflect upon their experience throughout the Unit.

A second alteration I would suggest to Creekmore's model is to rename the Maintenance Wall and instead call it a Process Wall. Maintenance indicates that learning has been done and is simply waiting about to be tested. A Process Wall is dynamic. Also, as I strongly support the idea of Project-Based Learning, I believe this wall should reflect the various stages of thinking, reflection and experimentation that students encounter along the way to producing their final Artefacts. Committing to a Process Board is committing to the process of learning and not simply to the outcome. Again, Visible Thinking routines are the ideal way to structure and display student thinking at every stage of their learning process.

For example, when you introduce a new topic, take an interesting image to hook student interest and use a See/Think/Wonder Routine. Essentially you ask your students to write down everything they see in the image, then ask what it makes them think and wonder. The routine asks students to think more deeply about a topic. It encourages them to be more observant, to think critically and to make wider connections. However, once they have finished the routine, it can be moved to the Process Wall, marking the beginning of their learning process. The rest of the board should be similarly filled with routines that tell the story of student thinking throughout the process. The last piece of work placed on the Process Wall should be a reflection, the 'I used to think ... Now I think' routine being particularly suitable.

As the Acquisition Wall and the Process Wall begin to fill with ideas, so too does the classroom become a thinking-rich



environment. And when all of the thinking is finished the students will, in accordance with the Project-Based Learning philosophy, have an artefact for presenting to the wider community. It is absolutely reminiscent of the architect's or engineer's office, a hive of ideas and thinking before the final product is unveiled.

Another benefit of arranging the Process Wall in this manner is that students are never overwhelmed with large blocks of text that are uninspiring and impenetrable, or poster work that is simply cleverly disguised note-taking. By using the Visible Thinking routines, everything placed on the board is deliberate and has a deliberate purpose. Further, not only will students be prepared for formative and summative assessments, they will also have a deeper understanding of how they think and how they learn. Because Visible Thinking Routines are simple after the first Unit of Study, students can be largely self-guided on breaking down their own thinking and deepening their own understanding thereafter.

By using this method to organise your classroom walls, you ensure that your students have a room that helps to deepen their understanding, that makes them more self-sufficient learners, that is aesthetically pleasing and, importantly, that they feel ownership over. However, this method does not only create a thinking-rich environment for your students but also challenges any parent, colleague or principal who enters your room to stop and think.

At the University of Augsburg, one of the highlights of our seminar on Internationally-Minded Education (IME) is when students take two class periods to create engaging wall displays. They are asked to teach their fellow students the fundamentals of IME by creating engaging wall displays that use Visible Thinking routines. What we have learned is that in order to catch the attention of potential learners outside of the classroom, some basic rules are important:

1. The choice of backboard colour is significant and influences engagement.
2. There should be three levels of headings:
 - a. An overarching heading that quickly draws the eye of the visitor standing in the doorway and pulls them in (written as a Headline routine).
 - b. Subsections that break up the Process Wall into thematic sections.
 - c. Smaller subsections that clearly point to essential information.
3. Graphic organisers such as mind maps and spider graphs force learners to break down chunks of text, identify key points and allow visitors to quickly and logically understand a topic, thus heightening the chance that they will retain that information.
4. Interactive elements such as 'See/Think/Wonder', questions with room to write answers, and flip-up cards over answers hold visitors' attention and demand that they think about a problem instead of simply consuming information.

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Design your own performance management

Mark Brisbane on creating conditions for committed teachers to thrive

Young Grace showed remarkable poise and character. Taking charge of her small group of less able mathematicians, she directed a couple on number bonds to 10 whilst setting another off to 20, encouraging them to use practical tools to solve numerical problems but also to record their learning in their books. Grace's group happily accepted her direction and seemed comfortable being led by one of their peers.

Watching this 7 year old child exercise such leadership skills was inspiring. Witnessing such visible learning is one of the joys of being in education and this particular example came about due to an initiative in the Primary phase at my school, The British School of Kuwait. As Head Teacher in the school I have always searched for ways of allowing creativity to flourish amongst teaching staff. By instinct, and through research, trial and error, I have come to understand that classroom teachers, when offered a significant degree of autonomy, will pursue best practice without undue need for overt extrinsic motivators.

Taking account of the theories of Dan Pink and contemporaries such as Simon Sinek, I plan strategically such that complementary motivators of mastery and purpose engage with autonomy to create conditions for creativity and continuous development to thrive. A natural corollary of this is that the children benefit from the application of teachers' discretionary effort, only given when staff are personally fulfilled and consider themselves genuine contributors to a vision they share: something I consider to be the essence of our role as leaders.

This is what the Design Your Own performance management initiative (DYO) is all about. Instead of rigidly controlling the performance management process I invite teachers to design their own learning-based investigation, write an action plan and carry it out, with leaders acting as sounding boards and critical friends.

I'm not always convinced it's worthwhile having managers sitting in the back of classrooms with a comprehensive tick sheet of criteria. Nor do I consider that following up with a short meeting – where apparent strengths and weaknesses are identified via the observation snapshot, before the paperwork is filed for another year – is the most effective way of improving a teacher's impact.

Consider a child's learning, where formative teacher assessment is often more reliable than a single exam and certainly more effective in raising standards. Similarly, ongoing professional action research, coupled with the dialogue facilitated by a learning coach, is likely to be more effective in improving teaching practice.

This is because the crucial reflective process, the continuous fine-tuning and innovation in practice, is better enabled when teachers are actively encouraged by senior management, and feel they benefit from intrinsic reward when they do so as active determinants of their own journey.

In its first year of operation the DYO saw about a dozen teachers in the Primary phase engage in the programme. When projects were wrapped up late in the academic year they were available to all colleagues, ensuring the sharing of



good practice at the grassroots level; not only by teachers, for teachers, but also specifically what works (and what may not work) in our unique setting. There are many variables acting on children's learning but in many cases where projects fell into literacy or numeracy categories, the average progress by those children compared favourably, albeit to a small degree, with year group averages.

This year there are around 20 teachers taking advantage of the programme, with interests branching out from traditional areas such as literacy and maths into behavioural sciences, intrinsic motivation and the learner voice. The use of Bloom's taxonomy and the correlation between levels of literacy education in the home and achievement at school are other areas being explored this year.

This is highly encouraging and, if the conversations I am holding with staff are anything to go by, the children are certain to benefit from highly passionate, engaged teachers. In the case of Grace, I was also able to gently challenge the teacher by asking 'How is Grace's academic learning

enhanced by helping the less able?' She had an excellent answer, but this is not the point; it's the reflective dialogue that matters.

Teaching is a noble profession that is often unfairly maligned. We are further weighed down by paperwork and regulation and sometimes simply by the weight of responsibility we carry, felt all the more acutely by a sincere faculty that overwhelmingly wishes to do its utmost for the children in its care. The DYO, in its own small way, looks to restore dignity and vitality to the profession.

In an uncertain world the responsibility lies with educators to develop young people as leaders, with the capacity for autonomous, critical thought. The future lies with these children. The DYO is a small start at The British School of Kuwait. Maybe there is a place for it in your school too.

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Letter to the editors

Dear Editors,

I write to share some thinking in response to the article in Volume 16 Issue 3 entitled 'Tolerance is good – but the need to question remains'.

Nick Alchin offers in this article a useful commentary on 'the need to question', which appropriately exposes the problematic slippage to relativism and the attendant lack of engagement in intercultural exchanges. Along these lines he writes 'I worry, though, about the slippery slope from tolerance to relativism' (p. 5). With a student from his IB Diploma Theory of Knowledge (TOK) class, he concludes that there are three ways to respond to differences of opinion, as follows:

- you can shrug and say 'all beliefs are equally valid; we are both equally right'
- you can discuss why you believe what you do, and why others believe what they do, and try to understand the difference
- you can just say 'I am right, you are wrong' (p. 5).

Of these three, Alchin proposes the second as the best option which, in contrast to the other approaches, can be the 'start of a conversation'.

I agree with the spirit of this commentary and I would like to offer a couple of caveats. First, I agree that the notion that all beliefs or opinions are 'equally valid' can act as an available script or logic that shuts down thinking and possibilities for intercultural dialogue. So too, the notion that acknowledging the impossibility of objectivity in cross-cultural knowledge mobilizations represents a 'slippery slope to relativism' can act as a script that also effectively shuts down thinking and dialogue. The complex terrain of attempting to think through and adjudicate upon, without guarantees, the constructedness of knowledge

and opinion across difference somehow becomes reduced to a short linear slope connecting the binary poles of objective scrutiny and 'anything goes' relativism.

Second, I agree that a sound path forward is to attempt to understand what informs one's and the other's differences of beliefs (Alchin's option 2). However, one must acknowledge that this hoped for 'understanding' itself cannot transcend the socio-cultural location of the self that produces it. Thus, one must be aware that tracing the epistemic difference of oneself and a cultural other also takes place from one's biased/located position—there is no neutral ground to weigh in on these different epistemic trajectories (de Souza, 2011; Tarc, 2013). So, yes, one still has to adjudicate on desirable values, beliefs and actions as informed by the thinking work of engaging epistemic difference. However, one must be vigilant to hold to, and be affected by, the awareness that one's knowing remains necessarily partial and that there are no guarantees of adjudicating correctly. And this, I believe, is the complicated and infinite terrain of an on-the-ground ethics in a world of difference, a terrain that the TOK course should be well suited to explore.

Yours,

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Moving service learning forward

Colin Campbell, Janet Field and Akofa Wallace offer some shining examples

How does a school with a well-established service learning programme move to the next level?

This question confronts us as we reflect on a programme well into its second decade. Things are running along quite smoothly. But we wonder how to move students toward even more significant learning in the context of authentic, mutually beneficial and transformative service partnerships.

Principled action and service have always been integral to UNIS Hanoi's school culture. From its beginnings, the school has aligned itself to the ideals of the United Nations. The school adopted an International Baccalaureate education because of the similarities between IB philosophy and our UN principles of promoting peaceful solutions and cooperation, developing friendly relationships, and encouraging respect. The IB programme continuum supports our mission, which

emphasizes each student's responsibility to be a 'steward of our global society and natural environment'.

Today, service is well-established and well-resourced. A Middle-High School Coordinator and a full-time assistant are supporting 41 service projects this year, with 94 community visits by our students and 62 campus visits from groups we work with. 554 students are partnered with 27 community organisations. Several teacher-leaders support service initiatives in the Elementary School. All teachers participate in service in some way; other staff members are also encouraged to participate.

Our professional development has drawn on several sources, including the expertise of Cathryn Berger Kaye who visited several years ago and continues to offer workshops in the region. Kaye's belief that "over time and with collaboration

Case study: Swim for Life

Since starting up, Swim for Life has evolved so much that students are truly the driving force. "At the start of the academic year it soon becomes clear who has unique strengths other than swimming," says Eleonora Healy, facilitator of the Swim for Life group. 'Not only are our students taught to be swimming instructors; we are also utilising their skills as marketers, photographers and videographers.'

Drowning continues to be the biggest cause of death in children in Vietnam. The Swim for Life project was established in cooperation with two local NGOs and the Ministry of Education to help combat this – at least within Hanoi. Annually, as many as 100 Vietnamese students aged between 9 and 19 benefit from the school's programme. The students – some disabled – have never swum before. Many are street children, often living with the everyday trauma their circumstance creates.

Their weekly interaction with 16 UNIS Hanoi students is making a positive impact. Yet it's not just the local children who are benefitting from the project. Students who are at least 16 years old can be awarded the American Red Cross Water Safety certificate after completing 30 hours' training plus weekly instruction time. To date, three students have received the award with a further ten hoping to do so by the end of the year.

"Through Swim for Life, our students are really learning responsibility, future planning, communication, collaboration and safety. Knowing they have children waiting for them to teach them is a good lifelong lesson," says Ms Healy.



Case study: Eye screening



This year, a new service project will begin offering eye screening and follow-up eye care to students of a local Blind School. The brainchild of a parent, the new project is an example of how the school's approach to service is entrenched in the hearts and minds of the school community.

"This initiative is unique because it is parent-led," says Colin Campbell, the Middle-High School Service Learning Coordinator. "We had a group of girls who wanted to work

with a local hospital, but were finding it difficult to get any projects started. We matched the girls with this initiative and we hope to screen as many as 40 students by the end of this academic year. Although starting a service learning project in this manner is experimental, we are excited about it because it also offers students a chance to be part of the decision-making process. We have had meetings regarding what the group aims to provide as well as what is feasible. This is good learning for our students."

and good work, service and learning can weave into the fabric of the extended school community and the lives of its members" (Kaye, 2010: 245) has been influential.

However, a strong commitment to authentic and meaningful service is not everything. In moving forward, we have found challenges and dilemmas that we know others share. One of these is finding the balance between project sustainability and student agency. Building quality relationships with partners takes time. Microfinance for Change, and Swim for Life are two projects that are building up multiple layers of learning as they evolve each year. Colin Campbell, Service Learning Coordinator, comments: 'Over time we have learned that it is of more value to us if we connect with fewer communities, but make deeper and more meaningful connections.'

Nonetheless, student-initiated action should – and often does – drive service projects in new directions. The school has an encouraging but realistic approach, helping students to analyse feasibility and needs, and making sure we understand 'success' from every perspective. A new Eye Screening project takes this further, with parents joining in the partnership.

Another challenge is the place of service learning within the curriculum. Where does it fit? What is its main purpose – the service, or the learning? Our programme has shifted from the curriculum's edges towards the centre as we have brought learning into focus, but it has a long way to go. The

relationship between action arising from learning and action as learning is something we are still figuring out, across the IB continuum.

Some projects, such as Microfinance for Change, link to subject studies. Others gain 'learning value' when students can transfer their skills and knowledge. Opportunities for conceptual connections also emerge when we loosen subject boundaries to allow for more interdisciplinary teaching and learning. Some of our more generative curriculum work has been occurring around UN principles, resources and frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Lastly, evaluation. How do we gauge the impact of service learning? What are the learning outcomes and what type of outcomes are even appropriate? Having students reflect on their experiences and explain their learning is a conventional way of gauging impact. But reflection can tip into being just another task, with a manufactured response. We would like to develop more consistent accountability without losing the authenticity of the context and diluting the students' intrinsic motivation. One consideration for next year is to develop the type of feedback that students receive, and have them use it to build effectiveness.

Also, our growing alumni network encourages us to think that we will be able to seek feedback on how former students have built upon the values instilled by the school, including whether principled action and service have taken hold in their adult lives.

Bigger evaluation questions exist around the programme's impact on service partners, as well as the broader value that the school gains from its investment. We can reflect on these, but are only starting to explore the ways that success might be defined.

When moving forward, it is easy to overlook how far we have come. Student agency, curriculum integration and evaluation are only three of our challenges, but listening to students reminds us that the value and impact of service is primarily felt by individuals, activated by their connections with others, and experienced in the learning and meaning that results. As one student, three years in Swim for Life, put it:

'A lot of the time I'm learning the same thing that I'm teaching the kids, and I thought that was really neat.'

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Case study: Microfinance for change

Since 2014, 20 students have gained an insight into microfinance and how it seeks to alleviate poverty in rural communities. The Microfinance for Change project is a partnership with local NGO Bloom Microventures, whose aim is to support small-scale women farmers.

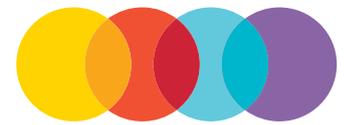
Through Bloom, women in the Pu Minh commune apply for business loans ranging from USD 100 to 400. 'Most women apply to buy livestock such as chicks or pigs,' says Ly Tran of Bloom. 'Our goal is to help women establish alternative sources of income so that they are not simply reliant on income from perennial crops.'

Working with Bloom, students have approved 47 loans with a successful payback rate of 98%. 'At the beginning of the school year, the students pay a visit to the villages to familiarize themselves with the people and their way of

life,' explains Donna Frose, co-supervisor. 'They become fully involved in the application review process and must consider a range of factors that can affect the decision to lend. In Semester 2, the students return to the villages to see the impact of the loans for themselves. This ties in with the IBDP Economics course while meeting real needs in the community.'

Microfinance for Change has become so successful, the group has been able to diversify. 'Half the group reviews applications and the other half is about to launch a honey social enterprise. Our students have chosen to purchase honey from two beekeepers which will be marketed and sold with profits going back into the microfinancing initiative,' explained Nathalie Grun, the group's other supervisor.





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Do I have an anosognosic in my class?

Vani Veikoso looks for help in teaching 'self-determined learners'

Have you heard of Freud? What about John Dewey? OK – but how about Joseph Babinski? No, you haven't? Well, I hadn't either until March 2015 when I was doing some reading as part of the 'Learn How to Learn: mental strategies to tackle tough subjects' course I am currently undertaking. It's part of my action research on strategies that I can use to assist students who are part of the self-determination group I am teaching at our school, the KAUST School in Saudi Arabia.

After 13 long years of teaching the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) as a homeroom teacher I decided that it was time for a change. Apart from my Bachelor's and Master's degrees (part of which consisted of a course in educating students with special needs), I also possess some qualifications in Teaching English as a Second Language so, when the opportunity arose, I decided to make the change to Student Support teacher.

Being a first-time Student Support teacher I was fascinated by the many challenges that arose from juggling schedules, building trust and rapport with homeroom teachers and, most importantly, being able to identify and serve the many students with varied learning and language needs that existed in the pod I belong to in grade two. Pod A, as we are known, is made up of four classes, each with at least 17 students. My role as a Student Support teacher involved supporting students and teachers in a pull-out and push-in model, as we as a school begin to develop our understanding of 'inclusion' or 'inclusive education' currently been promoted by the IB as 'the ongoing process of increasing access and engagement (for students) by removing barriers to learning'. It is with this motivation to remove students' barriers to learning that I embarked this year on building a self-determination program for students in the different Pod A classes who need it. My focus for this program was one of the good practices promoted by the inclusion model: affirming identity and building self-esteem.

Now back to Joseph Babinski – a prominent French-Polish neurologist (1857-1932) who proposed that 'a person who suffers from a disability (but) seems unaware of or denies the existence of his or her disability' suffers from a condition called anosognosia (Morris, 2010). Fast forward to 1999, when Professor David Dunning of Cornell and his graduate student Jason Kruger adopted this term in their published paper titled 'Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties of Recognizing One's Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-assessments' to make the connection that 'our incompetence masks our

ability to recognize our incompetence', which became known as the Dunning-Kruger Effect (Morris, 2010). Their research into the possibility 'to measure one's self-assessed level of competence against something a little more objective – say, actual competence' (Morris, 2010) was inspired by the 1995 Pittsburg bank robbery suspect McArthur Wheeler, who rubbed his face with lemon juice believing that it made his face invisible to video cameras.

How then is this psychological version (Dunning-Kruger Effect) of this physiological problem (anosognosia) connected to a self-determination class at the KAUST School? It just so happens that as I was reading the Morris article the faces of two of my 'Self-determined Learners' kept popping into my mind. These two students have a 'love-hate' relationship, whereby being together by choice always seems to result in one of them making a bad choice and blaming the other. And after the 'problem solving' stage of helping them identify the problem and find a solution, there seems to be a disconnect between their 'thinking' brain and their 'doing' brain. They are able to clearly articulate the problem in their actions/choices and the solution, but for some reason they keep repeating the same mistake even with intervention. I then am left to wonder, do I have a case of the Dunning-Kruger Effect in these students? And if so, what am I going to do about it?

As I write, I am in the process of continuing to build our self-determination program. With increasing awareness (as opposed to labeling) of the Dunning-Kruger Effect and anosognosics, I hope I can follow-up this article with a number of strategies I am planning to implement for my self-determined learners to continue to 'affirm their identity and build self-esteem' as students in an inclusive environment where they know they are important and valuable, and can learn.

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‘You may say I’m a dreamer...’

E T Ranger lends his ear to John Lennon’s masterpiece and hopes for the best

John Lennon’s ‘Imagine’ is a kind of anthem in international schools. I would guess that 80% of us think it is wonderful, and 20% reckon it is pernicious. I think this is worth a closer look, for what it has to say about us who hold opinions of it.

What charms us is surely the sight of a hundred or more little bright-eyed children singing their hearts out (with an occasional sidelong look for their parents in the audience, or a snigger as they catch a friend’s eye). They catch the gist of it: why can’t all the people in the world be friends? How can we tell them any other story at that innocent, hopeful age? Maybe I’m just nit-picking, and that is the lovely sentiment they will take out into this wonderful, faulty, compromising world, ready and willing to make it a better place. Sadly, I fear there is a danger that this song, like Santa Claus, is a story that can only lead to disillusion and perhaps cynicism.

Let’s look at who was writing, and when and where. John Lennon had experienced unimaginable success, left his child and wife of Art School days behind, and dropped into the New York arts world at the deep end with Yoko Ono, who is still a part of the avant-garde today. After the Beatles’ stratospheric era and flirtation with the transcendental world of the Maharishi, Lennon had successfully dissolved almost any connection with life as any of us knows it. In a recent obituary of David Bowie, Yoko Ono explicitly acknowledged their isolation. At that distance from the working world one could imagine almost anything, and even half-believe that it might come true. Isn’t this the ideal position for a philosopher to achieve enlightenment by withdrawing from the world, or a fantasist to create his own Neverland?

Let’s look at the text. In his own words Lennon later remarked that the song was ‘anti-religious, anti-nationalistic, anti-conventional, anti-capitalistic, but because it is sugarcoated it is accepted’. ‘Imagine’ exhorts us to live for the day, echoing the 1960s mantra ‘if it feels good, do it!’ This amounts to a renunciation of all the usual responsibilities that come with civilised modern life, a retreat into self-centredness. A school that has a commitment to sustainability might think about skipping that verse and moving on swiftly.

His attack on religion is another thing. Richard Dawkins might approve, holding religions responsible for the clashes between groups who identify themselves by their faiths, and Donald Trump – well, who knows what he thinks – except that he doesn’t like the 22% of the world who follow Islam? But although each faith group may be united by their beliefs, that is not to say that religion is a cause of enmity towards other groups. We might as well blame the language our enemy speaks, or the colour of their skin.

There is a quick name-check for virtuous poverty, perfectly



reasonable for a millionaire with an address on the Upper West Side. Greed and hunger, both of them unarguably bad things, are very properly put in their place. On the other hand the cure recommended is the dangerously socialistic notion of ‘sharing’, a bypassing of the Market which would not go down well with many of the commercial enterprises whose children we educate.

Countries are the next ill to be banished from the imagined paradise. One solution is easy: stay at home and pretend the other 199 countries don’t exist, but this is not an option in international schools. Alternatively, one could imagine a world in which there was no governing body that taxed the wealth of its inhabitants in order to provide services for the needy. Presumably in Lennon’s world all wealth is evenly shared, which a back-of-envelope calculation shows would give an individual GDP of about the level of Turkey or Venezuela. Undoubtedly this would be a gain for some, but not good news for the industrialised nations who form our major clients. There is also the question of who would ensure harmony and fairness in our borderless world, or who could even define them. In my favourite Doonesbury cartoon, Zonker is watering his plants and chatting with them about a presidential election campaign. One of them says to the other ‘Surely it is people’s unfairness that makes government necessary? But what do I know, I’m just a Begonia!’ I think we need to listen to the Begonias.

Finally, with an air of ‘we must do lunch some day’, we are invited to live as one, perhaps the heart-warming core of the song. From their suite at the Dakota, the welcome goes out to join the brotherhood of man. Budge over, Yoko, there are seven thousand million of us coming to join you!

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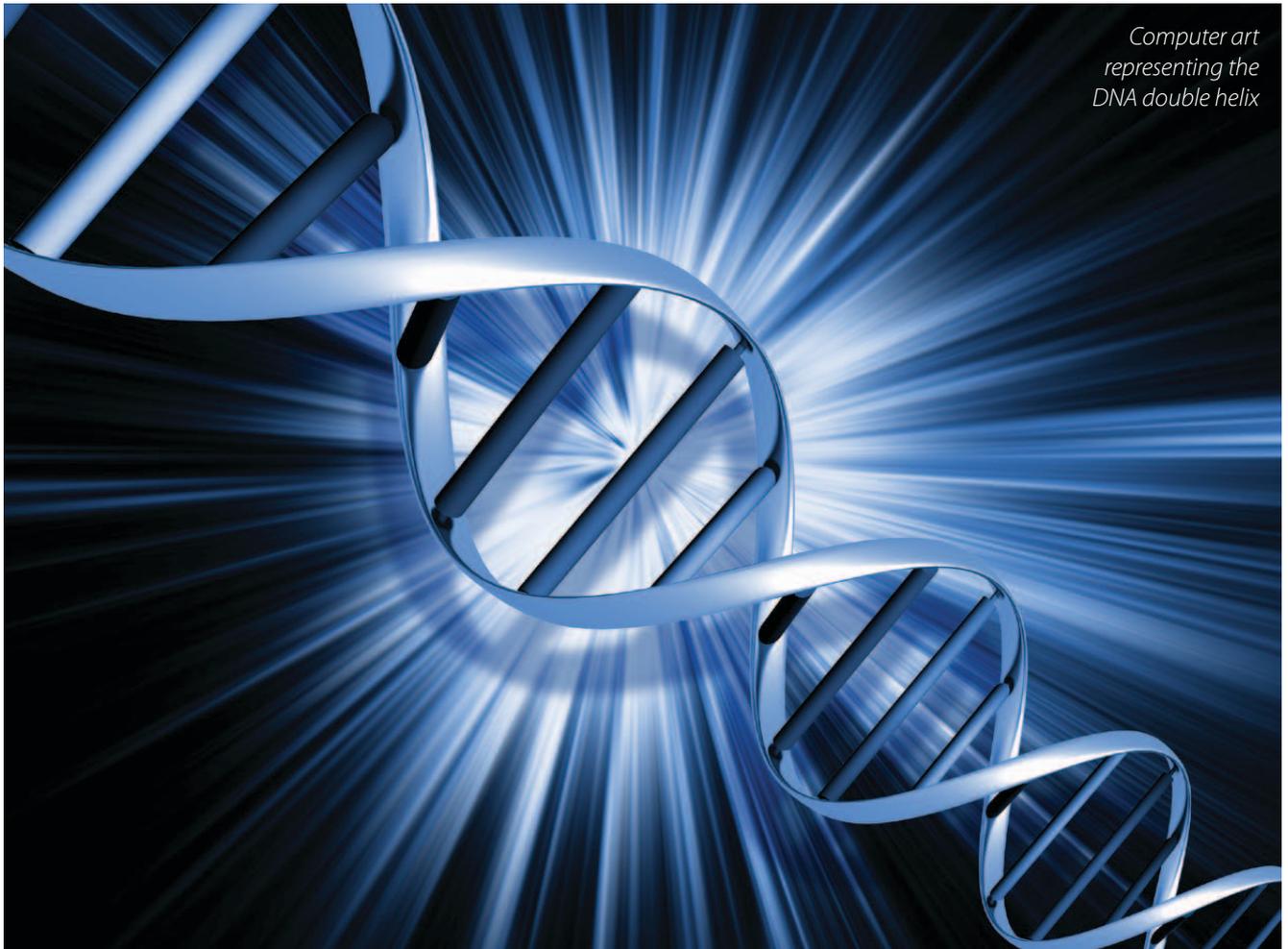
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Molecular therapy – the age of the red pen!

Richard Harwood looks at some of the latest advances in medical research

All the disputes, all the debate over ethical problems and all the money spent in pursuing the human code for life will have been well worth it if it fulfils even some of its medical promise.

The potential prizes certainly glitter. Most immediately the discovery of the detail of the human genome has led to improved genetic screening and diagnosis, with the eventual hope of new therapies. The work of turning the base pair data into the gold of new treatments has already yielded a significant upturn in the identification of genes implicated in human disease. The first use to which many new gene discoveries are put is the creation of diagnostic tests. Over four million genetic tests are now conducted every year in the USA alone.

The research and techniques developed can, however, be applied to new gene therapies, and these can be applied at

several different levels, some outlined below. In the far future, it may be possible to prevent genetic diseases from being inherited by cutting them out of the gene pool once and for all, so-called 'germline engineering'.

Conventional gene therapy

Clinical trials are planned or already under way to develop a 'functional cure' for HIV patients using modified T-cells, as well as for the genetic disorder beta-thalassemia (a blood disorder). These represent the easiest forms of gene therapy in that they can be done outside the body (ex-vivo, in technical terms). The appeal of ex-vivo work is the level of control; cells can be extracted, have their genes manipulated, and have their new genes tested before being put back. In the clinical trials of the HIV treatment, the immune cells infected by the virus are removed from the patient's bloodstream

Stipce matters

and a mutation edited in that makes them highly resistant to infection. Large numbers of the edited cells are then cultured before being infused back into the patient, where it is hoped they will flourish. A similar sort of approach can be used in blood disorders such as beta-thalassemia and sickle-cell disease which are caused by mutations in the globin gene.

Animal organ transplants

Researchers have eliminated viruses from within the genome of pigs using gene-editing techniques, thus enabling gene-edited pig organs to potentially be used for human transplant operations where appropriate.

Mitochondrial donation – three party IVF

In October 2015, the UK Parliament voted to change the law to support new and controversial in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) procedures known as ‘mitochondrial DNA donation’. This is seen as the answer for those women who have a family history of mitochondrial disease, where there are mutations in the DNA of the mitochondria that affect the function of these ‘powerhouses’ of our cells and tissues. Genetic faults in the mitochondria affect parts of children’s bodies that use a lot of energy, causing problems such as loss of muscle coordination, heart disease, liver disease, neurological problems, diabetes mellitus, deafness and dementia. About 1 in every 1,000 children in the United States are born with the disease and most die from it before reaching adulthood. The result of Parliament’s decision is that the UK is at the

cutting-edge of mitochondrial science and the only country in the world to legalise a germ-line technology. Clinics are now able to apply for a licence to carry out this procedure. Mitochondrial DNA donation is an in-vitro fertilisation technique that replaces a specific form of defective DNA from the mother with equivalent DNA from another woman. The process involves using part of a donated egg which contains healthy mitochondria to power the cells, and would allow women with mitochondrial disease to have healthy, genetically-related children.

This is so controversial because mitochondria contain genetic material, which means that the mitochondria donor would be contributing to the genetic make-up of the child and, importantly, to the genetic make-up of their future children. As a germ-line technology, which does or does not involve genetic modification (depending on which definition of genetic modification we use), it is not surprising that ideas of Frankenstein science and ‘slippery slopes’ to designer babies have dominated the headlines. As there is no cure and treatment is limited, the possibility of preventing a child from inheriting the disease has been widely welcomed. But the techniques have also attracted criticism from groups concerned about embryo research and those who believe there are safer alternatives.

Germ-line gene therapy

By altering the genes of eggs or embryos, it might be possible to block the transmission to subsequent generations within the affected family of inherited diseases such as Huntington’s Chorea or muscular dystrophy. This is the most controversial form of editing—editing the genome of a newly created embryo, or of the cells that produce sperm and eggs. If this could be done safely it would offer the possibility of acting once and for all. By changing a gene in an early-stage embryo, or in the cell that makes an egg, it could be ensuring that the change is found in every cell in the adult body – including its own eggs or sperm, which would pass it to the next generation and thus on down through the ages. No one is pursuing such avenues in the clinic as yet. But the announcement in April 2015 that a Chinese group had engineered changes into non-viable human embryos as part of their research into beta-thalassemia set alarm bells ringing. This form of gene-editing uses a procedure that has become known as CRISPR-Cas9 technology.

Some years ago, biologists discovered an odd feature in the genomes of some bacteria that they described as ‘clustered, regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats’ – CRISPR for short. Bacteria use them to make little bits of RNA, a molecule that can store sequences of letters like those that make up genes in DNA. A CRISPR RNA will bind to a piece of DNA that has a complementary sequence. A protein called Cas9, which is a sort of pair of molecular scissors, recognises the structure made when a CRISPR RNA binds to a piece of DNA and responds by cutting through the DNA at precisely that point. Bacteria make CRISPR RNAs that recognise the DNA of viruses which prey on them, marking that DNA for destruction by Cas9 and thus protecting the bacteria from infection.

This bacterial repair mechanism has been adapted and developed to give researchers a form of ‘molecular



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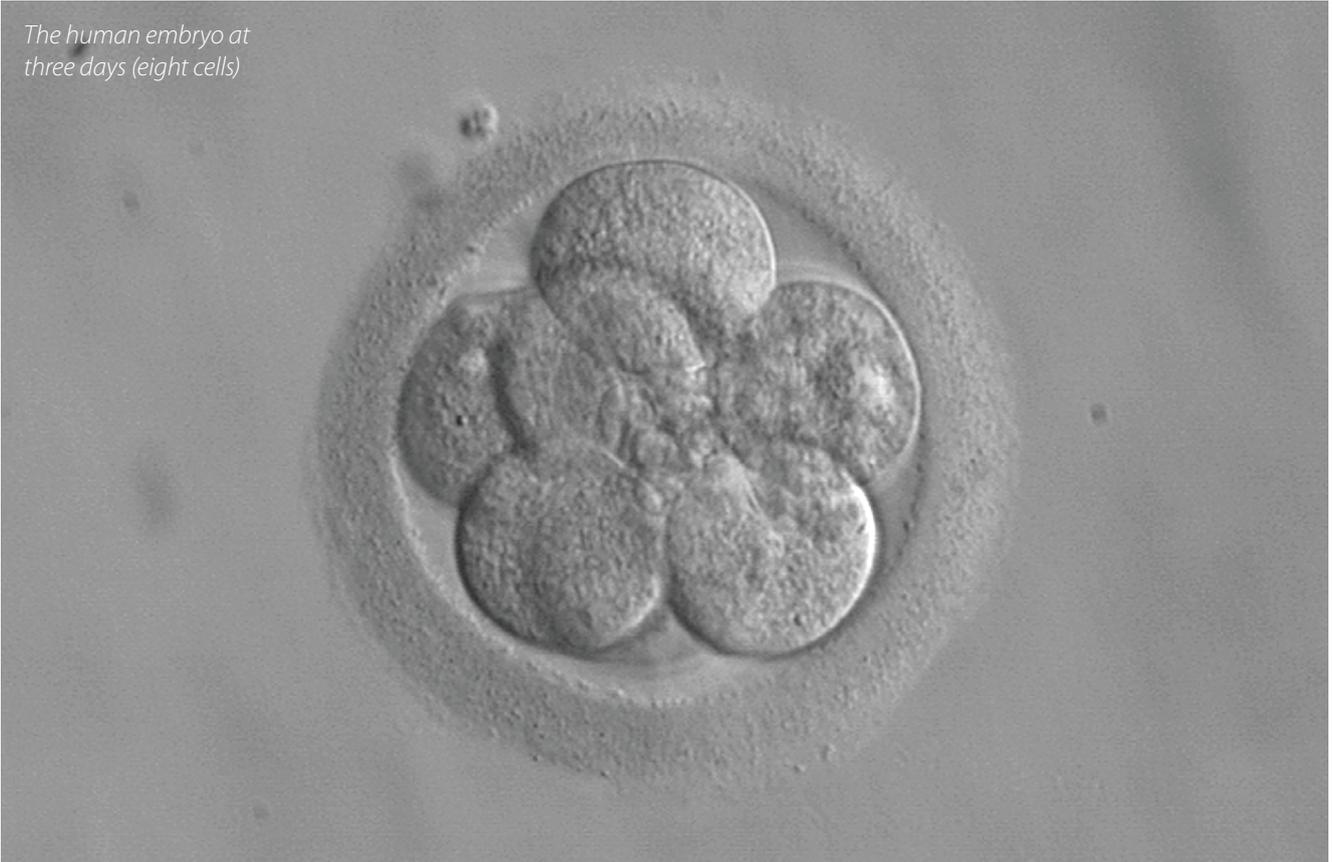
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The human embryo at three days (eight cells)



scissors' (see the work of Professors Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna). Scientists can make RNAs that target any sequence they want. And because of the way that cells repair broken DNA, if they put a new gene into a cell along with the CRISPR-Cas9 system, they can get that new gene to replace an old one. The effect is to give scientists something that works like the find-and-replace function on a word processor.

Germ-line gene therapy is banned in many parts of the world, including the USA and 14 European countries, but recent advances in the technology of gene editing have re-kindled the debate, stimulating re-consideration of the deliberate engineering of human eggs, sperm or embryos in order to block the transmission of inherited disorders by altering the DNA of all subsequent generations of the affected families.

In February 2016 UK scientists were given the go-ahead by the fertility regulator (the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, HFEA) to genetically modify human embryos. It is the first time a country has considered the DNA-altering technique in embryos and approved it. The research will take place at the Francis Crick Institute in London and aims to provide a deeper understanding of the earliest moments of human life (the first seven days after fertilisation). It will be illegal for the scientists to implant the modified embryos into a woman.

This is a controversial area impinging on our views on life and how far we should be able to control the nature of our offspring. The following are just some selected views on the latest developments:

- 'This technology is poised to transform preventive medicine' (Prof George Church, Harvard Medical School)
- 'Human germ-line editing for the purpose of creating genome-modified embryos should not proceed at this time, partly because of the unknown social consequences, but also because the technology and our knowledge of the human genome are simply not ready to do so safely.' (Prof Jennifer Doudna, UC Berkeley, pioneer of the CRISPR-Cas9 technology).
- Prof. Paul Nurse, Director of the Francis Crick Institute, UK, said 'I am delighted that the HFEA has approved Dr Niakan's application. (The) proposed research is important for understanding how a healthy human embryo develops and will enhance our understanding of IVF success rates, by looking at the very earliest stage of human development.'
- 'This research will allow the scientists to refine the techniques for creating GM babies, and many of the (UK) government's scientific advisers have already decided that they are in favour of allowing that. So this is the first step in a well mapped-out process leading to GM babies, and a future of consumer eugenics.' (Dr David King, Director of Human Genetics Alert)

So where is all this leading? Are the developments ethically justifiable? Do we have the regulations in place to safeguard the future? Undoubtedly the debate in this exciting and controversial field will continue.

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10 years of recruiting

Andrew Wigford on a decade of recruiting for international schools

Significant anniversaries often prompt reflection. They're an opportunity to contemplate the future too. As Teachers International Consultancy (TIC) celebrates its tenth anniversary, the need to look forward another decade, and to consider the opportunities and challenges international schools are likely to face when it comes to recruitment, is not only relevant but essential. Staffing is predicted to be the greatest cause of concern for senior leadership in international schools as the market continues to expand.

Reflecting on ten years

I launched TIC in 2006 to respond to a prevailing need for tailored, service-focused recruitment that carefully matches the right candidate to the right school. Back then – as I knew from my own experience as an international school teacher hunting for jobs, and later as a Head searching for staff – recruitment was almost entirely conducted through fairs or advertisements, with the process based more on crossed fingers than on strategic selection.

Today, although recruitment fairs continue to be popular, those that remain offer a step within the recruitment process – as do the adverts – providing one, but far from the only, route for a school to collect potential candidates. Rarely are

job offers made on-the-spot; a baffling scenario for which the traditional international school recruitment fairs became renowned.

What has emerged during the past ten years are recruitment agencies; some like TIC that specialise only in the international schools market, and others that are extensions of a nationally-oriented provision. Also more prevalent today are senior leaders who recognise the importance of strategic recruitment and long-term planning for faculty strength and sustained school standards.

Over the past decade, the international schools market has exploded. Ten years ago there were approximately 3,000 schools, in total employing around 120,000 full time staff. The latest data from ISC Research suggests there are now 8,200 international schools with over 400,000 employees. The biggest challenge for many schools today is not achieving enrolment capacity, but finding the right teachers.

International schools have succeeded – beyond most people's expectations – because of the calibre of the teachers and the learning they deliver. The international schools market will continue to thrive only if teacher quality and skills remain high.

Challenges we've faced

Because of the expanding market, one of the challenges that TIC recognised in its very early years was the need to increase significantly the pool of high quality candidates in order to ensure that schools had a healthy choice when recruiting. With very few teachers at that time aware of the opportunities overseas, much of our work involved educating nationally-based teachers about international schools. It necessitated a change of two prevalent perceptions; that teaching overseas meant nothing other than TEFL and, for those who actually knew what international schools were, that international school teaching wasn't just 'backpacking work'.

In the early years, when international schools were few and far between, those in enticing locations had relied very much on the backpacker teachers with earnings to suit. As the number of schools increased, student demographics changed and teacher supply struggled to meet demand, so schools were compelled to improve their benefits and salaries commensurate with those of a valued role. So too were they obliged to offer incentives for teachers to remain in post for longer than one or two years in order to enhance stability within the learning community. This was essential as a result of the vast increase, for many international schools, in the enrolment of local children as well as long-term expatriate postings.

For some schools that TIC has worked with, such changes have been recognised as necessary internally. For others, we have taken an active role in encouraging and supporting the



*Andrew Wigford at Latifa School for Girls
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transition. Today, all the schools we work with recognise that the combination of salary, benefits and location influences the quality of teachers that they will attract.

In recent years, we have implemented strict safe recruiting practices and advised many of the schools we work with on the development of policies and procedures of their own as a means of ensuring the highest standards of child safeguarding. And we've supported an increasing number of schools with strategic recruitment to meet long-term planning goals.

Mistakes we've learned from

Over the past ten years, I have made mistakes and learned along the way. As a recruitment agency specialising in a niche market, our staff and the people we work with are crucial to our success. It takes a long time for someone to understand the international school market and the very latest teaching and learning requirements. Combine that with the need to know about different regions of the world, visa restrictions and security issues, and learning how we like to work, and it can take over a year before a new consultant is really up and running. In the early years of TIC, I expected this to happen more quickly. I now know that we need to invest in people over a much longer period of time. Fortunately, all our current team members have been with us for at least two years, many for much longer, and their professional development is a constant focus.

We work in a global marketplace where daily interaction with clients and candidates is most commonly carried out remotely through email and social media. However, I have also learned that nothing replaces personal, face-to-face contact. There was a time when we relied too much on email. Today we travel a lot; to attend conferences and visit schools in order to reinforce the relationships we have with the headteachers and teachers we are already working with, and to meet those we would like to work with. It's why we spend a lot of time travelling to make presentations to teachers, and why we host our own seminars. When that isn't possible, we get to know candidates through the best way we can: via Skype. Today TIC candidates cannot be put forward for a job without having, at a minimum, a Skype call with one of our consultants.

So what of the next ten years?

Looking forward, the international schools market – to a very large extent – will only be as good as the teachers and leaders within it. Regardless of resources and facilities, regardless of curriculum and examinations offered, if the standard of learning and teaching is not notably better than that of surrounding national schools, then the demand from local families will diminish and the market will collapse.

There is a growing recognition of the type of teacher required by international schools if the market is to stay healthy – and of the need to expand training opportunities as a means of increasing the number of qualified and well-prepared teachers. Some international school groups are already investing in their own teacher training centres. Some higher education establishments, particularly in mainland Europe, are also beginning to offer qualifications to meet the specific needs of international schools. A consortium of universities in The Netherlands, Norway and Denmark is now

offering such a programme while, in the UK, the University of Bath has led the way for years with its professional development opportunities for international school teachers and administrators. More UK universities are likely to follow suit as the national curriculum of England and British-led qualifications continue to prevail around the world.

Word of mouth will also play an important part in the future of recruitment. It has already proved to be a successful marketing route for raising awareness as expatriate teachers, inspired by their international school experiences and fulsome in their recommendations of the lifestyle, have spread the word to family, friends and colleagues back home. The number of teachers who are contacting TIC as a result of such endorsements has scaled up significantly over the last ten years. As more teachers head overseas, so word of mouth will play an increasingly vital role in expanding the recruitment pool. But only for as long as international schools continue to support high calibre expatriate teachers in the appropriate way; not only with fair salaries but also with appropriate benefits, career development, and supportive work environments.

If the market continues to expand as ISC Research predicts it will, the number of teachers employed at international schools will need to almost double within the next ten years; from its current total of 400,000 to at least 740,000. Word of mouth and new teacher training courses will not be sufficient to meet the demand. This demand, combined with increasing competition between international schools, will force schools to improve their offerings to new recruits. Competition doesn't exist within the local region alone. Most teachers TIC works with are open-minded with respect to their next destination, motivated more by career prospects, salaries and lifestyle than by location, which means they may be interviewing simultaneously with schools based for instance in Dubai, Hong Kong and Mexico.

The packages that international schools are able to provide over the next few years will be crucial in attracting the best teachers and in preparing the ground for the sustained success of the entire market. Incentives for extending contracts will gain momentum as schools try to hold on to their best staff. Family packages will attract more mature teachers who want stability along with quality education for their children. Becoming more open-minded to skilled teachers from a wider range of source countries, and investing in training courses and mentoring to bring good teachers up to speed with a specific curriculum or approach to teaching and learning, will help to expand the pool of potential recruits. Salaries, benefits, professional development and defined career prospects will become increasingly more of a priority.

I look forward to the next ten years for TIC. I feel very positive about the way in which the market has developed and the way it is evolving. I am impressed by the number of schools that astound me with the quality of their learning and teaching. And I'm encouraged by the number of senior leaders who recognise that their greatest asset is their teachers.

***Andrew Wigford spent 16 years teaching and leading in international schools before launching Teachers International Consultancy (www.ticrecruitment.com)
Email: a.wigford@ticrecruitment.com***



Cultivating leadership in students

Debra Backlund says giving young people responsibility and a voice will reap rewards

What does it take to make a great student leader? The first words that may come to mind are self-confidence, discipline and dedication. For several years, the International School of Tanganyika (IST) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, has been working to elevate the role of the school's student leaders and the results are paying off. Not only are the student leaders demonstrating self-confidence, discipline and dedication; they are also learning valuable leadership skills such as how to listen to their constituency, how to address a diverse audience and how to generate coalitions to get work completed.

In the same way that teachers strive to make new concepts in the classroom accessible to students through scaffolding, IST also strives to enhance the development of leadership skills by providing support for emerging student leaders that diminishes little by little as the leaders themselves test and develop their own techniques.

Martin Hall, IST's Director, explains: "Leadership at IST could be defined as anytime one person or a group of people positively influence other people or situations, be it one's classmates or a global initiative."

"For a school to have effective student leaders, it needs to encourage everyone to take part. IST is an excellent example of this" says Benjamin Hotchner-Blaser, Grade 11 student and IST's Student Council President.

IST begins as early as Grade 3 (age 8) to encourage student leaders through participation in the Student Action Council (SAC). SAC is a programme for students in Grades 3 to 5 in which participants plan and take action on initiatives that are meaningful, achievable, personal and sustainable (MAPS). Students are encouraged to use MAPS to help them as they plan for and carry out their work. "My advice [for other schools] would be to listen to what students have to say and don't try to force your own ideas on them" recommends Ian Marsh, SAC advisor and Grade 4 teacher. SAC is open to all interested students, within the guideline of having two representatives per class per term. Interested students are required to give a short presentation to their class explaining why they would make a good representative, but there are no elections. One of SAC's major achievements has been the implementation and continuation of an on-campus recycling programme where staff and families can bring plastics, paper

and glass to a collection point at school for recycling.

Rebecca Gillman, IST’s IB Diploma Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) Coordinator for Grades 11 and 12 (ages 16 to 18), offers the following guidelines for schools that might be reviewing or enhancing their approach to cultivating leadership skills in students:

Set clear expectations

CAS students are expected to lead by design or example. They understand that participation in activities should be purposeful and that a positive group dynamic is not always innate; it needs to be fostered. Guidance and support is given during one-on-one meetings and small group conversations.

Make time in the school timetable for students to develop leadership skills

Grade 11 students at IST meet once every two weeks during the school day to develop essential skills required for initiating projects, learning to lead and being an effective collaborator in all aspects of their CAS programmes.

Nurture students’ interests and value the students themselves

Some time ago, teachers largely drove student-involved service activities at IST. However, over the past couple of years, with mentoring and persistence, students have come to see their potential. There is now a genuine school ethos where students are expected and encouraged to take ownership of, responsibility for, and lead student-involved service activities. The student leaders are supported in their work by guidelines

from the school relating to event planning, fundraising and working with external partners. However, the onus is placed on the student to think through what is important and what they want to accomplish. In addition, communications about the activity are directed to the student leader for their action and copied to a faculty mentor so that they are kept in the loop.

Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation

Continually referring to Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation (www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf) helps IST to assess itself against the eight levels of participation in projects.

Alioune Mbodj, IST’s Student Council Vice President, offers the following guidelines to schools:

Encourage

Let students know they have the potential to take up leadership opportunities. It helps build students’ confidence and makes them more likely to take initiative.

Establish Leadership Learning Environments

Create opportunities for students to practise organisation, communication and execution skills. A great example for this would be Model United Nations (MUN), where students have the opportunity to improve their public speaking skills, organisation skills and much more. Structures like this allow future leaders to build themselves.

Create Opportunities for Students With a Variety of Leadership Styles

Having a wide variety of student-led activities allows students with different leadership styles to practise their skills as well as to build the experience and knowledge required to take on leadership in different areas.

What’s Next for IST Students?

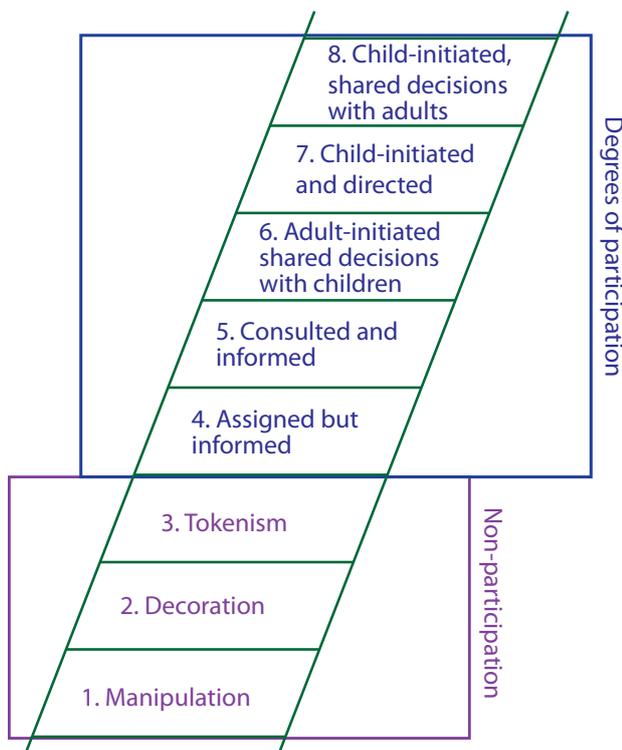
With respect to what’s next in promoting student leadership at IST, Martin Hall would like to see students become better advocates for successful learning. “I’d like to see students more effective in letting teachers know what works and what doesn’t work when it comes to learning” says Hall.

The school has already made progress in this area by asking students to participate in, for example, the review of school policies related to student conduct and behaviour, as well as sending annual surveys to all students from Grades 5 to 12.

Providing students with a platform for their voices to be heard is an important part of IST’s approach to cultivating leadership in students. “Teacher involvement is important and school leaders do have to lead by example”, summarizes Hall, “but it is also important for students to know that their voices and views carry weight and can influence their own learning outcomes – that they can be leaders for themselves as individuals”.

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Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children’s Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.



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Engaging with difference

Mary Hayden reports on an inspiring AIE conference in Bangkok

February 2016 saw yet another stimulating, thought-provoking and enjoyable World Conference of the Alliance for International Education – this time expertly hosted by NIST International School, Bangkok. Between 26 and 28 February teachers, administrators, university researchers and other educators with an interest in international education came together to join in a programme of sessions beginning on Friday morning and finishing at lunchtime on Sunday.

Issue 17 (2) of International School magazine described the AIE conference hosted in 2014 by Ecole Mondiale World School, Mumbai. As in Mumbai, and indeed as in all of the AIE conferences organised in alternate years since the inaugural 2002 Geneva conference (Düsseldorf, Shanghai, Istanbul, Melbourne and Doha prior to Mumbai), the 2016 conference was based on a programme consisting of a mixture of keynote addresses and strand-based sessions. With an overarching conference theme of Engaging with Difference, keynote addresses were given by three impressive speakers. M L Pariyada Diskul, Assistant to the Minister for Education, with over 20 years involvement with Bangkok Patana International School and having been founder and President for two terms of the International Schools Association of Thailand, provided a stimulating overview of the growth and development of international schools in Thailand to the present day. Khun Mechai Viravaidya, previously Chairman for two terms of the NIST International School Foundation, well known for his work on the promotion of sexual safety awareness and family planning and as founder of the Cabbages and Condoms restaurant in Bangkok, spoke movingly about the Mechai Pattana Bamboo School in Thailand, which he founded in 2008. Charging its students no fees, but requiring them to commit to community service and environmental conservation efforts, the school offers a curriculum focused on sustainability and social entrepreneurship. On the last morning Nicholas Alchin, High School Principal of the United World College of South East Asia (East Campus) in Singapore, presented his impressions of the range of issues arising from discussions held during the conference, and expertly related them to the wider international context.

Strand sessions made up a large proportion of the conference, arranged around six themes and led most effectively by strand leaders Jack Levy (Strand A: The Role of Language), Boris Prickarts (Strand B: Global Citizenship), Michael Fertig (Strand C: Leadership, Management and Organisation of Schools and their Communities), Sudha Govindswamy (Strand D: Teaching and Learning), Susan Ledger (Strand E: Curriculum) and Caroline Ellwood (Strand F: Aspects of Culture). With around 50 presenters across the six strands, participants

remained in one strand for the duration of the conference – a tried and tested model shown in previous years to facilitate the rich and cumulative discussion that is a hallmark of Alliance for International Education conferences.

In addition to keynotes and strand sessions, at this year's conference two interest group sessions were held, where participants could opt to join others with similar interests in one of four groups: primary, secondary, tertiary and leadership/management. A particular highlight of this year's conference was the participation of NIST International School students. In addition to providing support for strand sessions, students participated in strand group discussion, and presented a plenary student-led session involving a question and answer opportunity for all participants. In addition, on each of the three days of the conference a NIST student gave a well-received short plenary address on a topic of their choice related to the overall conference theme.

As at previous conferences, a session described as the Alliance Assembly provided the opportunity for participants to receive an update on AIE developments from AIE trustees, and in particular from Professor Jeff Thompson (Chair of the AIE trustees and conference Chair), Norm Dean (AIE Treasurer) and Darlene Fisher (AIE Executive Secretary). Beatrice Caston, AIE Vice-Chair, was unfortunately unable to attend the conference on this occasion.

Not least among the contributions made to the great atmosphere and stimulating discussions at the conference were the early evening reception held outdoors at NIST on Friday and the gala dinner held in the school on Saturday evening. Sunday morning saw the Gallery Walk – where creative and stimulating displays produced by strand participants were viewed by participants from other strands, thus generating even further cross-strand discussion. Presentations by strand leaders of summaries of their strand discussions were then followed by an impressive rendition of Thai music by a group of students, which provided a wonderful end to our very enjoyable few days together. We are grateful to the Head of NIST, James MacDonald, and his excellent team for the enormous amount of work they put into hosting the conference. Alliance conferences always seem to pass too quickly – but we're already looking forward to the next one!

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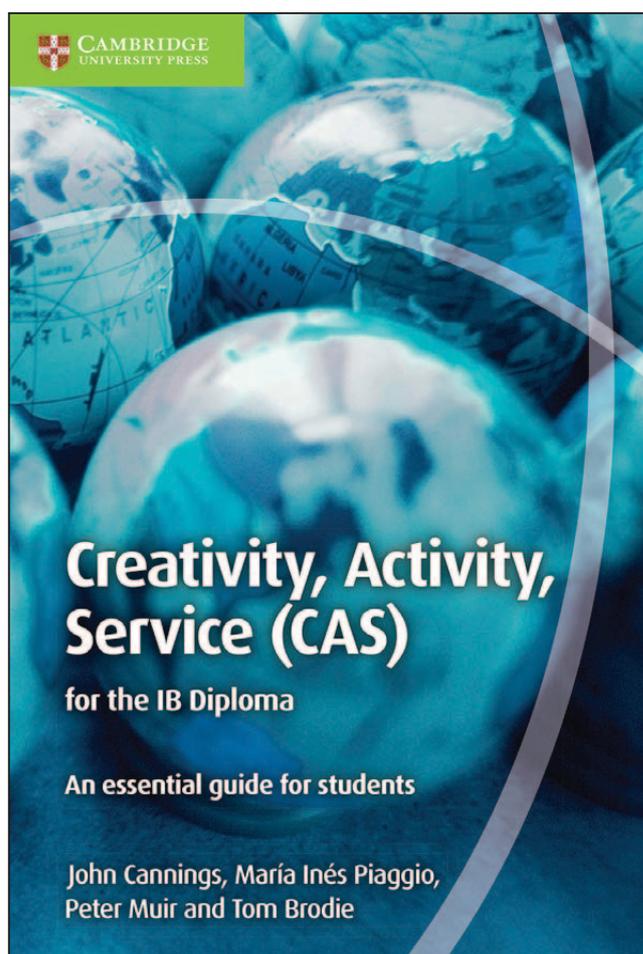
Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) for the IB Diploma

An essential guide for students

by John Cannings, Maria Ines Piaggio,
Peter Muir and Tom Brodie
Cambridge University Press (2015)
Reviewed by Anthony Hemmens

With the publication of a new Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) guide in 2015, for students completing the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma in 2017 and after, the IB has introduced some significant changes to the experiential learning component of the Diploma Programme (DP). Creativity, Activity, Service for the IB Diploma: An essential guide for students has been produced by a team of experienced CAS practitioners to complement the new CAS guide, in an accessible and user-friendly format, providing a useful and timely 'how to' guide for DP students as they progress through the CAS programme. As is appropriate for a text guiding students through the experiential learning component of an educational programme which has as a leading objective the development of international mindedness, there is a global scope to this book, with sample student activities drawn from all over the world and photographs of students in action in all three IB regions: Asia-Pacific; Africa, Europe, Middle East; and the Americas. CAS has changed in ways important for CAS coordinators and CAS advisors to understand as they manage its implementation, but for students new to the programme the full details of these changes are less relevant than the immediate implications for their CAS experience. The book does a good job of touching lightly upon the changes introduced by the IB, summing up some of the more salient of these changes as they relate to the students, so as to head off possible misconceptions: the removal of the 150 hours requirement; that reflections can be produced in a variety of mediums, not only written; and that CAS should be fun.

The primary audience for this book is IB students beginning their two year Diploma Programme studies (the so-called IB1 students), but it would also act as a valuable supplementary resource to the official IB guide for CAS coordinators, advisors and supervisors responsible for programme delivery, and particularly for those new to the programme. This is not a book to sit down and read from cover to cover, and it is clear from its layout that this was not the intention. Instead it is a reference text for students to consult as they progress through CAS, helping them to make CAS a more meaningful and fulfilling experience. There's a glossy magazine feel and



look to its pages, with lots of bright colour and plenty of photographs – mostly authentic with just a few from photo stock – of young people engaged in CAS activity planning, performance and presentation. Text is neither too long nor too dense. Drawing on the changed terminology of the 2015 IB CAS guide, use of language is informal while content is informed. There's a direct address to the reader that creates an inclusive and personable mood. Liberal use of headings and subheadings, bullet points and numbering, different font sizes and colours, bold, diagrams and lists, all combine to enable effective scan reading. Organised into ten chapters, each sub-divided into numbered sections, the text is well signposted with internal cross-referencing allowing for easy navigation where a point or issue is touched upon briefly in one section and more fully explained in another.

Arguably the most valuable aspect of the book is the series

The greatest benefit of this book lies in the creative approaches it offers to some of the CAS elements that DP students traditionally struggle with the most, including, in particular, some great guidance on alternative ways of approaching the reflection requirement.

of coloured text boxes that regularly punctuate the main text and provide guidance to the student over and above the detail offered in conventional guidance descriptions. Orange 'Activity Boxes' provide essential points for student consideration and action, either through questions to answer or tasks to complete, guiding them to clarify their objectives, choose relevant activities, plan and reflect upon their experiences. Providing encouragement, and at times inspiration, 'CAS Case Study' and 'CAS Snapshot' boxes (purple and blue respectively) detail good practice from each of the three CAS strands: Creativity, Activity, Service. Through examples that showcase projects undertaken and the personal benefits gained by participating students, we often hear the voice of past students reflecting on their experiences and sharing their insights, once more generating that personal and inclusive mood. Moving away from the inspirational, the green 'Spotlight on ...' boxes deal with what is ultimately the most important part of a student's engagement in CAS, the practicalities. Solid advice and guidance are offered here on many of the most important stages of any CAS project or experience: fund-raising; gathering and recording evidence; investigating projects and organisations in which to get involved; how to format a media release.

Much of what is on offer in this guide will become pretty apparent to IB1 students once they have launched into their CAS experience anyway, and some parts of the book would benefit from a little bolstering. We are told, for example, in a section extolling the value of CAS, that it makes the Diploma Programme attractive to universities and employers. I'm sure no reader will dispute this, but the claim could be valuably enhanced with some evidence, if only anecdotal, of the benefits of CAS to university and career prospects through the direct voice of both Diploma Programme graduates and university admissions officers; how have students utilized their CAS experience for university and employment purposes? What are universities and employers looking for in application statements that is provided by CAS? Other parts of the text seem not to quite hit the right tone for the readership age group for whom the book is intended; what might be considered rather babyish risk assessment questions ask students to consider what clothes they will

wear if it's cold or if there's a risk of mudslides. But these are minor criticisms of a text likely to be of great overall value to CAS students who, constantly encouraged to use their own initiative and judgment, are at liberty to cherry pick from this guide the points of greatest value to their own needs and circumstances. Opening with explanatory details of the purpose, expectations, scope and content of CAS, a major benefit of the text will definitely be felt by students completely new to the IB, to CAS and, especially, to the notion of direct experience as an approach to and source of valuable learning. To my mind, however, the greatest benefit of this book lies in the creative approaches it offers to some of the CAS elements that DP students traditionally struggle with the most, including, in particular, some great guidance on alternative ways of approaching the reflection requirement.

Contending with the stresses and pressures that come with completing a highly demanding educational programme, with high-stakes formal assessment and the anxiety of gaining university entrance, it is not uncommon to hear students, in the throes of their DP studies, bemoaning the CAS requirement: "it's a waste of my time", "it doesn't count towards my final grade", "it's just another thing to get completed". Yet equally common are the tales of profound, transformative and empowering experience recalled and recounted, not only by alumni returning to school, but also by students as they leave school and exit the Diploma. This guide, full of good advice and sound guidance delivered in a non-preachy style, offers autonomy to the student as he/she takes ownership and control of his/her CAS experience, thus helping students to develop the essential skills inherent to successful CAS completion, including organisation, collaboration and reflection, and helping students to make the most of a learning opportunity, quite unique among school-leaving qualifications, that lies at the heart of the IB Diploma Programme.

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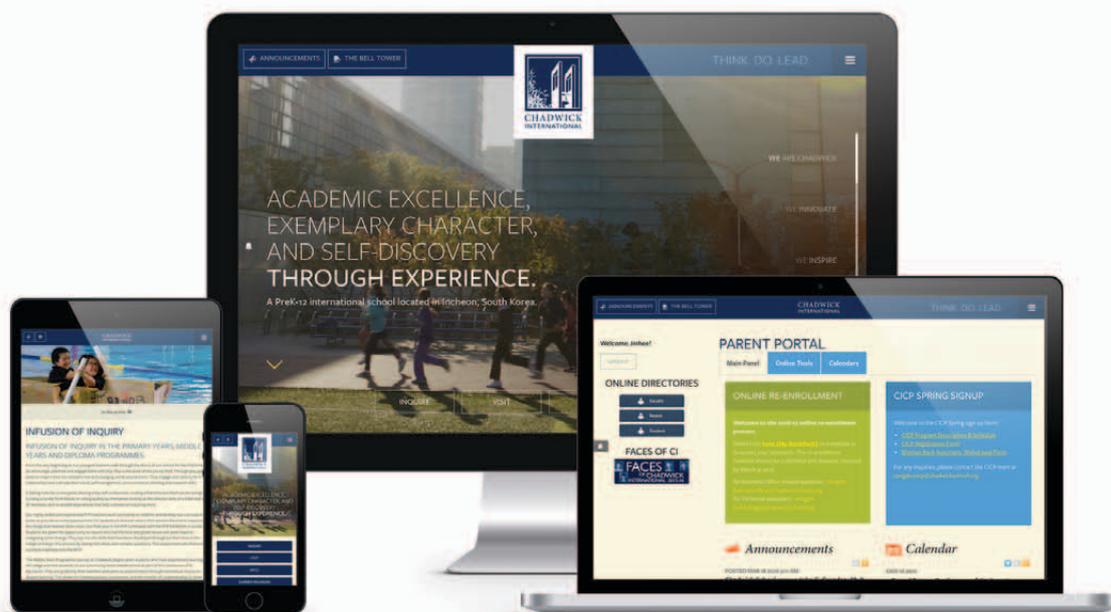
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