



# International School

The magazine for international educators



## 'Third Culture Kids' – still a relevant term?

India set for school expansion | A case for close reading | Developing intercultural competence

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# in this issue...



16



32



38



53

## comment

A rose by any other name...

Mary Hayden and Jeff Thompson

5

## views on the TCK label

I'm still a TCK purist!, *Mary Langford*

7

Is the label applicable in the real world?, *Shamiela Davids*

9

Do we even need a label?, *Bonnie Friedmann*

11

A label fit for rainbow mobility? *Richard Pearce*

13

Is there a better term? *Carol Inugai-Dixon*

15

## features

A global mark of quality for international schools, *Colin Bell*

16

Positive self-efficacy, *Nicola Lambros*

18

Neurodiversity as a competitive advantage, *Geoff Richman*

20

The long walk, *Anna Stadlman*

22

An inverse approach to school internationalization, *Richard Eaton*

24

## curriculum, learning and teaching

A case for close reading, *Hermione Paddle*

26

Facilitating effective professional learning, *Chris Gray*

28

Developing intercultural competence in teachers, *Sally Hirsch*

30

Teaching science through origami, *Anthony Artist*

32

Comparing student reactions, *Konrad Gunesch*

34

Nurturing creativity in children, *Angela Abraham*

36

A game-changer for boosting students' performance, *Ben Thompson*

38

## regulars

Forthcoming conferences

29

Science matters: The search for extra-terrestrial life, *Richard Harwood*

40

Fifth column: Is there life beyond 'TCK'?, *ET Ranger*

44

## people and places

International boarding schools in Asia – a white elephant? *Denry Machin*

42

Inspiring art show celebrates Zimbabwe crafts, *Michele Debuisne*

45

India all set for international education expansion, *Nalini Cook*

48

Through the eyes of future teachers,

*Vlad Coraci, Melany Mistrorigo and Chiara Bernardi*

53

The team behind the athlete, *Anne Louise Williams*

57

Aligning UN goals and learning goals, *Emma Silva*

50

## book reviews

The Creativity Challenge, by K H Kim

reviewed by *Ji Han*

61

Empowering Learning, by Malcolm Pritchard

reviewed by *Mary Mountstephen*

62

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# A rose by any other name...

We enjoyed reading your views on whether the term 'Third Culture Kid' is now outdated

In the 'Comment' section of the most recent issue of this magazine, we as Editors questioned whether the widely-used term Third Culture Kid, or TCK, has now passed its sell-by date, by virtue of the diversity and increasing complexity of its usage and the associated lack of clarity as to its precise meaning. We invited readers to express their views on the matter and, given the differing contexts which we are aware *International School* readers represent, we had hoped that a wide range of views might be forthcoming. We were not disappointed! In fact we are delighted by the response (not only because it shows that the Comment page is actually read!), and encouraged by the willingness of readers to share their thoughts – borne out of that diversity of contexts and experiences. We thank all our respondents wholeheartedly.

We have decided to feature, in this issue, five of the responses received, chosen for the differing perspectives they bring on the topic – which represent the range of different views expressed also by others. We anticipate that in future issues we may be able to include some of the other responses received. Mary Langford writes here on the subject from the basis of both experience and emotion, having been a TCK herself, contending that – whilst she loathes the label – it is a term that is widely understood! Shamiela Davids, meanwhile, questions the extent to which the term has applicability in the reality of the world today, while Bonnie Friedmann brings another perspective – expressing her views as someone who has come to the term for the first time. The term will continue to be used, argues Richard Pearce, while pointing out that as single labels are at the root of many of today's problems, there are likely to be difficulties in agreeing on a shared label that could apply with equal validity across the complex and diverse nature of the issues that confront children in the modern world – which is so different from that of the mid-20th century when the term was created. Carol Inugai-Dixon shares her reservations concerning the

difficulty of finding terms which can apply across constantly changing circumstances, while declaring her loyalty to a term that has, she says, stood us in good stead to date and should not yet be abandoned. Even our intrepid Fifth Columnist, E T

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Ranger, could not resist the temptation to ask the question: Is there life beyond 'TCK'?

There are, no doubt, many other terms that have been borrowed over the years from cognate disciplines and that have been applied to our own, emerging, field of international education. There are also undoubtedly many terms that were created within the international education field, but at a different time and in differing contexts, for which questions of current validity and relevance arise in our rapidly changing world. We invite readers to share with us their thoughts on other such terms – as have a number of readers already in respect of the TCK label, to whom we express our thanks.

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**LOOKING FURTHER**

# Your views...

## I'm still a TCK purist!

Mary Langford argues the case for 'the understood jargon' that you can Google...

If the editors' Comment in the most recent issue of *International School* was intended to stimulate debate, I was riled to rise to the challenge. As an Adult TCK, having worked with TCKs in international schools since I first pitched up on British shores in 1980, having spent nearly 5 years (1992–97) thinking about, reading about, speaking to and researching TCKs for my Master's dissertation, and having taught and presented on this topic for many years, I was affected by this Comment. Perhaps the proper reaction to the points raised would be based on a rational, research-based response to counter the notion that the term TCK is obsolete. My response is, however, based on experience and emotion.

This issue has not been helped by Ruth Van Reken's efforts to 'amplify' the term to 'Cross Cultural Kid', at the time (I believe) she produced the second edition of the book written originally with the now late David Pollock. In my view, and I have said as much publicly from the first time I heard the phrase and definition, the term 'Cross Cultural Kid', as defined by Van Reken, can apply to virtually every child in the world, except those in the most remote, monocultural environments who are not tainted by the internet and MTV. In trying to helpfully create this more inclusive term, Van Reken risks diminishing what I believe are still the unique attributes of TCKs. I may be a dinosaur, but I remain a TCK purist!

The TCK's experience stems from the idea that international relocation happens because of a parent's job, and with that goes the baggage of the child being identified (and judged) as the dependant of someone with a corporate culture – be it military, diplomatic, NGO or business. Dutch Professor Geert Hofstede spent years demonstrating that there exist organisational cultures (different from national cultures) in his work with IBM and others; the possibility that dependent children whose international journey is made at the behest of some 'organisation' can be influenced by the expected behaviours and values of that organisation is, therefore, logical. The frustration experienced by such children, knowing that at any time the organisation can dictate another move, is also understandable and logical. TCK (diplobrat) and BBC journalist and author Libby Purves has described such a lifestyle as continually moving 'at the whim of some unseen power'. This experience is unique to the TCK. That the TCK is growing up knowing that the working parent's professional reputation might be affected by his or her child's conduct and behaviour is another pressure that other 'Cross Cultural Kids' may not experience. Refugees or asylum seekers may experience moves brought on by powers beyond their control, but that is more likely to be a political event leading to civil unrest or war, or a natural

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phenomenon such as a flood or volcanic eruption that destroys their homeland, rather than the likes of Coca Cola or the Foreign Office!

The other variable here is the number and frequency of moves. While many immigrant or possibly refugee children, both of which categories qualify as 'Cross Cultural Kids', move with a sense of the move being one-way and possibly tied to one destination for a new and better life, the TCK knows that the move is most likely temporary, sometimes with no sense of how temporary: 1 year, 4 years ...? So, how much should one immerse and invest oneself in the new setting, making friends, working hard at school, knowing it won't last? Refugee children and families may hope and aspire one day to return to the land of their origins, but that future is often anticipated to be a long distance in the future. For TCKs the move home may be a 'dead cert', but what is all the more challenging is that it may not happen until that TCK enters university and when, as they cease to be 'dependants' of their parents, they may lose the residency or visa status that allowed them the right to stay in the foreign place they have come to regard as 'home'. There may be no going back – or if they can go back it's as a tourist, which excludes the TCK from the entitlement to feel a sense of belonging. Tourists visit a place: they don't 'belong' in the place.

It is true that TCKs may have much in common with Cross Cultural Kids, but there are still elements of the TCK concept and experience as originally defined that are unique. I was reminded of this once again this autumn as my school welcomed new families. As well-travelled, experienced and even sophisticated as our international school students are turning out to be, there are still families who move abroad with children for the first time, who exhibit all of the 'culture



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shock' cycles identified by numerous experts (an emotional high followed by a plunge into the depths of despair), facing the same challenges identified by Useem, and later Useem and Baker-Cottrell: classic TCK stuff. Even the multi-mover, experienced TCKs who have joined my school go through that initial period of reticence as they observe and figure out the new culture, or what my former colleague and cross-culture trainer Corinne Rosenberg described as 'the way we do things around here'. The facility and ease with which our new multi-mover, sequential multilingual TCKs at school engage with English as another new language with more ease than the monolingual first-time movers is another indicator and characteristic of the TCK. The pain that we know some students are experiencing because they failed to 'leave well' their last location, in part because of the short notice given by the employer, is painful to watch no matter how often we see it.

My emotional response stems from my day-to-day interactions with people I encounter in my work in an

international school. It's fine for the academics to challenge the relevance in 2017 of this term first coined in the mid-20th century. I agree that the 'species' is becoming increasingly complex with the growth in dual-national and second generation TCKs. There are new areas that should be explored through research. Maybe new 'terminology' needs to be devised for these kids. Perhaps TCK2 would fit? I personally loathe the TCK label, but it's the understood jargon, and the one that works on Google! The original, garden-variety TCK first identified by Ruth Useem is still out there, and is still moving abroad for the first time and still experiencing the same sentiments, confusions and awareness of 'being different' that I first felt when I repatriated to the USA from Belgium at the age of 6. Rant over!

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## Is the label applicable in the real world?

Shamiela Davids says that calling young people 'TCKs' overlooks the reality

Thank you to Mary Hayden and Jeff Thompson for opening up discussion (in the last issue of *International School*) about the scope and appropriateness of the term Third Culture Kid (TCK). My contribution is to ask to what extent the term has applicability in the reality of the world today. I asked my class of Year 13 students, many of whom are international, the provocative question: did they think the term Third Culture Kid was rather quaint, and elitist? The term seems to reflect the reality of a very small proportion of those who are internationally mobile. In its narrow definition the term appears to refer only to those living in and being educated in foreign countries because they are the children of professional expatriate families; in other words, owing

their mobility to their parents' employment. In my view, this overlooks the reality of many young people in the world today who are the victims of forced demographic shift, instilling in them not a rose-tinted global worldview of multiculturalism but a permanent, aching sense of alienation and dislocation. In other words, could we apply the term Third Culture Kid to refugees and asylum seekers, and how might that fit?

The concept of the TCK is interesting because it raises issues of identity. So much of what we identify with comes from our surroundings. A problem faced by most young people being raised in one culture while identifying with another is that they feel their identity is, on the one hand,



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more multidimensional than their less travelled peers or, on the other hand, somewhat incomplete. A second, related problem is that of belonging. All too frequently, those who qualify to be described as TCKs lack the tools or the instruments to immerse themselves meaningfully in the culture around them. They are not proficient in the language, let alone the lingo, and they do not enjoy access to or participation in day-to-day life in that place. Equally importantly, they do not have a specific cultural broker or midwife – a term I have come to use to mean someone who introduces others to the culture in which they will spend vast amounts of their time – who helps them to make sense of where they are and of how they fit in. Consequently, they become the eternal observers; spectators not participators. The sad result of this is that TCKs can end up retreating, chalking up their time in the host country to an extended tourist experience while seeking, inevitably, to move on.

This being the case, how can education play a meaningful role in helping to develop and galvanise young people's sense of self, wherever they find themselves? How can education positively build the identity of those who through unfortunate circumstances have found themselves flung into foreign territory? Education in an international setting can certainly be an activity through which students are encouraged to appreciate themselves for the difference that they can bring to a particular society and to do what

they can to contribute to everyone's wellbeing – and, most importantly, be valued for that. Sadly, we have all too often seen what happens when people feel that they do not belong; in the best case, the 'aliens' retreat to a ghettoised existence where they cling to symbols of the 'home' country, speaking an inferior form of their 'mother tongue', or they remove themselves from the social structure completely. The worst scenario, as the news reminds us constantly, is that these 'foreigners' have on occasion turned to sinister groups to validate their existence, and in extreme cases they act out anti-social, destructive behaviour.

Those who join a society need to be valued for enriching that context, and international educators should seize the opportunity to lead the celebration. Rootedness feels very important, but we should not get too hung up on it; trees, plants and all living organisms grow, and most bear fruit. Being rooted is not an aim in itself; what matters is what we do with it, how we use our resources to offer support and sustenance to those who shelter under our branches and, yes, who pick our cultural fruit and disperse the seeds further than we ever imagined.

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## Do we even need a label?

Bonnie Friedmann would much rather see a new perspective

Honestly, until I read the Comment in the most recent issue of *International School* magazine, the term TCK was unknown to me. Been around since the 1950s, this terminology? Argued about by people who claim to be "real TCK's" as if it is a badge of honour? Related to children whose parents move them around from country to country, passport to passport, so that they could only truly identify with others who shared the same experience? Hmmm ...

In the 1970s, my family never moved farther than 30 miles down the Long Island shorelines, though we did do that about 14 times all told – and there was The Big Exception, the time we moved to Connecticut for three years ... the move that tore the marriage and family apart. Dad gave up on mom and moved to southern California. At 18 I followed ... and sang softly to myself "LA's fine but it ain't home, New York's home but it ain't mine no more ...". I was as homeland-less in one country as my own son now is, born in South Africa, moved to San Diego at 2, Germany at 12. Home, we tell him – and I tell myself, is where the heart is. And my heart? It's within me, wherever I roam.

That background is probably what landed me at a bilingual international school in Germany, where I have now lived and taught for going on five years. How did our journey begin, me the New York Nomad, and my husband the Boy from Nebraska for whom university on the East Coast opened up the wider world? Good question. Not sure I have a good

answer. Well, maybe. Unhappy in SoCal where we met, we jumped at adventure in South Africa in the form of a professorship for him. An adventure for sure; a bit on the dangerous side as we discovered. Okay for us, but not for the baby we then produced. So ... back to SoCal, but with the determination that our son would not be a monolingual American, but a Citizen of the World vaguely like the people we met and loved in Jo'burg; not just bilingual but normally multilingual from early ages. And that's when we found a bilingual English-German IB Primary Years Programme charter school – and well, it just sort of evolved from there. Summer trips to Germany when we realized our minimal high school skills were not enough to help him, a sabbatical year that led to a job in Frankfurt for my husband and, six years later, here we stay. For now.

So yes, I suppose I agree with Hayden and Thompson when they say the time has come to go beyond the TCK label. But what to replace it with? How about going beyond labels, period? We can define experience and attempt to contain it as much as we like, and as humans I suppose we are inclined to do so. Our yearnings for tidy explanations won't, though, change our richly unique, ever-changing realities in what has become a world connected by economics, electronic media and jet travel, not to mention migration due to the ravages of war and the lack of opportunity as well as the simple desire for adventure and experiences.



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I would argue that it is not a new label we need. We need a new perspective, a way of opening our minds to remember a very simple, timeless truth. We need to remember that people have always moved, always been restless for adventure, or for a better life. Not everyone to be sure, but not everyone moves today, either. In some corners of the US, at least, and of Germany and other countries I am almost sure, live folks who have no desire to go anywhere or be anyway different – like Dorothy in Kansas, but they don't need to go to Oz to know that their heart's desire is right outside their own back door. I met friends in Connecticut like that; they live there to this day. Happily, I might add. Do we need to label those people? What shall we call them: the One Culture Kids? Sounds a bit denigrating when you say it out loud, no? Ah yes. Now we get to the heart of the matter. This whole TCK thing sounds a bit like turning a necessity into a virtue – okay, so your parents had to move you because of a job, or chose to move you for more opportunities, or had to move you because your country was a war-torn mess .... or, or, or. You're a kid, you got moved. It was jarring, you either opened up and found new friends or closed down and became wary, unsure, guarded. Some of that had to do with what – and more so, who – you found on the other end of that moving van.

So what do our students find when they arrive at our

school? A place that respects all traditions, as well as one that builds its own tradition; a tradition based on mutual respect for all and built on working together in community? A place where current students and staff take new students under their wings, regardless of race, creed, or class? A place where we learn together, laugh together, make mistakes together and apologize together? That is the kind of place where I work, and the kind of place I hope all children find when they come to school, be it a new school in a new part of the world, or the same neighborhood school that their parents attended. We don't need labels to help us appreciate each other and our 21st century web of a world. We need good old-fashioned respect, honest curiosity to know one another authentically and deeply, patience with our imperfect humanity together, and a genuine desire to remember we are all passengers on the same fragile blue planet we call home, wherever our hearts may land on its wondrous shores. In a nutshell: we need to be, and teach others to be, IB World Citizens, just as we are IB World Schools.

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## A label fit for rainbow mobility?

Richard Pearce says single labels are the root of many problems

The editors' 'Comment' in the last issue of *International School* ('TCK: a label whose time has come – and gone?') challenges a long-serving label which has brought comfort to many since it was coined in the 1960s. I share the editors' doubts about the adequacy of the term for today's

rainbow mobility. I have written about this at some length (Pearce, 2015), but there is just space here to consider how we might meet present needs more helpfully, both in our practice and through sensitive research. I suggest that 'TCK' will last, and people will go on finding comfort in it, but it



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was composed for specific experiences of one community; today's movers come from diverse communities and have different experiences.

Why is mobility a problem in the first place? Mobility makes us uncomfortable because we hate making mistakes; abroad, we don't know whether we are 'doing it right'. Going abroad is bad enough, because we don't know how things are done there; but coming back is worse because we think we do know – and then we find that we were wrong! To deal with this we need to look at how our understanding of decision-making has been revolutionised by research since 1967, when Ruth Useem first defined the term Third Culture Kid.

As we go through life we all need to feel that we are good; good at being us, good at doing what Mummy – or the teacher, the priest, or the community – says we ought to do. Culture is the set of images of good things and good behaviour that has been developed by a particular community. In childhood we learn to do those good things, the things that community members do, and we are rewarded by feeling that we fit. 'TCK' provides a place where children fit if they return to what they have been told is home and find themselves not doing or understanding what the 'home' community does. More recently, Ruth Van Reken has written about 'Cross Cultural Kids' or 'CCKs' (2017), a general term she uses for any children who are crossing a social boundary. They could even be 'CCKs' without leaving home. The problem they all share is that they feel they don't fit. Does either term – TCK or CCK – fit the wider field?

I suggest that a requirement for a useful new term is that it takes account of the way in which we adopt sets of images of good, and how we maintain them. Recent advances in neurology draw attention to the role of emotion, first as the raw indicator – the 'gut feeling' – that tells us that something is good or bad, and second as the force that binds us to role models or arbiters of good. Our emotional attachment to these guides makes us learn and want to be approved in their eyes. We are content if we know we are doing good

and have someone to confirm it. Mobile lives place us in many situations, give us many images of good, and many guides are watching us at different times. We can often find ourselves in the company of people whom we want to please, but we don't know how to do so.

Single labels are at the root of many of today's problems. Children need to learn when young who they are and who they can rely on; they learn to identify. But as they move around they experience more models, and on returning they have some sets of values they use in one setting and other sets that they use in others. A shared label can free them from the pain of being homeless, but it doesn't tell us who they actually are. Behind all of our behaviour lies a haunting question: 'who is proud of me?'. This search for validation governs the comfort of children abroad, of new members entering a group, and even of presidents who tweet. A new way of talking needs to draw attention to the person's multiple experience, to the value-sets they have already acquired, and to the complex court of imagined judges who silently approve what they do. By concentrating on the assets they have gained by moving around, such a title would also be cheering in times of insecurity. As a first bid may I offer rainbow cultural, multiply validated, rich life pattern, plurally enculturated, personal palimpsest, or simply polycultural? And perhaps not 'kid'.

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## Is there a better term?

Carol Inugai-Dixon is struggling to think of one!

While I agree (in response to the editors' Comment in the last issue of *International School* magazine) that the term Third Culture Kid can be described as vague, and that the cultural, national and linguistic backgrounds of several generations are increasingly complex, I am at a loss to think of a better one.

And a term is needed. In everyday affairs we identify ourselves and others by which group they and we belong to, whether it is nationality, ethnicity, culture and so on. And there are many people who cannot and do not want to identify themselves by their passport, or place of birth or lineage of their parents. It could be argued that TCK is a term rather like international mindedness which, rather than describe as vague, I would prefer to describe as open to change. International mindedness now has a much broader meaning than when it was first coined. I suggest we let the concept of TCK expand so it becomes more inclusive of

people who see it as a fit for their backgrounds. I would quite like to use the term to describe myself, for instance. Although born in England and holding a British passport, I have lived in Japan longer than I have lived in England, and my cultural understandings are more in tune with Japan than they are with modern day England. In some contexts it would be very helpful to have a term to describe this sort of situation.

Beyond this I have a sense of loyalty to the term TCK. It has done such good work. I know how, over many years now, it has supported parents and students who were anxious about losing their language and culture by being in an international school. Let's not abandon it just yet.

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*COBIS has schools in 80 countries worldwide*



# A global mark of quality for international schools

Colin Bell introduces The Patron's Accreditation and Compliance, a new COBIS accreditation programme with royal approval

The Council of British International Schools (COBIS) is a global membership association for international schools primarily teaching the National Curriculum for England or the International Baccalaureate (IB). With schools in 80 countries worldwide, our diverse membership base consists of over 290

unique learning institutions sharing a reputation for quality. Accreditation for schools teaching the 'British' curriculum has previously been limited to the UK Department for Education's (DfE) British Schools Overseas (BSO) scheme (although there are more options for IB schools), and the demand for an

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## Peter Simpson, Director of Accreditation at COBIS and a former Headteacher at The British School in The Netherlands, predicts that 25-30 new international schools will receive The Patron's Accreditation or become compliant with the COBIS standards during the academic year 2017-18.

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alternative to a process that some schools found challenging has been rising since I joined COBIS in 2010. In more recent years, we consulted with our members to identify how the BSO scheme could be improved and asked them to visualise what a viable alternative would look like. Although hopeful of a change in criteria to the BSO programme from the DfE, especially in terms of restrictions on teaching Western values in the Middle East, our lobbying efforts did not yield positive results and our members remained at odds with the government's system. This led us to the development of a new, fit-for-purpose accreditation journey which focuses on school improvement called The Patron's Accreditation and Compliance, named after COBIS Patron, HRH The Duke Of York, KG.

### Ensuring quality

The COBIS Patron's Accreditation and Compliance system is distinct from other accreditation and inspection systems, with elements of autonomy for schools to select areas to evaluate which fit with their identified development objectives. We recognise that schools are highly diverse and exist in complex contexts. Therefore, a one-size approach to a professional accreditation process is not in the best interests of schools, the communities they serve and the unique ministerial jurisdictions in which they operate worldwide. We knew, when developing the programme, that it had to be innovative and unique, and its characteristics reflect and were directly influenced by the views of our schools. It sets high expectations and standards of accountability, it values education for international understanding, it's based on a realistic 5-year cycle, is far removed from a 'snapshot inspection of condition' and harnesses digital power to reduce time and cost. The system was also designed to reflect self-evaluation and support school improvement. At the heart of everything COBIS does is child protection and, with that in mind, we made certain that the accreditation programme had a strong emphasis on scrutinising the effectiveness of safeguarding practices.

### Supported by technology

The majority of the school improvement journey takes place on the COBIS Digital Workbook (DWB), an online platform developed by Titus Learning where schools can upload evidence against the standards for accreditation

and compliance which include safeguarding, teaching and learning, and leadership, amongst others. The DWB allows collaboration and communication with the school's assigned LIP, or Lead Improvement Partner. The LIP is an international school professional assigned and trained by COBIS to lead on accreditation and will visit the school, along with a number of accreditation team members known as 'peer accreditors', at the culmination of the improvement journey. At the time of writing, we've accredited three schools who took part in a pilot stage of The Patron's Accreditation in early 2017, while Doha College was the first school to participate in the full accreditation process. Dr Steffen Sommer, Principal of Doha College, was impressed by the Accreditation Team tasked with visiting the school and the formal report that followed, saying:

*"The COBIS Patron's Accreditation was the least intrusive evaluation we have ever experienced. The team were highly qualified and suitably experienced in the accreditation and school evaluation processes, explained the essence of the COBIS accreditation to staff and governors right at the outset, and made every effort to blend in. The full written reports, which are well written and usable as a working document and as marketing material, arrived only days after the team had left so that process and delivery of results were in keeping with the promise of an efficient, precise and targeted accreditation which encourages and enables ongoing self-evaluation."*

### A busy year ahead

Peter Simpson, Director of Accreditation at COBIS and a former Headteacher at The British School in The Netherlands, predicts that 25-30 new international schools will receive The Patron's Accreditation or become compliant with the COBIS standards during the academic year 2017-18. By 2022, all COBIS member schools will have been through the programme. That's not to say that schools which choose to go down the DfE's BSO route will no longer be given recognition. In fact, BSO schools will continue to be welcomed as COBIS Accredited Members.

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# Positive self-efficacy

Nicola Lambros discusses the forgotten but crucial ingredient for happy, healthy schools

As leaders we are often asked to reflect on our core values or educational philosophy which, as might be expected, mostly focus on supporting every student to reach their full potential. When asked 'How are you doing this?', many leaders reply that they provide a well-rounded, holistic curriculum; one that supports students in the exploration of the creative and performing arts, the sciences, sports and academics so that they may realise their talents and achieve success. They may go on to describe their excellent co-curricular programme and student support systems. Then when asked what is celebrated in school and in published materials, often these leaders talk about celebrating all student successes and the demonstration of the school's core values. However, when questioned further on what this 'success' looks like in their schools, leaders may talk about students who have won debating competitions, sporting events, accolades in drama and music festivals, who have achieved places to study at Oxbridge or other prestigious universities, and have an impressive collection of top grades in their examinations. There is no doubt about the nature of such success, and that behind these successes sits a huge amount of hard work, dedication and determination. These achievements deserve our congratulations. However, when asked to pause

and reflect on the verbal and non-verbal messages these celebrations send to our student body and community, a glimmer of doubt can set in. Are we telling our community that success *only* equals the top grades, roles, awards and achievements? Does every student have the capability to reach these dizzy heights, or are they left constantly gazing upwards? And what about those who work just as hard and, given their capabilities, achieve great things – only for these great things not to reflect our version of success?

Students today live in a high pressure world and our schools are highly pressurised environments. We want our students to do well; we encourage high expectations; we expect a lot from our young people and they know it. They are told on a regular basis of the importance of achieving excellent grades, how they must take every opportunity open to them, and how they must work hard, show grit and determination in the face of adversity and embody the school's core values if they hope to be successful in life. They must reduce their screen time, be responsible citizens, make time to support charity events and be active role models for younger students. We tell our students that without top grades and a plethora of achievements in extra-curricular activities their university applications will not be competitive.

Moreover, this message is being reinforced at home by parents. It is time for us to pause and reflect on how we would feel if we had to live up to these expectations, and on how they are affecting our young people today.

We also have to consider our teaching staff. What messages are they receiving? When we consider that most external inspection bodies make key judgements that are based on student outcomes and exam results, and that schools are judged by their stakeholders – who in many cases are their clients such as parents and prospective parents, pressure on staff can be high. Teachers feel this pressure and even subconsciously push this onto their students. Extra lessons, subject clinics at break times, extra work for underachievers and exuberant praise for those who achieve top marks in tests can all further increase student pressure.

All these factors are combining to fuel the decrease in student well-being and the increase in mental health issues in young people. If we take into consideration the perspective of some of the most pivotal research in education, we begin to have a better understanding of how and why our current education system is not supporting student wellbeing and mental health. Firstly, we need to understand that teenage brains are not fully developed; they have not matured and therefore do not yet have many of the executive functioning skills required for them to be able to manage and cope with the demands we place on them. Secondly, the messages we communicate to our young people mean that the intense expectations for academic and extracurricular excellence are those by which they measure success; not achieving these expectations can result in feelings of failure and a fear that success will never be achievable in the future. Students are measuring their self-worth by the grades they achieve, which have become the means by which they are defined. This has a huge impact on self-efficacy, a key component of academic success researched in depth over decades by Albert Bandura (see, for instance, Bandura *et al*, 1996). Without a strong and resilient self-efficacy a child will underachieve, whatever their academic capabilities. We should not therefore underestimate the damage that can be caused by having expectations of our young people that can be achieved by only a small minority rather than the majority of students.

I am not arguing that we should lower our expectations; high expectations are crucial for the continual development of our education systems. What I *am* arguing is that we should change the focus of our curriculums, expectations and reward systems so that we focus on developing and celebrating the character strengths, individuality, talents and skills of every individual, the progress they make and their learning journeys. This should be at the very core of every lesson and activity in school, and must be underpinned by an outstanding tutoring system and well-being curriculum. Along with strong teaching, such a focus creates a robust self-efficacy in every student leading to increased resilience, persistence, motivation and aspirations, and a reduction in the likelihood of students developing mental health issues or truanting. By adopting this approach we can be sure that every student will achieve the grades they are capable of without ever having to mention them!

So how do we do this? Recent research (Gleason, 2017; Lambros, 2017) has shown that we need to work to change

the culture within our schools by changing the beliefs of our teachers and parents, and not to expect our students to change, if we are to reap the rewards. We must ensure that we build strong relationships with our students, that coaching and mentoring is a key part of what we do (particularly for underachievers), that we provide ample opportunities for risk taking and learning from mistakes, and that we actively model this within every aspect of the curriculum both in and outside of the classroom. We must ensure our students are educated about how their brains work, and are given a better understanding of why they behave and think as they do. We must, for instance, make the language of growth mindset the only language used in school; celebrate failure (by, for example, modelling the learning and re-drafting process and consistently viewing mistakes as learning opportunities); effectively teach emotional self-regulatory skills; effectively teach literacy skills in all lessons; develop study skills and core values in context; celebrate progress, values and learning habits in addition to academic achievements; have an improved awareness of what executive functioning skills are reasonable to expect of our students; use data effectively to set appropriate achievable but challenging goals, and differentiate work. We must ensure we build strong relationships with parents so that they are educated about the messages they give to their children, and about growth mindset, study skills and the importance of self-regulation. And we must give time for all these things to happen; in particular for staff training. Without our staff having a strong collective efficacy, our students will never feel efficacious, and relationships with parents and students will not blossom. Furthermore we must stop over-scheduling our students, and teach them the importance of building relationships and of spending time relaxing with friends and family.

If our schools have the courage to take such steps we will not need to spend time practising mindfulness or yoga in schools, we will not be faced with stressed-out young people in a state of anxiety at the thought of a test or of not gaining top marks. What we will be faced with is a group of positive, happy young people who thrive in school, love learning and feel proud of themselves and their achievements, and schools that truly practise what they preach. Oh ... and genuinely outstanding schools and a great pile of excellent examination results to celebrate!

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# Neurodiversity as a competitive advantage

Schools stand to gain from an array of learning profiles, says Geoff Richman

In 2016, the research arm of International Schools Consultancy (ISCR), led by director Richard Gaskell, surveyed nearly 600 international, independent schools with respect to whether and how they include students with learning differences. More than a third of the schools were in Asia, while Europe and the United States were represented by nearly a quarter each. With respect to admission policy, 32% of schools considered themselves selective, many highly so. But half of the schools described themselves as non-selective, willing to accept students with mild learning differences only (13%), mild and moderate (28%), or mild, moderate and intensive (9%) needs.

The trend toward more open acceptance policies over the past two decades has led schools to grow more diverse with regard to levels of classroom skills, volumes of background knowledge, and abilities to thrive with a high volume of coursework in fast-paced environments. While recognizing this changing population, we teachers are still developing our understanding of how best to engage a broader range of students in our classrooms.

It was in the spirit of recognizing the contributions of students with unique learning profiles, accepting their differences and playing to their strengths, that I read an article titled "Neurodiversity as a Competitive Advantage" by Robert

D Austin and Gary P Pisano in the May-June 2017 *Harvard Business Review*. Naturally, the authors write about advantages of employees rather than students, but as I continued to read I was pleasantly surprised to find their reasoning appeared to fit both work *and* school environments:

‘Everyone is to some extent *differently abled* (an expression favored by many neurodiverse people), because we are all born different and raised differently. Our ways of thinking result from both our inherent ‘machinery’ and the experiences that have ‘programmed’ us.’

At international schools, not only are there more children with different learning profiles, but there are many students coming with cornucopias of experience from so many cultures, making for classrooms replete with those born and raised distinctively. To clarify language, the authors refer to a specific definition of neurodiversity:

‘Neurodiversity is the idea that neurological differences like autism and ADHD are the result of normal, natural variation in the human genome’, John Elder Robison, a scholar in residence and a co-chair of the Neurodiversity Working Group at The College of William & Mary, writes in a blog on *Psychology Today’s* website.”

Robison, who himself has Asperger’s syndrome, continued by proffering a philosophy that fits tongue-in-groove with appropriate classroom support for the neurodiverse:

‘Indeed, many individuals who embrace the concept of neurodiversity believe that people with differences do not need to be cured; they need help and accommodations instead’. We couldn’t agree more.’

According to the authors, some of the advantages of neurodiverse talent at work are the unique perspectives of such individuals, which contribute to a valuable 21st century asset – innovation:

‘Most managers are familiar with the advantages organizations can gain from diversity in the backgrounds, disciplinary training, gender, culture and other individual qualities of employees. Benefits from neurodiversity are similar but more direct. Because neurodiverse people are wired differently from ‘neurotypical’ people, they may bring new perspectives to a company’s efforts to create or recognize value.

‘In fact, in recent decades the ability to compete on the basis of *innovation* has become more crucial for many companies. Innovation calls on firms to add variety to the mix – to include people and ideas from ‘the edges’, as SAP (a company featured in the article) put it in the press release announcing its (dedicated hiring) program. Having people who see things differently and who maybe don’t fit in seamlessly ‘helps offset our tendency, as a big company, to all look in the same direction’, senior vice president of digital business services Silvio Bessa says.’

In our classrooms, those unique perspectives—seeing things differently—can contribute to the learning not only of those individuals but also of their peers; we can never know what is going to spark meaning for our students, especially as we have a greater number of students in that range of what SAP would call “edges”.

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## Demonstrating dexterity in successfully teaching students with different abilities and experiences is valued by families and children.

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Nudging a big company to consider alternative ways forward equates to a school division, a department, or perhaps just a single teacher incorporating a greater variety of learning strategies or presenting concepts through multiple modalities. In recognizing and accepting diverse thinkers in an office or classroom, managers and teachers gain valuable skill in tapping into the strengths of all employees and students. Indeed, it is our capacity as teachers to “put more tools in our toolbox” that gives all of our students the best shot at achieving to their utmost:

‘Perhaps the most surprising benefit is that managers have begun thinking more deeply about leveraging the talents of *all* employees through greater sensitivity to individual needs. SAP’s program ‘forces you to get to know the person better, so you know how to manage them’, says Bessa. ‘It’s made me a better manager, without a doubt.’

Finally, it is not solely the individuals who gain from such neurodiversity. As the authors point out, businesses gain in prestige by welcoming a wider range of abilities: “The companies that pioneered (the hiring of neurodiverse talent) have been recognized by the United Nations as exemplars of responsible management and have won global corporate citizenship awards.” Our schools, too, stand to gain from including an array of learning profiles. Demonstrating dexterity in successfully teaching students with different abilities and experiences is valued by families and children. Perhaps that will not get us recognized by the UN, but it will be appreciated—and rewarded—by our communities.

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# The long walk

Anna Stadlman invites you to join a learning journey

This is a story about a man who, one day, pulled on his walking boots, kissed his wife goodbye and set off to walk the world. The journey is expected to take him ten years to complete and to cover 21,000 kilometers. It is a story that will interest teachers and their students across the globe. The man is Paul Salopek, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and National Geographic Fellow. On 10 January 2013 he set off from Herto Bouri, Ethiopia, on a mission to trace the footsteps of our ancestors who left the Rift Valley of Africa 60,000 years ago and headed eastward. On his journey across the planet, he has encountered and will encounter many obstacles created by religious conflicts, wars, and geographical barriers. However, like the archetypal hero on his odyssey, Salopek will also meet characters who help him on his way. He collects their stories and shares them with the world in his dispatches to National Geographic magazine, in videos and in tweets. Through technology, we get a glimpse of people in the world's distant corners.

**'Traveling: it leaves you speechless then turns you into a storyteller.'**

The journey, which Salopek calls the '*Out of Eden Walk*' and describes as 'a global storytelling project', began in Ethiopia's great Rift Valley. Situated beside the field camp of paleoanthropologist Tim White on the Middle Awash River,

it is considered to be one of the world's greatest hominid fossil sites. His route follows the archaeological sites where evidence of the first humans has been discovered. He retraces their journey as they moved from Africa eastward across the globe, settling in the Middle East, Europe, Asia and the Americas, until he reaches Tierra del Fuego, his final destination.

Writing in National Geographic (2013), Salopek explains that:

Tiny groups of *Homo sapiens* had been taking similar strolls from this very spot for at least a hundred thousand years. Why? Climate change? Overhunting? Famines? Population pressures? Curiosity? Nobody knows for sure. But for early peoples, this first discovery of the Earth would be a key test of human survival, ingenuity and problem solving.

**'Traveling: it makes you lonely, then gives you a friend; it gives you a home in a thousand strange places.'**

As he walks across the world's remotest places, Salopek meets people. He stops to hear their stories, asking three

questions: ‘Who are you? Where are you from? Where are you going?’ He observes their lifestyles and traditions closely and, with the help of an interpreter, he listens to their stories, hopes, fears and dreams. Then he writes their stories. This sort of journalism he calls ‘*slow journalism*’, something he says that you cannot do “if you are hurtling across the world by train, plane or automobile”.

‘Out walking, I constantly meet people. I cannot ignore them or drive by them. I greet them. I chat with strangers five, ten, twenty times a day. I am engaged in a meandering, three-mile-an-hour conversation that spans two hemispheres. In this way walking builds a home everywhere’. Curious children join Salopek as he passes through their lands. ‘They brim with a thousand questions. Who as a child has not dreamed about walking away from home? To the farthest corner of the world? To the edge where the seas falls off? Children remember. Children understand’, wrote Salopek in a dispatch from Tajikistan to National Geographic in August 2017.

He travels lightly, carrying in his backpack a change of clothes and the equipment he needs as a journalist: cameras, a laptop and notebooks. He stops every 100 miles to record the milestone by taking a photo, some video footage, and to interview whoever is nearby. He captures on film amazing historical monuments and geographical wonders like the badlands of the Ustyurt Plateau in Kazakhstan.

### **‘Traveling: it offers you a hundred roads to adventure, and gives your heart wings.’**

The ‘Out of Eden Learn project’ set up by Harvard University’s ‘Project Zero’ is a unique online learning community, inviting teachers and students to participate in Salopek’s adventure. Described as a ‘learning journey’, the project provides weekly, well-structured activities for its international participants. Students from around the world are grouped together, to follow Salopek’s travels. They post their responses, read and respond to others’ posts. It’s a project that teachers could include in Global Citizenship units, Social Studies projects or after-school programs.

Since a significant part of ‘Project Zero’ encourages students to explore and observe their neighborhoods, thousands of students and teachers are now using this form of slow journalism as a teaching tool. ‘You don’t have to go to Patagonia’, says Salopek in an interview with the BBC (2015), ‘you don’t have to go to Chechnya. Go out into your own neighborhood and walk around’. Salopek wants students to understand that the world is not as dangerous as they may think; he wants them to explore, observe and record what they see. ‘Yes, there are wars’, he says, ‘there are famines, there are diseases like Ebola, but you can also get killed by just staying at home.’ With a notebook or iPhone and by slowing down, students can look around their localities and ‘discover the world’.

### **‘Traveling: All you have to do is take the first step.’**

A group of Grade 4 students at Marymount International School, Paris took part in an experimental project to find out about *Out of Eden Learn*. It was incorporated into the existing Social Studies curriculum. The students were excited to find out about Paul and his journey: ‘Learning about all the countries Paul is walking through was so fascinating’ observed Wyatt, a fourth grader, while Luiza was in awe

of Salopek’s courage to ‘cruise through the world and its cultures’. Others wanted to know the brand of boots he wore! They were pleased to discover that his wife did not wait and weave like Penelope, but joined him on the walk from time to time! In addition to mapping his route and discovering little known corners of the world and their cultures, students considered essential questions such as how physical geography may shape the walk, and whether it could have shaped the migration of humans around the world. Students also researched our ancestors and human migration.

The project took the students in several other directions, discovering for example Lucy the Australopithecus, the oldest hominid ever discovered. Literature and history collided as the students read stories about Ibn Battuta, a medieval scholar, who spent almost thirty years from 1325 to 1354 traveling from his home in Tangier towards Mecca. This journey of 75,000 miles took him throughout the Islamic world, across the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa, and is beautifully re-told in the poetic picture book entitled *‘Traveling Man’* by James Rumford. The students’ curiosity was endless and, just like the children Salopek is meeting on his journey, they brimmed with a thousand questions.

The class was linked with three schools in other countries: Portugal, Singapore and Brazil, via the *Out of Eden Learn* website. They commented on Paul’s progress and engaged in ‘slow journalism’ by taking walks in their own localities. They shared their observations, pictures and maps of their neighborhoods with their ‘walking partners’. They photographed things that interested them or that gave insight into the culture and particular traditions of the local people, and sent them to their partners.

By joining this ‘Learning Journey’, students of all ages can join this amazing long walk across the world while at the same time discovering the world just beyond their own doorstep. For Salopek, the walk has gone beyond that threshold. ‘The walk has turned into my life ... It is to find out what’s over the mountain.’

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### **Some relevant resources**

- Out of Eden Walk*: [outofedenwalk.nationalgeographic.com](http://outofedenwalk.nationalgeographic.com)  
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# An inverse approach to school internationalization

What happens when an international school has to localize? asks Richard Eaton

After an unsuccessful bid to have a special status that allowed Berlin International School to facilitate instruction primarily in English, the school was informed by its local department of education that to continue receiving state subsidies we should facilitate an increasing amount of instruction in German: particularly in, but not limited to, Grades 7–10. We complied – because we had little choice. To retain financial aid and maintain a realistic fee structure, authorization as a state-supported private school and financial subsidies were necessary. Moreover, without state authorization we would not be able to freely educate most host-nation children. For many stakeholders, new and old, these developments came as a surprise and elicited concerns, among them that students would no longer be adequately prepared for leaving exams offered in English at the end of Grade 10: the International GCSE (IGCSE) and Grade 12: the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme.

One of several responses to this situation was to engage the community in a review and revision of our school

mission, one that had not been revised since 2006. Our goals in this process were dichotomous: to celebrate – if not highlight – our nascent local identity as a state-supported multilingual school, while simultaneously confirming to our community a commitment to international education. An initial learning point was that our 2006 Mission did not mention our commitment to the values of the IB. Adding this, we felt, would offer assurances to our community that, in the first case, we were an IB World School that would continue to promote excellence in international education. However, we were also bold in inserting into the 2016 Mission reference to the Educational and Pedagogical Goals (*Bildungs- und Erziehungsziele*) of the State of Berlin. For a community already weary of localization, this received a lukewarm reception. Yet as the spirit of these educational goals was made more widely known to stakeholders it became clear, as the CEO of our school’s parent foundation put it, “you can’t win the game [of internationalization] with one card.”

Two aspects of the Educational and Pedagogical Goals of Berlin will be used to illustrate this point. First, living and learning in Berlin means you will see and experience considerable openness within society, and hence students in local schools and in our school are encouraged to “develop their own perceptions of reality, sensibility, expression, and artistic awareness” in addition to learning to “deal with the media appropriately, critically and productively.” There is little in the IB Learner Profile, by contrast, that takes such a pointed stand, nor is there specific mention, secondly, of an intent to “celebrate the equality of men and women and recognize the achievements of women in history, science, economy, technology, culture and society”. While the IB Learner Profile may be ‘international’ in that it is malleable to varied locales, we had begun to see the added value of ensuring our students were also exposed to and understood the origins of local essences.

Another issue that emerged in the Mission redrafting process was concern with the 2006 Mission’s declaration of promoting “respect for the variety of cultures and for the culture of the host nation”. The 2016 Mission review steering team questioned whether the positioning of a “variety of cultures” in the first place elevated pan-culturalism above local culture, thereby delegating local culture to a secondary position and serving to devalue it. Consequently, this objective was removed and supplanted in the 2016





Mission with the desire to facilitate “an appreciation and respect of our shared humanity and diverse community.” Following on from this, as dialogue with the community ensued there was debate about whether or not we had, in drafts of the 2016 Mission, clearly articulated an explicit school-specific definition of ‘internationalism’. Our response was the development of a potent and functional equilibrium – in essence, at Berlin International School internationalism was “a curriculum that was local and global”, amalgamated with the cultivation of “multilingualism with an emphasis on English and German”.

What had this begun to teach us? Though the concepts of ‘international mindedness’ and ‘international understanding’ have dominated the last decades of *internationalizing* schools, if positioned above, or considered without reflection on, ‘local understanding’ and ‘local mindedness’, they might become alienating and divisive rather than uniting and transcendent as they are often championed to be. The reworking of our Mission, therefore, could also be characterized as an opportunity to find harmony in a city (Berlin) and country (Germany) where “private” education carries negative and elitist stigmas, leading private schools to call themselves “free” schools to avoid perceptions of exclusivity.

Thus, it might be fair to say we had begun to foster, not necessarily by our own choosing but by practical design, a project of school re-design that was globally dexterous and locally responsive and to where we had arrived in ‘time’ and ‘place’. Nevertheless, to exemplify this blended agility in practice would equally require, as the 2016 Mission states, “a shared partnership between students, families and the

school”. Partnerships can only be shaped by discourse. Hence, for a community aspiring to be multilingual, no conversation may have been more important to the Mission review process than discussions surrounding the appropriate translation into German of the 2016 Mission. From this exercise valuable local and international insights were gleaned, arguably achieving, in effect, greater shared understanding and commitment. With this came a replenished consciousness: though we had *localized*, unexpectedly we may have emerged more robustly *international*.

Even so, while a renewed Mission is now in place, we have not convinced our entire community that our current localized/international identity is sensible or practical. There remains considerable resentment of the Department of Education for what was perceived to be an administrative act that thrust more German language instruction on our school and – as one might imagine – a sense of loss lingers and a long journey lies ahead. Continued and creative discourse will be needed from subsequent leadership for the school to maintain commitment from all stakeholders and leverage the potential advantage of what has been a unique learning process for the entire community.

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# A case for close reading

## Hermione Paddle looks at the international aspect

Close reading is a literary skill in which students investigate short extracts of text. Through their deliberate reading of prose or poetry, students develop structured commentaries that appreciate various aspects of the text, including form, style, tone, figurative language and syntax. As a teaching strategy, close reading works especially well for students in an international context – in both the primary and secondary domain. Since it is skills-based, students merely interpret the language without having to memorise quotations or narrative, contextual details. Close reading is commonly used in literature examinations to test students’ responsiveness to what they read, and their knowledge of the technical language used to describe the way literary texts create effects. In the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, students study courses in language and literature and are examined on their close reading skills.

### Exploring successful strategies when approaching close reading

As an IB Diploma classroom teacher of Literature, and Language and Literature, I have identified several different skills that proficient students use in their writing. Such approaches include being able to understand tone and atmosphere, as well as understanding character and exploring stylistic choices. Table 1 is a summary of how tone, character and other stylistic features can be successfully analysed in close reading.

Writing aspect	Explanation	Example
Comprehending tone	Understanding the author’s creation of tone, mood and atmosphere is integral to understanding the overall meaning behind the text	The casual and detached tone is also established by the dialogue between the two characters. Every expression is ended with ‘he said’ or ‘she said’ and this repetition takes out the emotion, and an interpretation of the character’s feelings is almost impossible because there is no variety describing what they say.
Comprehending character	Strong commentary writing is also able to draw inferences about character traits.	She describes the cat by comparing his eyes to those of the famous magician Houdini to emphasize on the rather mysterious, eerie and intimidating look the cat seems to have.
Understanding stylistic choices	Successful commentary writers identify literary features and comment on the effects these have on the reader.	The author connects the idea of a vast cold landscape with the landlady, illustrating that her bitter, frosty exterior creates a feeling of anxiety in the speaker.

Table 1: Successful examples of how tone, character and literary features can be explored in close reading.

To develop critical ideas about tone, understand character and understand stylistic choices, useful strategies for teachers can include focusing on:

- articulating and reflecting on extracts verbally, as focusing on oral expression often removes student intimidation
- discussing interpretations as a group because sharing, comparing, analysing and finding patterns together helps students bounce ideas off each other
- closely scrutinising specific words and short phrases to develop understanding of mood, atmosphere and meaning
- using contrasting uses of a term in alternate readings and exploring the different effects these can have.

### Problematic approaches

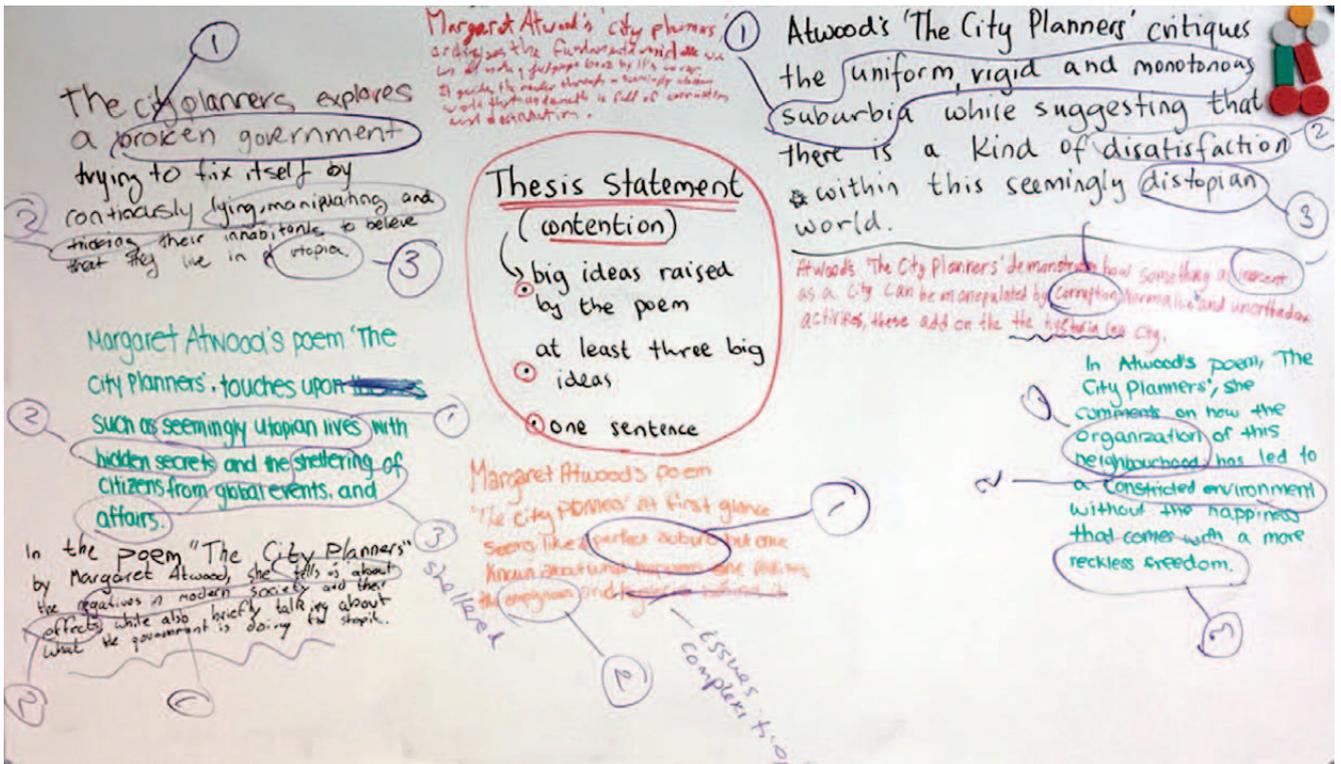
International students often face problems with close reading, including mechanically applying literary terms, failing to comprehend nuances in language, and making judgements about the writer’s work. Table 2 shows three typical problems that students often encounter during close reading.

Writing aspect	Explanation	Example
Routinely listing literary devices	Listing techniques one by one can often create a stultified response and a disconnected feel, and can suggest analysis that lacks authenticity and engagement.	This passage uses similes, metaphors and personification. This essay is how the writer uses hyperbole, metaphor and tone.
Failing to comprehend complex vocabulary	Complex vocabulary and text with a high lexical density can create a barrier to understanding in close reading.	He describes the man rather mysteriously when he compares him to animals: ‘bear-like’, which leads to the conclusion that either he is very big or has a lot of facial hair.
Making judgements	While critical evaluation is encouraged, students should avoid thinking that this means ‘fault-finding’ and condemning an author’s writing.	The title of the poem, though suitable for the most part of it, can be seen as too simplistic and not fully reflecting the deep, personal emotions that the child experienced.

Table 2: Problematic examples of how listing literary devices, misunderstanding key words and misinterpreting or judging texts can be undertaken by students in close reading.

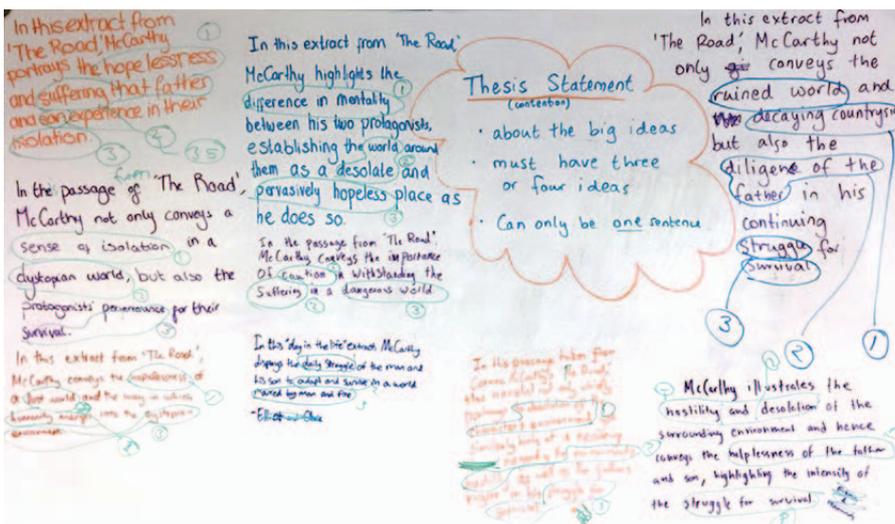
To help students to avoid structural issues, understand complex language and avoid making judgements, useful strategies for teachers can include focusing on:

- encouraging students to construct arguments and commentaries around ideas rather than devices
- how the extract explores loneliness, desperation and desire and then focus each of their paragraphs on these three ideas, finding stylistic choices that help convey this
- encouraging wider reading of the literary canon and undertaking close reading on difficult passages



Above: Creating thesis statements - ways to avoid routinely listing literary devices.

Left: Grade 11 students collectively brainstorm their close reading thesis statements.



- leading discussion away from simply 'did you like the piece or not?' to help students move from judging or evaluating a text's literary merit, as this is not relevant

**Some relevant reading**

Brown, S., & Kappes, L. (2012). *Implementing the Common Core State Standards: A Primer on 'Close Reading of Text'*. Washington DC: The Aspen Institute.

Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2014) Close reading as an intervention for struggling middle school readers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(5), 367-376.

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# Facilitating effective professional learning

## Chris Gray introduces the Sharing Knowledge Project

Since January 2016, three Dutch international schools have been participating in a research project coordinated by Leiden University Graduate School of Teaching (ICLON): The Sharing Knowledge Project. The project aimed to investigate how professional learning, regarding inquiry-based teaching, takes place using a bottom-up approach and how knowledge attained from this approach is shared amongst teachers. This article will evaluate aspects of the project, including outlining some of the strategies used at the International School of The Hague (ISH), the strengths of these strategies and possible considerations for schools that wish to engage in similar professional learning activities.

For the project, each school was requested to create a role of *teacher-researcher*: a teacher who was to be responsible for coordinating sub-teams within their school and who would regularly meet with other teacher-researchers and representatives from ICLON. Schools were responsible for establishing their own professional learning strategies and the approaches were evaluated and shared amongst the three schools.

### Specific strategies – The International School of The Hague (ISH)

The professional learning strategy at ISH aimed to:

Encourage and promote discussion of and development of inquiry-based teaching and learning strategies.

The school aimed to identify ‘dilemmas’ (Windschitl 2002, p132) that teachers may experience during inquiry-based teaching. These dilemmas could then be discussed and strategies established to help address them. Windschitl (2002) identifies four potential dilemmas that could limit the use of inquiry-based teaching strategies in the classroom. ISH aimed to specifically address pedagogical dilemmas which are ‘aspects of teachers’ intellectual and lived experiences that prevent theoretical constructivism from being realized in practice in school settings’ (Windschitl 2002, p132). The dilemmas that may occur when using inquiry-based teaching strategies include classroom management issues, how to assess learning, time limitations and perceptions about how students can learn through inquiry. Two specific strategies were adopted at ISH, as follow below: in each case the strategy is described, followed by comments on the strengths of the approach and some considerations for schools planning to engage in this type of activity.

### Teacher-as-student observations with a *buddy*

Teachers and non-teaching staff participated in a ‘normal’ inquiry-based lesson as if they were a student. During the lesson participants were encouraged to engage in the same activity as the students and to make observations that could be used during a post-observation and discussion session. To provide greater insight into how students engage in inquiry-based activities, participants worked with a student *buddy*. Throughout the lesson the participant was treated as a student and was expected to engage in activities with their buddy, respond to questions asked by the teacher and consider the teaching and learning strategies used to support inquiry.

One strength of this approach was that it provided rich insight into the nature of an inquiry-based classroom. Based on post-observation discussions, almost every observation resulted in participants identifying pedagogical dilemmas in their own practice or experiencing a new strategy they could use related to inquiry-based teaching. Over 100 observations took place during the project, which indicated that there was a good deal of opportunity to discuss strategies related to inquiry-based teaching. The planning and organization of the activity in the classroom was very simple and it provided a natural setting for teachers to experience learning through inquiry, from a student’s perspective, making it context specific.

*Considerations for schools planning to engage in this type of activity:* Experiencing a normal lesson allows colleagues to discuss pedagogy in a realistic and therefore meaningful setting. We suggest the teacher delivering the lesson and participant should not treat the experience as an ideal lesson. Planning a perfect lesson and expecting to see one can provide an unrealistic view of what takes place in a classroom. Keep it simple. If the teacher observing enters the room, sits next to a buddy and participates as a student would and is treated like a student, this should provide enough insight and points for discussion.

### Post-observation discussion and reflection session

In this strategy, discussion and reflection sessions took place following a lesson observation, as reflection can be used as a tool to promote changes in practice and perceptions. The sessions aimed to focus on non-judgmental observations and discussion that encouraged personal reflection. During discussion, teachers set their own professional learning goals in order to take ownership of their learning.

Strengths of this approach included that discussions

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**Planning a perfect lesson and expecting to see one can provide an unrealistic view of what takes place in a classroom. Keep it simple.**

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highlighted wide variations of teacher experience in inquiry-based teaching and perceptions of inquiry as a learning process. This provided very valuable information as it could be used to establish strategies to address issues or to influence future professional learning opportunities and the development of resources to support inquiry, such as plug-ins.

*Considerations for schools planning to engage in this type of activity:* Allow colleagues to share their dilemmas and encourage the direction of discussions to aim towards identifying root causes of these dilemmas. In many cases the root causes of dilemmas were manageable where strategies could be identified or developed to address them. Discussions should take place as soon after the observations as possible. Those that did not were less effective as participants had difficulty recalling specific moments. Ensure that a next step is established before the end of the discussion. This could involve planning another observation and discussion, or a strategy to try in the classroom.

### **Inquiry plug-ins**

Plug-ins were designed throughout the project with the aim of providing colleagues with some ideas and activities that could support them in an inquiry-based classroom. Many of the plug-ins were created as a response to dilemmas identified during post-observation discussion and reflection sessions. These plug-ins were made available throughout the project, both on the school's PLC page and on a prominent wall in the staffroom. The use of plug-ins was also the topic of an action research paper by the teacher-researcher with the aim of improving how they can be accessed and used.

### **The next step?**

Encouraging and facilitating professional learning through a bottom-up approach is well documented in education, and can result in educators having greater autonomy when considering how to improve their own practice. The strategies described here could provide an easy access point into initiating a teacher's own professional learning that requires little more than a classroom of students and two teachers.

### **Reference**

Windschitl, M (2002). Framing constructivism in practice as the negotiation of dilemmas: an analysis of the conceptual, pedagogical, cultural, and political challenges facing teachers. *Review of Educational Research*, 72(2), 131–175.

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# Forthcoming Conferences

February 1-2, COBIS Conference for Bursars, Business Managers and HR Staff, Dubai, UAE.

February 5-7, AAIE Conference, New York, US.

February 15-18, ECIS Library Conference, American International School of Chennai, India.

March 8-10, MAIS, ESL, Special Needs & Technology Conference, American International School in Egypt.

March 15-16, COBIS Conference for Marketing, Development and Admissions Staff, Bucharest, Romania.

March 25-27, IB Asia-Pacific Regional Conference, Singapore.

March 29-30, EARCOS Teachers' Conference, Bangkok, Thailand.

April 4-7, ECIS Leadership Conference, Berlin, Germany.

April 4-7, ECIS PE Conference, International School of Düsseldorf, Germany.

May 12-14, COBIS Annual Conference, London, UK.



# Developing intercultural competence in teachers

It's an ongoing process, says Sally Hirsch

Pick up a brochure for any international school and chances are you will find a statistic touting the number of nationalities represented in that school community. This number is seen as a marker for internationalism in a school but, like many things in life, quantity does not always equate to quality. Having 40 or more different nationalities does not necessarily mean that a school fosters international celebration, harmony and understanding. It doesn't equate to a teaching staff who are responsive to the needs of a culturally diverse student body, and it doesn't really provide an indication of the intercultural competence of the administration or school structure. Research has demonstrated that there is a positive impact on student learning when students experience a culturally responsive curriculum and are taught by teachers who are culturally aware (Oller, Vila, & Zufiaurre, 2012; Schellenberg & Grothaus, 2011; Sleeter, 2012). So how can international schools ensure that this happens?

## Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence focuses on the "interaction of an individual from one culture to another" (Cushner, 2011). Deardorff (2011) explains that the term *intercultural* is preferred over terms such as *culturally aware* or *cross-culturally able* as it "applies to anyone who interacts with those from a different background, regardless of location". Cushner further describes

*competence* as being about appropriate and successful interactions that are a result of an individual's cognitive, affective and behavioural skills. Intercultural competence is a step beyond being internationally minded as it describes a person who is not only culturally knowledgeable, but is also someone who can change their behaviour and communication to be culturally appropriate as required by the situation.

Intercultural competence matters in teachers, since those working in international schools (in particular) have to be excellent code switchers. They are often moving between several cultures: their own, that of the host country and the culture of the school itself. We expect all teachers to be able to adjust their teaching strategies for students of different skill and knowledge levels. In international schools, teachers should also be able to adjust their teaching for students from different cultures. This includes being responsive to the cultural differences from parents that permeate communication style, expectations of the teacher, and expectations of the school. Teachers are at the front line of meeting the needs of the student, and developing curriculum that is culturally responsive. A teacher working in an international school won't know how to develop and implement a culturally responsive curriculum if they don't themselves have a high level of intercultural competence.

### Assessing levels of intercultural competence

For school leaders, understanding how to define and identify intercultural competence in a teacher is the first step towards school improvement. Often, this takes place during teacher recruitment where school leaders may try to differentiate between teachers who will be successful, compared to teachers who want to work in international schools for the fringe benefits (the 'tourist teachers'). Responses to questions that specifically ask a teacher to talk about their different cultural experiences can quickly show a teacher's level of intercultural competence.

Once a teacher has been hired, one of the quickest ways to assess intercultural competence is to use a self study questionnaire that promotes reflection on past experiences as well as reactions to hypothetical situations. Using tools such as the *Intercultural Development Inventory* developed by Dr Mitchell Hammer and Dr Milton Bennett, or the *Assessment of Intercultural Competence* developed by Dr Alvino Fantini, helps teachers to understand more about their own level of intercultural competence, as well as providing more information for school leaders.

School leaders can undertake a more detailed review of where cultural differences or bias might exist in school systems. By asking some of the following questions, school leaders can reflect on what training or policy changes might be needed:

- What is the ratio of expat to local staff?
- Are there differences in contracts between expat and local staff?
- What sort of cultural training is provided to staff?
- Is cultural training available for both expats and locals?
- Do school systems take into account cultural difference? For example, in staff meetings, are people given multiple ways to ask questions or have their voices heard? A 'town hall'-style staff meeting may be isolating those from a particular culture.
- Have teachers ever done a curriculum audit to identify cultural bias?
- Aside from the usual flags, food and festivals, how is intercultural knowledge developed in the school?
- Is training provided to help teachers work with a culturally diverse student and parent community?
- Does the school do any training or outreach with the wider community?

### Planning professional development

As with any professional development planning, it is absolutely vital that it is organized around the needs of the community and not only on the basis of what a few people think is needed. A thorough review assessing the existing level of intercultural competence amongst staff and teachers is vital for planning professional development. It is also important to include all members of the school community, while realizing that professional development for intercultural competence may need to be varied for different groups of teachers, administrators, staff and parents. We expect

teachers to differentiate in the classroom; school leaders must also differentiate professional development based on teacher needs. In order for change to be sustainable, it is vital to develop an on-going plan for intercultural competence. Decide as a community what will be the evidence or benchmarks of a school or faculty that is interculturally competent. Continuous, responsive professional development is the only effective way to increase the level of intercultural competence within a school community (Fisher, 2011; Hofstede, 1980; Shaklee & Merz, 2012).

### Conclusion

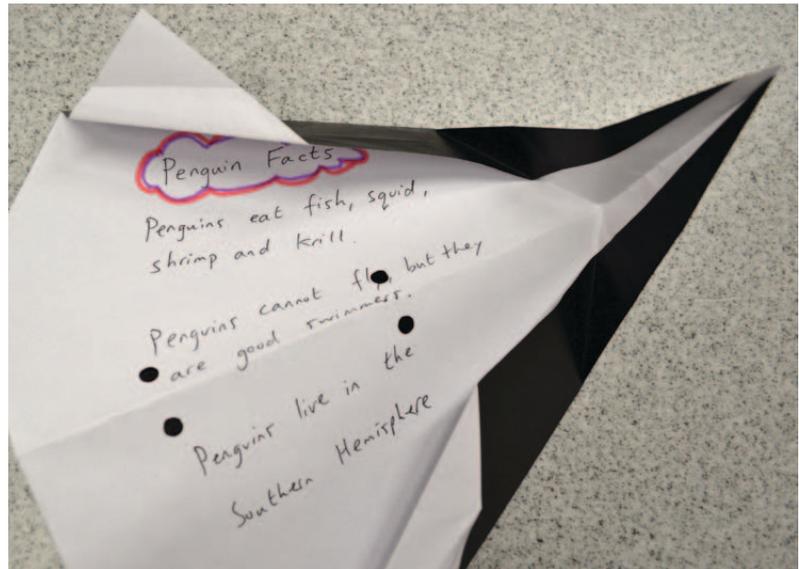
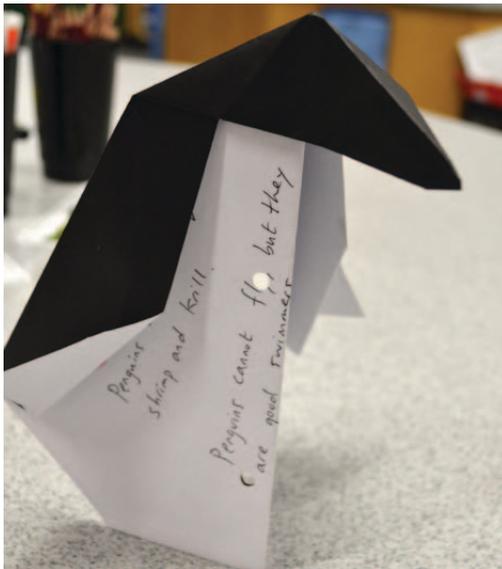
Intercultural competence is a highly desirable skill in any educator, but especially in educators working in culturally diverse environments. Teachers with a high level of intercultural competence have the ability to be flexible, knowledgeable and responsive to the different cultures within, and surrounding, a school community. However, just because a teacher has worked internationally previously does not necessarily make them interculturally competent. Several self-assessment and observational tools will provide more specific information about an individual's level of intercultural competence. These tools will also provide more specific feedback on the requirements for professional development, both of individuals and of groups within the school.

Successful professional development around intercultural competence needs to be on-going. A cycle of assessment, training, action and reflection will help to focus professional development on the needs of the school, rather than professional development being only a reaction to a single incident. Bringing in change through professional development will be more successful if the changes are research-based, and will ultimately help teachers to become better at what they do, while responding to the culturally diverse needs of their students.

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# Teaching science through origami

Anthony Artist shares an innovative approach

I am always trying to find ways for students to create concrete and meaningful connections with scientific knowledge. Where possible, and to improve overall student growth, I also like to bring in other subject matter, cross-curricular links, and technology. No small task! Whilst perusing the Science and Technology section at a local library for primary-based ideas, the Art section quickly caught my eye with the colour of books and creative ideas on offer. I was instantly drawn to the origami section, and I noticed quite quickly that nearly all of these books had something in common on the cover: animals! Yes – a connection to science!

I kept looking through the covers, and I could see frogs, swans, whales, elephants and penguins. “Great!”, I exclaimed, “the students I teach would love to make animals”. But after opening the pages of a couple of books I could see that some of the so-called ‘easy’ animals already looked quite challenging, especially for young children. The elephant looked impossible, but on closer inspection the penguin appeared to be simple, manageable and effective. I teach the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) across the lower school (6 to 10 year olds), so I started to look back through my curriculum for relevant connections. In the standards, I have to teach the diversity of life within different habitats, and a connection must be possible in this area!

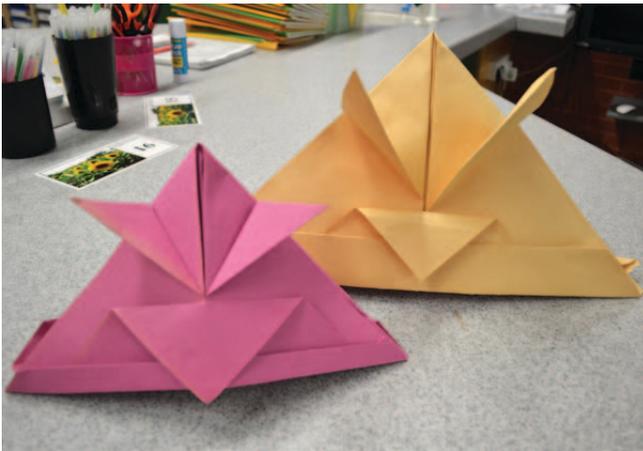
## Origami and Penguins

In Grade 2 (7 to 8 year olds), we had already looked at living things in our local habitat (southern England), so studying penguins would give us the opportunity to look at a contrasting habitat. We watched a short *brainpop*

video about penguins, and noted down some key facts. We also looked at a map of the world and coloured in the places where they lived. Next – to the origami! I had already prepared square pieces of paper with white on one side, and black on the other. I prepared paper in different sizes, to give students the option of creating different sized penguins. The larger pieces of paper helped the less dexterous students. Sample penguins, along with assembly instructions, were placed on every table around the room to promote student independence. I also demonstrated the sequence of folds required to construct the penguin. After folding the penguins, students then unfolded them and wrote simple facts on the back, before refolding. The facts related to what penguins eat, what eats penguins, and where they live. Some students even had time to create more than one penguin – a whole family with mother and father, brothers and sisters!

## Origami and Turtles

I was on a roll. Origami and science were working hand in hand. What could I do next? Which animal could I use next, or did it even need to be an animal? In Grade 1 (6 to 7 year olds), NGSS requires students to use materials to solve human problems by mimicking how animals use their external parts to help them survive. In class, students had made the connection that a tortoise shell protects the tortoise, and that we humans protect ourselves with protective clothing, and helmets. This was a great connection, but I did not think it would be practical to make bicycle helmets with Grade 1 students. What could we make? Would origami once again provide us with a solution?



I came across the folding techniques for a Japanese warrior helmet. The sequence was more complicated than for the penguin, but this was an ideal connection. It also brought inter-cultural awareness into the lesson, which is an essential component in international schools. Whilst trying to make the helmets myself I tried using different quality paper, of varying sizes. In the end, I found that sugar paper was sturdy enough to stay in shape, and that it needed to be at least 60cm by 60cm if it was going to fit on a child's head. The students loved this activity. The lesson included the required science content, but also started to develop each student's technology and engineering skills. The inclusion of inter-cultural awareness was an added bonus!

### Origami and Arthropods

With origami activities now in place for Grades 1 and 2, I wondered what I could implement in Grade 3. Could origami lend its hand again to help teach concepts? NGSS requires students to know that some animals form groups for survival; for example, ants. We also looked at other insects which might, or might not, form groups for survival. This led us to look at other small animals we found in our local woodland such as spiders, millipedes, bees and woodlice (or pill bugs), which in the UK are termed 'minibeasts'. However, it soon became very clear that many students thought that all minibeasts were insects.

I wanted to bring a different approach to animal classification, and this time I found an origami *fortune-teller*, which is also known as a cootie catcher. *Fortune-tellers*



have four labelled outer squares which function as options for players to choose from. When a square is chosen, it reveals four more options, which are typically presented as statements or questions. The questions conceal answers, giving the illusion of mind reading or telling fortunes. Could this approach solve my arthropod issue?

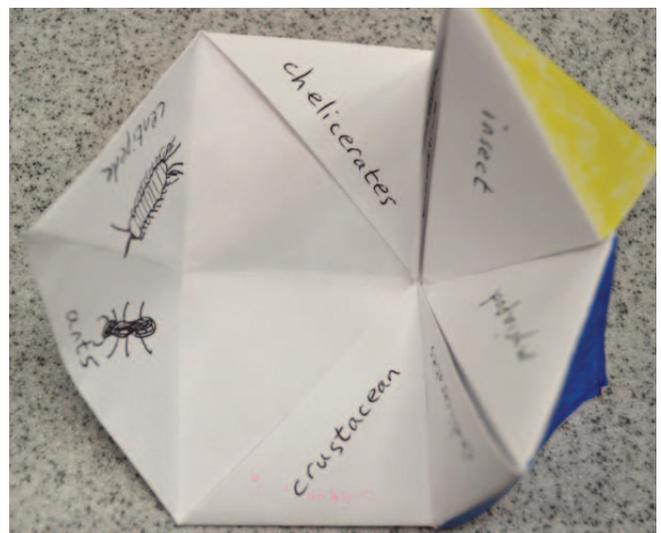
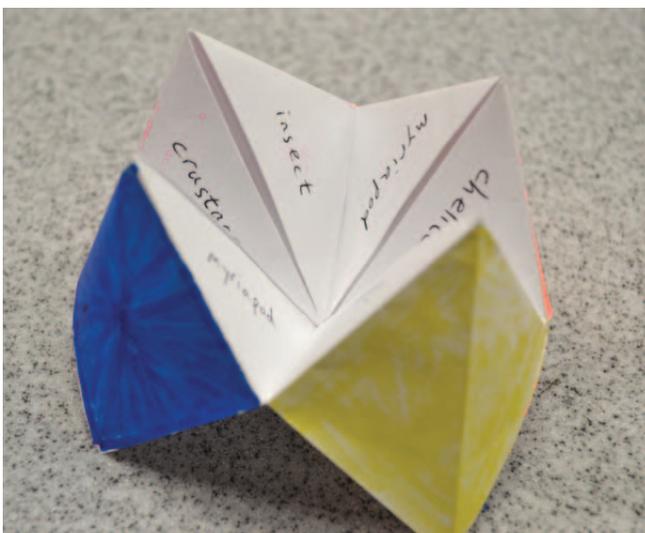
Square pieces of paper were prepared for the students, and sample *fortune-tellers*, with instructions for construction, were placed on each table around the room. After construction, the four outer squares were coloured different colours, and the inner eight sections were labelled with different arthropods: insect, myriapod, chelicerates and crustacean. Examples of specific animals were then placed at the centre of the *fortune-teller*, with small illustrations:

- bees and ants (insects)
- centipede and millipede (myriapods)
- spiders and scorpions (chelicerates)
- crabs and woodlice (crustaceans)

The students were then encouraged to play games using their new devices. "Yellow", said one student. The other student opened and closed the *fortune-teller* reading out Y - E - L - L - O - W, before saying, "Name a myriapod". "Centipede", the first student replied. Perfect!

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# Comparing student reactions

## Konrad Gunesch looks at cross-cultural responses to art, history and cinema

'International mindedness' is traditionally one of international education's challenging notions in theory and practice, as 'the knowledge and skills of 'international mindedness' could be open to a plurality of applications' (Haywood 2015: 47). Yet it can, as Pletser (2012: 59) phrases it, 'empower schools across the world to reconsider international learning in their own contexts and with each other'. Without trying to add to its conceptual framework, this article describes students' reactions to, and changes of, a teacher's approaches and materials aimed at bringing elements of international mindedness into the higher education classroom in two different cultural contexts.

Using Haywood's 'simple typology' (2007: 79-84), we will look at the types of international mindedness labelled 'diplomatic', 'political', 'economic and commercial', 'multicultural' or 'globalization'. Fitting with these labels, we take a look at the cultural and educational contexts of Bachelor of Arts in *Global Business* classes at Laureate International Universities in Panama, and a Master of Arts in *Diplomacy* course at the American University in the Emirates in Dubai. We look at a class called *Cultural Diplomacy* and, for reference, also at students' testimonies from classes of *International Marketing, Negotiation and Conflict, Basic Management, and Quality Management*. Their range from broad course titles ('cultural', 'international') to the more specific ('negotiation', 'quality') hopefully lets many teachers and student benefit from the gained insights.

My actions and reflections, retrospectively traced, were probably a mix of conscious efforts to live (up to) international education's ideals, subconscious uses of my global academic backgrounds, straightforward applications of personally favoured teaching materials and styles, and fortuitous flexibilities in course contents that allowed considering international mindedness in the first place. To serve students' different learning styles, I tend to use multi-sensory mixes of sources and styles, and let the students link them to the respective syllabus as a first transfer task. Thus in the 2017 Dubai class *Cultural Diplomacy* (reflecting Haywood's 'diplomatic' and 'multicultural' types of international mindedness), I introduced assorted artistic renderings of diplomatic personalities or encounters, such as Hans Holbein the Younger's famous 1533 painting *The Ambassadors*. The painting (whose original is one of the first impressions for visitors to London's National Gallery) highlights the 'learnedness' of the two depicted protagonists, one dressed in secular and one in clerical attire, and is crammed with objects such as a terrestrial and a celestial globe, a sundial, quadrant, astrological torquetum, psalm book and lute, among others. My Middle Eastern students were

never expected to identify either any of those, or with the artistic style or historical era at large. The intention was merely to provide a taste of how diplomacy is seen through different eyes and eras.

Here the pedagogical challenges began. The students seemed to find it hard to make any sense of the painting's life-sized overhead display, whether in motive, style, historical or artistic meaning. Assuming the reason to be either the artwork's Eurocentric motive, or Islamic art's avoidance of rendering the human figure (favouring calligraphy even in architectural ornamentation), I switched to Middle Eastern motives (even if still by Western artists) such as Antoine Coypel's 1715 painting *The Persian Embassy to Paris* (depicting the Safavid Ambassador's entourage in Versailles), or Jan-Baptist Weenix's 1659 painting *The Dutch Ambassador on his Way to Isfahan* (depicting his retinue accompanied by the Sultan of Bandar against a dramatic coastal seascape). Yet problems persisted even on the most basic level of interpretation of symbols, and I wondered whether my interdisciplinary enthusiasm for art now impeded international mindedness and understanding.

First I just berated myself for having started out (instead of ending up) with holistic interpretations of complex historical imagery. This made me more keenly aware of the multiple demands that interdisciplinary learning materials place on students' understanding, such as when they are asked to disentangle several levels of politics or diplomacy reflected differently across artworks, periods, mediums and genres. For the future, I vowed to break down any materials that required unlocking several layers of international mindedness. Finally, it struck me that seven years earlier I might have integrated international mindedness with interdisciplinary materials less consciously, but far more effectively when teaching *Global Business* at Laureate International Universities in Panama.

In 2010, three students there had each given me a personal appreciation certificate as a goodbye gift. Their intellectual maturity and independence is reflected in two of them at the time being trainees in their fathers' law and insurance companies, and one a Marketing Operations Advisor for Dell. Also, each certificate offered suggestions for improving my teaching style. On that basis, the below quotes can be seen as their evaluation of our learning sources from world literature, art history and popular cinema as interdisciplinarily insightful, besides substantiating Haywood's 'economic and commercial', 'multicultural' and 'globalization' types of international mindedness.

An excerpt from the first student's appreciation certificate says that:

I shall always remember... one of the most challenging theoretical concepts and real-life scenarios of the course Negotiation and Conflict, the so-called 'Exploding Offer', relevant when you are evidently unfairly pressurized to accept a business proposal. He [Konrad] quoted the 'Farpoint Gambit', which originates in an episode of Star Trek and a swift move by Captain Picard.

while an excerpt from the second student's appreciation certificate noted that:

Professor Konrad ... explained ... differences between Eastern and Western business practices with ... historical and philosophical backgrounds ... of multinational Western companies when entering Eastern markets ... McDonald's stumbling establishment of a subsidiary on Tiananmen Square in Beijing was, in International Marketing, a model for the importance of cultural awareness, in Negotiation and Conflict, a lesson for the priority of negotiation, and in terms of general culture, another opportunity to familiarize us with timeless passages from Confucius's 'Analects', Lao-Tseh's 'Tao The Ching', and Sun Tzu's 'The Art of War'!

Finally, the following are excerpts from the third student's appreciation certificate:

In Basic Management, additional excerpts of translations from Classical Greek literature, such as Herodotus's 'Histories', Pericles's 'Memorial Oration', Socrates's 'Apology', and Plato's 'Republic', where they highlight the image of the business community back in those days, made us compare the historical with the current standing of our career ...

In Quality Management, he showed us how the concept of quality has evolved over time in the fields of art, architecture, engineering and philosophy, from the timeless construction of the Egyptian Pyramids, over the continuous reconstruction of the Japanese Shinto Temple at Ise, to the development of standards during the American Civil War and the Industrial Revolution, up to 20th century and contemporary quality movements...

A teacher who can introduce... the films 'Casablanca' and 'William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice' as part of Midterm Exams in Basic Management, investigating Rick's leadership as well as Antonio's and Shylock's hardships under aspects of cultural diversity and business ethics, for me epitomizes... putting 'the universal' into 'university'.

Re-reading those accolades spurred me into modifying my historical-artistic material one last time, namely to modern

motives, hoping that mass media's political-diplomatic satire, such as cartoons in leading Emirati English-language newspapers (*The National* or *Khaleej Times*) would be much easier for the students to 'read'. At first, even those cartoons needed to be broken down into their elements (figures, faces, props, contexts) and then put back together again. Yet once the students internalized satire's tool of blowing real-life incidents or personal traits out of proportion in a very confined pictorial space, each new cartoon became immediately accessible – even fun – for them.

At the end of the day (i.e. the end of the semester), my cart-before-horse (or forest-before-tree) approach unexpectedly paid off on one more level: those students who initially professed the *least* interest for art *history* came to develop the *subtlest* grasp of *modern* political imagery. It was as if traveling to (or maybe rather *through*) the past had given them a dimension and tool of understanding that they might not necessarily embrace, but knew how to wield. And while none of them became a declared aficionado of classical art's medium or motives, even I did not want to stretch Heywood's 'multicultural' type of international mindedness so far as to require its appreciation.

Those two cultural contexts and teaching experiences led to these mindfulness teacher notes:

1. Be aware not only which, when and where, but also why and how some student cultures digest international mindedness materials faster and more enthusiastically than others.
2. Precede incentivizing international mindedness via interdisciplinary integration of materials and approaches with ensuring the required levels of cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity.
3. Adapt or alter, select and splice, and season and serve interdisciplinary materials according to the local learning palate.
4. Ensure proper procedures in the preceding points, and teaching insights or learning revelations might more than compensate for the time and effort invested.

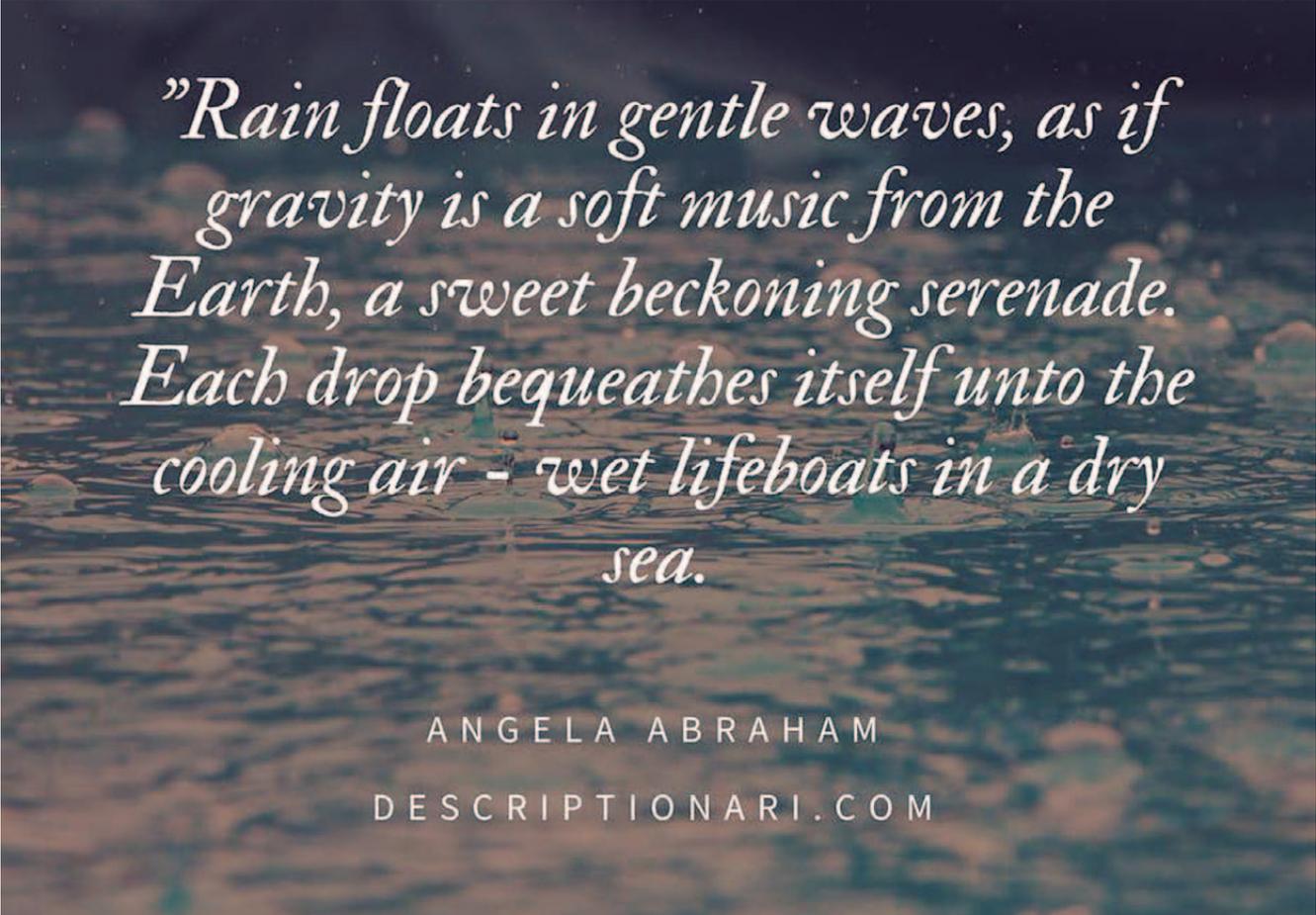
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*"Rain floats in gentle waves, as if gravity is a soft music from the Earth, a sweet beckoning serenade. Each drop bequeathes itself unto the cooling air - wet lifeboats in a dry sea.*

ANGELA ABRAHAM

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# Nurturing creativity in children

Angela Abraham suggest some examples

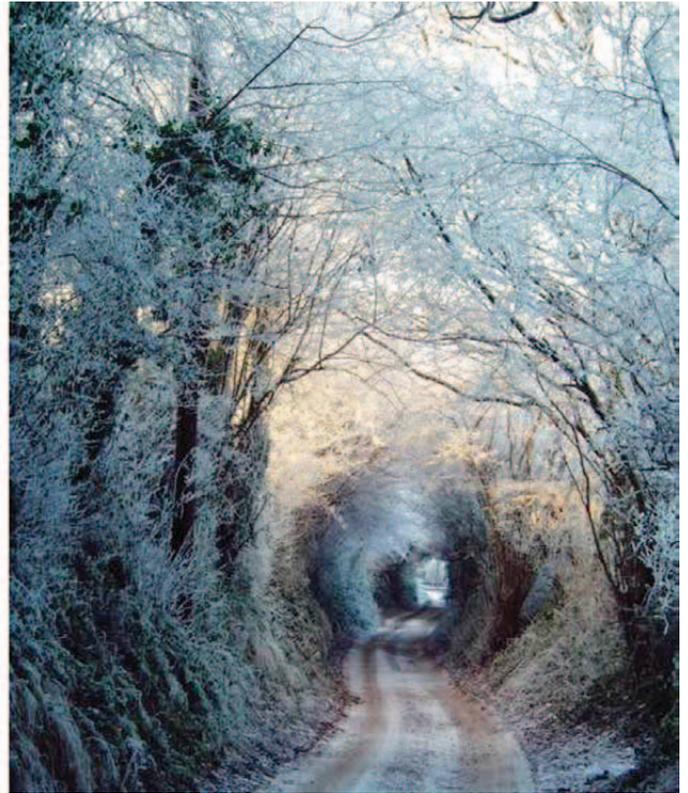
Children are born creatives; they make-believe everything from cooking to imaginary friends. As Einstein said, it is this creative ability that is intelligence; knowledge is something else. To progress in areas of academia there will always be knowledge to be acquired, yet it is those who retain their inborn creativity who will lead the way to innovations in their area of passion. Thus, it is critical that we educators keep this ability alive. Creativity bursts forward when children are having fun; it is inborn of a sense of wonder and play. Happy children learn best, happy adults teach better, both students and teachers enjoying better mental health. When we teach this way we achieve perhaps the most important social good of all, educators role-modelling healthy and robust relationships built on love and trust, enabling students to become well-functioning adults in their various life-roles.

It is wise to keep in mind what our species is, how we came to be what we are. Since the dawn of the human era,

some twelve thousand years ago, we have changed little. We love to learn by storytelling, by music and art. We love to play and tell jokes. In every group there is a natural leader, and the same is true of children. In every group there will be a diversity of ability and interest as is healthy and needed for a community to thrive. A generation of gifted mathematicians who didn't like hunting, farming or building homes would never have survived. In recognising this diversity we can begin to really understand that every child is a needed and valued member of our local and global community. Every child will be led by their passions and natural abilities toward a life of helping others and doing good things. Natural learning is what it has always been: "observe, imitate, practise, master", and the same very simple approach is still the best one.

When we apply this approach to nurturing creativity, we see that the child needs more of an "observe and imitate"

"UNDER A DOVE GREY SKY  
THE COLOURS OF MY  
WORLD DON THEIR  
WINTER COATS, EACH HUE  
DARKER AND RICHER THAN  
BEFORE. THE PATH SPARKLES  
AND CRUNCHES. LIKE  
SUGAR UNDERFOOT AND  
THE COOLNESS BRINGS ME  
RIGHT INTO THE NOW,  
INTO THE MOMENT  
OF LIFE."



phase than is currently given. Plagiarism is an inappropriate notion when educating children; it is an adult concept linked to ownership of rights and has no place in the classroom. Let the learning be full of wonderful rich examples in all mediums. In writing, teach the technical aspects in a different lesson and let the fun begin. Any parts of the inspiring material the children copy will enrich their experience of language; after all, we would not teach children a dance and then scold them for taking the same steps. This is how our species learns. When they are ready to practise and master their art they will naturally be original, keen to explore their own ideas and talents with confidence.

As the class moves from the imitate phase to practising, they will become more creative, adding their own parts and flourishing touches. Let our motto be "The sillier the better!". When we educators relax with children, their learning takes on an organic form; the child and the learning interact to produce something unique. As they move forwards with their passion for creatively expressing themselves, children will pass through to mastery under their own steam and driven by their own interests. This form of teaching can take a little longer in the early stages, but the results are far better. Children believe in themselves as independent learners, are curiosity driven and ready to embark on whatever the purpose of their own lives might be. Let us see the child in pursuit of learning and not the other way around.

As alluded to above, the techniques of writing are thus taught in a separate lesson, although many skills can be picked up "organically" by some children. Punctuation and spelling abilities are unrelated to a child's creative ability (and thus their intelligence). Indeed, often the most highly creative children find such skills the most challenging because they require slower thought. They feel somewhat like a racing car

being forced to drive at a crawling pace. Indeed, for children who find writing difficult, allowing them to submit their work orally or in any non-written form is a huge advantage. Our species did not evolve depending on our ability to de-code symbols or write them, thus it should be little surprise that intelligence is not dependent on ability to read and write. For some children their reading and writing ability comes later; many very intelligent children have highly asynchronous brain development. Einstein himself was something of a late-bloomer, not talking until age four and not reading until about age nine. I have too often seen children who are challenged in the areas of spelling and writing mis-labelled as "low-ability."

So let's show our students that we love writing too, that we still create stories, dances, music and pictures just for fun! We can let them watch us write a story and let them join in the creation of the tale. We can do a daily silly dance. We can tell jokes we make up on the spot, no matter how "lame" they are, and laugh at ourselves. We can read them rich material of wonderful descriptions and not mind if they copy a bit. Let's give children the ingredients for a successful and happy life. Let's encourage them to take a chance on being creative – a skill they can use in whatever academic field awaits them. In the words of Plato: "Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each".

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# A game-changer for boosting students' performance

Ben Thompson highlights the importance of sharing information well in school

The best way for a school to motivate its students is to really understand them. This is easy to say, but in a large international school with eight houses, how do you put this into practice? At Wynberg Boys' High School in Cape Town, South Africa, we seek to understand our students better by discovering what makes them strive for excellence. Established in 1841, Wynberg has a long and illustrious history and, like many older schools, we value our heritage and traditions. I am, however, a firm believer in embracing new ideas and innovative ways to help students achieve their full potential. At the heart of this is information sharing – it is essential for helping staff across the school to keep their finger on the pulse of student progress.

## Working together to support students

So, what's new? Teachers have always talked to each other about their students, and these conversations can often be

hugely beneficial. A quick chat in the staff room about a boy who is falling behind in maths might reveal that the same student is having difficulties in other subjects, for instance. Teachers can then work together to put interventions in place that help to boost the child's achievement across the curriculum.

But we wanted to take a more proactive approach. At Wynberg, we do not want key information such as details of a student's attendance, homework marks or test scores to be recorded only to simply sit in a filing cabinet or on the school's computer system. Our staff have an electronic dashboard of information, such as details of students' attendance and achievement, that is pushed out to them from our SIMS management information system. They don't need to seek it out for themselves: if they are authorised to see it, it goes straight into their hands. We've found that this

sparks valuable conversations between teachers. They have in front of them the latest information on the progress a child is making – or not, as the case may be. This means that issues are uncovered that a teacher might not have been aware of, and staff across the school can then work more effectively together to address them.

### Information sharing in action

If a teacher awards a merit to a boy in their class, other staff members can be automatically notified live, in real-time. So every teacher who has contact with this student will know that they have excelled in that particular subject, and the senior leadership team will have a better view of the student's progress across the board. For us, this is a game-changer in understanding and supporting our students. Our eight house heads, whose primary role is to manage the wellbeing of our students, have at their fingertips the information they need to fulfil that role. From the dashboards on their computer screens, they can see which of their students have been awarded merits or demerits, and how each student has performed in their academic studies; soon we'll be able to monitor the boys' sporting and cultural achievements too.

So, a head of house could walk down the corridor and say to one of his boys, 'You had a bad history lesson, everything alright? Or 'Great improvement on your maths exam, up 22% from last term!' The look on a student's face when we praise them for a piece of work, or offer encouragement after a difficult lesson, says it all. We have that depth of understanding of their progress and, as a result, the students are much more likely to open up and engage with us.

### Helping parents support their children

In my view, by showing students that we are there to support them through the ups and downs of school life, we can empower them to raise their own standards too. At Wynberg, the boys are encouraged to set their own minimum performance levels and have the freedom to raise or lower them as they progress in their studies. Parents have a critical role to play in supporting this too, and that's why we believe it's important that the student reports that go home regularly should have a real impact.

We represent visually each boy's achievements and academic potential, by creating graphs on the school

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reports which chart their progress towards learning targets throughout their time with us. This way, the boys and their parents can see at a glance how they have performed in the past, as well as what they are capable of achieving in the future, as the timescale we use also includes the academic terms that are yet to be completed. It means the widely referred to and intangible concept of a student's 'potential' is framed in a very visual way for parents and boys.

But the official school report is not the only way to communicate with parents. Families today expect to be kept informed on a much more frequent basis than previously of how their child is faring at school, so we have launched an online parent portal. Linked to our main system, all the relevant information about a student can be accessed via the portal, so if a parent is wondering how their son performed in his English test, they can log on and see the result for themselves. With details of achievements and behavioural incidents uploaded as they happen, it's so straightforward: two clicks from the teacher and every boy in the school with a merit or demerit that day will be having a conversation with their parents over dinner. That's a very powerful motivator.

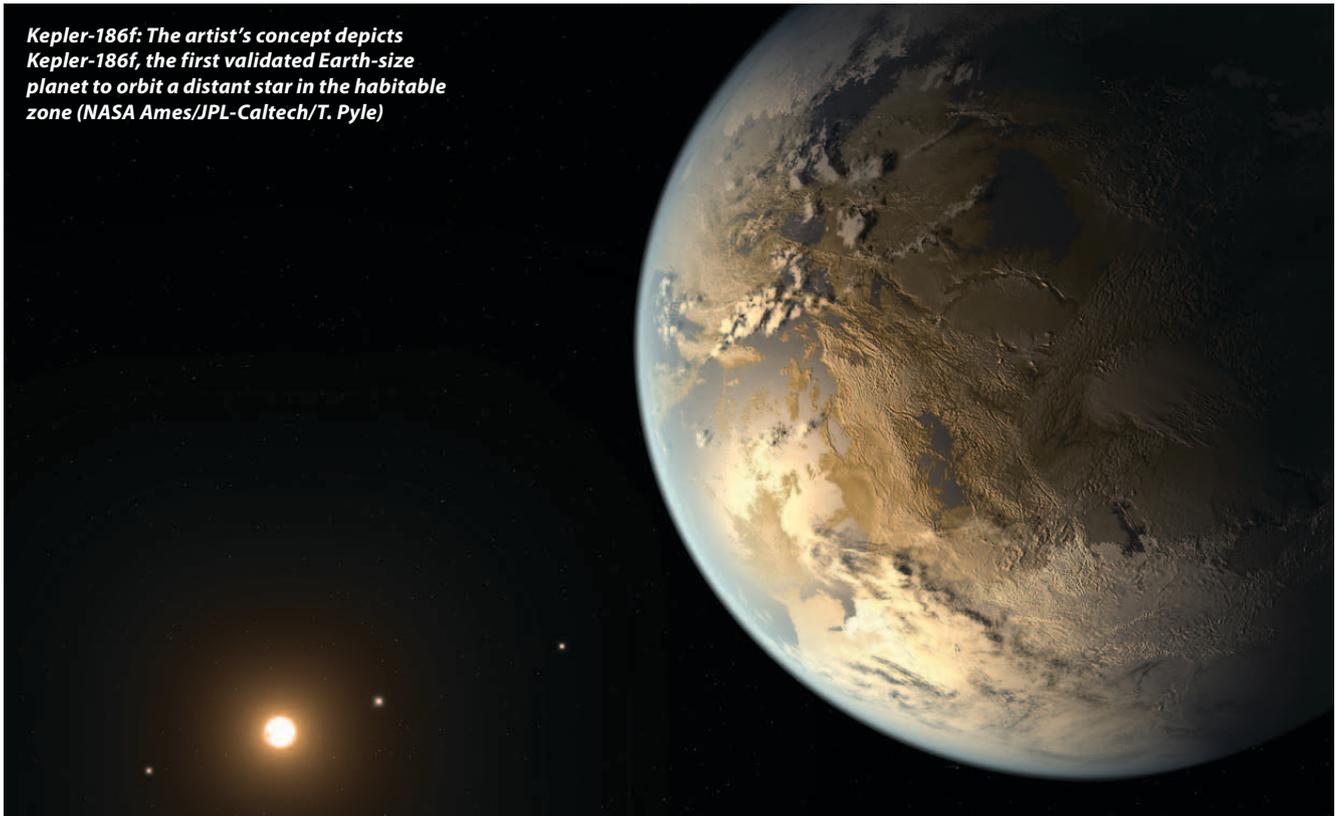
### Encouraging two-way conversation

One of the major benefits of having an effective information-sharing policy in place for a school is that students will be more inclined to open up if they are concerned about their own progress. In our experience, if a subject is proving difficult or a student is struggling to keep up with their homework, knowing that the subject teacher, department leader or head of house is aware of the situation helps. Students are more willing to work with us to identify what support is needed and are more engaged when we provide it. Discussions about what the boys need to do to reach the next level will, more often than not, also happen naturally.

Effective information sharing has always been part of our school's ethos, but we can now share more data, more quickly with those who need to know what progress students are making. Working in unison with some of our older traditions, it has become a vital element in helping us to prepare Wynberg boys to make a positive contribution to South African society after they leave our school.

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**Kepler-186f: The artist's concept depicts Kepler-186f, the first validated Earth-size planet to orbit a distant star in the habitable zone (NASA Ames/JPL-Caltech/T. Pyle)**



# The search for extra-terrestrial life

Astronomers discover that hidden planets may surround our closest star, writes Richard Harwood

Consideration as to whether there are other planets within the cosmos that could support life has generated great interest over the years, and in earlier issues of *International School* magazine we have referred to possible Earth-like exoplanets. Astronomers have recently released information on a dust cloud surrounding Proxima Centauri, the star nearest our own solar system, and suggested that these belts of dust may indeed hide a system of several planets. One Earth-like planet was discovered orbiting this red dwarf just last year. This planet, referred to as Proxima b, resides in its star's habitable zone and is roughly the size of the Earth.

What do we know of Proxima b? Importantly, it is the nearest rocky exoplanet we have spotted, being only 4.2 light years from Earth. Its size has not yet been clearly determined, but it's almost certainly just a bit larger than the Earth. It orbits its star, Proxima Centauri, about once every 11 days, meaning it orbits incredibly close to the star. Proxima b's habitable zone status is explained by the fact that Proxima Centauri is a relatively chilly star. But such a tight orbit does

present other dangers to the exoplanet. It experiences a huge amount of X-ray radiation and stellar wind, and may even be tidally locked. This means that the 'day time' side of the planet is always facing the star – making it hot and bright – with the 'night time' side always pointing towards the emptiness of space, making it cold and dark.

One problem with any study of Proxima b is that, from the Earth viewpoint, it never transits in front of Proxima Centauri, meaning that we cannot use the light from the star to analyse any atmosphere the planet may have. However, the fact that, cosmologically speaking, Proxima b is a relatively close neighbour may mean that we can look for any atmosphere or signs of life by other means.

A prime source of information on new planets that could support life is the NASA Kepler mission; an instrument specifically launched to search for such possibilities. There are now technical difficulties with the Kepler spacecraft but they don't detract from its work in identifying a range of possible planets. Indeed, scientists have found a full 20 new planets

**One of the most truly Earth-like exoplanets we have found is Kepler-186f. It is only 10% larger than Earth. Like several other planets being studied, it orbits a relatively dim star about half the size of our sun.**

that could support life, suggesting there are more habitable worlds out there than we had thought. The new findings from the Kepler mission to discover alien worlds like our own are some of the most optimistic findings yet, suggesting new breakthroughs in our attempt to find 'Earth 2.0'.

One of the most truly Earth-like exoplanets we have found is Kepler-186f. It is only 10% larger than Earth. Like several other planets being studied, it orbits a relatively dim star about half the size of our sun. It is 500 light years away, making atmospheric studies difficult, but we have established that its year is of the order of 130 days and it has a probable surface temperature of about -85C (roughly as cold as Mars). Somewhat chilly! But there are micro-organisms that could survive such temperatures.

The planets found as part of these studies – such as Kepler-186f – have a 70-80 per cent chance of being strong candidates for habitable worlds, according to the scientists involved. Kepler-186f is part of a five-planet star system (Kepler-186) about 500 light years from Earth in the constellation Cygnus. The five planets of Kepler-186 orbit an M dwarf, a star that is half the size and mass of the sun. Figure 1 compares the planets of our inner solar system to Kepler-186. The inner four companion planets each measure less than fifty percent the size of Earth. Kepler-186b, Kepler-186c, Kepler-186d and Kepler-186e orbit every 4, 7, 13 and 22

days respectively, making them very hot and inhospitable for life as we know it.

Since Kepler was launched in 2009, 21 planets less than twice the size of Earth have been discovered in their star's habitable zone – the region in a planetary system where liquid water might pool on the surface of an orbiting planet.

Research such as this is of immense rational and psychological interest, speaking to our place in the cosmos and giving insight into the formation of our own planet. For instance, the orbiting dust cloud of Proxima Centauri may well give insight into how planets are formed within such gravitationally-held dust belts. Three notable planet-hunters involved in the Kepler mission (Natalie Batalha, Michaël Gillon and Guillem Anglada-Escudé) have been recognised by TIME Magazine in their list of 2017's top 100 most influential people, while its principal investigator, William Borucki, has been named as a Fellow by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). In April 2017 the *New Scientist* carried an interesting article on the five most likely candidates to check out for alien life.

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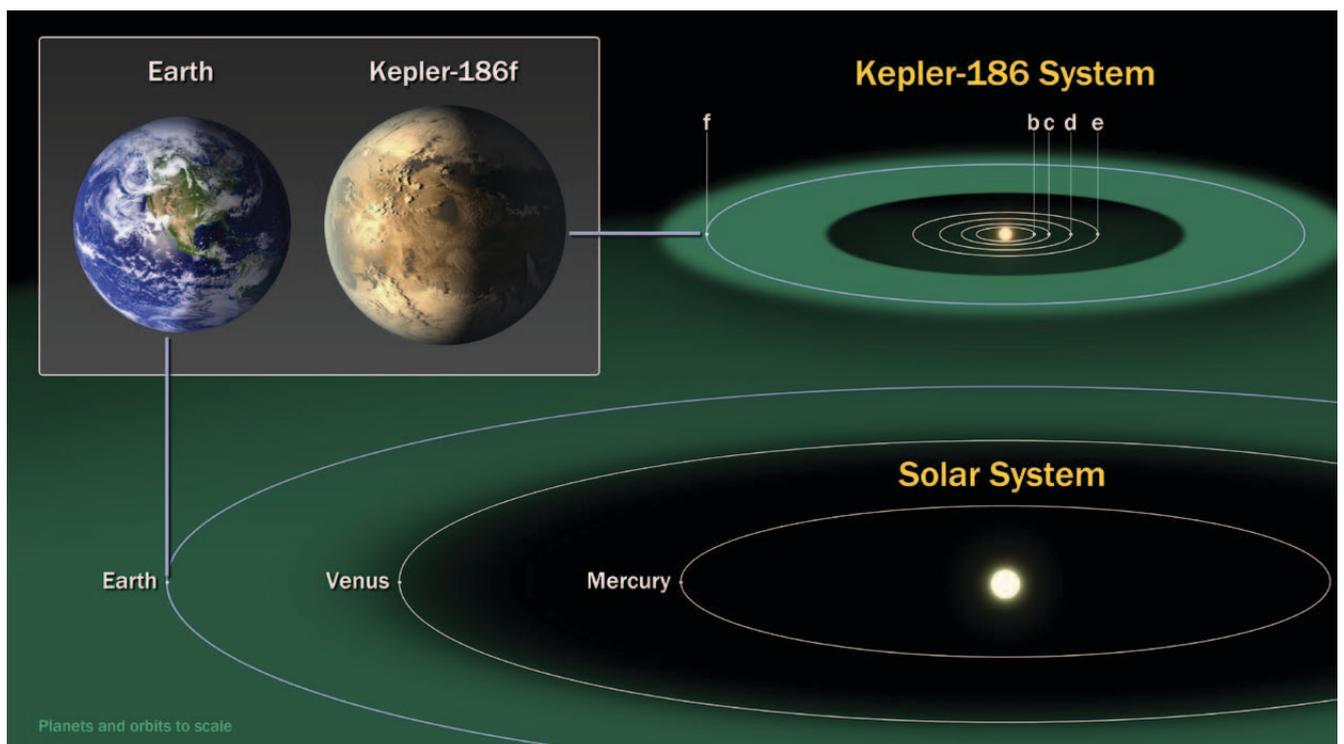


Figure 1: Comparison between the Kepler-186 planetary system and our solar system. (NASA/Ames/SETI Institute/JPL-Caltech)

# International boarding schools in Asia – a white elephant?

Denry Machin considers whether the traditional UK boarding experience can be replicated across the world

When Dulwich College landed on Phuket's shores in 1996, it was the first British private school to make a foray into foreign lands. In the last decade Dulwich has been joined by, amongst others, Repton School, Marlborough College, North London Collegiate School, Epsom College, and Wycombe Abbey. All now have boarding schools overseas.

For boarding schools in the UK, the number of boarders often makes up a large proportion of the roll; indeed, in some schools boarding is compulsory. The expectation is that overseas outposts will mirror this model, healthy demand for day places translating into healthy demand for boarding. However, for many international schools boarding is somewhat adjunct to the day offering and, unlike in the UK, not a fully subscribed nor fully integral part of the school. Exact data is hard to come by but, *soto voce*, many schools report falling short of boarding targets. Is boarding a white elephant? Asian parents are buying into British educational brands, but not (at least not in the same numbers) into boarding. Why not? Based on what limited data there is, and with a strong Asian bias, this article will explore that question under the following headings.

**Siblings:** The most obvious factor is that many international schools are 'all through': K-13. Two siblings may attend a school, one of whom is too young to board (or cannot board for other reasons). Faced with this situation, in many cases, neither child will board.

**A declining market:** UK (and US) boarding numbers have been in decline. In April 2017, the UK's Independent Schools Council reported that boarding numbers fell by 0.2%; the largest decline was in female boarders (1.46%), with those in single sex girls' schools down by 4.0% ([boardingconcern.org.uk/2017/04/28/uk-boarding-decline-continues/](http://boardingconcern.org.uk/2017/04/28/uk-boarding-decline-continues/)). These are long-term trends. High fees and the changing habits of modern parenting are making traditional UK boarding schools a tougher sell. Pertinent to international schools, the resultant slack in UK-based schools is being taken up with overseas students.

According to *The Guardian* ([theguardian.com/education/2016/sep/01/third-of-students-at-many-british-boarding-schools-come-from-overseas](http://theguardian.com/education/2016/sep/01/third-of-students-at-many-british-boarding-schools-come-from-overseas)), one in three students at many British boarding schools come from overseas, with China and Hong Kong providing the largest number. If aspirational Asian families are sending their

children to the UK, that has obvious implications for boarding numbers in sister schools overseas.

**A lack of tradition:** Despite declining enrolment, in the UK there is a long tradition of boarding education. It is common for multiple generations of one family to have attended the same school, and to have boarded. In the UK (and US), parents send their children to boarding schools because they value a boarding education; they cherish the community and the connections, they place importance on the independence it fosters and the aspirations it breeds. More than just exam results and brand name, in the UK the *experience* of boarding is important. In contrast, for many Asian parents boarding is more often a pragmatic solution; it allows access to a school where, for reasons of geography, traffic, or a lack of comparable non-boarding options, it would otherwise be denied. However, in many cases these practicalities are easily overcome. Families often have maids and drivers; children can be ferried to/from school, often in luxury cars, and can be cared for without needing parents to be present. In some places, on the South Korean island of Jeju and in Hong Kong for example, the purchase/rental of a second home near the school is also common; the children stay alone, with a maid or with a non-working parent.

Combined, these factors place a drag on demand. Asians value education, but they privilege family and traditional Asian values too. Coming from collectivist cultures, they don't give the same priority to independence that Western parents do. Given the choice, many Asian parents would rather have their children at home, not in boarding.

**A different type of experience:** While mindful of over-generalising, it is common for UK independent school teachers to have attended similar schools themselves, often as boarders. In Asia-based international schools this is less true. International boarding schools are often staffed with teachers who have limited prior experience of boarding; residential staff may have come from Western boarding schools but, across the whole staff body, prior knowledge and experience of boarding is less common. Moreover, in a K-13 school a portion of the staff are working with children too young to board. For many staff, boarding is largely outside of their purview and experience, and not part of their daily interaction with students.

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**For the most part, boarding in international schools isn't the same as boarding in the UK. It has a different history, is differently organised, and is different culturally. This doesn't mean that boarding schools in Asia cannot be successful. The long histories of schools such as the Raffles Institution in Singapore and The Doon School in India prove the contrary.**

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Boarding schools in the UK are often organised very differently, usually around Houses and around sporting and co-curricular commitments: games afternoons, split-day timetables, evening prep (even for day students) and Saturday morning schooling are common. Serving the needs of K-13 children, and of large numbers of day students, international schools are usually not structured in the same ways. Many have House systems but these are often day Houses, distinct from the boarding houses. This changes the culture of many international 'boarding' schools. Rather than being part of the school's DNA, and part of its routines, boarding is an add-on. In the UK, students are often bonded to their boarding House first and the school second. Few international schools have yet developed to the stage where the boarding House you were in really matters. For Asian parents, the brand of the school itself matters far more.

In a sense then, many international schools have *residential services*, but not *boarding* – at least not as it would traditionally be seen. The impact of this is two-fold:

1. The experience being 'sold' to parents is (often, though admittedly not always) a weak facsimile of boarding as experienced in the UK (or US). Parents who aspire to a boarding education are, as above, likely to look to the West: to the original, not the replica.
2. Even if perceptually and not deliberately, it affirms boarding as a pragmatic choice rather than one made based on values. Parents may use a school's residential services if they have pragmatic need but, seeing it as such, the *value* of boarding is obfuscated and this weakens overall demand.

So, is boarding a white elephant? Despite the points made above, no. Boarding usually attracts sufficient numbers to at least break even, and to contribute to surplus/profit. Schools also benefit, of course, from being able to enroll children who would otherwise not be able to attend, and from increased total income. So in those terms, boarding is often a successful element of the school. However, for the most part, boarding in international schools isn't the same as boarding in the UK. It has a different history, is differently organised, and is different culturally. This doesn't mean that boarding

schools in Asia cannot be successful. The long histories of schools such as the Raffles Institution in Singapore and The Doon School in India prove the contrary. Yet it is a mistake to assume that what works in the West (and has done for centuries) can simply and profitably be exported to Asia. With the great and the good of UK schools establishing outposts in Asia, those offering boarding should note that:

- Boarding is *unlikely* to be as significant a proportion of roll as it is in the UK home base.
- Asian parents who value the boarding experience will continue to look West, to the UK and US.
- For other parents, boarding offers a pragmatic solution to school access.
- The international school boarding experience will be different; not worse, not better, but different.
- Recreating a UK boarding experience in Asia will require a deep and long-term strategic commitment and some tough organisational decisions.
- Marketing messages which promote boarding as a practical option should be avoided; the focus should be on the ethos of boarding and the benefits boarders gain not in shorter travel times but over their lifetimes. Growth will be slower, but the longer-term upside greater.

Appropriately, the term *white elephant* originates from Thailand. White elephants were gifted to kings' courtiers who had rendered themselves obnoxious, the cost of upkeep ruining the recipient. Few international boarding schools are at risk of ruin, but investors, Heads and governing bodies would do well to openly, reflexively and critically discuss the reality of boarding in Asia. To mix metaphors, they need to be wary of the (white) elephant in the room.

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# Is there life beyond 'TCK'?

E T Ranger has been doing some fieldwork...

Ever eager to know the word on the street, in October 2017 your correspondent joined the *Alliance for International Education* conference in Amsterdam, a biennial gathering of many parties to international education. As a group of educators, academics, examiners, parents – and in some cases grandparents, it offers a formidable concentration of international and intercultural experiences, and triggers some rich discussions.

One grandparent claimed that a grandchild in a primary school in a British city has more access to the ordinary homes and lives of other communities than another grandchild who attends an international school. Reflecting on the homes that an international school bus is likely to call at, this seems very possible. Perhaps we globe-trotters are aware of one kind of diversity – nationality – and blind to others – heritage, class, personal history.

Does this matter? To some extent it depends where we see the child's mobile future being played out: in a 'home country', where host and immigrant communities are divided

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**Can the TCK model be applied to refugees, or to economic migrants, or committed cosmopolitans?**

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by values, or in the international field of business and politics, where communities are defined by borders and passports? It is the latter that we almost invariably think of in our schools, where we tot up our number of nations with pride. Yet at 'home', and throughout the world, the daily problem is the difference in values between two individuals.

It sounds as though we could learn from those who stayed home. Our editors have suggested that we look again at the label 'TCK'. If we think about diversity in terms of the 244 million people who the UN said in 2015 were living outside their country of birth, how useful is the term 'TCK'? Devised to provide a category for those who travelled abroad at a time when few did, and returned to find themselves unexpectedly out of synch with everyday life, that seems a very specific journey. Imagine the many kinds of cultural

encounters the 'millennials' will have in their lifetimes, even if Brexit, wall-building, and insidious nationalism continue. Can the TCK model be applied to refugees, or to economic migrants, or committed cosmopolitans?

There is an additional reason to revisit the term and its consequences for practice. There is currently a major reassessment ongoing of some of the fundamentals of Social Psychology, among other subjects. Called the 'Replication Movement', it is a systematic re-examination of the methods, statistics and conclusions of research, and of the 'research-based' remedies that have been marketed as a result. The rumble of collapsing theories and reputations keeps academics and consultants awake at night. Part of this is due to improved statistical methods. Researchers are not all statisticians and, to be honest, most research is a search for confirmation of the researchers' hunches. Many investigations in Social Psychology only produce evidence of fractional effects. But this can generate a headline (or a tweet), then a miracle method, and a reputation is made. In the present climate it is a matter of time before our current theoretical assumptions are put under the microscope, and the TCK paradigm may be one of them. It's not so much that they aren't true – generalisations are a good place to start – but rather that we need a richer account of human development if we are to understand our complex reactions to such diverse situations.

If we want to find some solid ground as research comes under criticism, where can we look? A hundred years ago Gregor Mendel's statistical method was challenged by Ronald Fisher, and the question is still simmering (Franklin *et al*, 2008). John Berry, the Canadian authority on integration of immigrants who is a consultant to several governments, is clear about what is needed. Research in just one community cannot hope to be widely valid, he says. He has just published a 17-country study of the intercultural relation of communities which suggests that there is reliable validity in three social processes (Berry, 2017). Multiculturalism promotes the mutual respect and understanding of communities; Contact Theory predicts conditions in which genuine engagement with another community will generate understanding; integration promotes stability in societies where both the host and home cultures are sustained. Is this a place to start looking for a new formula to bring to the study of people who move?

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# Inspiring art show celebrates Zimbabwe crafts

Michele Debuisne outlines a creative endeavour

Marymount International School, Paris is a Catholic school with a mission statement that embraces diversity and fosters not only individual success but also compassion for those who are less fortunate. As a school, we have annual fundraising that supports our sister school in Zimbabwe. The sisters there belong to the same order as our sisters here: the RSHM (Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary). In the spirit of the RSHM mission “that all may have life”, I came up with the idea to have a school-wide art fair that would feature students’ art from grades 1-8 and would also have a fundraising component: the art auction and “goodies” generated from the student art for sale. Here’s the story.

I am fortunate to teach in a large, glass-roofed art studio. The students come down to my studio once a week; happy, eager and ready to do something new and exciting. After the initial settling-in period of September, I launched into project

work that would be displayed in the art fair. I explained that only their very best work was acceptable and that they needed to practice before going on to their final set of materials. The motivation for the art was the animals, the people and the traditional crafts of Zimbabwe. This was rich inspiration.

Giraffe silhouettes, mountain gorillas, African warriors, lions, clay bowls, Ndebele dolls, Ndebele designs and houses, hippos, zebras and elephants. This is the complete list of art created, and each class spent several weeks perfecting their individual piece. A frame was added to every painting with patterns and designs. Some classes enjoyed the process so much we continued to make more art inspired from the first project. In grade 4 after painting lions, they were eager to draw elephants too. One student in grade 2 told me she was drawing mountain gorillas at home all the time!

Artistic surprises also happened along the way. My students





developed a more critical attitude towards their subject. My grade 6 students were challenged to paint hippos in water, and they learned how to create highlights and shadows. Students had to improve their painting techniques, so they practiced using oil pastel and watercolor; wet on wet technique; salt sprinkles into wet paint; and enhancing with thin markers or colored pencils. Grade 7 painted a zebra, cropping from the shoulders to feature the full details on the head. Various techniques were used such as bold acrylic paint, rainbow stripes in watercolor, or rich oil pastels. The zebras featured a black frame that was printed with white cardboard lines and paper sponges to create a dramatic black and white effect.

The learning experience was as exciting and engaging for me as it was for the students. We were all focused on producing top-notch art pieces. Students helped other students who were struggling to mix the right color, construct a paper frame or make a pattern. As a teacher, I enjoyed seeing genuine excitement and art learning in action every week. I was supported by our Head of School, who absolutely loved the idea and encouraged me endlessly. We had monthly meetings and our team grew larger to include our Parent Teacher Organisation members, our communications department and alumni members. We decided that instead of selling student art, we would select one piece of art from each grade and turn it into a magnet. We sold badges made in our FabLab (a maker space that puts technology for design and construction, such as 3-D printers and laser cutters, into the hands of students) and a poster featuring student art. Lastly, we auctioned two paintings from Asher Jay, an animal conservationist artist whose work reflected our own themes and ideas. Our online auction featured art donated by a member of our community.

On a hot day late in May I was ready to hang the art in our administrative building. This might not seem like a worthy venue to display art but this is a magnificent, mansard-style building. It was the perfect place for an art exhibition. We displayed the auction art and sales goodies in the parlors downstairs. Over 350 student art pieces were

displayed on panels, along staircases, hallways and boardrooms. We displayed on three floors. The result was nothing short of amazing. The 'vernissage' (opening night) was held one evening and welcomed enthusiastic parents, students and colleagues. The silent/online auction was underway, followed by a 'Live' auction of Asher Jay's stunning paintings. Champagne and nibbles completed a perfect evening!

QR codes! One QR code was on a student's art piece. I designed it so that it would explain the meaning behind each of the subjects chosen for the student art. For example, the grade 6 hippo painting had QR codes that told the story of an English couple who saved the hippos from drought in 1991. Every QR code told another part of the story, so if you listened to all 10 of them you would have a better understanding of the story behind the hippo paintings. Students visited the Art fair with their homeroom. They used iPads to scan the QR codes, learn a story and fill out an activity booklet I had prepared. There was too much to complete in one class so they chose the group of paintings about which they wanted to learn more.

To conclude, the event raised several thousand euros for Zimbabwe through the sale of magnets, posters and auction art. More importantly, it was a community event that ended our school year on a high note. Students improved their techniques and skills. They learned to persist and persevere on their individual project. They admired and were in awe of hundreds of art pieces coming together in one place for a week. They were interested in the art for sale in the auction section donated by older students, teachers, parents and alumni. It was exciting to participate and to see the prices going up on the silent online auction. The Zimbabwe art fair was a powerful experience that reached everyone in the school community and a wider public via our social media.

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# India all set for international education expansion

Nalini Cook reports on a thriving sector

The international schools market in India is on the cusp of significant expansion. This forecast is based upon data and intelligence that ISC Research, the leading provider of data and intelligence on the English-medium K-12 international school sector, has published in a new Market Report for India. Key facts from the report indicate that, within the last five years, the number of international schools in India has grown by over 45%, while student enrolment has increased by over 70%. There are currently 469 international schools located throughout the country, attended by 268,500 students aged between 3 and 18. The fees at international schools in India range widely, but capacity utilisation is high regardless of fees (ISC has researched all international schools in India with fees over USD \$4,000 per year). The schools with annual fees between USD \$4,000 and \$10,000 are, on average, 79% full. Schools with fees over \$10,000 are currently in excess of 81% full. Some schools have waiting lists, particularly for primary

years. Intelligence gathered by ISC's research consultants, who visited and interviewed the schools in India this year, suggest that within four years most of this spare capacity is likely to be filled.

There is a decline in enrolment at India's private schools as some students migrate to international schools, and several of India's schools are moving from state examination boards (such as the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education) to international boards (such as Cambridge International Examinations, and the International Baccalaureate) to respond to the increasing demand for more globally-recognised education and qualifications. It is a demand that is being led by local families. In India's mid-fee-range international schools (those between \$4,000 and \$10,000) 75% of the enrolment are local Indian children. In the high-fee-range schools (those over \$10,000), 43.5% are locals. Expatriates, particularly American, South Korean and British, make up the



remaining student demographic. With respect to curriculum, the most prevalent programmes among schools charging annual fees over \$4,000 are those of the International Baccalaureate. A curriculum from the UK follows closely behind in these schools, but dominates when taking into account all international schools, regardless of fees.

ISC's market report highlights several reasons why opportunities for international school development in India look particularly favourable. India's population is growing apace, with over 28% of its total population currently under the age of 14. By 2022, India's population is predicted to match that of China, and then to exceed it. In addition, due in part to economic liberalisation, India is home to a new generation of relatively affluent and aspirational parents who want the best for their children. As ISC has identified, the country is experiencing increasing demand for high quality international education and, according to management consultancy firm Technopak, by 2020 India's private education market will have doubled in value within the space of just four years.

All indications suggest further development of international schools in India in forthcoming years, particularly in the mid-range-fee schools where demand will be highest. Major school groups already well established in India, GEMS and Maple Bear Canadian Pre-Schools, have plans for further development in the country, and two British independent schools are already making their mark there; in 2016 King's College Taunton opened King's College India in Rohtak, northwest of Delhi to become the first British independent school in the country. Repton School has also now identified the potential and will be opening a school for 3 to 18 year olds in Bangalore/Bengaluru in September 2018. The school also has four Repton Nurseries throughout Bengaluru to act as feeder schools. Increasing numbers of independent schools and school groups are expected to follow suit.



**Tony Puri, CEO of Repton International at the ground-breaking ceremony of Repton Bangalore.**

"India is one of the world's fastest growing economies today, and a country with a huge thirst for quality education", says Schools Director at ISC Research, Richard Gaskell. "Prospects for international school growth in the future look very favourable."

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**India's population is growing apace, with over 28% of its total population currently under the age of 14. By 2022, India's population is predicted to match that of China, and then to exceed it.**

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# Aligning UN goals and learning goals

Students at UNIS Hanoi are committed to sharing learning experiences. Emma Silva reports...

Shared values between the United Nations (UN) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) have provided an ideal framework for learning at the United Nations International School Hanoi. And as the school celebrates '30 Years of Learning to Inspire', the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been brought even more sharply into focus as a key driver in curriculum development. Since the launch of the SDGs in 2015, UNIS Hanoi has made intentional efforts to integrate them with the IB units of inquiry. Recognising its unique opportunity – as one of only two United Nations international schools – to make a global impact, work started immediately the SDGs were launched, with UNIS Hanoi students from Discovery (age 3) through to Grade 10 actively exploring and reflecting upon the aspirational goals as part of their science, maths, languages, humanities, arts and sports lessons.

Devised to tackle global concerns such as gender equality,

climate action, clean water and sanitation, peace and justice, and education, the SDGs aim to make the world a better, safer place for all. Furthermore, the United Nations has challenged itself to achieve firm targets by 2030, the same year in which our five and six year olds will graduate from school. The 15 year duration of the SDGs proves beneficial for whole-school learning, and means that students will receive multiple chances over the years to know more not only about the Goals, but also about the UN and its overall mission.

The architects behind the integrated curriculum at UNIS Hanoi are Primary Years Programme (PYP) Coordinator, Angela Meikle and Middle Years Programme (MYP) Coordinator, Cindy Barnsley. The duo mapped out the links between SDGs and the school's programme of inquiry, ensuring all opportunities to explore a Goal are taken. And what seemed a difficult task at first, revealed Cindy, was quickly achievable because the SDGs naturally connect to the IB curriculum's

focus on action and service. Angela further observed that “The values of what the IB wants in an internationally minded student, and what the United Nations wants, are closely aligned”, while Cindy continued: “Integrating the SDGs with our curriculum helps us live the mission statements of both UNIS Hanoi and the United Nations, and helps us really see how we connect together.”

In the Early Childhood Centre and Elementary School, all Sustainable Development Goals are taught in age-appropriate ways. Despite some potentially daunting topics, such as SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), children are effortlessly grasping the issues. In Grade 2, for example, as part of their unit of inquiry integrating humanities, students were tasked to select SDGs and redesign them to reflect what they mean (See Figure below); while Grade 1 students convey their understanding through poetry. In the Middle School years up to Grade 10, students delve into these global concerns in much greater depth, often required to debate, research and write compelling assignments, or even dramatize some of the scenarios around the SDGs.

Both Coordinators stress that it’s not only the themes that make the integrated approach successful; it’s also the calls to action they garner – a key component of the IB. As Cindy explained: “One of the things that differentiates us as an IB community is the focus on action.” Angela added that “We want students taking action – in the local community and global community. As students move through our programme, their knowledge and understanding of these goals will continue to deepen, combined with how they would take action to make a difference. I think it’s exciting to keep putting the question back to the students to say ‘What will you do?, because it’s your world.’”

As a result of this commitment to action, UNIS Hanoi has dedicated considerable resources and precious time within

the schedule to embed service learning into the Middle and High School curriculums, embracing the opportunity provided by the three IB programmes offered to make responding to authentic community needs a part of each student’s learning every year they attend our school. UNIS Hanoi has connected each of its 35 service projects to Sustainable Development Goals with the intent that every project will make a real long-lasting impact, while guided by specific Goals such as no poverty, gender equality, good health and well-being or quality education, to name but a few.

The brainchild behind the initiative is UNIS Hanoi’s Middle and High School Service Learning Coordinator, Colin Campbell, who says he hopes the SDGs will become a ‘vocabulary’ for the school to use in order to assess the effectiveness of its programmes. He continues, “We make service a core part of the Middle and High School experience. There isn’t an opt-out. But it’s not enough to have kids in clubs or groups; we want to make sure that the programmes they are involved in are making a difference in Vietnam – and the right kind of difference. As a UN-connected school, it was organic to link our service initiatives with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. They are an excellent set of targets to motivate the students with.”

At the beginning of the school year, students in Grades 6 to 12 received a handbook detailing each service learning programme and the specific SDGs they relate to. For example, the Swim for Life programme links to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education). New for this year is the *A Slice of Hanoi* cooking group that is addressing SDG 2 (to End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition, and Promote Sustainable Agriculture). Also new this year, the whole Grade 7 class are focused on SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through their work in the UNIS community gardens and connected projects.



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“We want students to question whether they actually reduced poverty, promoted quality education or gender equality, or good health and well-being – which are just some of the Goals for a number of the projects”  
– Colin Campbell

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With these strong links made at the very start, students and their teachers will be able to better gauge the true impact of their activities over the year. “We want students to question whether they actually reduced poverty, promoted quality education or gender equality, or good health and well-being – which are just some of the Goals for a number of the projects” said Mr Campbell. “What we are doing is setting ourselves up to a higher standard.” And there is no higher standard than impacting the UN’s 2030 goals. At the launch of this curriculum endeavour, UN-appointed Board member, Ms Claire Montgomery, called on all faculty to commit to sharing learning experiences that exemplify the work of the UN, and in particular the drive towards achieving the SDGs by 2030. She said, “As our students progress through the school, the Sustainable Development agenda can serve as a reminder of the highest ambitions of international cooperation. We look forward to a more peaceful, equitable and just world by 2030, and we hope our students feel equipped to contribute to this ambitious agenda.”

This commitment to action and development, and the impact that it has had on Vietnam’s development, is recognised and appreciated by our host country government. At the School’s 30th UN Day celebrations this month, Foreign Affairs Vice Minister Le Hoai Trung, who was until last year Vietnam’s ambassador to the UN, paid tribute, saying that “UNIS Hanoi is the symbol of the commitment of the UN to Vietnam. UNIS Hanoi is also a symbol of the expansion of the cooperation, and you see in the growth of UNIS also the achievements of Vietnam. I very much wish that UNIS will continue to be the symbol of the UN.”

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# Through the eyes of future teachers

Vlad Coraci, Melany Mistrorigo and Chiara Bernardi report on The Alliance for International Education conference

Between 6 and 8 October 2017 the Alliance for International Education held its biennial conference in Amsterdam on the topic of internationalizing schools. Among the multitude of representatives who attended the event were ten lucky future teachers from Stenden University: Chiara Bernardi, Melany Mistrorigo, Lena Boßmann, Vlad Coraci, Marleen Bosma, Jorijn Vuyk, Noëlle van der Sligte, Melina Knispel, Emma Golles and Christina Kulle-Gutoskie. This is an account of that event through the eyes of these student teachers.

AIE conferences bring together people involved in the promotion of intercultural understanding and international education (AIE, 2017) and that is precisely what we had the privilege to experience: listening to distinguished guest speakers at the seminars and lectures, learning new practices

from teachers from all over the world, and at the same time contributing to the dialogue with our own ideas. On a misty Saturday morning, we also held a plenary session where we shared our view of what 'international' means to us. We told the stories that made us global nomads and what brought us to the ITEps (International Teacher Education for Primary Schools) programme. Many of the key issues that we pointed out during our session resonated with the experiences of international students and international teachers. This was undeniably a huge opportunity for us as it put us on the map for the representatives of international schools at the conference, and it sparked engaging conversations with them. It was so meaningful for us also because these intercultural exchanges allowed us to dig deeper on the

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topics brought up during the seminars and to discuss our views with the experts present.

During the conference we also had the chance to actively participate in discussions. Many connected with the dilemmas and questions brought up: Melina Knispel explored the concept of globalism: "think globally, act locally"; Jorijn Vuyk delved into the view we have of international schools and the pitfalls of assuming that they necessarily offer better forms of education than national schools; Chiara Bernardi learnt about the concept-based curriculum as used at CLIP, the International School of Porto, Portugal. The content of the seminars was inspiring and thought-provoking, but what made this conference so powerful was the format that allowed us to get to know professionals from around the globe: we mingled, and we exchanged experiences, thoughts and ideas with them. We related to them, as all participants in this event had a common aim and worked to achieve a common goal: internationalizing the world we now live in.

More inspiration also came from the guest speakers at the plenary sessions, which provoked critical thinking on our part. Prof Dr Marli Huijter, a Dutch philosopher and Thinker Laureate of The Netherlands, made us reconsider and reflect on our idea of internationalism and global nomadism, and made us acknowledge the feelings of those 'left behind'. We, citizens of a mobile international world, need to bring change to the world, but as Huijter states 'we must consider that movement seems to be impossible if nothing is at rest' (Huijter, 2017). On Sunday morning Dr Conrad Hughes,

Principal of the International School of Geneva La Grande Boissière campus, discussed prejudice, its meaning and relevance, and the role that international education can play in reducing it.

This unique experience not only brought onto the table our view on internationalism, but also opened new exciting paths for us. We found similarities between ourselves and the other international teachers participating in the conference, while connecting more deeply on a professional and personal level with those who are already working in the field. We are passionate about international education and we are working hard to be able to fulfill our dream to one day be the teachers of tomorrow. When attending a conference, student teacher are not the colleagues participants might expect to meet, but we were so fortunate to have been a part of this experience. We are still so grateful for having been part of the AIE Conference, which has made a lasting impression for when in the future we will be the ones driving further change in international education.

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# The team behind the athlete

## Anne Louise Williams on supporting a high-performing student-athlete

Conor Ferguson (aged 16) is an elite swimmer from Northern Ireland who trains over 20 hours a week. His proudest achievement to date is being the 100m Backstroke Champion at the 2015 Commonwealth Youth Games in Samoa: “When I stood on the first place podium position getting my medal presented to me followed by my national anthem, it was a proud moment in my career”.

When an athlete achieves the pinnacle in their chosen sport, whether it be winning a title, making the tour, becoming a world champion or achieving an Olympic medal, they tend to reflect on their journey and the supporters who assisted them along the way. For a student-athlete, the entourage consists of many individuals who work together to support and develop that person. Whilst focused on different aspects of the athlete’s life and career, the parents, coaches and school all share a passion to guide, manage and support the student-athlete to achieve their goal in the shorter term and to prepare them for a future as a successful and balanced individual.

Conor’s entourage includes his parents, coach Alan Bircher and Ellesmere College, UK where he is a boarding student. Vicky Pritt-Roberts, Deputy Head Academic of Ellesmere College, an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, commented: “We pride ourselves on valuing the individual which is something lots of schools claim. But to really demonstrate that, you need to be willing to adapt and be flexible to enable the individual to pursue their goals, and have a good education. Helping athletes achieve both is an example of our mission in practice.”

Being an essential ‘cog’ in Conor’s entourage, Ellesmere College ensures that he is able to balance his training regime and school work. Pritt-Roberts added: “By being aware of the demands that elite training puts on a young person, and by drawing on their commitment to their training and the self-discipline that generates, the school liaises with coaches at the start to ensure that their schedule is designed to dovetail their academic and training commitments. For example, they have supervised homework sessions earlier in the day

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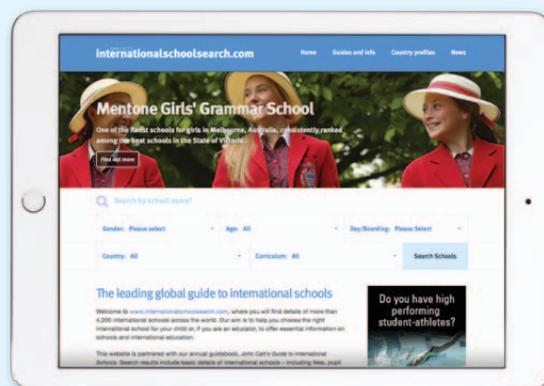
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for certain groups of elite athletes so they can attend their training sessions later. The school values opportunities to do other activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, so where an athlete is keen to do this, they alter the programme to accommodate their commitments and still be able to access the elements of this award. By doing this, the school finds its athletes can have a range of experiences and helps them to grow in confidence outside of their sport."

Recognised as an Athlete Friendly Education Centre (AFEC), Ellesmere is an accredited 'athlete-friendly' school by the World Academy of Sport. Pritt-Roberts commented: "We strive to create an environment where athletes can thrive in academic, personal, and sporting terms. Having AFEC accreditation is the quality mark that sends that message out so they can see we are serious about this." As a World Academy of Sport, AFEC-accredited school Ellesmere College is provided with an international accreditation recognised by many International Sport Federations as well as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

In Conor's opinion "The key with balancing academic and sport commitments is planning and being organised. For example, if I have a competition coming up and in that same week an exam for a subject or an assignment to hand in, I'll make sure that I do enough work in advance so I am prepared for that exam or complete the assignment a week earlier. This therefore avoids any type of stress from the academic side of my life meaning I can compete without any unwanted distractions". For coach Alan Bircher there is one clear characteristic of an athlete who has a more balanced life, especially when it comes to education and sport. "It's really simple, they are consistent. Consistently swimming at a high level and being able to have sufficient rest between sessions and schooling gives them the best chance to achieve."

The benefits to Conor in attending a school like Ellesmere College which actively supports athletes in maintaining a balance between sport and academic commitments is very clear to Conor's parents. They make the following observations about particular benefits experienced by their son:

**Like-minded People:** "Being with like-minded people means they communicate in a similar fashion, they are more likely to get the best out of each other and they are more likely to want to live in a less negative influencing environment that may affect their performance – alcohol, drugs, partying etc."

**Athlete Family:** "This family works together, learns to live together and be there for each other. (It has been a joy to observe from a distance). This experience joins the dots in a protected environment between childhood and adulthood. Conor's development is clear to see when he returns home."

**Wisdom and Shared Experience:** "The school has the experience and the technical expertise in dealing with athletes and their challenges; the unseen pastoral care has been exceptional. Conor's attitude towards many situations has improved and his understanding and knowledge is mainly due to the expertise of the staff and students he is surrounded by."

**World Class Environment:** "We consider the coaching World Class, the personal and academic environment World Class, and the school is working on the facilities to become World Class. Many of the athletes are World Class at a junior level – Ellesmere College is the best stepping stone for them to become WORLD CLASS!"

Communication between members of the entourage is a key ingredient of the success for Conor as both a student and an athlete. As coach Alan Bircher commented, "As a coach, I'm an open book and any information required from the school, parents and Conor is free to access. I have regular meetings with the school to make sure students are up to date with the academic side, and with regards to the swimming, we have communication with parents and athletes, and make sure the line is always open. As is often the case for athletes, there are many individuals who support Conor in making him the most successful and most balanced athlete he can be. Ellesmere College, his parents and his coach will certainly all be mentioned in any upcoming acceptance speech he is likely to make in the future."

The World Academy of Sport (WAOs), with support and guidance from its International Advisory Board, the International Baccalaureate and many of the International Sport Federations, has put in place a framework for schools to become accredited as 'athlete-friendly'. Schools like Ellesmere College are accredited for delivering excellent support services and providing flexible learning pathways to enable student-athletes to balance their sporting and educational commitments.

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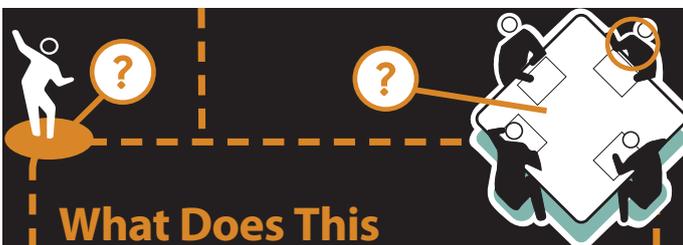
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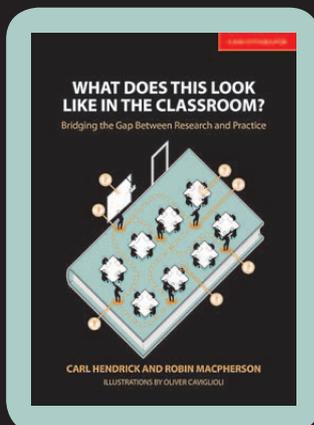


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# The Creativity Challenge

## How We Can Recapture American Innovation

by K H Kim

Prometheus Books, New York (2016)

Reviewed by Ji Han

George Lois says 'Creativity can solve almost any problem. The creative act, the defeat of habit by originality, overcomes everything'. K H Kim shares her story about how finding and nurturing creativity changed her life. In this book, she maintains that 'human beings have an unprecedented ability and potential to create'. Based on her research findings and numerous other studies, Kim warns that 'creativity is declining and something must be done'. A 2010 IBM survey of Chief Executive Officers globally determined that creativity is the most crucial factor for future success. With so much compelling information at our disposal, what are we doing about it? Why do our educational frameworks and professional structures continue to value and develop the opposite? Kim's book offers a definition of creativity and innovation, along with multiple factors that can influence and nurture creativity.

Kim begins with a poignant tale of her family history, and how the power of creativity both changed and saved her life. As someone who 'was different ... a square peg in a round hole', Kim explores differences in creativity, which she found are due to life experiences, not innate ability. She defines creativity as 'unique and useful ... a process that leads to innovation in all fields'. Furthermore, she differentiates between being creative and being artistic. She explains that many people in the Western world use these words interchangeably, seeing creativity as primarily artistic in nature. Conversely, the Eastern world equates creativity with scientific discoveries or inventions. Overall, she argues that creativity is far broader than either of these two interpretations.

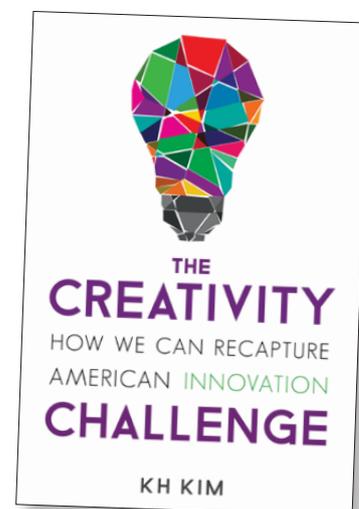
The ideas in Kim's book focus on ways to improve creativity by nurturing an interest and turning it into a passion. As a result of her syntheses and factor-analyses of empirical creativity studies and great innovators' life stories, Kim compares developing creativity to growing plants. In this book she suggests the '4S' are needed for creativity to flourish:

1. soil (diverse resources and experiences)
2. sun (inspiration and encouragement)
3. storms (high expectations and challenges)
4. space (freedom to be alone and unique)

Additionally, Kim suggests the development of CATS (Creative Climates, Attitudes and Thinking Skills) using three practical steps:

1. cultivate creative climates
2. nurture creative attitudes
3. develop creative thinking skills

Kim's research takes a critical look at the differences in how gender has influenced or hindered the development of creativity. Additionally she engages with the idea that certain



parenting styles (specifically Jewish and Asian) can have a major impact on how creativity is enhanced or hindered. In this book she explains her idea that Jewish parenting/teaching nurtures children's 4S attitudes which enable ION (Inbox, Outbox, Newbox) thinking skills. In contrast, Kim proposes the premise that high levels of Confucian parenting/teaching are directly related to low levels of creativity. This implies a significant challenge and imperative for the Asian nations to augment their approach towards cultivating creativity.

Kim believes that all individuals are born with creative potential; their creative thinking, she argues, is determined by what's left over after their creativity is stifled or 'bonsaied' by their climates. Her book outlines the current, disturbing reality in many educational systems which increasingly emphasize test scores instead of focusing on developing creative potential. This process, she believes, turns students into human bonsai trees who are pruned and wired to be uncreative. Her message urges us to focus on nurturing the creativity that children bring to us by providing the environment and opportunities for it to blossom. She offers hope by going into detail about how a multitude of attitudes can and should be developed to address what she dubs 'the Creativity Crisis'.

*The Creativity Challenge* is a book that was written from the heart and based on deeply personal experiences, which touched me as a mother and teacher. Kim's key message: 'Creative individuals who are dreamers and risk-takers are needed', is crucial, now more than ever. Back in 2004, Sir Ken Robinson rocked the world with his provocative TED talk claiming that schools were killing creativity. This book is another compelling reminder that as leaders and learners we need to acknowledge the Creativity Crisis and take on the Creativity Challenge, in order to help our children to become what Kim describes as the 'innovative light of the world'.

**Ji Han is Director of Curriculum and Learning at Zurich International School, Switzerland.  
Email: [jhan@zis.ch](mailto:jhan@zis.ch)**

# Empowering Learning

## The Importance of Being Experiential

by Malcolm Pritchard  
Woodbridge: John Catt Educational (2017)  
Reviewed by Mary Mountstephen

Dr Malcolm Pritchard is a bilingual educator and Head of School at a private Chinese-English bilingual school in Hong Kong. He has publications in the fields of education, history and linguistics and is a regular on the conference circuit, presenting on topics including international education and cultural conflict. Dr Pritchard holds several degrees in subjects as varied as Asian Studies and Information Technology, and his doctoral dissertation was related to the practice of experiential learning in schools.

This book is divided into 3 parts, opening with a comprehensive and wide-ranging overview of literature relating to the nature of learning, experience, and the importance of experiential learning. Pritchard covers in detail the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, and relates these to constructivism and to the links between theory and classroom practice. He also introduces the theme of reflection, and this is a thread that runs through the text. He defines experiential learning as a social enterprise,

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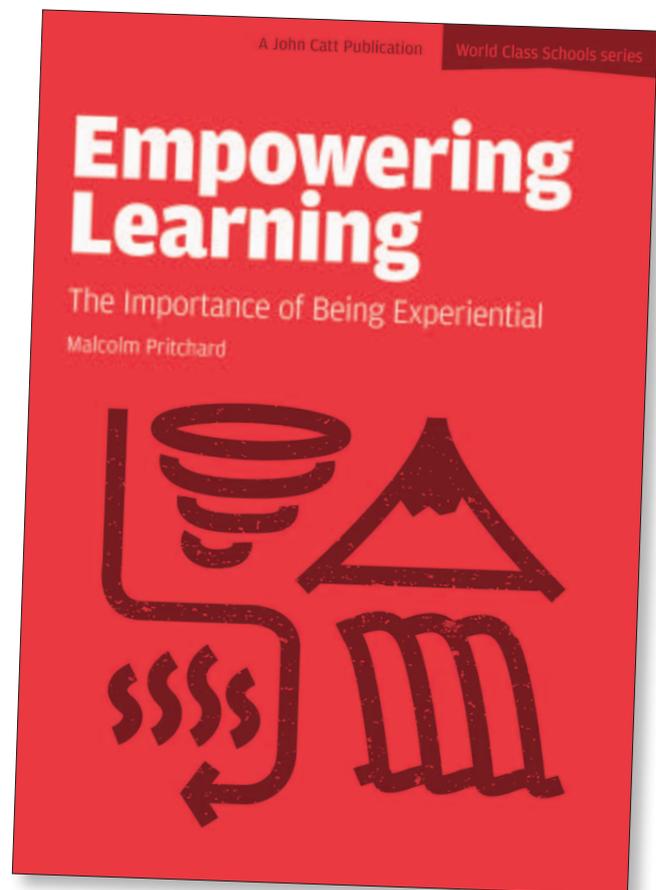
**This is a fascinating and well-researched text that is accessible in terms of its style and format.**

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with the student placed at the centre of learning activities involving problem-solving and risk-taking in a range of settings as diverse as 'the playground to the wilderness'. He characterises it as a 'stealth technology' that has the potential to offer 'unique and educationally desirable outcomes to learners'. He notes that experiential learning can be confused with terms such as 'outdoor education', and stresses that the setting plays a major role, with unique physical, cultural interactive and social dimensions.

In Part 2 Pritchard turns to the practicalities of the design and practice of experiential learning. He combines learning theory with professional experience to provide an overview of essential elements of programme implementation, and stresses the centrality of social interaction in this process. This section contains a number of quotes to illustrate

individual experiences, and he raises key questions relating to the status and role of the learner as a social being. The final part of the book draws the threads together, and revisits some of the theoretical concepts discussed earlier. Pritchard provides a useful comparison table to summarise the advantages and disadvantages of classroom/semantic learning and experiential learning; the author is clearly passionate about the potential of experiential learning as a



powerful agent for change.

This is a fascinating and well-researched text that is accessible in terms of its style and format, whilst providing a strong academic framework to support the case for experiential learning. As such, it will be of value and interest to school leaders charged with enhancing the quality of education for all students.

**Mary Mountstephen is an independent consultant and trainer.**

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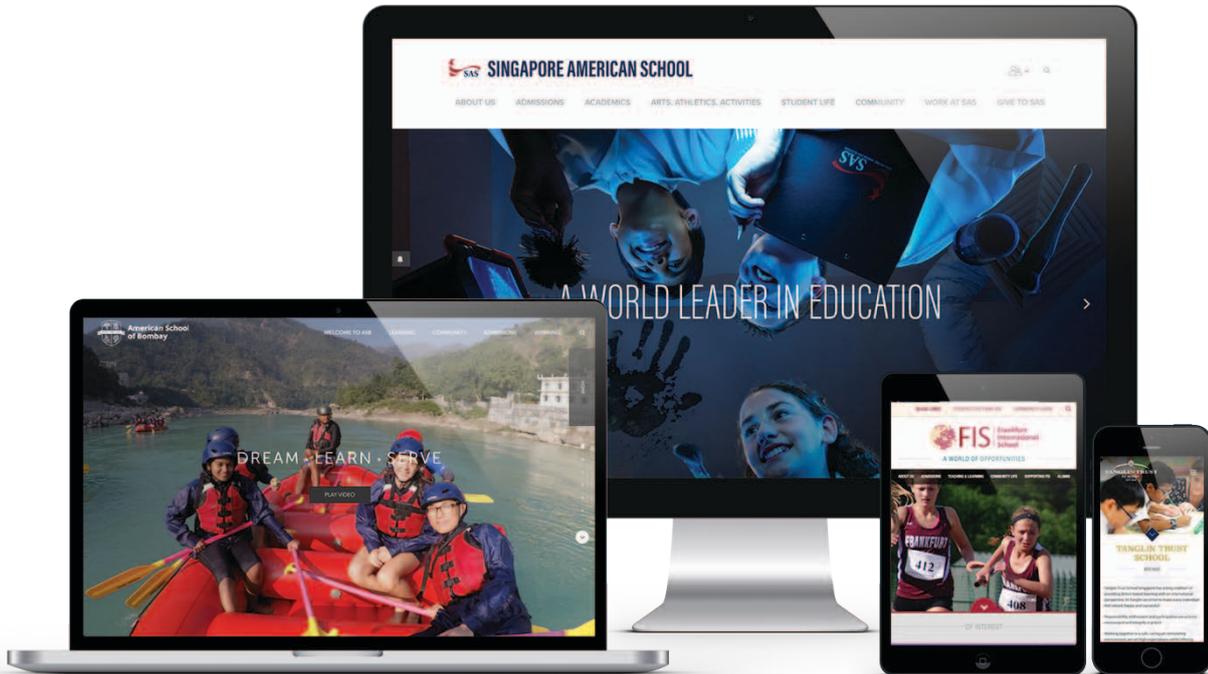
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