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Education has a duty to inspire each future generation, building on the idealism of youth in the hope of a better future. Surely this must be its gift to all, not only to the privileged few?

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We are living in interesting times...

... and arguably international schools face a bigger task than ever before

Does every generation believe that it lives in more sophisticated, more developed, more challenging and more interesting times than those of its predecessors? Perhaps so, though a visit to a 14th century cathedral in Europe, the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, Stonehenge in England or the carvings of Easter Island might provide some pause for thought. And while there may be no evidence to support the apparently apocryphal claim that 'May you live in interesting times' is a translation of an ancient Chinese curse, there will be many worldwide who feel that we are currently living in times that are perhaps more 'interesting' than we might wish them to be.

Who would have anticipated in January 2016, for instance, twelve months before the publication of this issue of *International School* magazine, that the coming year would see such major shifts in the global political and social environment? At the time of writing, the current uncertainty about the implications and knock-on effects of these shifts is undoubtedly unsettling, and raising many uncomfortable questions about the direction in which our world is heading. No less unsettling is the fact that the dreadful situation in Syria and other parts of the world continues unresolved, with refugees fleeing to countries that are not always as welcoming as might be expected, and that are in at least some cases well-intentioned but struggling to cope with the scale of the problem with which they are presented.

What does all this mean for international schools? Arguably such schools now have an even bigger task ahead than ever in ensuring the achievement of the mission that many promulgate of supporting the education of young people to be respectful, informed and caring adults who will be culturally literate and will feel a shared responsibility for making the world a safer and more peaceful place for all its inhabitants – no mean aim in the current environment. It is clear that many international schools are taking this

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challenge very seriously and, in response to our call in the Comment section of Issue 18(3) of this magazine, we have received a number of articles describing work being undertaken by international schools to respond to the humanitarian crisis that is the refugee situation affecting many parts of the world. We are including in this issue just one such article, by Matthew Baganz, about the initiative being taken by Strothoff International School in Dreieich, Germany to respond to the crisis. We plan to include more such contributions in a themed issue for publication later in the year. Please do contact us if you are able to submit a short article on this topic – or if you have ideas for an article you would like to discuss – with a view to contributing to the sharing of ideas within the international school community.

With our good wishes for a more peaceful (and in some respects, at least, less interesting) 2017.

Mary Hayden and Jeff Thompson

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International education – a promise unfulfilled?

Has international education become the servant of neo-liberal economics? asks David Wilkinson

In the seventeenth century a group of Protestant radicals, known as the diggers because of their attempts to farm on common land, strongly attacked the enormous divide in society between the rich and the poor. Their leader, Gerrard Winstanley, eloquently expressed the immorality in this when he wrote, in around 1650:

"Was the Earth made to preserve a few covetous, proud men to live at ease, and for them to bag and barn up the treasures of the Earth from others, that these may beg and starve in a fruitful land; or was it made to preserve all her children?"

The last 25 years have increasingly witnessed an enormous growth in the disparity between the minority who possess obscene levels of wealth and the overwhelming majority of the world's population. This is not only a problem between rich and poor countries but also within countries themselves. In this time, many of the graduates of international schools, often holders of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, have entered the world of globalised commerce and industry that has adopted the economic philosophy of neo-liberalism. In view of this, it is pertinent to ask if international education has unwittingly served the process of globalisation that has been instrumental in the growth of such inequality. If this is the case, have the ideals that the founders of the IB hoped the programme would achieve come to serve a very different purpose than the one they had anticipated?

The founders' dream was that graduates of the IB programmes would be successful in crossing cultural and national boundaries, and this aim seems to have been achieved. Combined with the strength of intellectual preparation that the IB provides, graduates often enter the world's most prestigious universities and move forward to careers in which they are both successful and influential. Yet the fact remains that, since IB graduates first started to enter the world of work, the prevailing neo-liberal economic philosophy has been barely challenged and the world's economic resources have become increasingly more unfairly distributed. What has gone wrong? In a recent article, Martin Jacques expressed the issue very clearly: "In other words, the neoliberal era has delivered the west back into the kind of crisis-ridden world that we last experienced in the 1930s" (2016).

Why have so many highly talented and presumably highly principled people made so little impact? After all, the IB learner profile is quite specific in what it hopes for: "The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world." (<http://ibo.org/>) Is it that there are simply too few IB graduates? Or is it that there was, and remains, something absent in what the IB expects of its graduates? My argument is that there is a missing element. Whereas there is great success in achieving international mindedness in young people for whom national and cultural boundaries mean little, what is deficient is the complementary need to cross class and socio-economic boundaries. In a different context Natalie Nougayrede expressed the same issue: "It's as if, in today's Europe, it has become much harder to cross social and economic boundaries than it was once to break out from behind the Iron Curtain." (*Guardian*, 2016)

The world of international education cannot dismiss this concern. Surely graduates must be people who will not accept the world's present economic status quo, with its disgraceful and increasingly unequal division of the world's resources. Indeed, they should be expected to take a leading role in its overthrow. Yet if they are to take this role, their IB experience must expose them to a cross-section of society wider than that of the narrow confines of the globally mobile elite for which the IB network of schools currently caters. It seems clear that a far greater effort is needed to widen access to IB programmes, despite the cost implications. Reaching out across the social divide is not a matter of weekly visits in a carefully controlled CAS programme. Even scholarship programmes for entry to the IB Diploma are not sufficient.

It is because of this that the question of access to the IB programmes needs to be addressed and acted upon, particularly in the developing world where the cost of the programmes is prohibitively expensive for all except the international schools that serve the local elite and the transient expatriate communities. If the population of students enrolled in IB Diploma programmes is to reflect both a cultural and a class cross-section of different nationalities, then the provision of scholarship funding is necessary but not sufficient. The problem is that children educated in most government schools throughout much of the developing world do not have an education of sufficient quality to



provide them with the academic skills they need to make a success of the IB Diploma Programme. Their intellect has not been stimulated nor have they been given the mental tools needed to compete on equal terms with students who have had the advantage of a more privileged education.

This became quite evident to me in my first year at the Mahindra United World College of India when we advertised full scholarship places for Indian nationals. We needed criteria to decide which applicants should be invited for interview. In addition to active involvement in co-curricular activities and some degree of social and global awareness, we needed some guide as to academic preparedness and potential that would enable the young person to have a reasonably good chance of being successful in the final examinations. The criterion that we chose as a means of assessing academic preparedness was the student's score in the Grade 10 Indian national examinations. We set a requirement of an overall minimum of 75% to be considered for interview. The example of our local village school shows how unrealistic this was if we were to reach out beyond the urban schools. Not one student in the history of the school had ever scored more than 50%. This was hardly surprising considering the fact that the school had almost no educational equipment, including textbooks, and teachers who were seldom in the pluri-classes at the school.

Providing scholarship access directly to the IB Diploma Programme for students whose socio-economic background has typically meant that they have received a substandard education, although important, is therefore not sufficient. Some form of compensatory education is needed. One such programme was pioneered at Mahindra College.

The inspiration and financial support came from an Indian graduate of the Lester B Pearson United World College (UWC) in Canada. The son of a village policeman, he had the good fortune to obtain a scholarship to enter a leading Indian school in Grade 7 and from there the scholarship to the UWC. He was sure that the 4 years of quality education leading up to his UWC application had been vital in his achieving the scholarship.

Having become a very successful businessman, he was determined to find a way to give to other students from a background similar to his own the opportunities that he had received. We worked together on developing a supplementary education programme. Students from the local village school were provided with extra afternoon lessons in the College in mathematics, English and science in each of the final three years of their secondary education: Grades 8, 9 and 10. The graduate of Pearson College provided the financial support and the College provided the rooms and the teaching staff. The results were impressive. After just two years of the programme, all of the children scored more than the pass rate of 50%, and several scored over 75%. Students who would never previously have been awarded scholarships to study the IB Diploma Programme were now successful. Most importantly, we had taken a small step towards widening the socio-economic intake of students.

The Pestalozzi Overseas Children's Trust, meanwhile, provides education in several countries for children from severely disadvantaged economic backgrounds. It recognises the need to provide a sound education from an early age if this is to compensate for an inadequate early schooling. In Zambia, for example, the Pestalozzi school selects students

from impoverished rural backgrounds for entry to Grade 5. A team of experienced Zambian educators visits remote village schools each year to carry out the selection. They are looking for academic potential in those they choose; not an easy task, but one in which they have become increasingly proficient over the past several years. Many of those selected have completed secondary education with high levels of achievement, and some have gone on with further scholarship support to study the IB Diploma Programme in United World Colleges.

These are examples of steps taken towards enabling young people from an educationally disadvantaged background to have the opportunity to enter the IB Diploma Programme. There are other approaches, too, including the provision of scholarship entry to the IB Middle Years Programme. In all such cases the benefit is not simply to the students who have had this opportunity; my contention is that it is important, too, for the students with whom they study. Their input to discussions of global issues, for example, brings first-hand experience of the impact of gross inequality. It leads to a more realistic and informed view shared by all of the problems that this causes to many of the world's population.

In a world where national governments no longer have the power, or perhaps the will, to act against the self-interested greed of multi-national companies, international education could have a unique role to play. Across the globe, the network of international schools has become an important feeder of highly talented young people into these same companies. However, if they are to be effective and long-term agents of change, they cannot be the products of education in a bubble, insulated from the realities of young people growing up with far less privilege. Therefore, the question of access to the network of international schools that provide the IB is a real issue. A school that purports to provide an international education must address the issues that deeply divide the rich and poor of our world. It is not sufficient to provide programmes of global issues or for privileged students to commit themselves to service. These are important in themselves, yet by themselves they do not change attitudes. Comfortable acceptance of the global status quo is not amongst the values that will make international education a force for change.

Education has a duty to inspire each future generation, building on the idealism of youth in the hope of a better future. Surely this must be its gift to all, not only to the privileged few? Yet the present evidence points to the fact that those in power increasingly ignore a significant proportion of humanity. Over 20 years ago, in his *Age of Extremes*, Eric Hobsbawm wrote: "To put it brutally, if the global economy could discard a minority of poor countries as economically uninteresting and irrelevant, it could also do so with the very poor within the borders of any and all of its countries." (1994:573).

Whether or not the neo-liberal era is coming to an end, the ugly gap in wealth between the rich minority of the world's population and the rest must surely echo Winstanley's words. I believe that international education, by living up to the ideals of the founders of the International Baccalaureate and the United World Colleges, should have a clear role in promoting an alternative vision of society. I have argued that this role can better be served if access to

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the IB programmes enables bright young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds to share these remarkable educational programmes with their peers across the widest possible socio-economic spectrum. If this is the case, then in addition to crossing cultural and national boundaries, IB graduates will stride with not only meaningful but also realistic ease across class and social barriers.

Graduates of the international network of schools go on to the most prestigious of the tertiary educational institutions and are young people of overwhelmingly high ambition and ability. As such, when they enter the world of work many rise to positions of considerable influence. The fact is that many have done so over the past 40 years and still the divide between haves and have-nots has steadily increased in this period. From whatever background they came, did their final two years of secondary education serve principally to direct IB graduates toward the world of privilege? If this is indeed the case, then the ideals implicit in the IB's Mission statement remain promises that will never be fulfilled.

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Why students and teachers should be aware of 'orphanage tourism'

Rob Oliver and Michelle Oliel offer words of caution and advice on gap year volunteering

Volunteering: a popular gap year option

Like many students around the world, international school students often view a gap year between school and university as an opportunity to travel and gain new experiences. One of the most popular ways to spend a gap year is volunteering abroad, part of a much broader phenomenon of 'volunteer tourism' (or 'voluntourism') that has grown rapidly in the last two decades.

It sounds like a win-win situation for a student on a gap year: volunteer to help others, and see the world at the same time. And the thriving volunteer placement industry knows it. Gap year students are a key market for volunteer agencies, with a growing number of websites making enticing offers of short-term volunteer-travel opportunities in Africa, Asia and South America.

Many of the companies operating in the volunteer tourism field are well known and well regulated, giving advice to students and operating under codes of conduct. However, concern has grown in recent years about the impact of volunteer tourism on local communities, and in particular the hidden impact of unqualified volunteers spending short periods of time with vulnerable children in residential care institutions such as orphanages and children's homes. To put it simply, student volunteers and volunteer agencies may in some cases be making deep-seated development problems worse, despite their good intentions.

The rise of 'orphanage tourism'

Estimates of the number of children worldwide living in non-familial institutions such as orphanages range from 2 million to 8 million, but it is widely recognised that the majority of children in institutions – some claim as many as 80%, or even 90% in some countries (Lumos Foundation UK, 2016) – have at least one parent alive. Children end up in orphanages for a variety of reasons, including natural disaster, conflict, displacement and HIV/AIDS, but there is one overriding cause: poverty. Parents and guardians give up their children (sometimes forcibly) to institutional care because they cannot afford to look after them or provide for them.

The good news is that the number of orphans globally has been steadily falling in recent years. The bad news is that the

number of commercial orphanages, run on a profit basis, has risen rapidly in some countries, most notably countries which attract a large number of volunteer travellers, such as Kenya, Cambodia and Nepal.

One of the reasons for this rise is the growth of 'orphanage tourism' – fee-paying volunteers working for short periods in some orphanages without qualifications, often as part



What is an IB education?



(16-19 year-olds)

- Encourages reflection, critical inquiry, independent research
- Challenges students to complete a creative service-oriented project
- Promotes successful transition to university and completion of a degree program in four years



(16-19 year-olds)

- Provides academic study and practical skills development
- Enables students to apply knowledge in real-world scenarios
- Leads to higher learning, apprenticeship or employment



(11-16 year-olds)

- Promotes active learning, international mindedness, empathy
- Develops the ability to pursue meaningful and purposeful lives
- Offers assessment that leads to student certification



(3-12 year-olds)

- Develops the whole child as an inquirer
- Prepares children as life-long learners; active, caring and respectful
- Provides excellent foundation for future studies

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of a larger travel itinerary or a gap year. In the worst case scenarios, traffickers lure children from poor families to orphanages with the promise of education in order to use the children to attract well-meaning western volunteers and donors, including gap year students. The children, who in most cases have families, literally become 'poverty commodities', with the profits going to the orphanage owners and traffickers, and denying children their basic rights (Next Generation Nepal, 2016).

It is widely agreed that orphanages and other forms of institutional residential care are bad for children in comparison with loving families, community-based care, or foster solutions. According to the United Nations, orphanages should be seen as short-term, last resort options rather than long-term, sustainable answers to development problems (United Nations, 2010). Children have the right to family. Students and teachers should therefore be cautious before supporting orphanages that serve as a long-term home or do not seek to help children regain their right to family through reunification or by establishing foster care arrangements. Simply put, children do not belong in orphanages.

'Orphanage tourism' serves to keep commercial orphanages in business, thus reducing the impetus to reunify children with families, promote sustainable alternative care, and facilitate access to proper education. That is why organisations such as Stahili Foundation, UNICEF, Save the Children, the Better Care Network, and Lumos, to name a few, campaign to highlight the damage caused by orphanages and how volunteers may be perpetuating the unnecessary institutionalisation of children.

Advising students about volunteering

Without doubt, volunteering during a gap year can be a life-enhancing experience for international school students as they continue their educational and life journeys. Serving the community is a well-established principle in many schools, exemplified by the community service and global citizenship models of which international schools should be rightly proud. Further, volunteering abroad opens the mind and increases moral awareness of how our individual and collective actions can make a difference in tackling deep-rooted problems of inequality and injustice. At the same time, volunteering needs to be done with care, in informed and responsible ways which do not cause harm, either to the communities served or to the students themselves.

Before embarking on volunteer assignments abroad, students need to do their homework on what it means to be a responsible volunteer and ensure that volunteer placements are ethical and sustainable. A number of organisations, including Learning Service Info and Global Service Learning (see 'Further Reading' below), offer advice on ethical volunteering and what to look for when evaluating volunteer organisations or organising volunteer-based travel. The pressure group Tourism Concern, which promotes ethical travel, publishes a list of volunteering organisations (Tourism Concern, 2016) which are guided by ethical principles to ensure that the impact of volunteering is beneficial for communities and that volunteers themselves are personally well prepared, culturally sensitive, and informed about development issues.

NGOs and other organisations campaigning to stop the growth of the orphanage industry strongly discourage unqualified volunteers, including gap year students, from working with vulnerable children. Instead, students should be encouraged to volunteer for projects which do not involve close interaction with children, perhaps starting with projects in their own communities, working with established groups who can guide them and give them support and training, or projects abroad where they will be well supervised by qualified staff. Above all, volunteering should not be seen as another form of tourism, but as a commitment in itself, and should not involve working with children in orphanages.

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Further Reading and resources

For more information on orphanages and the threat of orphanage tourism:

- Better Care Network: www.bettercarenetwork.org
- Lumos Foundation: wearelumos.org
- Child Safe: www.thinkchildsafe.org/thinkbeforevisiting
- Next Generation Nepal: www.nextgenerationnepal.org
- Save the Children: www.savethechildren.org

For more information on ethical volunteering:

- Learning Service Info: learningservice.info
- Global Service Learning: globalsl.org
- Ethical Volunteering: www.ethicalvolunteering.org
- Tourism Concern: www.tourismconcern.org.uk

For a useful introductory article on gap year volunteering abroad see The Guardian, Gap Year Volunteering: How to Do it Right (13 August 2015) at www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/aug/13/gap-year-volunteering-how-to-do-it-right

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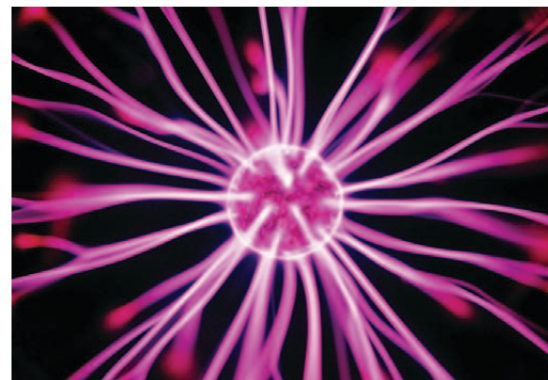


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Preparing teachers for their new employment

Robert C. Mizzi offers help in making that move

After arrival at an international school there are teachers who struggle to negotiate the social, cultural, curricular, pedagogical, linguistic, and administrative differences that characterize the work context (Bates, 2011). Such negotiation takes time away from teaching practice and school involvement, and may affect job productivity and retention through feelings of isolation, stress, and demotivation. Successful navigation of differences in the overseas workplace depends, in large part, on the orientation that international workers experience prior to departure (Deveney, 2007). Orientation is a form of professional development that supports a smooth and positive adjustment for new employees to their place of employment. Orientation can contain information that relates to, but not limited to, work procedures and organization, culture and language differences, evaluations, strategic plans, and resource allocation. Pointedly, what teachers learn prior to departure

through an orientation-type activity may be helpful in mitigating the aforementioned work differences. Although 'learning on the job' is a familiar and acceptable practice of any position, the teaching profession has a well-established culture of preparedness that may be useful to international schools through its comprehensive and intense certification programs. Pre-departure work becomes paramount for international schools since many new faculty members do not visit the school or meet colleagues prior to their arrival. The goal for pre-departure work is to help international teachers conceptualize their lives in the new school and community, learn necessary skills, expand knowledge bases, and begin developing school relationships. International schools may stand to benefit by way of minimizing teacher turnover, improving student and teacher learning, and building a cohesive school environment at the hiring stage. Unfortunately, there is a scarcity of corresponding research

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In Canada, my research on preparedness and teaching overseas suggests that only 26% of schools of education across the country actually prepare educators for teaching overseas during their undergraduate program, and only 7% provide post-degree professional development in this area.

on the relationship between international teachers and pre-departure orientations; what is presented below may give some clue into understanding this relationship.

What agency provides pre-departure training for international teachers? In Canada, my research on preparedness and teaching overseas suggests that only 26% of schools of education across the country actually prepare educators for teaching overseas during their undergraduate program, and only 7% provide post-degree professional development in this area. Study findings also suggest that 86% of the current 106 provincially affiliated schools overseas do not offer a pre-departure orientation, which is mainly due to the financial and human resource costs associated with offering such an orientation. In a recent survey I coordinated that involved 57 international teachers, study participants identified their colleagues as being a primary method of preparing for their jobs, largely facilitated through email exchanges. On one hand, this informal learning can have useful elements because colleagues tend to feel more comfortable asking questions of each other rather than of their leaders. On the other hand, this exchange is largely responsive (i.e., the employed teacher responds to questions that the incoming teacher guesses are important), and shifts professional development away from school leaders. New teachers need many initial opportunities to become “psychologically close” to their formal leaders in order to “seek feedback” (Erdogan & Baur, 2014). Pre-departure learning that consists of unstructured email exchanges may represent a missed opportunity for school leaders to build close relationships with incoming faculty.

Building relationships based on sharing texts might not produce the desired effects of feeling prepared to teach overseas. In a recent study of nine pre-departure manuals designed for international teachers, we identified three dominant themes in the data (Mizzi & O'Brien-Klewchuk, 2016). First, there was a heavy emphasis on information that describes how to set up life in the new country (e.g., how to obtain a visa), and little emphasis on culture shock, cultural diversity, or intercultural competence. Second, there was moderate consideration of “good” teaching practices, but the manuals were devoid of leadership approaches, or learning how to become a leader. Last, the manuals informed teachers “what not to do” and “what to do” in order to succeed, without consideration of personal or professional backgrounds. These three themes are significant as they cement an instrumentalist approach to pre-departure

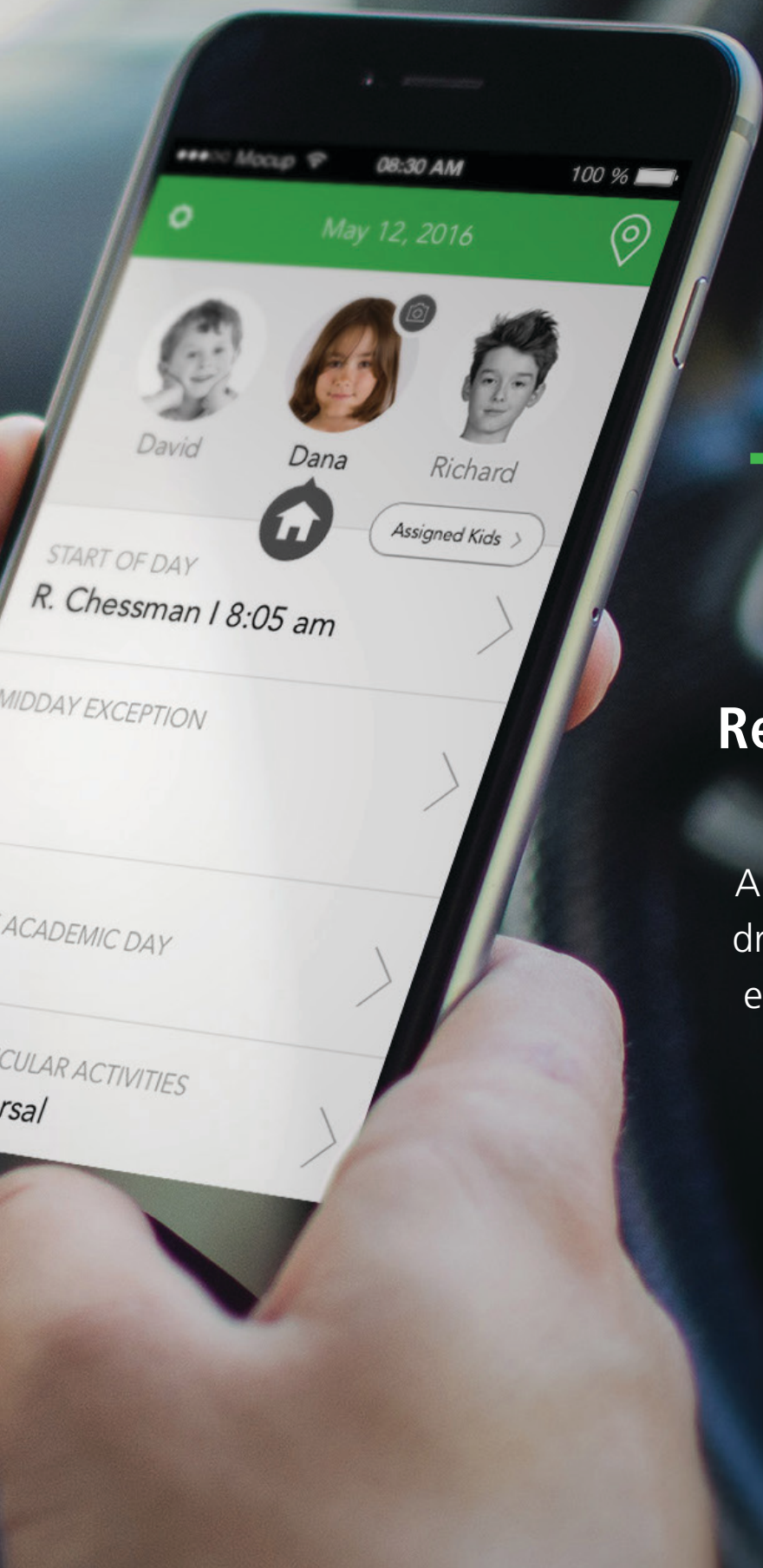
orientation manuals and do little to present teachers with opportunities to acquire intercultural competence, predict issues of disconnect and toughness, learn of different options and opportunities in the new school and community, or form negotiation strategies of the differences that nuance work in an international school.

In light of this research, I suggest a reconsideration of the value placed on pre-departure support, to consider the experience as an opportunity to strengthen the applicability and adaptability of teacher academic knowledge. The pre-departure orientation can be utilized as a pedagogical moment through which international teachers can learn about and come to appreciate human diversity. For example, I find that online learning virtually transports teachers to an international school through videos and interactive activities. This approach helps teachers conceptualize different aspects of teaching overseas, such as how to incorporate aspects of the local culture into teaching practice. The way in which school administrators decide to provide pre-departure support largely depends on work situations and available resources. Yet with the advancement of new communication and education technologies, it will be more beneficial to adopt a proactive role and reconsider the new forms of pre-departure orientations that can be made available to international teachers.

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Engaging with a controversial celebration

Kees van Ruitenbeek and Boris Prickarts on the thorny issue of the Zwarte Piet tradition

In November 2012 a number of parents and teachers started a campaign at the Amsterdam International Community School (AICS), with the aim of removing every representation of Zwarte Piet (Black Pete) in the building. Books from the library with Zwarte Piet stories were not returned and got 'lost', pages with Zwarte Piet images were ripped out, Zwarte Piet posters were taken down and put back up, and heated discussions took place on a daily basis among fervent groups of Zwarte Piet protagonists and antagonists. One year later, a way forward was found through dialogue.

The Sinterklaas celebration

Saint Nicholas (Sinterklaas) is the main figure in an annual, European celebration on 5 December (as in the Netherlands) and 6 December (as in Belgium). According to the tradition, he is a third century bishop from Myra (Turkey) who celebrates his birthday with children by giving presents and sweets. He is represented as an old man with a long, white beard and he is dressed in a long, red bishop's cloak and a mitre. In the Netherlands he arrives by boat and he travels on the back of a white horse, accompanied by – traditionally – black helpers or Zwarte Pieten. The Zwarte Piet was initially an obedient helper whose main job it was to scare and punish children who had been naughty. Zwarte Pieten are dressed in puffed sleeves and trousers and wear a feathered hat.

In the Netherlands, the figure of Zwarte Piet has been meeting with an increasing amount of opposition over the

past few years. Since 2014 a Dutch Minister has facilitated talks at government level between people who represent immigrants from Surinam and the Dutch Antilles, people who are involved with the Sinterklaas celebrations in the big cities, and the Society of Saint Nicholas. In 2014 a Dutch Christian lobby group called Civitas Christiana collected 200,000 signatures in support of Zwarte Piet. In 2015 the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination wrote to the Dutch government that '[as] even a deeply-rooted cultural tradition does not justify discriminatory practices and stereotypes, the Committee recommends that the State party actively promote the elimination of those features of the character of Black Pete which reflect negative stereotypes and are experienced by many people of African descent as a vestige of slavery. The Committee recommends that the State party find a reasonable balance, such as a different portrayal of Black Pete, and ensure respect for human dignity and human rights of all inhabitants of the State.' (CERD, 2015)

In September 2016, the National Ombudsman for Children in the Netherlands concluded that Zwarte Piet is in violation of Dutch law and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child because it contributes to bullying, exclusion and discrimination. Defenders of the Zwarte Piet tradition reacted by saying that it is impossible for a traditional celebration to satisfy everyone, and that Zwarte Piet is being 'misunderstood' by a 'dictatorship of the minority'.





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Dialogue as a means to keep the school's values up to date

Confronted with so much emotion and controversy in our school, we decided to organise dialogues. We could do so with the help of an expert of the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (KIT), the Dutch Royal Tropical Institute (Verdooren, 2013). The KIT has a lot of experience in dealing with diversity within organisations. AICS students, parents and staff were trained in chairing and taking part in what we called 'Valuable' meetings. These meetings usually take one hour and are about exchanging ideas and considering each other's point of view. Everyone around the table gets the opportunity to clarify issues and voice questions or concerns. The chair ensures that this happens without judgment, and with respect for the other. After the meeting the chairs collect the statements and together they summarise the total 'harvest' of the Valuable meeting. We are so happy with this way of working that we have adopted it for regular discussions of fundamental school policies and issues that touch on our school's core values.

The dialogues are not about meeting difference and diversity with universal ('one way or the highway') or relativist ('anything goes') solutions. Merely tolerating the other can often be a sign of cultural superiority. The meetings are open-ended, and ask from every participant the adoption of a mindset that others, with their differences, can also be right. How do you know what the other really means? Asking questions is a good start. Through dialogue, we have found not a universal, nor a relativist, but a pluralist way forward to engage with a controversial tradition. The dialogues are not meetings between different cultures, but between different people on the basis of mutual respect. Instead of arguing or trying to convince the other what is harmful, harmless, colonial or 'Dutch' about Zwarte Piet, we tried to find out what exactly it was that triggered people's emotions so much. We asked each other: How do you celebrate Sinterklaas? What is the role of our school? How can we help to improve the celebration? Those who came to the meeting with an end goal in mind, to keep or get rid of Zwarte Piet, had to change their approach and allow for the possibility of an unexpected outcome. Valuable meetings at our school are, for that reason, the most adventurous meetings we have!

The Zwarte Piet statement

The Zwarte Piet dialogue, exchange and consideration have led to the following statement:

- Although there are many different readings of the actual historical origin of Zwarte Piet, it is our view that the figure of Zwarte Piet in his current and common representation bears elements of racism and racist imagery. In our celebrations of Sinterklaas, we will not have the figure of Zwarte Piet present. Celebrations of Sinterklaas will take place either without the figure of Piet, or with the figure of Piet in alternative representations that are not offensive or reminders of the painful histories of slavery and colonialism.
- At the same time, we see the figure of Zwarte Piet as a learning opportunity for our students, that enables them to study topics such as slavery, colonialism and culture

**Through dialogue,
we have found not
a universal, nor
a relativist, but
a pluralist way
forward to engage
with a controversial
tradition.**

and their effects on the current day Dutch society and to reflect upon complex societal and historical discussions.

- As an international community school, AICS wants to involve its students in the broader Dutch community and society, where the figure of Zwarte Piet will most probably be readily available – for several years to come – and visible through advertisements, at events and in the media. AICS will not censor all references or representations of Zwarte Piet from texts, books or other materials, but rather use these images or references as discussion material and help prepare students for the exposure to these images outside the school environment. Also, objects (such as advertisements or wrapping papers) that are brought into the school by students with the image of Zwarte Piet will not be rejected, as also the traditions and customs of Dutch students and their families will be respected.
- The main challenge of the Sinterklaas celebrations is not the actual representation and imaging of Piet, but the consistency and persuasiveness in the communication around it. This involves not only students and teachers but also parents. It is crucial to inform parents about the view of AICS in this matter. Also, parents who contact the school when their children have been confronted with images of Zwarte Piet must be informed of the school's view in this matter.

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They're not 'refugees', they're people

Matthew Baganz reports on a school's initiatives toward integration: a two-way street

Strothoff International School is located in Dreieich, Germany, just 12 km from Frankfurt Airport. When families from Syria and Afghanistan began moving to Dreieich, and then into a temporary housing facility 200 metres from the school's front doors, the call for support was clear. Although there was some concern about safety and health implications, the larger part of the Strothoff community agreed that this was both an opportunity and an obligation.

The natural place to start seemed to be monetary donations that could be used for whatever was needed. Parents contributed to bake sales and packed their children's school bags with old books to be sold at book swaps. At Strothoff's International Fair, community members sold regional German dishes and other international cuisine. After their unit of inquiry about businesses, International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) 4 and 5 students donated the profits from their Business Fair. As the specific needs became clearer to the school community, collections became more focused and meaningful, such

as a winter clothing drive and a specific request for men's professional attire.

A game-changing activity, however, was one that finally put a face to the fundraising. An initiative led by students as young as Pre-primary organised a toy drive. Through the local Integration Office teachers received the names and interests of a group of refugee children. Students then stocked care bags with toys, books, and treats, and painted rainbows and refugee children's names – Yousef, Ali or Umar – on the sides.

Students were no longer blindly sending money to an imaginary person named 'Refugee'; now Strothoff children were seeing and 'meeting' refugee children, if only through photographs at this point. The smiles reflected on either side of the action were one and the same.

Education and Raising Awareness

Along a path paved by Pre-primary children toward the development of new friendships, adults established educational initiatives with the goal of alleviating the hardship

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The mayor of Dreieich visited the school to express his gratitude for the work undertaken with refugees

of the integration transition. In collaboration with the Haus des Lebenslangen Lernens (House of Lifelong Learning), an educational campus that not only offers language courses to refugees but also provides temporary refugee housing, Strothoff teachers and parents began to volunteer to teach language courses in German and English.

Afternoon German classes continue to be offered after the school day, and refugee parents who attend these classes can leave their children at Strothoff International School to be cared for by a group of IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) students and an adult supervisor. An English class is also offered three times a week to a select group of unaccompanied refugee teenagers. In addition to the recognition that language alone can be a definitive barrier to successful integration (hence the language classes), other features of local culture naturally merged into the curriculum, including the presumptions of specific posture and eye contact tendencies, social conduct such as acceptable personal space, and national politics and histories.

Through these interactions the Strothoff community considerably deepened its own sense of international mindedness. Teachers and students explored the central ideas already prescribed in their units and linked them to the current events occurring outside the school's windows. A PYP 1 unit exploring how children around the world play with toys inspired the care bags that brought the situation to a whole new level. A PYP 2 unit exploring children's rights led to a primary-wide discussion with representatives of Kinderhilfe Afghanistan (German Aid for Afghan Children). A group of PYP 5 students elected to focus on the refugee crisis from a broad theme about societal decision-making, and a secondary teacher took MYP 5 students to a town hall meeting to witness the political discussion about how to handle the refugee crisis.

Trumping money – and even education, many might argue – is the notion of friendship and camaraderie. What connections might be made between international MYP students and refugee toddlers when they play with Lego while their parents are learning the local language? Inspired by the action a PYP 5 exhibition group took by visiting a local shelter for a playdate, several other students initiated a bi-weekly gathering where refugee children were invited to the school playground to escape, for four hours a week, the boring hallways of the shelter.

Are these collaborations the seeds of greater action, such

as inviting a refugee family into your home to live with you? When the Mayor of Dreieich commended the Director of Strothoff International School for doing just that, the Director replied that 'It was self-understood. These are people. And they needed help. There should be no question'.

The Lasting Future

On the first day of the playground initiative, when Strothoff and Syrian children played side by side, one Strothoff student told a teacher with a camera 'I want a picture with one!' Four weeks later, that same student couldn't find a particular Syrian child on the playground and asked 'Why didn't Rita come today?' For that Strothoff student, 'one' (an objectified reference to a nameless body) progressed to 'Rita' (the name of a little girl with a personality) – a significant step from disassociation toward unification.

The more convenient methods of reaching out to those in need, such as collecting donations or sticking a 'unity for all' bumper sticker on the family car, are described by some as 'slacktivism' – acts 'which do little more than simply announce one's support for a particular ... cause' (Skoric 2012). And indeed for some it does stop there. But for others, spreading awareness of accurate information – be it through bake sales or Likes on Facebook, may very well be the spark to real change, to open and unprejudiced integration, and true friendship.

Strothoff teachers are exploring how to deepen their understanding and increase their assistance of the refugee crisis, perhaps by participating in an international school collaboration, coordinating new foreign exchange programmes, or learning Arabic or Persian. Regardless of location, size, or budget, all international schools have an opportunity (or is it obligation?) to be representatives among the wider community in the pursuit of global mindedness.

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Refugees and Strothoff children play side-by-side

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Transculturalism – a new lens for international school education

Dave Stanfield and Eeqbal Hassim offer a new perspective on global citizenship

Global citizen development is a hallmark of an international school education. A school's location, curriculum, diverse faculty and student composition may contribute to global citizenship – but what are the other requisite elements?

International schools need purposefully to design teaching and learning in ways that build on the array of global experiences and perspectives among students, and maximise their potential to live and function as global citizens. The world needs global citizens who are able to work together, regardless of differences, to navigate the opportunities and challenges of our common existence and of our shared futures. However, education for global

citizenship is not only about preparing students to be globally ready. Rather, and perhaps more importantly, it is education that is designed and delivered *because of* the interconnected nature of the world.

Therefore, education for global citizenship is about the knowledge, understandings and skills students need to be global *as well as* the perspectives they bring to learning in schools as global citizens. For international schools, this has implications for curriculum, pedagogy and professional development.

One way to view the implications of global citizenship for education is through the lens of transculturalism.



Features

Transculturalism draws from transnationalism and cultural theory. Transnationalism refers to the various and dynamic movements of people, capital and ideas across national boundaries. When combined with cultural theory, we arrive at the notion of transculturalism, which refers to incessant interactions across cultures that produce new and/or hybridised ways of thinking and being. This is the nature of our world today, augmented by the proliferation of IT and broader access to travel. Our ability collectively to navigate transcultural contexts is one aspect of global citizenship and is fundamental to ensuring our social sustainability.

Typically, global citizenship education in schools is viewed as learning about cultures in order to develop better cultural awareness (a multicultural approach) and/or engagement between – usually discrete – cultural groups to foster intercultural understanding (an intercultural approach). However, both approaches fail to acknowledge how the world has evolved in the last two decades or so.

We live, interact and make decisions in a transcultural reality. Hence, students need to understand how cultures blend and collide. They need to understand the implications for them and

for others of cultural fusion, collaboration, contradiction and conflict. And, in considering these implications, students need to identify personal contributions that will make the world a better place for all. Students require curriculum and pedagogy that will enable them to develop these understandings and skills.

Most international schools are multicultural in some way; students and staff come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and represent a range of cultural perspectives and experiences. Most of these schools are also intercultural, as people from different cultural backgrounds interact with one another. However, all of these schools are transcultural, even if students and staff do not immediately recognise this. For example, knowledge is transcultural. No culture or civilisation has sole claim on knowledge, which is, and has been, a collective human endeavour. When knowledge is recognised as transcultural, this implies that what we do and how we think has an impact beyond our own proximal experiences.

Importantly, multiculturalism, interculturalism and transculturalism are not hierarchical and can co-exist in a single context. These terms provide a lens and a common language through which to understand how various aspects





of a school are addressing issues of culture and cultural interaction. Nevertheless, the language of multiculturalism and interculturalism is perhaps no longer sufficient in the educational discourse around global citizenship and cultural learning. Furthermore, it remains a challenge to move beyond a multicultural mindset, because cultural diversity does not necessarily imply optimal cross-cultural relations.

By acknowledging transcultural schools as the norm, international schools can establish a strong foundation for teaching and learning for global citizenship, which makes this educational endeavour a core part of what a school is, rather than something 'out there' and aspirational, psychologically removed from the day-to-day.

This view of transculturalism and international schools has implications for school leaders as well as for teaching and learning. From a leadership perspective, leaders need carefully to identify and acknowledge how and why different aspects of their schools are transcultural. This is an important starting point, to determine what kinds of changes and/or consolidations need to happen to take teaching and learning for intercultural leadership to the next level. It is also about the setting of purpose and ambitions.

However, this exercise is not without challenges. Leaders will need to navigate particular tensions such as being culturally adaptable and open-minded while staying true to their own values and beliefs. They need to manage the tension between giving a voice to all cultures while preserving the culture of the school and establishing effective systems and

processes. Furthermore, leaders need to ensure traditional academic outcomes are achieved while making sure that students also develop the competences to live and function in a transcultural world. International schools can learn how to navigate these tensions by sharing their approaches as a professional learning community.

As for teaching and learning, the school as a transcultural context requires students to examine how different cultural perspectives and experiences interweave and interact on a particular topic or theme. The focus is on interconnections and the opportunities, challenges and consequences of these interconnections. This is in contrast to the study of cultures as distinct entities, or how distinct cultures interact with each other in the spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

So – how does the idea of transculturalism affect your school?

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Complexity – a big idea for education?

Jane Drake, Roland Kupers and Rose Hipkins on helping students understand complex systems

“Our world is full of complex causality; causal loops and spirals, events with multiple contributing causes, chaotic oscillations in the weather, the stock market, the ecology. Understanding complex causal systems is fundamental to navigating the contemporary world, yet complex causality gets no more than an occasional nod under the label of systems thinking ...

... Awakening learners to these more complex patterns is half the battle. The other half concerns how easily we can overlook what's going on. Drawn to salient events, we may, for instance, never ask what keeps systems constant, miss problematic patterns that play out only now and again, and neglect possible causal influences far away in time and space.” (Perkins 2014)

How might education help students grasp the complexity of the systems surrounding us? How can education better equip them to recognise and respond in appropriate ways to the inherent complexity in environmental issues, disease epidemics, social media challenges, conflict on many levels (personal, societal, national, and international), lack of food security for many, or a financial crisis? Deeply interconnected systems are everywhere and at all levels of scale. One thing these very different systems have in common is that they behave in ways that surprise. Their interconnected nature leads to emergent behaviour that is not obviously triggered by a single cause. This means that systems can trip across thresholds into sudden transitions and they can react disproportionately to seemingly small triggers, or transform as a result of influences from within the structure itself.

If we want our students to understand how complex systems work, and to develop the habits of systems thinkers, we need to change some key ways in which we introduce them to new knowledge. Familiar teaching approaches typically try to reduce complex systems into their parts so they are easier to understand. Then we tend to look for linear cause-and-effect relationships between these separate parts. Doing this is a problem because it ignores the essence of the dynamic whole that makes the system what it is. We need to find new ways to keep the wholeness, while still making the parts accessible. Traditionally we have also looked for students to demonstrate their understanding by giving us ‘right’ answers to every question we pose. This is another familiar practice we need to adapt as we help students build new habits of mind. They need lots of practice in the more

contingent (‘it depends’) thinking that an understanding of complexity demands.

The field has developed a shared language for talking about complexity concepts, and there is general agreement about the key characteristics of complex systems. Complexity science is increasingly developing tools relevant across disciplines that deal with complexity as it is. Our challenge is to find ways to equip our students with these tools, and this theory, so they can come to grips with complexity. Some teachers are already exploring these ideas with their students and some would like to start. In this article we discuss the potential relevance of complexity science to the IB and present various strategies for integrating it in the programmes. These issues formed the basis for discussion at the International Baccalaureate (IB) pre-conference in October 2015.

The promise of complexity science

“Some scientists will seek and develop for themselves new kinds of collaborative arrangements; that these groups will have members drawn from essentially all fields of science; and that these new ways of working, effectively instrumented by huge computers, will contribute greatly to the advance which the next half century will surely achieve in handling the complex, but essentially organic, problems of the biological and social sciences.” (Weaver, 1948)

Methods of scientific research that address complexity began to be developed by the Santa Fe Institute from the mid-1980s. These methods are now a mainstay at PhD and post-doctoral levels at most universities around the world. The roots of the ideas are much older, however, as this quote by the physicist Warren Weaver illustrates. He identified the limits of the standard scientific approach for many of the important problems of the time, and he laid out a path for addressing their complexity.

The science research community failed to meet Weaver’s hoped-for window of 50 years from 1948. But complexity science does now have a substantial impact in both the natural and social sciences. It is also starting to influence policy and is gaining access to the imagination of the general public through a stream of popular science books. In the social sciences complexity has always been recognised as central, but new research tools provide opportunities to deepen ideas in the social sciences themselves, to reintegrate

the social sciences with economics, and to connect them to the natural sciences.

Complexity research methods are gaining traction at national and international levels. For example the World Economic Forum has published a very accessible brochure entitled *Perspectives on a Hyperconnected World – Insights from the Science of Complexity*. In the Netherlands, complexity has been proposed as one of the core themes for scientific research. Singapore, meanwhile, has made it a strategic theme for the country and founded an ambitious new research institute.

Key ideas about complex systems

We've already noted the need to use new pedagogies to introduce students to knowledge in general. Another implication of the growing importance of complexity approaches is that we need to add knowledge of complexity to the curriculum – i.e. there is new 'content' or understanding to address. Complexity takes a biological systems view of the world, with an emphasis on interconnections between the various system components. The following concepts are central to knowledge of the characteristics of complex systems and how they behave:

- The whole is more than the sum of its parts.
- The greater the diversity (heterogeneity) of the different parts in a system, the more resilient it is likely to be.
- Systems evolve dynamically over time, self-organise and their global properties are said to be emergent.
- Change is non-linear and properties are emergent, so small consequences can have large effects that might not have been anticipated or predicted.
- There are constant interactions between any system and its surrounding environment so the boundaries of a system are typically 'fuzzy' – it is said to be open.
- Understanding the dynamics of networks and their topologies becomes essential for many social and natural sciences.
- Uncertainty: some things are knowable, but others are irreducibly uncertain. Embracing uncertainty and dealing with ambiguity become essential skills.
- Agent Based Models are increasingly used to understand how system level properties relate to the individual agent behavior within them.

Some topics in the current curriculum include some complex systems concepts, such as evolution, equilibrium, identity and sustainability. However, ideas about complexity are not typically foregrounded when addressing these topics, nor are ideas about complexity exploited across disciplines. Complexity science requires these concepts to be embedded into a rich new conceptual framework.

The dominant stance in education is reductionist. Breaking things into their parts to make the ideas more accessible has been a major ingredient of effective learning strategies. In effect, without it ever being a learning goal, or perhaps ever being mentioned, students have been taught reductionism as a core methodology for tackling problems. The organisation of the curriculum has also been

reductionist, breaking knowledge up into subject silos that typically remain unconnected from each other. With the emergence of complexity science these familiar education practices are being re-evaluated, opening opportunities to reconnect the natural, the social sciences and the arts.

We emphasize that complexity does not reject a reductionist approach. The aim is simply to acquire the skill to decide when a reductionist approach is fit for purpose, when it is not, and what the tools are for those kinds of problems. Complexity does not offer solutions to every difficult problem. But there is continuous progress and, more importantly, there is every indication that it will feature prominently during the adult lives of students who are in school today.

The state of systems learning in K-12

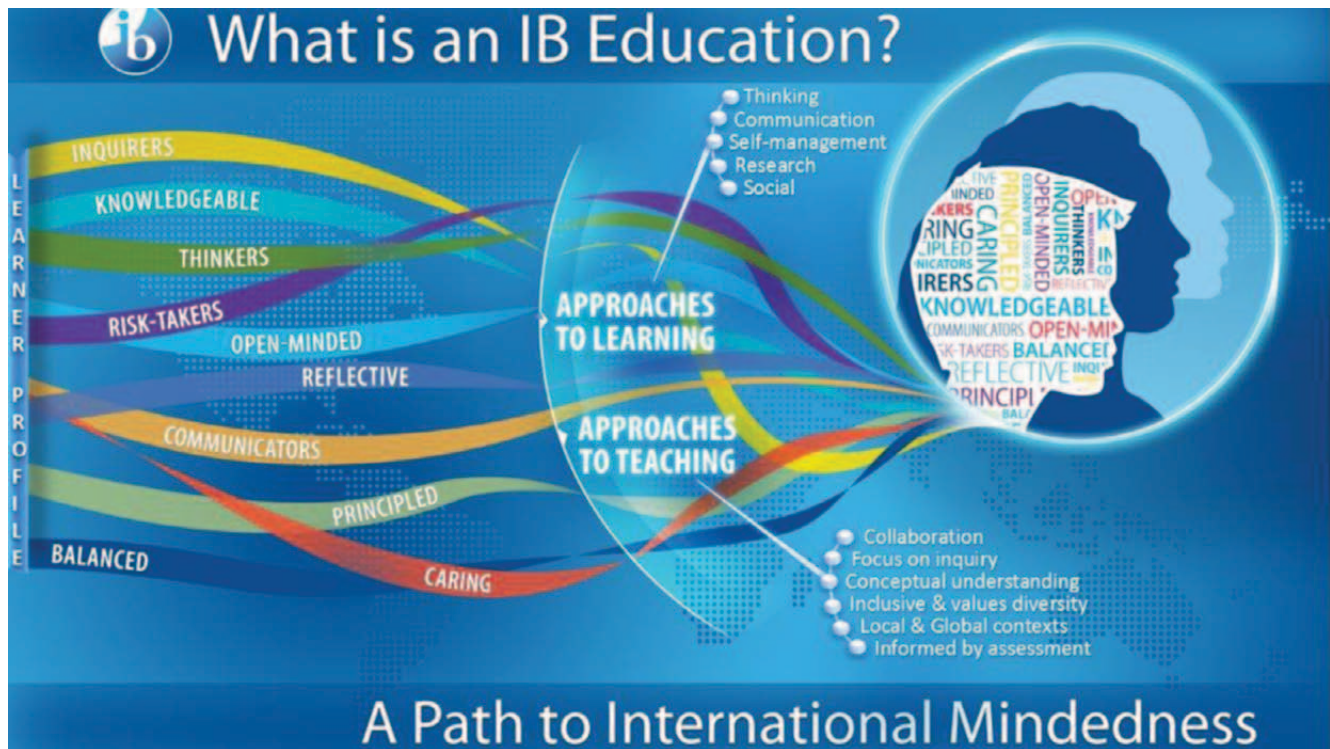
"Unfortunately, little of the conceptual power embodied in the rapidly developing perspectives and tools of complex dynamical systems or informatics has informed the educational experience of our citizenry at any level, save that of graduate students in a few scientific areas." (Jacobson and Wilensky, 2006)

Momentum is building to integrate complexity science into K-12 curricula. Jacobson and Wilensky (2006) describe the implications for education. Perkins (2014) highlights how complexity requires revisiting how we teach cause and effect. The GUTS (Growing Up Thinking Scientifically: www.projectguts.org) effort, an outreach programme of the Santa Fe Institute, is exploring how to do this in practice.

The Waters Foundation in the USA (<http://watersfoundation.org>) and NTO-effekt in the Netherlands (www.nto-effekt.nl) are other organisations that have pioneered the use of systems dynamics approaches in education. In particular the Waters Foundation website has a very extensive set of tools and resources. They have developed programs and rolled them out at scale, fostering networks of teachers. The Waters Foundation publishes a chart that succinctly summarises their approach. This is useful early complexity thinking, which offers a wealth of tools and practices to introduce the students to systems.

GUTS has developed detailed curricula which are available through their website. Deployment is currently mostly limited to schools in the US, but the modules are detailed and shareable. All programmes are centred on practical cases such as water or climate change. The approach is cognitive, in the tradition of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education.

There are undoubtedly opportunities to build on these programmes, to leverage the long experience of systems dynamics curricula, as well as the experiences of individual teachers. This includes going beyond the cognitive, to experiential and intuitive learning – connecting complexity with tools such as CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning: www.casel.org). A group of schools in Australia is currently working with Harvard's Project Zero to develop thinking routines that allow exploring complexity. Goleman and Senge (2014) have argued persuasively that empathy for others and for the world is an essential element of engaging with complexity; personal development is an integral part of the ability to be a systems thinker.



Why the IB is so well placed

The good news for IB teachers is that IB programmes already contain a wealth of opportunities to explore complexity and complex causality. There are holistic threads that connect programmes throughout the IB continuum of education (illustrated above).

Together, they create a rich environment that includes the following elements:

- The organizing mission of creating a better and more peaceful world necessarily includes the elements of personal development and empathy mentioned above. A complex aim that encompasses the need to lift the human spirit and avoid a 'tragedy of the commons'
- Centred on learners within a curriculum that is broad, balanced, conceptual and connected
- One that actively encourages connections across disciplines and explores content significant to local and global contexts
- Effective approaches to teaching that carefully nurture the IB learner profile and develop the approaches to learning skills
- Learning experiences that build understanding by encouraging students to challenge their thinking, the source of their knowledge and their perspectives on the world

Via these types of opportunities, the IB programmes have developed a community of schools rich in innovation and experience who are well placed to explore complexity.

Student capabilities

As already noted, students need to build new types of knowledge about the features of complex systems and how they behave. They need lots of practice in thinking

through how systems dynamics might play out in a specific case. This takes a disciplined blend of critical and creative thinking; critical because they need to look beneath the surface of things for hidden connections; creative because they need to look beyond the obvious to find non-linear links and interactions; and disciplined because this is not a case of 'anything goes'. Complex systems might behave unpredictably but they are bounded by the reality of their parts and dynamics. Students also need to set aside familiar habits such as expecting that there should be a right answer to every question asked. Actually they need to become good at asking questions and finding problems. No one can make them do these things, so building the disposition to tolerate uncertainty and keep on exploring and building critical connections is really important.

When students use a specific combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values (dispositions) to achieve a specific type of action we could say they have demonstrated competence in that aspect of learning. This is how the OECD describes 'key competencies' for example. Our preference is to use the term capability because it points to something more open-ended. What do we want our students to be capable of? How do we plan to stretch their existing levels of competence? Who do we want them to be and become? These are important questions because, as already noted, there are important non-cognitive dimensions to systems thinking. If we want students to be able to do the things outlined above we have to add to the traditional focus on students' knowing and doing a concern for their 'being'. How we might do this is an important pedagogical question to explore together.

Strategies for integration into the IB programmes

We should not try to integrate opportunities to learn about and practice complex systems thinking into the IB programmes in a top down fashion. Doing that would not be consistent with the insights of complexity science itself,

nor with the experience and common sense of educators. Instead this should be an exploratory journey, capturing and sharing learnings from a diverse set of bottom-up initiatives, continuously evolving the approach.

Content, contexts and complexity

The content and the contexts that we choose to explore will either invite or inhibit complexity. We need rich, relevant content into which students can immerse themselves in order to explore connections, to be challenged by perspectives and experience the ambiguity that is at the heart of knowledge making. Taking as its focal point a problem such as climate change, traffic congestion, or the spread of social norms, students can be introduced to the tools of complexity science and practice them. This would allow the use of elements from many of the traditional disciplines. This approach could sit within a discipline and build connections out, or it could cross disciplines to connect and transfer understanding. A third solution might be a multidisciplinary approach that builds connections at need, irrespective of disciplinary boundaries.

Project GUTS at the Santa Fe Institute has pioneered the latter approach with many schools and they have gained a wealth of practical experience. They can offer a rich array of tools and practice. Our own programmes offer a wealth of opportunities for rich content: programmes of inquiry, conceptual understanding, inter-disciplinary units, projects, exhibitions, global engagement, service, action, IB Diploma group four (Science) projects: an ever expanding list. IB curriculum managers are already seeking to highlight opportunities within subject guides and teacher support materials. Each example brings an opportunity to understand that complex causality is both challenging and real; it is the very essence of the world we live in.

Thinking and doing

In building students' capacity to apply and transfer their understanding, perhaps there is also merit in getting straight to the intellectual work that complexity thinking needs to do as we help our young people to learn how the world works. They will need to build an understanding of some of the key properties and patterns of complex systems, indeed of the very concept of complexity itself. These ideas could be introduced through IB programme elements such as Global Contexts, the Theory of Knowledge or the acquisition of specific Approaches to Learning skills, or they could be integrated through inquiry and conceptual understanding of topics that are already taught.

Rich topics have the benefit of supporting students to see what the ideas of complexity science mean in actual cases. What does it really mean to say that system properties are emergent? How do patterns of self-organization and behaviour emerge in a complex system? (How does the 'whole' system function in ways that go well beyond rules and behaviours of the individual agents in the system?) What might complex causality look like? (Can we recognise instances where amplifying or absorbing effects are in action? What are examples of resilience or fragility, and where have we already seen unexpected impacts over both distance and time?) What causes complex systems that often appear to be relatively stable to tip over into a phase change?

Teaching students to reason about causal complexity and recognize patterns of complexity would complement more traditional explorations of curriculum content. This reflects the emphasis on developing understanding rather than replication of knowledge within an IB education.

When teaching problem-solving a number of concepts and tools specific to complexity science could also be introduced. This would make the tools of complexity readily identifiable and let the students make the connection to problems in different disciplines. For example, the advent of fast processing power and accessible modelling software allows students to create and explore agent-based models of their own. In this way they understand how simple rules can lead to surprising and apparently complex emergent behaviour. Just as importantly, they will understand that models are also limited; that they are representations of the rules programmed into the software and not the real world. The IB has already worked with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and Roland Kupers to develop and trial a complexity curriculum with UWC Mahindra College and is collaborating with key thinkers at MIT and Pennsylvania State University to develop a framework for International Mindedness (IM) based on compassionate integrity. Central to this IM framework is an emphasis on the learner profile attributes and the deliberate integration of systemic and empathetic understanding and practices.

The ideas sketched above suggest there could be multiple paths to exploring complexity within the IB programmes. We look forward to developing these multiple paths through the experience of teachers.

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Going beyond the academic

How do we know teachers and schools are making an impact? asks John Wells

I come from another age. When I was school-age in the 1970s the overriding, if not only, reason for going to school seemed to be to achieve decent qualifications which would enable us either to leave school straight away and get a reasonably well-paid job, or to go on to a university or polytechnic, complete a degree, and then find a very well-paid job. Yes, there were assemblies and time spent with form tutors when good behaviour, positive attitudes and good habits were espoused, but these always seemed to be something peripheral, of secondary importance to studying for qualifications.

I am not suggesting that teachers and schools did not aim to make students better people. A great many did. But from what I remember of the schools I attended, my attention was not explicitly drawn to a specific set of values, attributes or dispositions that I was supposed to imbibe. Times have changed. Whether a student now follows a national curriculum or an international programme, the chances are high that teachers and schools will be expected to complement academic knowledge and skills with a specific set of attributes, values or dispositions that are deemed to be an integral part of being a 21st century learner; someone who might be described as internationally minded, or a global citizen. [See the dispositions that the American Association of School Librarians (AASL, 2015) claims are necessary for the 21st century learner; the attributes of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile (IB, 2013); the type of skills that learners following Cambridge International Examinations (CIE, 2015) programmes are expected to have, among others].

This is all well and good. Aiming to make students better people by asking schools to develop a specific set of attributes, values or dispositions must be laudable. However, there are two issues that I suggest need to be developed or clarified. One is the theoretical justification for the attributes, values or dispositions that are included in a programme. More specifically, what is the justification for describing what is to be 'taught' to students as 'attributes' or 'dispositions' or 'values' or 'characteristics'? Which term should be used and why? Why choose 10 items (the number of attributes of the IB Learner Profile) as opposed to 5 items (the number of adjectives used to describe CIE learners)? Why are some attributes, values, dispositions or characteristics chosen in preference to others?

Here, I think it is a positive move that the IB has commissioned a number of studies to explore what is meant by international mindedness, which involves educating learners to be better people who will make the world a

better place. It seems that the IB is working to establish clearer conceptual justification for the terms used in its programmes. In addition, the IB appears to recognise that schools can also work with other attributes that are relevant to the context in which they work.

“Teachers and schools need to know if they are having an impact on the development of students and, if they aren’t, they should consider what action is needed to ensure that they do.”

A second issue that I propose requires attention is the extent to which schools and educational organisations track or measure their degree of success in promoting the attributes, values, dispositions or characteristics among students; just as we evaluate students to see if they have acquired the necessary academic skills and knowledge, so I would argue we should measure the extent to which experience at school has an impact on the attributes, dispositions or characteristics that we believe students should develop. If we do not do this, then why are we trying to promote those attributes, dispositions, values or characteristics? Teachers and schools need to know if they are having an impact on the development of students and, if they aren’t, they should consider what action is needed to ensure that they do.

As a result of my many years of teaching IB programmes, I have a special interest in the extent to which schools promote the attributes of the IB Learner Profile among students. For a recently completed study, I designed research tools that asked students to reflect on how well they thought they managed the attributes of the IB Learner Profile and who they thought was responsible for their acquisition and continued development. Additionally, I asked students what they understood by the term 'international mindedness' and whether they thought the attributes of the IB Learner Profile helped them to be internationally minded. (See Singh and Qi, 2013 for a discussion of the IB's definition of international mindedness),

The vast majority of the students involved in the research (all Colombian and mostly having been at the school since the age of 4) felt that they were stronger in some of the attributes of the IB Learner Profile than others, and believed they had acquired the attributes not only as a result of experience at school, but also because of the influence of significant others, such as parents and friends – or even through their own reflections. They felt that they tended to be stronger communicators and open-minded, and that these attributes enhanced their ability to be internationally minded – though there was no shared view as to what actually constituted being internationally minded. Students also tended to believe that the mind-set they had when undertaking service activities with the community was more important than the activities they actually undertook.

The learner is at the centre of the IB programmes. It is crucial not only that we listen to the perceptions of learners as to how school has impacted their way of being and the dispositions that they have, but also that the questions we ask are based on sound theoretical constructs. The research tools I used can not only be applied in other IB schools, but may also be adapted by schools that offer other international programmes.

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Forthcoming Conferences

February 6-8 AAIE Annual Leadership Conference, San Francisco, US.

February 19-22 Association of International Education Administrators Annual Conference, Washington DC, US.

March 3-5 ECIS ESL Mother Tongue Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark.

March 4-5 EARCOS Middle School Global Issues Network Conference, Hong Kong Academy.

March 24-25 ECIS Early Childhood Conference, Brussels, Belgium.

March 29-31 IB Global Conference, Yokohama, Japan.

March 30-April 1, EARCOS Teachers' Conference, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.

April 14-15 COBIS Wellbeing Conference, Dubai College, UAE.

April 21-22 ECIS Annual Leadership Conference, Barcelona, Spain.

May 6-8 COBIS Annual Conference, London, UK.

May 28-June 2 NAFSA Annual Conference, Los Angeles, US.

July 20-23 IB Americas Regional Conference, Orlando, US.

July 30-August 5 IB World Student Conference, Rochester, US.

August 6-12 IB World Student Conference, London, UK.

October 6-8, Alliance for International Education World Conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands (see pages 52-53).

Proposals for peace

Charles Gellar considers how students can help

This is a summary of an idea I presented on 19 November 2016 during an 'unconference session' at the ECIS conference, where I spoke as an honorary ECIS member for the past 30 years. Over those several years ECIS has played a seminal role in many of the achievements in international education as we know it today. This is particularly true in the development of the world-wide international accreditation program. There were two questions that I felt needed to be addressed.

Firstly, what have international schools contributed to world peace?

Historically, over 150 years ago, after the horrors of the Crimean War, perhaps the first truly international school – the International College at Spring Grove (London) – was established by a prominent group of important individuals, including Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley and Charles Dickens, with the goal of preparing pupils from different countries to be 'Ambassadors' for world peace.

International schools should give serious consideration to this major contribution to education for world peace.

Years later, in 1924 – after an even greater holocaust, the International School of Geneva was formed for the same purpose, quickly followed by Yokohama International School in Japan for the children of foreigners after the great Kanto earthquake. Yet only 15 years later, the greatest holocaust in the history of the world occurred, and in 1968 the International Baccalaureate (IBO) launched the IB Diploma with as one of its goals the advancement of world peace. The IBO will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2018.

International schools, even those offering an IB programme, can and do get by without the need to wrestle with or even debate the need for universal values, but internationally-minded schools cannot. It is hoped that those who are internationally-minded will work to ensure that a clear and unambiguous statement of universal values is made an essential part of the ethos of international education; that a commitment to justice, peace, and compassion for all be openly espoused and made central in their thought and conduct.

At the ECIS conference, I strongly recommended the outstanding 'Education for Peace' curriculum framework for K-12 schools created by the International Schools Association (ISA). It lays out a number of thematic areas particularly on human rights. International schools should give serious consideration to this major contribution to education for world peace.

Secondly, what more can we do?

Yet the impact of all this on the most important issue of the present – international peace – has yet to be properly articulated to the general public.

As Kevin Ruth, ECIS Director, wrote in his letter of 14 November 2015:

"At times like these, we must go beyond our curricula, beyond our politicking, beyond our first world complaints, and seek to create positive impact in our world as deeply and intentionally as we can."

Those of us in international education and committed to the pursuit of universal values – we all go to conferences, we all discuss these issues earnestly within our own sphere – must break out of this in-house bubble of our own making and make known to the broader public at large what we are about and why. For this reason, I am committed to helping ECIS create a so-called 'Peace Prize' to be awarded to students in international schools who make a real contribution to building international understanding. Examples of such contributions abound in *International School* magazine, in *IB World* magazine and in the IB Diploma's CAS program. Such a prize would have the potential to garner public visibility, while at the same time promoting a deep, life-long commitment by our pupils to the service of world peace.

Therefore, I proposed the following for consideration by ECIS members:

- (a) That ECIS establish an International Peace Prize to be awarded to pupils in our schools who have proposed and/or worked on projects that have contributed to international understanding in their local or broader school community.
- (b) In support of this endeavor, that a fund be established by ECIS and other such organizations to grant financial awards in support of such student projects.
- (c) That these awards be made known to the public at large in a number of ways, particularly via the schools themselves and under the auspices of ECIS.

Following on from this, the audience and I discussed these proposals and how they might be carried forward. Everyone thought the Peace Prize was a very good idea, particularly as it involves student projects. They also felt a letter needs to be prepared and sent to schools explaining the idea of a world peace prize and asking for feedback.

I would be interested in what you, the readers of this article, have to say, and whether you have any particular contributions to make to the whole proposal? If so, please send your comments to cagellar@beps.com. Many thanks.

Charles A. Gellar is an Honorary Member of ECIS

International schools 'moving towards inclusion'

Richard Gaskell looks at trends across the sector

An increasing number of international schools are embracing the opportunities and the challenges of inclusion, according to a survey conducted in January 2016 by ISC Research (ISC) in collaboration with Next Frontier Inclusion (NFI). Since that research, the international school community has been devastated by news of the death of NFI Co-Founder and Design Team member, Bill Powell. As well as serving as a respected international school educator for over thirty years, Bill was passionate about his work with NFI; an initiative that he and his wife Ochan established together with Kevin Bartlett and Kristen Pelletier to promote and support the inclusion of children with special educational needs within international schools. The survey was the first of what will be an annual study of the market into the approaches that international schools are taking regarding inclusion. Future surveys will be dedicated to the memory of Bill. Over time, as trends can be identified, the research will hope to show the continued progress that international schools are making towards inclusion.

Today's international schools market responds to the learning needs of children from both expatriate and local families, and both sectors are driving the demand for

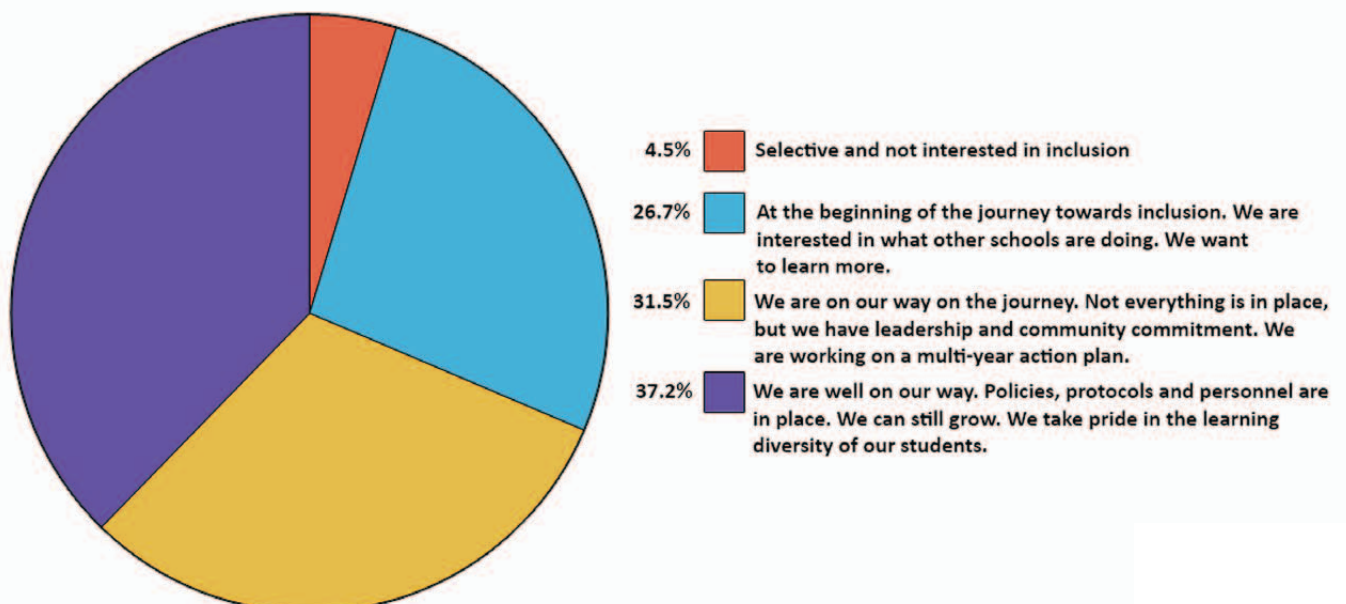
provision for students with special learning needs. As legislation supporting inclusion in schools is being implemented in countries including the UK, US and Australia, so expatriate parents are expecting similar provision from international schools. Local families who are unable to access specialist support in their state schools are increasingly turning to international schools for the solutions they need. It is as a result of these demands that a growing number of international schools are becoming more inclusive.

The initial survey collected responses from 584 international schools about their approaches to inclusion and their provision for children with learning differences. The research represented international schools of varying sizes based in all regions of the world, and the results of the survey suggest many international schools are addressing inclusion to some extent.

The initial findings

Although a third of the schools that responded to the research classify themselves as selective (27% based on testing and previous school records) and 6% as highly selective, the remaining schools consider themselves non-

January 2016 ISC Research/NFI Inclusion Survey
Extent of inclusion provision



What is evident from the survey is that most international schools are uncomfortable with an exclusionary attitude towards children with special learning needs. However, skilled staff are often lacking.

selective to varying degrees. Over 80% of the schools said they are currently supporting students with dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, ADHD, as well as highly capable students. 75.5% are supporting students who are high functioning on the autistic spectrum. The percentages dropped dramatically for supporting students with intensive needs. 9% said they accept a managed number of children with learning differences who include some with intensive needs. Often children with intensive needs follow a modified curriculum and may be placed in 'a school within the school', following an alternative pathway to graduation.

Integration within the mainstream classroom varies significantly. 35% of schools participating in the survey said they follow an inclusive approach whenever they can. 25% said they use a learning specialist as a consultant, while 10% said they use a learning specialist to co-plan, co-teach and co-assess alongside the mainstream teacher (known as a 'push-in' model). 44% said they use both push-in and pull-out (resource room) models. Only 5% of schools reported that the pull-out model was the main learning approach employed. However, through its work with educators, NFI has found there remains considerable confusion in international schools regarding the relative merits and weaknesses of different models of provision, suggesting more understanding of appropriate provision needs to be developed.

What is evident from the survey is that most international schools are uncomfortable with an exclusionary attitude towards children with special learning needs. However, skilled staff are often lacking. Only 33% of schools in the study said that staff working with students with learning differences are entirely qualified special educators. 21.5% said staff are mostly qualified, 39% said some are qualified, and 14% said they have no specialists to support children with learning differences.

Challenging questions for some schools

The research highlighted an issue that some schools may wish to address. 84% of the international schools responding to the

survey said they enrol children with special gifts and talents, but only 35% of the schools said they are satisfied with their provision for this group of students. "There is a disconnect here", says Ochan Powell, NFI Design Team member. "Many times, school leaders use finances as a reason to exclude children with special educational needs. They'll say: 'we don't have the programme for you, so it would be wrong for us to take you into our school'. But on the flip side of this, some of these schools are accepting children with high academic gifts and talents, even though they admit they are not happy with the provision they provide. That's a significant ethical consideration that this survey has highlighted", she adds. In response to this misalignment, NFI will be putting together a task force to propose standards for meeting the needs of highly capable students in international schools.

Other conclusions from the survey suggest an attitudinal shift away from elitist and non-inclusionary language and policies, although many schools indicate they are insecure about how to change. "There's a greater willingness towards inclusion, but there's also some scratching of heads about what to do, and a fear about getting it wrong", says Ochan. Anecdotal evidence gathered within the survey suggests the market is moving towards being more inclusive. Looking to the future, analysis of this annual survey will help to identify trends and provide the data that international schools need in order to know how the market is responding to requirements of all students.

A full electronic report of the survey is available free of charge from ISC Research, via Liz Dixon (ld@isc-r.com).

Richard Gaskell is Director for International Schools at ISC Research (ISC). Next Frontier Inclusion (NFI) is a non-profit membership organisation supporting international schools on their journey to becoming increasingly inclusive of children with special education needs.

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Tracking student performance Western-style in a Chinese bilingual school

Will Percy explains how a data management system is helping to raise standards

As a bilingual school in China, all of our students and parents, and many of our teachers and administrators, come from a culture where league tables dominate student performance and where children are ranked according to academic ability. Here at HD Ningbo School in Zhejiang province, China, we are taking a different approach; focusing on every individual student's learning progress. Our school information management software, which includes bilingual programmes for both staff and parents, is supporting us in this approach.

We recently introduced a centralised, online information management system for data recording, tracking and reporting to give us clarity and transparency on student performance. Prior to that, the school was using spreadsheets to monitor student performance, and mail-merge with the spreadsheets to produce student reports. Access to student data was limited and multiple access was all but impossible. We are still in early implementation stages and have faced challenges along the way, but already we can see that we are achieving what we set out to achieve: a data management system that helps everyone within the school community to support each and every student with their learning progress.

Preparing for a new school management system was a learning journey for our school. It prompted us to open up discussion amongst the staff. This didn't just focus on the

tracking of student performance. We also had important conversations about what we could do, and what data we needed, to help improve each individual student with their learning progress, regardless of where they are ranked in the class. We discussed how we want students to think about their learning, how to grade them, how to move students on to the next level, and discussed our standards too. This involved the entire faculty and led to significant discussions about how to grade for our two different systems (British and Chinese), how to recognise the differences between these two systems, how to balance comments and grades, and when to use assessment; not simply to track and report, but also as a spring-board to keep moving students forward.

The results of these discussions required a real shift in focus, particularly for our locally trained colleagues; a shift from a focus on ranking to a perception that, if everyone in the class performs at their highest standard, then everyone is succeeding. This shift in how we use performance data is helping to transform the culture of our school.

Using data to support change

We're really proud of being a bilingual school. We talk a lot about taking the best from both East and West. In my opinion, the tracking of student data is one of the best aspects of the West; not tracking for punishment and reward but, rather,



tracking to help with personal improvement and to help each student move on to reach their full potential. No longer is school just about generating league tables. Now we work with the idea of continuous incremental improvement and the need to collect data in order to drive this improvement. Some people think of figures and statistics as being geeky and boring. But figures and statistics on students are far from geeky! Turning data into progress indicators is helping us to transform our school community. Within our one single-sign-on information management system (which is from UK-based WCBS), we are now able to collate holistic as well as academic data on each student. This helps us to know them and the way they are progressing both academically and pastorally.

Our reports have a numeric base, but in addition we are now able to use rubrics and provide transparency about why students get the grades they do. This has meant that we can help students and their parents to make the shift away from the mindset that only one person can get the top grade, to a mindset of 'this is how I can get my best possible grades, this is how my performance is measured, and now I am racing against myself'. At every possible opportunity, we are coaching our students about the data and how we are using it to help them move forward with their learning. We're also coaching our parents.

Shifting parents' cultural expectations

Our parents made an early and brave choice to move their child to a bilingual international-style school in a country which is only just experimenting with this form of education. They come from a culture where everyone is ranked. We recognise the risk our parents know they are taking, and we believe we should give them transparency and clarity with respect to what we are doing to reassure them that they have made the right decision. We run information sessions for parents to explain how we measure performance; that it's not just based on academic grades. This is not always easy for parents to comprehend as it's a different way of looking at success in school. We know it will take time for them to shift their mindset about data. We regularly explain to them

why the students have been given the grades they've been given, and keep reminding them of how we are using our data. We take every opportunity to talk about the way we define student progress, to relate it back to the ethos, mission and vision of the school, and to talk about what we expect from our students. One example of this is when we make selections for scholarships and summer schools. We are now able to use our academic and holistic data to show parents and students the basis on which we are making a selection.

Giving our parents access to data on their child's learning progress through a parent portal helps them to regularly engage with us and with their child in a meaningful way. This portal lays out our reports so that parents are able to easily see the learning progress of their child. We show them that we're preparing the students well for university, and that the way we are using our data is helping to drive every one of the students towards their own success.

Our advice to parents is to use the parent portal regularly, but not to use it every hour of every day. Logging in once or twice a week will help parents to keep up-to-date with how their child is doing. We want our parents to look at the grades and, more importantly, the learning trends with their child and, together, talk about the child's development; to use the data to plan with their child his or her learning pathway. We hope that by working with our parents to help them understand what to look for in the portal, and why to focus on progress rather than individual grades, then the transparency of the parent portal will give them greater faith in the school, our processes and our teachers.

Our new information management system has not only provided clarity of data tracking. More importantly, it has prompted open and ongoing discussion about what we value about student learning, and how we structure a system to capture what is valued. It is helping us all to focus on what we can do to shape our school culture, and to put each student on the right learning path.

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Authentic reflection for CAS

Stirling Perry and Robin Ann Martin encourage an important principle of learning

It is axiomatic that there is little meaningful learning or growth without reflection. It is not enough simply to act or experience: one must also think deeply about those actions and experiences in order to internalize learning and meaning. Professional athletes, for example, spend countless hours re-watching and analyzing their games in order to improve future performance. Musicians identify their technical weaknesses and address them through practice. And one only needs to watch children on the playground as they use continual reflection to develop and adapt strategies toward having the most possible fun. This is the essence of reflection: analyzing past experiences in order to create narrative meaning and develop strategies for future experiences.

Consequently, reflection is an explicit aspect of many educational curricula, including the CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) programme – a core component of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP). Successful completion of the CAS programme requires students to reflect extensively on their various CAS experiences. However, through our research with colleague Manolya Tanyu, we found that reflection is, for students, the most loathed and problematic aspect of CAS.

We visited six IBDP schools in Turkey, interviewing stakeholders – students, CAS coordinators and advisors, teachers, and administrators – about their respective CAS programmes. While students had mostly positive comments

regarding CAS activities, the general attitude towards reflection was quite negative. When asked about the purpose of reflection, multiple students said that it was only to verify that they had actually undertaken the activities – “To [please] our advisor ... he wants us to prove that we did those activities.” It was often described as a rote and meaningless exercise:

“Sometimes we are writing things that we do not know. When I’m filling-out reflection forms, I’m really not me – I’m someone else ... I didn’t give them my experience: I gave them what they wanted me to experience in their imagination.” (student at an IBDP school in Turkey)

For many students like the one above, reflection is not seen as a meaningful learning tool. Rather, it is a bureaucratic hurdle they must surmount in order to complete their CAS requirements. This is directly counter to the goals of CAS – reflection should be a means of realizing growth through experiences. The question is, then, how can reflection be implemented so as to make it a meaningful and effective aspect of experiential learning – that is, authentic? We found some answers both in our research and in recommendations from other researchers.

The timing of reflection

In our experience of working with CAS students, it is often the case that they will put-off doing reflections until after finishing an activity. Boud et al. (1985) and Eyler et al. (2002) recommend, however, that reflection can be more effective if it is done *before, during, and after* experiential learning. How can someone reflect before the fact? In “preflection”, students can consider their assumptions, expectations, intentions, goals, strengths, and weaknesses. A supervisor or advisor may ask, “What do you already think you know about this topic? What do you think is going to happen? What do you plan on doing about it?” The preflection is important as a framework for future reflections: students can look back on their preflections to see how their thinking has (or has not) changed, and how they have grown and learned.

Reflecting *during* an experience gives students the opportunity to re-evaluate their initial assumptions, and critically examine strategies. A student tutoring English, for example, reflects that one teaching strategy was not particularly effective, so she decides to try another strategy. At this stage, a supervisor can prompt reflection by asking questions such as, “How have your ideas and feelings changed? What has and has not worked well? How can you challenge yourself more? What would you do differently?”

Lastly, of course, there should be some kind of summative



The founding father of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, is featured in every school room of the country where the research on reflection was conducted.

Our research found that effective CAS programmes involved regular, meaningful feedback from advisors.

reflection *after* an experience in which the student identifies areas of growth and difficulty, and celebrates accomplishments. Ideally, this should occur with reference to a student's previous reflections: observing how assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses have changed – and to what extent goals have been achieved.

In our study, the CAS coordinators and teachers at the six IBDP schools in Turkey that we explored were all versed in the importance of reflecting at different points in time. However, in some cases, on-going reflection had become a burden for many students. We found that students were more likely to reflect authentically if the reflection occurred not as scheduled, but after significant or “teachable” experiences. Reflecting after every volleyball practice, for example, is not effective. But reflecting after a significant win or loss can help students develop intra-personal insights, as well as strategies about how to be successful in future matches.

A variety of methods and social contexts

Journaling was, by far, the most common means of reflection at the schools in our study. Students at some schools were filling-out seemingly endless “reflection forms,” day after day. But why should writing be the only way that students reflect? Teenagers are, by nature, vocal creatures. Spoken reflection can be effective and timely, allowing for immediate feedback from advisors. The CAS Guide (2015), backed-up by research (Eyler 1996; Reed and Koliba 1995), makes clear that students should utilize a variety of formats including creative writing, discussions, presentations, video blogs, and even art. These techniques allow for the possibility of more meaningful reflection because a student can choose the method and develop it in such a way as to bring more depth to the reflection process. Furthermore, reflection by no means has to be an isolated enterprise. Students can reflect through discussions with an advisor, create presentations for the community, or de-brief together after an event.

In our research, we found that one-on-one discussions with an advisor, or some form of group discussion, were very effective methods of reflection. In those social contexts, advisors are able to give students instant – verbal – feedback, posing questions and helping students achieve insights. Written reflection is limited because the feedback cycle can take days or weeks – or not happen at all. Reflecting through discussion allows feedback to be instantaneous and discursive, and thus more useful to the student.

Advisor feedback

It goes without saying that feedback is essential to learning in any domain, and it is equally true for reflection. One researcher, McEachern (2006), goes so far as to suggest

that “reflection is not effective without instructor feedback” (p. 314). Especially in the first months of CAS, students need guidance to help them understand what it means to authentically reflect on experiences. Furthermore, reflection should be a discursive process in which advisors provide a framework to help students analyse experiences and achieve growth. Giving continual written feedback to CAS students is a monumental task, but oral feedback can be equally effective – perhaps more so because of the extemporaneous back-and-forth exchange for which discussion allows.

Our research found that effective CAS programmes involved regular, meaningful feedback from advisors. CAS is a heterodox curricular programme that few students have encountered before. They need, therefore, considerable support and feedback, especially in the beginning months of the programme. Furthermore, regular feedback helps students understand the connection between experience and learning.

Conclusion

Reflection does not have to be an onerous task – for students or advisors. Our research, along with the research of many others, supports the use of a variety of methods and social contexts – before, during, and after activities – and with meaningful feedback from advisors. Through these methods, reflection can be seen less as a burden for students, and both easier and more effective in helping students achieve growth.

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English for academic achievement

Sandra Comas on the importance of language skills

Oftentimes we provide great English instruction at our international schools, believing that communication among students and teachers is the highest priority. Is it true that a student who converses easily and well in acquired English is the student who is also best poised for advanced academic learning? It would seem so. Yet our experience shows that the ability to read and write, listen and speak, with the vocabulary and thinking of a specific area of study, is the ability that best prepares students for success at university. A student can be

outstanding in mathematics and face language barriers that hinder her progress. Another student could be exceptional in certain types of scientific reasoning, but not have developed the specific knowledge of English that allows him to continue to develop his scientific capabilities.

International schools often focus on one language for teaching and learning. Even at the highest levels of academic study there can be “interferences” between languages that can impede learning of content. Schools face the challenge



of facilitating language acquisition for study of complex subjects. The type of English instruction that will guide non-native students to their best education focuses on English for academic purposes. At earlier stages of language learning, it is important to develop the essential skills of communication with others. Such instruction is invaluable for helping students to organize their knowledge of putting sentences together in another language, find adequate words, and express ideas. Students can practice the conversations of daily life and develop a social, cultural, and intellectual understanding that is a significant resource.

Some universities have discovered, however, that as they become more international, with more English language learners who are non-native, their approaches to language acquisition need to be more focused on academic skills. How can one reason in chemistry with the tools of daily conversation? Are there language elements in the presentation of a mathematical problem set? Do students of literature also need a specific vocabulary and certain phrases in order to refer to concepts?

Many schools offer robust instruction in English communication. It is at least as important, I believe, to actively prepare students for engaging in English for academic purposes. This is a school-wide effort that focuses on professional development for teachers to help them create exercises, introduce vocabularies of words and ideas for each area of study, to speak clearly, assess frequently and in a variety of ways, and to give extra opportunities for writing. A student who can write in the language of higher-level English can more readily speak it and understand this English when heard or read. Yale University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Virginia are all centers of higher learning in the U.S. that have been developing special instruction

in English for academic purposes. International schools at the high school level can do the same, but differently, with students acquiring the language at a younger age and stage of intellectual development.

At EF Academy we have developed specialized vocabulary lists that are available online. Students in any course can click on a word or concept and find its definition, discovering and practicing the English that is specifically relevant to satisfactory understanding of more abstract or more advanced thinking. Our teachers and department heads have also explored the fundamentals of English, its patterns in grammar and usage, its nuances and multiple meanings in words, in order to offer this learning in courses created specifically for second-language learners. These courses are offered in all four years of our high school and, as part of these courses, students also study for the verbal sections of college entrance exams. These exams test how well a student is prepared to do higher-level work in English. Therefore, it is helpful to stay focused on the skills that universities require, and to incorporate this study into a broader plan.

Students communicate with each other, with teachers, and with other members of their communities. They also communicate within areas of study, with others from around the world and across time. At our school, with many cultures and countries represented, it is this English study, both broad and specific, that allows students to develop the language skills that not only open doors but also guide them to a rich wonderland of academic exchange.

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Teaching history across the continents

Overseas history teachers must understand how important they are, says Mark Sunman

Many articles, including some in this magazine, have been devoted to the teaching of English in a second language context. Less attention, however, has been given to the teaching of history by overseas staff, despite the massive growth of this phenomenon. Our school (San Silvestre, a well-established girls' school in Lima, Peru) has been entering students for Cambridge history examinations (formerly 'O' level and now IGCSE) since the 1940s, and for IB Diploma history since the 1990s. As a recent arrival to Peru from the

UK in 1993, I can still remember my shock as I launched into a lesson on the British Agricultural Revolution of the eighteenth century (Turnip Townshend inter alia) at the end of a Lima summer, as humming birds hovered outside the window. Was the sense of anomie I was experiencing shared by my students, and was I in fact imposing an alien cultural history on bewildered recipients, just as French teachers in Saharan Africa used to teach African boys that their ancestors had blonde hair and blue eyes? There are, in fact, many



benefits of teaching history in English to those who are second language English speakers, which can be enhanced by enlightened professionals.

Some historians such as Elton argue that history should be taught for its own sake, its own intrinsic value. Purists may even maintain that historical process is more important than content. It is preferable, it is argued, for students to develop an understanding of change and continuity, cause and consequence, than that they learn a particular given set of facts. Such a view ignores a key point. A well-chosen curriculum introduces children to perspectives from different times and places, thereby enriching their understanding of their own self and country. Overseas history teachers would be wise to devise less of a Eurocentric syllabus even if they have to dispense with traditional texts, and have to produce their own material. If history teachers wish to stick to “my historical period”, then overseas teaching is not for them. Many of our pupils go on to study or live in the USA, and so they learn about the American Revolution, the American Civil War and twentieth century America. Surely these students are more likely to take an interest in their studies than are those who follow a more traditional course on Imperial and Soviet Russia or Nazi Germany, topics with which many teachers are familiar. History teachers moving overseas thus need to be flexible to local needs. As we move further into the Asian century, Chinese history must surely receive more attention than it has until now. The assertion of Tennyson’s young Victorian that “Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay” will no longer do, as the IB Diploma Programme recognises. Of course an international curriculum can be, and is, delivered by local teachers, but overseas history teachers can offer different world views which can engender international mindedness.

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As a young university student in England during the 1980s, I was fascinated by the teaching of an American lecturer. He enthralled students with his experiences as a boy in 1930s America. I particularly remember his accounts of the misery and shame left by the Depression. He remembered how a teacher, perhaps insensitively, asked his class of teenagers how many of their parents were receiving New Deal relief. Half the class put up their hands, with many simply bursting

into tears. That simple anecdote brought home to me the true scale of the Depression more than all my reading of facts and figures. In a subsequent class the same lecturer enthralled us with accounts of his interrogation, whilst a CIA officer, of Japanese prisoners of war, and how these interrogations revealed a mentality gap wider than the Pacific Ocean separating the American and Asian continents. His often amusing reminiscences of his experiences as an officer in post-war Germany clearly described the poverty of a Europe destroyed by war – especially cold and miserable to American eyes. I believe that my current history colleagues also have great stories to tell. As we teach the Cold War, it must surely come alive to the class as the teacher relates that he once guarded Rudolf Hess in Spandau prison. Another teacher in the department comes from Saltaire, a Yorkshire wool town in the Victorian era, where the factory owner was famous for his Christian kindness and consideration extended to his workers. The history may seem rather dull until the teacher explains how this nineteenth century Yorkshire factory used Alpaca wool, and how this Peruvian connection helps to explain why her family moved to Lima. This simple personal story of Anglo-Peruvian links does more than any text to explain the processes of nineteenth century globalization.

Overseas history teachers need to understand their vital importance as English teachers. Many might come from backgrounds which place emphasis on historical skills, especially when the accuracy of English grammar and spelling is of secondary importance in history examinations. Much more time should be spent, I believe, on explaining the meaning of key words and phrases. Take a word like expansion (the same word in Spanish, expect for an accent). Unless all in the class are clear of the meaning, pupils are unlikely to make the most of a unit on the expansion of the Roman Empire. Depending on the linguistic development of particular classes and schools, teachers should be aware that some lower secondary pupils will know the word expansion in both English and their first language, while others will know it only in their first language and some will not know the word in either.

Steven Pinker explains why it is difficult to interpret a series of sounds – what we all know as talk. When confronted with an unfamiliar language, we hear little more than gibberish. Even if pupils have been learning English for some time, they are likely to understand much more of what they read than what they hear. Long droning monologues or videos can leave even a willing and able pupil bemused. Intelligent pauses, careful questioning, and visual aids such as key words and diagrams can scaffold the listening skills of young English learners. Video material with sub-titles can be invaluable when speakers have accents that might be difficult to follow.

In conclusion, an overseas history teacher who is sensitive to the needs of his or her students can do much to foster learning. An enthusiastic teacher can make students more internationally aware and widen the class’s world vision whilst at the same time consolidating their ability to communicate in English.

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Can you boost attainment by celebrating success?

Yes you can, says Paul Young

For many of us working in international schools, finding effective ways to boost the attainment of a transient student population can be par for the course. At Doha College, we endeavour to ensure that every one of our students reaches their full potential. But not knowing if they'll be with us for six months, or the full duration of their studies – or anything in between – certainly adds an additional edge. Foremost in our minds is the question of how we can provide all our students with the support they need to make good progress – regardless of how long they are with us.

The school welcomes 1800 children, between the ages of 3 and 18, from 90 different nationalities. Our aim is to ensure learning targets are put in place, based on each individual's starting point, that are aspirational enough to

challenge and inspire. After all, standards here are high. Many of our students are accepted at top universities around the world including Oxford, Cambridge, Yale and Harvard.

So how do we make sure every student's time with us really counts? We've found a careful calibration of monitoring progress and attainment from day one, plus looking at different ways of encouraging each child to give their best, helps to ensure that our students achieve all they are capable of. Our six steps to success are as follows:

1. Benchmarking

As is the case in many international schools, a child can start at any point of the school year, in any age group, from any educational background – so the first stage is to benchmark

the children when they join us. We've found that using a cognitive ability test – one that isn't tied to any particular curriculum – is a very useful starting point.

2. Target setting

With a clear point of reference established, it's time to set appropriate targets for our students to aim for, using a mix of assessment results and teachers' professional judgement. Our Heads of Department will adjust these targets as and when they see fit, to ensure they strike the right balance between challenge and aspiration.

3. Monitoring progress

Details of all our students' achievement are recorded and stored electronically in our management information system (we use SIMS), and a simple traffic light system of red, yellow and green bandings makes it easy for teachers and senior leaders to see who is working at what level and spot when we need to step in. The data help us to see quickly if, for instance, Emily is falling behind in English or Sumiko might benefit from some extension work in maths, so we can put the right support into action and track its impact. Since many of our students are high achieving, we've added another colour – 'Doha College Blue' – to our traffic light system for those who are on track to exceed their targets by the end of the school year.

4. Raising expectations

When it comes to monitoring students' grades, we not only keep an eye on A* to C grades, but track A* to A, and A* to B grades too. This has two advantages. Firstly, it encourages a little bit of friendly competition between departments, which can have quite a positive impact on achievement. Secondly, as part of Doha College's mentoring programme our staff meet once a week with any student who is identified as not on track to achieve 5 A* to B grades. These meetings give students and staff the chance to discuss any issues, and provide the opportunity to identify areas for revision. This is often enough to encourage the student to aim high as they work towards achieving their full potential.

5. Rewarding every effort

Along with the monitoring of current attainment, at Doha College we are keen to encourage effort. This approach can be a great motivator for students. Our teachers award effort grades in each subject; 3 is excellent, 2 is very good and 1 is good. An average score is then worked out from each student's cumulative total, which is tracked by our Heads of Year to see if effort has increased – or not. Effort scores also trigger a number of House points, which contribute to the overall House competition.

6. Celebrating success

Our experience is that celebrating success encourages success, and students respond really well to the recognition they receive. Each year, our highest achieving students are invited to participate in a prestigious event, where they personally receive a paper report and a hand-written letter of congratulations from the Principal. We usually produce electronic reports, but this is an occasion where students truly value the paper-based approach.

We know our focus on encouraging and celebrating success resonates with our students. When we hold our Celebration Evening after examinations, they often tell us it's one of the things they most value during their time at Doha College. We've even had students travel back from other parts of the world just to pick up their certificates.

Challenge, aspiration and effort

In my view, there are no shortcuts to success. We have found that adopting a blended focus on challenge, aspiration and effort means that every child progresses during their time at the school. Ultimately, rewarding effort is a key part of our strategy for encouraging high attainment amongst our students and it works as an educational strategy. While the ability of students at Doha College has been consistent since 2008, results are improving all the time – success, by anyone's standards.

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Teaching Brazilian percussion

Ollie Tunmer gives curriculum some rhythm

As the Director of *Beat Goes On* I have the privilege of delivering STOMP-style Body Percussion and Brazilian Percussion workshops in schools and CPD events throughout the UK and abroad. I'm very lucky that what I do is naturally loud, exciting and highly accessible, meaning that the sense of accomplishment and fun can be achieved fairly quickly!

Maintaining this, however, requires some clear methodology. I find that, as a musician, if I have a verbal phrase that sounds like the rhythm I'm trying to learn, the rhythm becomes more memorable. If a workshop facilitator includes the keywords of a project, then participants will end up repeating the keywords using the rhythm that they're learning. For example, when teaching an 'agogo' bell rhythm from the Brazilian style 'maracatu', I use the following:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|--------|---|------|---|----|-----|---|----|-----|---|----|---|
| 1 | e | & | a | 2 | e | & | a | 3 | e | & | a | 4 | e | & | a |
| L | | H | | L | | H | | L | H | | H | L | | H | |
| Let | | the | | groove | | flow | | on | the | | a- | go- | | go | |

L = low bell

H = high bell

Along with many of my colleagues, I find this indispensable, both as a teaching / learning aid and as a compositional tool. Last year I delivered a 4 week samba project with Caitlin Sherring and pupils at Woodcroft Primary School in North London, during which pupils learned traditional rhythms and the names of 7 instruments, and composed their own samba 'breaks' using this approach – quite an achievement!

Ensemble music-making frequently provides a platform for the development of other, non-music-specific, skills. The 'mestre' (leader) of a samba band has to develop communication and leadership skills. Training young people as mestres can allow them to take ownership of their learning. A 'surdo' (bass drum) player may be required to play a pulse-based rhythm which, although simple, is of huge



importance to the overall sound of the band, providing a sense of responsibility for the student involved.

One element that often provokes interest (and, at times, trepidation!) is the linking of music with other curriculum areas. As the awareness of the clear links between musical involvement and academic achievement increases, creative approaches for all subjects are still being explored, despite the merciless obsession with test results from certain strands of society. It takes a bold, courageous (and well supported) school or teacher to break away from 'normal' teaching styles but the results can be life changing.



Curriculum, learning and teaching

We've proudly been working with literacy guru Pie Corbett of Talk4Writing fame (www.talk4writing.co.uk), taking his ingenious storytelling and poetry methods down a body percussion route – high energy, creative fun for all involved, with astounding results! Pie also had these kind words regarding our collaboration:

'Working with Ollie is an extraordinary experience and I would recommend him to any school. We have used body percussion to let the rhythms and meanings of poems and stories fly. Exploring story/poetry through the arts deepens imaginative engagement and makes language memorable.'

Beat Goes On also use the rhythms of topic keywords (as noted above) as a tool for composition and the holistic learning of, for example, Brazilian culture. This also develops students' literacy skills in a fun, musical and memorable way.

Composer, percussionist and educator Keith Terry of US-based Crosspulse (www.crosspulse.com) has developed a brilliant use of body percussion to teach numeracy, which

Beat Goes On have been incorporating into their own work. These kinaesthetic approaches completely revolutionise a typical maths lesson and they really work!

The Rio Olympics and Paralympics inspired many examples of topic-based teaching covering the sport, dance, history, food, fashion, religion, language, geography, ecology and of course music of Brazil. *Beat Goes On* had great fun working with pupils and teachers to help make learning come alive!

Feedback from all of these approaches is unanimously positive – they cover the full range of learning styles allowing all children and students to access material in new, creative ways. The use of body percussion is very budget-friendly as the participants are the instruments!

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Serving the new majority

E T Ranger looks at the implications of a changing international school landscape

Three thoughts coincide to bring this particular idea to mind. The first is the observation that 80% of children in international schools these days are from host countries – the accepted wisdom, based on authoritative data from ISC Research. These families are the new majority. The second item is a piece of as yet unpublished research emanating from the developing world. The third is a survey for the BBC published earlier this year by GlobeScan, showing the proportion of people in various countries who identify as ‘global citizens’ rather than as nationals.

The ‘global citizen’ survey is very relevant to us. ‘International-mindedness’ is a related concept which we talk about a lot in international schools these days. Many accreditation schemes require schools to have a policy on international-mindedness, and in some cases to choose a local definition. This is very welcome because it recognises how varied our missions are. In a classic look at the topic, Cambridge and Thompson (2003) suggested the terms ‘internationalist’ for a school mission aiming to produce people who would do more for the world, and ‘globalist’ where the mission was to produce people who would get more out of the world. Among the 18 nations questioned by GlobeScan about ‘global citizenship’, Russia comes last, with 24% claiming global citizenship, just below Germany (30%). But the table is topped by Nigeria (73%) and China (71%). What does all this mean? These are the background feelings in the countries whose young citizens come to us in international schools. What understandings of such a phrase do they bring from outside our specialised world?

Mission statements reflect the way in which schools see local and global culture. Needless to say, we who work in the schools tend to have benevolent ‘internationalist’ aspirations, respecting other cultures but wishing to contribute to the world, and many of our graduates do us proud. But a recent piece of research from Nigeria confirms that for the new majority – the host country children in developing countries who attend international schools – international-mindedness may have a very different meaning than it does for the schools. High school students were asked 11 prompting questions about their attitudes to their own culture and to the global world that they were qualifying to join; in reply most of them clearly rejected their own community and proclaimed their ambitions to move into the prosperous modern global world.

Is this a surprise? No, of course not. It makes complete sense for ambitious host country families who want prosperity and security for their children. It echoes the policies of colonial powers to cultivate elites of enlightened locals who would

bring European ways to their less developed nations – this is exactly what we should expect. But what are the children getting from us? As they eagerly take on Western career ambitions and tastes, do they also absorb our aspirations for a sustainable and fairer world?

**Are we facing
up to the evident
gap between the
idealism of schools
and the pragmatism
of communities?**

We are used to reading cutting-edge conceptual thinking that emanates from United World Colleges and other pioneers of international education practice, but I suggest that we need to hear more from the more typical schools. If the ideals of the clientele are so different in these ‘new majority’ schools, does international education talk in terms that are useful to them? Do schools go through the motions of internationalism, vowing respect for the host country as well as for all others, designing sensitive service activities that respect local values, honouring traditions on all sides, when all the time they know that most children and parents see it so differently? Should we not be more practical, and study the aspirations of the parents, which may well vary from region to region around the world? Are we facing up to the evident gap between the idealism of schools and the pragmatism of communities?

I’m sure that in fact many schools are dealing with this issue, on a daily basis. It would be fascinating, and hugely helpful for everyone, if those experiences could be shared. Schools may feel that when, inevitably, they have to make compromises these would be seen as failures, and better glossed over. On the contrary, schools are working in the real world, and they are the pioneers of a new and numerically dominant field. They are discovering new ways to negotiate what they believe to be good with actual families in actual communities. Let’s hear more from the new majority.



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Alliance for International Education

World Conference: Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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Internationalising Schools

Sharing good practice and addressing challenges

AIE conferences, held in alternate years, aim to bring together those involved in the promotion of intercultural understanding and international education, including researchers and practitioners at every level of education throughout the world. The 2017 conference programme will include keynote presentations by distinguished speakers, and a series of related strand sessions based on small group presentations and discussion around a range of strand topics. There will also be opportunity for those with common interests in the differing age-related phases of education to get together to share experiences, as well as a host of other informal opportunities for the exchange of views and experience around the overall conference theme of Internationalising Schools. All participants will be members of one of the strand groups, and those who wish to make a presentation within one of the groups should submit a proposal via the AIE website, as outlined below.

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To submit a proposal, please upload to the conference website an abstract of the proposed presentation (not exceeding 300 words), together with the name(s) and full contact details (telephone number and e-mail) of conference presenter(s). All proposals will be peer reviewed.

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

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- **Internationalisation: definitions and meanings**
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The Northwest Passage – discovery, controversy and environmental issues

Richard Harwood delves deep into the Arctic Ocean and explores some maritime mysteries

HMS Terror, a long-lost ship that vanished while searching for the Northwest Passage and thus sparked one of the world's great maritime mysteries, has been found almost 170 years later. The Arctic Research Foundation announced in September 2016 that the vessel, the second ship in the British explorer Sir John Franklin's ill-fated polar expedition, had been found on the sea bed off King William Island in the Canadian Arctic. The foundation spokesman Adrian Schimnowski has commented on the amazing state of preservation of the vessel: "If you could lift this boat out of the water and pump the water out, it would probably float", he said, noting that the ship was found lying in almost pristine condition in about 80 feet of water, with most windowpanes still intact.

The discovery came with information from an Inuit ranger and completes an intriguing and staggering story of exploration, hardship, controversy and scientific endeavour stretching over almost 200 years. It follows on from the similar discovery two years earlier (September 2014), by a heavily-funded Parks Canada underwater archaeology search project, of HMS Terror's sister ship HMS Erebus (Franklin's flagship). Details of the search and images from the wreck can be found at the Parks Canada website: www.pc.gc.ca/eng/culture/franklin/index.aspx

HMS Terror and HMS Erebus, together with a total of 129 men, disappeared in the late 1840s while under the command of Sir John Franklin. The Franklin Expedition set sail



Drawn by E. M. Wimperis.

H.M.S. "TERROR" IN THE ICE OF FROZEN STRAIT, APRIL, 1837.

[Engraved by J. and G. P. Nicholls.]



from England on 19 May 1845, planning to search for – and sail through – the Northwest Passage, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, through the islands of the Arctic Archipelago. But the voyage was to end in tragedy. The vessels became stuck fast as the icy seas froze around them. With supplies running low, their crews abandoned ship in April 1848. Thought to have been already weakened by badly preserved tinned food, the men died one by one, on an ill-fated attempt to walk south to safety, across the vast and unforgiving Arctic wastelands. Search parties were sent out year after year, but found only the skeletons of some of the sailors, and diaries explaining what had happened to them.

The Arctic traveller and Hudson's Bay Company doctor, John Rae, was a significant figure in efforts to establish just what had happened to the Franklin expedition. Based on his own exploration and evidence from Inuit groups that he met, Rae returned to England with evidence as to what had happened and the hardships endured by the men involved. The nature of his evidence, however, with the suggestion that at the very end one group had resorted to cannibalism, meant that Rae was denied the recognition he deserved. On his return to London he was subjected to a campaign of denial and vilification led by two of the most powerful people in Victorian England: Franklin's widow, Lady Jane Franklin, and Charles Dickens, the most influential writer of the time. The stature of John Rae has more recently been reinstated in the highly readable biography 'Fatal Passage: the untold story of John Rae, the Arctic adventurer who discovered the fate of Franklin' by Ken McGoogan.

In 1906, the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen and his crew were the first to cross the Northwest Passage entirely by sea. Although that crossing was an important 'first', it had little economic significance as the journey took three years to complete, and used waters that were too shallow for commercial shipping. The first single-season trip through the passage was by Henry Larsen and crew in 1944, in the St Roch, an 'ice-fortified' schooner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Again, the route taken was not deep enough for commercial shipping.

Maps showing the routes of various key attempts at completing the Northwest Passage can be found via www.athropolis.com/map9.htm, while a comprehensive depiction and analysis of human exploration of the Arctic can be found in the recent 'Lines in the Ice; Exploring the Roof of the World' by Philip Hatfield.

The impact of global warming and the consequent

retreat of the Arctic ice pack has resulted in increased interest in exploiting the Northwest Passage. The largest ship to navigate the Passage to date is the cruise liner Crystal Serenity. In August 2016 this ship sailed from Vancouver to New York with 1,500 passengers and crew, taking 28 days. The prospect of the increased accessibility of the legendary Northwest Passage in the Arctic has led to the proposal to build a new port on the shores of the Bathurst Inlet within the Arctic Circle. This port would serve as the export route for the minerals mined in some of the largest mines in the world located in the region – the Ekati diamond mine, for instance. The impact of the exploitation of the mineral resources of this region on both the lives of the local peoples and the environment requires careful assessment.

Finding the Erebus and the Terror was not an explicitly political venture. It was an exceptional achievement, exploiting modern science and technology, by modern-day explorers and researchers intent on answering some of the remaining questions left from the period of 19th century exploration. However, it was also a triumph of the then Canadian government's Arctic strategy, which sought to assert Canada's sovereignty at a time when other nations were seeking to take advantage of the political, trade and mineral opportunities of a changing Arctic.

The issues facing the Arctic region in balancing the interests of nations, peoples and the environment will be an interesting test-bed for those who will face the Antarctic when the treaty protecting that region expires in the relatively near future. The history and controversies that surround the search for, and now exploitation of, the Northwest Passage offer great educational scope for the discussion of many of the key issues that face us in the immediate future.

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Maintaining a balance between school and high-performance sport

Anne Louise Williams describes some exciting news for young athletes

Saloni Mehta knows what it takes to win, having been selected to represent Hong Kong on the junior national badminton team. She is also acutely aware of the choices she has already had to make to maintain her school work as a Year 10 student at King George V (KGV) School in Hong Kong while sustaining a demanding training and competition schedule.

With all great athletes, a raft of support is required to assist them along their journey including parents, coaches, sports science staff and – in Mehta's case – her teachers, who are playing an increasingly important role. Mehta comments: "KGV School supports me tremendously and recently enrolled me in the 'High-Performance Athlete' programme where I was able to reduce certain subjects which allowed me time to focus on important subjects, catch up on schoolwork and also have a balance in both academics and badminton. I am extremely grateful for such a supportive school!" The subject selection Mehta mentions was arrived at after careful long-term planning undertaken with the school staff, in order to ensure that her academic and sporting goals could best be met. The school set up meetings with the career guidance team to identify what goals she would like to strive for after school, and then offer advice around what subjects were key for her future.

Scott Hooper, Teacher of PE and Head of Sport at King George V School, says "KGV is passionate about supporting our high-performance athletes because we understand the demands they face in balancing their academic studies, sporting commitments and personal lives. We want our high performing student-athletes to feel supported throughout their time at KGV by providing a partnership between the school and the athlete. We believe this will have a positive impact on the athlete and help them to achieve a better life balance and be better prepared to make important life decisions."

When asked about what KGV is doing to support its high performing athletes Hooper commented: "KGV is promoting a culture of excellence in school sport to match that already in place for students who are recognised for their academic achievements. KGV puts its high performing athletes at the centre by giving each student a High-Performance Athlete Programme tutor. The tutor supports the athlete's individual

needs and they work together on specific academic and sporting targets. KGV has already had a number of students who have received academic support in the form of a flexible academic timetable to support their sporting commitments. This involves communication with the athlete's teachers to ensure they are aware of the additional support required around assessment deadlines and flexibility on attendance."

When asked about the challenges of balancing school and sport, Mehta mentions having had to miss some classes due to training and competitions and subsequently working hard to keep up to date with school work. She also found that she pushed herself too far in the past, and became ill from over-exertion and lack of sleep. This can now be better managed through the High-Performance Athlete programme.

Throughout 2015 KGV School, along with other affiliated English School Foundation (ESF) schools in Hong Kong, underwent an accreditation process to become recognised as Athlete Friendly Education Centres (AFEC). Most known for its significant work across the international sporting community in developing and delivering education pathways and programmes, the World Academy of Sport (WAoS) which accredits schools such as KGV, developed the criteria for AFEC overseen by its International Advisory Board which consists of prominent individuals from the International Paralympic Committee, International Olympic Committee, International Sport Federations and the International Baccalaureate (IB). The AFEC accreditation process provides schools with international recognition for meeting the unique needs of its high performing student athletes so they can maintain a balance between their academic, sport and personal lives in order to make informed, positive life choices. As an IB World School, KGV is also able to participate in a pilot project with the IB whereby high performing students such as Saloni Mehta can better balance their sporting and academic commitments by opting to complete the IB Diploma Programme over an extended period, usually up to three years.

By becoming an accredited AFEC, KGV School has raised the sporting agenda to senior levels of the school. In commenting on what it means for KGV to be AFEC accredited, Hooper states that "KGV is delighted to have been accredited as an AFEC and



Saloni Mehta in action

believes that it is incredibly important for the school which values sport so highly. It is vital that we offer our students who are high performing athletes access to the highest standard of education that is sensitive to their needs. In the past, students have not had the option to compete in sport at a high level because their academic studies have put too much pressure on them and they have had to sacrifice either sport or their studies. However, we are now really excited to be able to proactively promote the importance of athletes maintaining their education while still competing at the high level they are capable of. We believe this will have a positive impact on our younger students in the coming years."

Student athletes are also being positively influenced in other schools globally, including:

- Jordan: Amman Baccalaureate School
- UK: Ellesmere College, Plymouth College, and Anglo European School
- Thailand: Phuket International Academy and British International School
- Spain: SEK Ciudalcampo and SEK El Castillo
- Denmark: Ikast-Brande Gymnasium
- Australia: Trinity Grammar School
- Singapore: Singapore Sports School
- Hong Kong: all ESF high schools including KGV School, Island School, Sha Tin College, Renaissance College, South Island School, West Island School and Discovery College

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A new professional learning landscape for English language teaching

Marcelle Houterman reports on technological advances in collaborative learning

At the International School of Phnom Penh (ISPP), professional development is regarded as something more than a workshop or a conference. Those who engage in day-to-day professional dialogues are constantly learning and upskilling themselves. ISPP's school priority for the 2015-2017 school years with regard to professional growth and learning is focused on supporting English language learners (all language learners) across the school. During this school year (2016-2017), all faculty will engage with SPELTAC (Social Platform for English Language Teaching Across the Curriculum), which was developed by Marcelle Houterman, primary EAL teacher at ISPP.

A long-term shift in thinking needs ongoing professional development

With almost twenty years of experience as EAL coordinator and teacher across all school divisions in different international school settings, Marcelle wanted to design a differentiated, self-directed programme that would sustain good teaching practice for English language learners. Enthused by the possibilities of technology and connected learning after taking part in COETAIL (Certificate Of Educational Technology and Information Literacy), and inspired by the work of Sylvia Rosenthal Tolisano, Eithne Gallagher, Pauline Gibbons and many others, she designed a learning management system

It will be exciting to see what new understandings, insights and initiatives will emerge about international school students, bilingualism and English language learning. While much has been written about supporting English language learners, the linguistic needs of international school students are unique and there is much learning to be done.

for English language teaching with a focus on international mindedness, based on the premise that most students in international schools are learning on a bilingual continuum. She felt that what was needed was a long-term shift in thinking about how language should be integrated and valued in international education; how it is central to learning and international mindedness. Marcelle wanted to design a model of professional development that would be an ongoing part of educators' learning, which could constantly be explored, revisited and strengthened.

Learning is defined by our times (Siemens, 2004). But learning will always be accelerated by feedback, connectivity and reflection. In international English-medium schools, professional learning about teaching bilingual learners through an internationally minded approach will remain constants. The dialogue about how to support the linguistic needs of students who are learning in a language other than their mother tongue must be continued.

The power of blogging and social media

At the time of writing this article, faculty at ISPP have nearly completed the SPELTAC orientation course, introducing them to connected learning and blogging. The range of teacher blog posts is diverse. Teachers have started blogging about the importance of inviting home languages into the classroom, reflected on the value of connected learning, international mindedness, the importance of inquiry learning for language acquisition, creating a larger section in the library for home languages, questioning how we are addressing the 'now' literacies in the school, where coding comes into being literate, and much more. Practices have been shared on Twitter and teachers have used each other's ideas.

World-wide, teachers report that online networking, social media and blogging have created an unprecedented growth in their learning. Learning through blogging provides teachers with a forum to try out strategies, to improve them, and to reflect on how they support language and literacy learning, but also that international educators bring a wealth of knowledge and skills in the area of supporting bilingual

learners that can be shared locally and globally. It will be exciting to see what new understandings, insights and initiatives will emerge about international school students, bilingualism and English language learning. While much has been written about supporting English language learners, the linguistic needs of international school students are unique and there is much learning to be done.

SPELTAC has the potential to facilitate collaborative learning, model and enthuse teachers to implement 21st century literacy practices, make visible what is needed in a school, celebrate growth and achievement, and create institutional memory: so far, it has proven to be a catalyst for making connections off line too. The virtual learning environment mimics the inquiry classroom; it brings to the surface what colleagues are thinking and learning about, and it is a place where teachers can inspire each other and build on each other's understanding. As a result, conversations are ignited in the corridor.

Expected to be completed in May 2017, the real success of SPELTAC will become clear when baseline data has been collected to enable the benchmarking of growth, which will be done through growth continua and surveys. Results will be published on the website. Is everyone on board? Blogging is not everyone's comfort zone – but as a colleague put it in one of those conversations sparked by a blog post or a Tweet in the corridor: "There is a lot for everybody to take in but with that comes a dialogue not so much about why we can't but why we should."

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What I wish my teacher knew about me...

Through the eyes of a student, Jane Barron investigates mobility's impact on learning – and what schools can offer in support

Dear Teacher,

Like most of the students in your classroom, I am a globally mobile kid. I have spent a significant portion of my developmental years living in at least one culture that is different from my passport culture. By the time I finish my international school education, I will have experienced more meaningful losses and separations than most people experience in a lifetime. Did you know that whilst living a globally mobile life comes with many benefits, it can also impact my learning? Please let me tell you about it and what you can do to support me, so that mobility does not inhibit my learning but enhance it.

Moving is hard. I'm not the only one who thinks this. I've heard grown-ups say that moving is as stressful as death and divorce, and the hardest of all moves is repatriating. I'm not looking forward to that one! Researchers have recently confirmed my thoughts too: here are some examples.

A 2016 Danish study led by Dr Robert T Webb found that, regardless of socioeconomic background, links between childhood residential mobility and negative outcomes in later life were widespread, particularly if frequent mobility occurred in early/mid adolescence. Between 2009 and 2015, in three studies, Professor John Hattie identified that the single factor most detrimental to learning was unmanaged mobility. In March 2016, Australia's NSW Department of Education concluded that students who change schools several times do worse in literacy and numeracy than their peers. This research has brought me comfort. I'm not crazy. All the weird things going on inside me are because I live a globally mobile life.

How does Mobility Impact My Learning?

"At any school with a high degree of turnover, transitions affect everyone – staff, parent or student – and regardless of whether a person is moving or being moved away from" say SPAN (Safe Passage Across Networks), leaders in supporting and connecting school-based programs that address international mobility. For me (and other globally mobile students), mobility impacts my academic, social, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing and causes me to ask questions about my identity. Let me explain.

Academically, there are gaps in my learning because each



school I go to has a different curriculum. It worries me. Will I ever catch up? Will my current knowledge be valued?

Socially, leaving old friends and making new friends is stressful, not to mention dissecting new social norms. Working through the grief and loss of saying goodbye, suppressing the feeling of disloyalty to my old friends whilst trying to make new friends are just some of the challenges I face.

Emotionally, we students arrive at a new school feeling sad and anxious. Sad, because we have lost the familiar old life. Anxious, because everything is new and unknown. Add in anger at our parents who made us move here and we have a jumble of emotions that makes focusing on schoolwork incredibly difficult. I can't even begin to discuss what happens when I stay and my friends leave.

Physically, all of this takes a toll on my body. Sometimes,

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the strain of mobility causes me to have stomach cramps and headaches, physical hyper-sensitivity and cultural fatigue that's exhausting. Memory loss is also common in mobile children who have so much going on in their world before, during and after The Moving Season. It's reassuring to know why I'm a bit forgetful right now.

Spiritually, I've been asking a lot of questions about a Higher Power and myself. Some days I feel strong in my faith and that gives me a peaceful feeling, but on other days I feel abandoned and get angry, which just adds to my stress.

With all this upheaval, I think it's quite natural to ask 'Who am I?'. When people ask that dreaded question, 'Where are you from?', I feel confused. My passport says one thing but my heart says another based on the cultures in which I have lived. I'm not sure who I am. I don't feel confident. It's not surprising that research shows that students like me can struggle in the classroom. Thankfully, there are things you can do to help me.

Steps for Supporting Me

I don't want these challenges to be traumatic for my fellow international school students or me. I want to overcome these challenges. Douglas Ota is a transition expert, psychologist and author who has spent the majority of his professional life working with globally mobile kids like me, and international schools who educate us, to help address the challenges associated with mobility. He suggests the following steps will help you to help me make these challenges levers for growth.

1. Actively manage your own grief

It's tiring working in an environment of regular goodbyes isn't it? It can seem easier to avoid goodbyes altogether. That's not true. I need to learn how to "maintain emotional health and (develop my) ability to tighten and loosen relationship bonds", says Ota. Please show me how to grieve the loss of my friends and teachers. I know you can only do this if you're comfortable in dealing with grief yourself. If I can get this right in my school years, it will help me in all my relationships ahead.

2. Develop and implement a comprehensive school-based transition program

This looks different at each school, but transition programs significantly reduce the negative impact of mobility upon students' learning. By supporting the Leaver, the Arriver and the Stayer, staff, parents and students can learn to think about transitions as a process, a life experience that can be purposefully managed ... and that is the key. Unmanaged mobility is what causes trauma; managed mobility can be full of positives. Please put a Transition Team together to look at what we already do, what we can do better and how we can learn from others so that, as Ota says, "parents can parent well, teachers can teach well and all in the ultimate service of achieving a goal common to all schools, namely that students can learn well".

3. Collaborate with other international schools

It's likely I will soon be moving on to a new school. "The emotional processes generated by transitions transcend school walls and ignore academic calendars". Douglas Ota

I feel confused. My passport says one thing but my heart says another based on the cultures in which I have lived.

is right. Please can you work together with the other international schools to help me transition from here to there, and others transition from there to here? We can then build on a solid foundation and make the most of this incredible opportunity to live a globally mobile life.

It is predicted that my current generation, Gen Z, will have seventeen different jobs and five different careers, and live in fifteen different homes. Change will be our constant companion. I need to learn to engage in the process of change to succeed in this 21st century. By providing focused attention and nurturing, you and our school can help all of our staff, families and students to engage effectively in every transition in life, whatever the context. Please, help our school to support everyone in our international school community so that mobility is not traumatic but is a springboard for growth, not an inhibitor to learning but an activator of learning. Thank you for caring and placing me in a position to succeed, both inside and outside the classroom.

Sincerely,
Your student

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Postmodern picture books as a reflective tool for making learning visible

Brett Healey and Susan Ledger get artistic

How can school communities engage with difference across the curriculum? What kind of learning culture needs to be fostered? Which opportunities, which challenges and which types of problems can we, as international school stakeholders, seek out in order to address these questions?

The 2016 Alliance for International Education (AIE) world conference in Bangkok, Thailand brought together educators worldwide under the theme of *Engaging with Difference: finding ways forward*. The theme was explored within various strands, one of which was that of curriculum, which ignited a number of contemporary issues and questions as outlined above. Curriculum strand participants were introduced to postmodern picture books as an inquiry approach to teaching difference, and the strand leader (Sue Ledger) decided to adopt the approach as a reflective tool to summarise the learning that took place over the duration of the conference. The postmodern picture book (PmPb) explores visual images,

text and interpretative literacy to create and make meaning on several levels including socio-cultural concerns, codes and symbols (Anstey, 2001; Goldstone, 2002)

The following themes were illustrated through the large PmPb display jointly constructed by the strand participants to represent their conference discussions. The PmPb revealed learned knowledges and intercultural understandings that spanned diverse contexts, were inclusive of stakeholders, respectful of dialogue not monologue, and responded to individual and collective differences. The following is an overview of the key themes arising from the Curriculum strand.

1. **Culture of Thinking.** Namrata Goel from Mumbai, India discussed the importance of creating *cultures of thinking* and how this serves as a building block that promotes curiosity and independence. In order to engage with difference, students need to be able to think differently, using strategies that not only address a particular content-driven problem,





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but can also be applied to any array of new challenges. Thinking routines encouraged across the curriculum allow students to talk about and model their thinking processes (Hattie, 2009; Ritchhart et al, 2011) so as to give voice to the silence.

2. Development of Self. Brett Healey from Perth, Western Australia concluded that once a thinking culture is established students learn to look *inward*, and explained the importance of children developing intercultural understanding as a global skill. He recognises, however, that challenges impact levels of schooling in different ways, including the egocentrism of early years children, so that first, we need to develop and inquire into their sense of *self*. Brett introduced the structure and function of postmodern picture book inquiry. He highlighted authors/illustrators such as Shaun Tan who create stories of intercultural significance that force the reader to engage their visual literacy skills in order to set children thinking, wondering, questioning and interpreting texts. Critical and creative thinking puts the reading in the hands and minds of the children as they leap from the pages to their ever-expanding world in order to create cognitive connections and philosophical links about their own place in the world. In developing their perception of self, the path towards understanding difference emerges.

3. Start local – ‘wicked problems’. Another way to address the issue of intercultural sensitivity is to have students start local. Students in the Middle Years wonder about the world outside their community, and schools want to send them into the world with a caring global perspective. But, as Oyndrilla Mukherjee from Mumbai suggested, before solving issues of migration, inequality and poverty on a global scale, students need to have first-hand experiences of solving local issues, which builds empathy for the people and communities with whom they work. Future world leaders will need to have this sense of empathy, not only sympathy. Serving locally exposes students to problems and challenges beyond linear cause-effect issues (eg: giving them more money reduces poverty), and allows students to experience ‘wicked problems’: those that are difficult to define, multi-causal in nature and socially complex. Only a committed and genuine equal-status relationship between teachers, students, parents and the community will instil the type of learning that develops agency in the learner as a contributor to the community.

4. Cultivation of Character. Self-reflecting learning has strong links with the general aims of the International Baccalaureate Diploma’s CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) component. Learning occurs through cognitive experience and genuine reflection allows for personal growth and insight. However, in this only non-formally-assessed component of the IB Diploma Programme, students need to engage in reflection in order to fulfil requirements, and it is questionable whether these reflections are always genuine. CAS requirements raise interesting issues with respect to what is important in education and whether we value the learner or the content learned, the cultivation of character or the test scores. It could be argued that our perspective shifts as students approach university. Is there a way to value CAS – the experiential learning, the character growth

– equally with the high-stakes testing of other parts of the IB Diploma Programme? Many high-profile universities are now recognising students’ personal contributions to society as part of admissions considerations.

5. Two-way Caring. Lucy Cooker, from the University of Nottingham, UK argued that how much a student invests in a requirement such as CAS is a possible reflection on the ‘Caring’ attribute of the IB Learner Profile. Lucy argued that an explicit focus on Caring is found more in the primary years of schooling than elsewhere, with a gradual decline as students get older. That is not to say that older students are less caring, but that the way in which this element of the profile is integrated changes. In the earlier years, students are taught explicitly about caring, not only about being cared for. In adolescence, students require more modelling of caring and can engage in dialogue about what and whom to care for. The language of the IB Learner Profile uses the phrase “commitment to service”, which brings us back to the question of values – especially in relation to external examinations that do not consider caring, thus possibly detracting from the Learner Profile.

We as teachers can take something away from these points of discussion at the AIE conference: there is unity in diversity, similarities amongst the differences. Martin Derbyshire from Beijing warned that educators from around the world can be caught in ‘dichotomy debates’ such as formal vs play-based learning, phonics vs whole language development, theory vs practice. Unfortunately, these commonly debated dichotomies tend to simplify complex problems. The unity in these diverse ideas lies squarely in the fact that both sides are interested in the same goal: educating children in no matter what setting – including exploring difference through home schooling communication (as noted by Michelle Brinn from Bangkok). So why not seek out similarities in our differing yet overlapping ideas? If we put our energy towards engaging with the differences as new opportunities, we will be able to seek new solutions. Participants in the Curriculum strand of the 2016 Alliance for International Education conference used the elements of a postmodern picture book to highlight the key learning that took place during this stimulating gathering.

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Candles in the darkness

Anna Stadlman reports on an author's inspiring visit to Marymount International School Paris

The annual Writers' Festival has been a part of the literacy programme at Marymount International School Paris for many years. Students have the opportunity to showcase their writing and meet authors who share with them their experience as writers. Lynne Reid Banks, Anne Fine, Jack Gantos, Nicola Davies, Caroline Lawrence, P.J. Lynch and Marcia Williams are among the authors and illustrators who have inspired us over the years, enriching our literacy programme with their expertise.

Service to others is also an important part of Marymount's curriculum, so this year our guest for the Writers' Festival was a writer who could link the two areas: the internationally respected author Cornelia Funke. Cornelia, a multiple award winning German writer and illustrator, writes fantasy for readers of all ages. Amongst her best-known books are *The Thief Lord*, *Dragon Rider* and *Knight and Boy*, as well as the *Inkheart* Series and the *Mirrorworld* series. Many of Cornelia's titles have been translated into over 30 languages and several of her books have been made into movies.

Cornelia's visit was unlike those of past authors. As tradition has it, she spoke about writing and her books. She also shared with us her 'other life' as advocate for children, and supporter and creator of charitable organisations which bring comfort to abused, illiterate and sick children. Her presentations, which humbly blended her life as a magical writer with that of a compassionate human being, gave our students an unforgettable and inspiring experience.

Advice on Writing

The audience sat silently as Cornelia read an extract from the book *Inkheart*, enchanted and gripped by the power of her words, 'sticky as a spider's web and enchantingly beautiful'. She spoke about writing in a personal, conversational tone, saying that it is essential to carry a pen or pencil always, to jot down ideas that may pop up unexpectedly; ideas which would be lost forever if not captured. We must 'Read, read, and read', she said, for in this way we are exposed to the craft of skilled writers who are a great source of inspiration for our own voice and personal style of storytelling.

Being curious is a must for a writer. When asked the inevitable question 'Where do you get your ideas?', Cornelia replied that they are all around her; everyday life is full of ideas, all vying for a place on paper. 'As a writer everything you do inspires your writing', she said, complimenting the students on the seeds of ideas that she would take away from her experience with them in Paris. 'I will not forget you', she said, 'you can be sure of that'.



Her words about her 'writing process' were encouraging for both students and teachers of writing. She writes all her ideas and plans in a notebook. She thoroughly researches for her books, ensuring that the information is absolutely accurate. When writing the *Inkheart* series, for example, she learned everything she could about the craft of book restoration since Mo, one of the main characters, was a 'doctor' whose clientele were books!

Cornelia rewrites her work several times, crafting it like a sculptor or a painter so that it is the best it can be. She loves revising, and encouraged students to enjoy this part of the writing process which, as many teachers will agree, is often met by the words 'Do I have to?' by impatient students.

Service to Others

Since a major part of Marymount's mission is to serve others, Cornelia was invited to talk about her involvement in and views on this subject. In response, she explained that she preferred the word 'compassion' to 'service'. She is not alone in this; several international educators have struggled with the word 'service'. Kendall, for example (1990), believed that the term 'service' suggests inequality between the 'servers' and those 'being served'. It also, Kendall argues, suggests a tone of self-righteousness, a 'vaguely disguised ticket to salvation for upper and middle class people who feel guilty about their access to resources' (p 24). Wade (2000), meanwhile, says that service should be an attitude, a relationship and 'a way of being in the world'. We may not be serving others, Wade argues, if we act without compassion



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Look at what you really care about. It may be tigers or frogs; it may not be human beings.’
Understanding you are part of everything is what helping is about. As an advocate for the environment as well as children, she posed the question: ‘Are human beings always more important than all creatures and this planet? – I do not think so.’

and engagement and ‘a willingness to ‘be with’ rather than just to ‘do for’ another’ (p 25).

Cornelia advised the students that, having decided to help others, they should ask themselves ‘Why do you want to do this?’ If it is to make you feel good, this may be selfish and not necessarily a good reason. She recalled that she had worked with social workers who were doing the job just so that they could be ‘better than all the others’; this sense of superiority, she said, is dangerous. One student asked if she felt a ‘warm feeling’ when she reached out to others; she said that feeling good about yourself was natural. However, if you have the attitude that after doing your ‘good deed for the day’ you can return home to relax with a drink in front of the TV, you should reflect on your motive and ask how much has changed for the person you helped? Were you really showing compassion? As Kris Dan Besker wrote in his book, Shine (2008), ‘We cannot counterfeit compassion.’

Being compassionate, Cornelia Funke believes, involves being able to face the darkness created by the injustices in the world. She was 14 years old when she first became aware of this darkness in the world, as her world was shaken after reading a report by Amnesty International about torture. Facing this darkness, she became an active member of Amnesty International and began her work with charities. She advised our students to confront the darkness in the world; turning our back on it is useless, she argued, because it will always be there to scare us. Face the darkness in the world and overcome the fear by getting involved: get involved and become passionate about something that is outside yourself. For Cornelia, helping children was her passion. She describes herself as an advocate for children and sometimes ‘a spy for children in this strange world of adults’. So despite her parents’ advice to study art, she studied pedagogy and worked with underprivileged children.

Connecting ‘with something in the world that is not us’ is crucial, she stated. ‘It is dangerous for our personal growth to become narcissistic. Look at what you really care about. It may be tigers or frogs; it may not be human beings.’ Understanding you are part of everything is what helping is about. As an advocate for the environment as well as children, she posed the question: ‘Are human beings always more important than all creatures and this planet? – I do not think so.’

Using Your Talent

As a social worker, Cornelia Funke painted with and told stories to children in her care. It was then that she realised

that she *had* to become an artist and writer: ‘You cannot go against your talents ... Your talent is part of you like a limb and if you go against it you can be sure you will be miserable ... there is something in you that wants to be lived’. So began her career as artist and writer. She stressed that students should pursue their dreams and develop their gifts, even if this involves hard work. ‘It would be unforgivable to die with the words “Oh, God, I wish I had ...” on your lips.’

Being a successful writer enabled Cornelia to become a social worker, again using her talent to help others, working with abused, illiterate and homeless children, and children with physical disabilities. She donates her books for auction, to raise funds for charitable organisations; instead of a fee for her readings and presentations, she asks that the money be given to a chosen charity. (Marymount was able to donate the money we would have given as a fee to ‘Room to Read’).

Students wondered if working with children had influenced her writing. She said that children she had taught inspired several of her characters, such as the homeless children in *The Thief Lord*. When asked how she felt when meeting children who were in such sad circumstances she said that, in addition to the children’s plight, the lack of compassion shown by the people around them was upsetting. When refugees came to towns in Germany from war-torn countries, for example, some residents wanted them removed from their streets and refused help.

Cornelia wrote that ‘stories never really end ... even if the books like to pretend they do’. Like all good stories, Cornelia’s visit to our school will live on. By showing compassion, acting passionately about something in the world outside ourselves, by using our talents to serve others and by facing the darkness in the world, each one of us at Marymount can continue the story by being, as Cornelia requested, ‘a candle in the dark’.

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Collaborative creation

Charmaine Suri unveils an eye-catching project

Every year, our PYP Visual Art students are all abuzz about embarking on their last unit – How We Organize Ourselves: Art as a visual language. Our central idea is 'Our creativity, skills and knowledge enable us to make significant contributions to community events'. It's the time of the year when everyone involved in the PYP comes together for the end-of-year performance and the Visual Art students design and create the backdrop. Every child in the PYP has a role to play in displaying the skills and the knowledge they have gained throughout the year.

The end product: a humongous 30 x 12 feet backdrop custom-designed for each production.

The process: All classes watch the movie (if there is one), read the script/story and talk about characters, settings and scenes. Then each child draws and colours a sketch of what they would like the backdrop to look like. Every class votes for the one they like best from their class. Later they vote once again for the one they like best from all of those chosen. This

design is then printed in black and white on a giant flex. This takes about 2 weeks.

During their Visual Art classes over the next four weeks, all classes work on a part of the backdrop using their particular area of expertise – whether roller painting, collage, sponge printing, tribal art, and so on. We start each class by looking at the backdrop critically together and discussing what we can work on to enhance it. We end the class with a discussion on the attributes of the IB learner profile and attitudes used that day.

It's a mammoth collaborative effort and all of us heave a sigh of satisfaction and relief when it is completed – only to look forward to starting afresh next year!

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Heaven and Hell

The Psychology of the Emotions

by Neel Burton

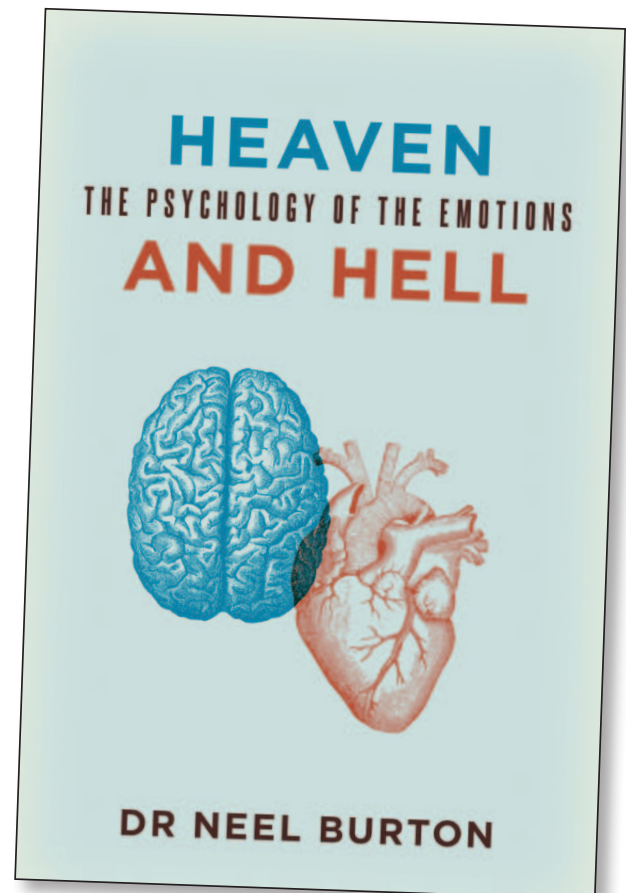
Acheron Press (2015)

Reviewed by Arjun Ray

In this book the author describes 29 key emotions that human beings experience, including sadomasochism. Each emotion is explained in five to seven pages and is at par with the others. Higher order emotions find the same value as boredom, laziness and lust. Apart from just one brief sentence to say that emotions do not receive their due importance in education, there is otherwise no connection with education in the entire book. It ends just there. Period. Surprisingly, the author makes no mention of creativity as being an emotion; it is certainly not a left-brain attribute!

Undoubtedly, schools focus disproportionately on high scores in examinations, at the cost of neglecting the non-cognitive skills of individuals that are essential for learning and unlocking human potential. The emotional context in which children grow up is vital. Academic rigour is not cognitive performance; rather, it includes critical emotional, spiritual and aesthetic competencies such as creativity, grit, mindfulness, compassion, and higher order emotions such as empathy and love. We may call them survival skills in a world that is volatile, uncertain, complex, chaotic and ambiguous. One might have expected Neel Burton to weave in this connection. For teachers to be able to benefit from the author's rich experience, it would be worthwhile to reflect on his suggestions as to how teachers are expected to create an enriched classroom environment that is mindful, collaborative, social and free from stress.

From a psychiatrist's perspective, the author was well qualified to recommend why and how emotional intelligence and happiness are trainable, and how the right type of neuro-rewiring of teachers and students is possible, in order to improve positivity and disposition.



Traditionally, an effective teacher is considered to be one who displays expertise in knowledge of content, pedagogy and disposition. In all conversations and writings, teacher disposition receives scant attention. There are just about six books written on disposition! In the 21st century the role of teachers is to unlock their own potential and that of the children for whom they are responsible, thus preparing them for an uncertain life that lies ahead. Given the power of the Internet, content is no longer an issue. It is a toss-up between pedagogy and disposition. Even if teachers are masters of pedagogy, learning is unlikely to happen if they are not able to engage the students and motivate them to learn. Teacher disposition is the key to learning, although pedagogy is important.

Regrettably, this book is likely to be of limited usefulness to teachers and schools.

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