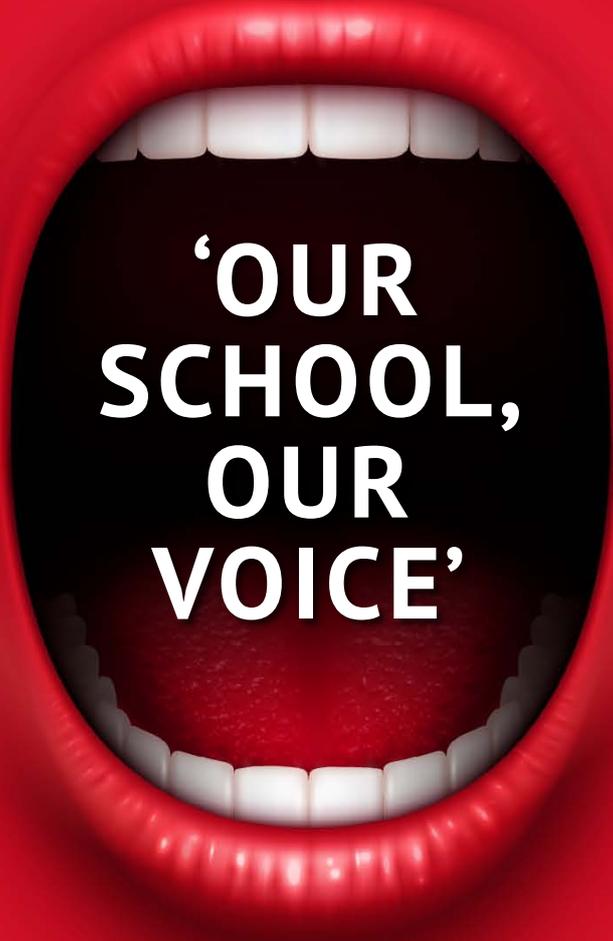


Autumn Term 2014 Issue 1

world student



**'OUR
SCHOOL,
OUR
VOICE'**

**GOING
FUTURING**

'AN INDISPENSIBLE SKILL'

Plus: Young leaders,
international boarding,
and going to university
overseas

**'I'M AN
ONLINE
LEARNER'**

THE BENEFITS OF

ONLINE STUDY

**COBIS** | COUNCIL OF
BRITISH
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SCHOOLS

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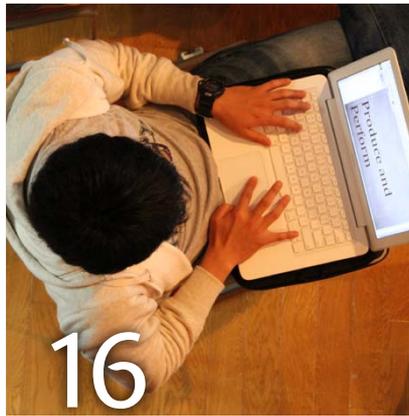
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Coming soon!



World Student magazine will be available free to download via our new app. Search "World student magazine" in the App Store or on Google Play



Welcome!

Welcome to the first ever issue of *World Student*. We are truly excited about the launch of this magazine. As far as we can see, there is nothing quite like it. We wanted to produce a magazine aimed specifically at students at international schools around the world; a magazine that can inspire you to think ambitiously about your future.

International schools are widely recognised for the excellent academic, spiritual, social and physical education that they provide. Typically, they provide an environment in which international understanding flourishes.

The very nature of your school, with students from all around the world living and working closely together, means that intercultural understanding and acceptance are often natural features of the student population.

You are likely to appreciate, value and respect all cultures, religions and languages and see yourselves as global citizens, looking beyond gender, class and race to understand the person beneath.

More than many other young people of your age, you and your fellow students are the global citizens of the future. We hope this magazine can encourage you to fully appreciate and exploit this unique position.

We hope the magazine can play a small role in helping young adults like you see your future as one filled with courage, generosity, creativity, values and determination. *World Student* wants to promote in you a commitment beyond exams and qualifications, to personal growth and responsibility through service to others on an international scale.

So we hope you are inspired by the articles in this first issue – but we would love more student input in future. We want this magazine to be filled with your stories, your ambitions and your experiences. Please do contact us with your ideas.

And don't forget to download the app version of the magazine for free! Search 'World Student magazine' in the Apple App Store or Google Play store for Android devices.

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world student

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Student Competitions & Events

2014/2015

cobis.org.uk



COBIS schools around the world are invited to engage and participate in a range of competitions and events in 2014/15.

- **COBIS Student Leadership Weekend (Secondary):**
17-19 October 2014, King's College, Madrid, Spain
- **COBIS Primary Creative Challenge:**
Closing date 31 December 2014
- **COBIS World Debate Competition (Secondary):**
6-8 February 2015, The British School of Bucharest, Romania
- **COBIS Student Poetry Competition (Primary/Secondary):**
Closing date 2 March 2015
- **COBIS Young Scientist Film Awards (Primary/Secondary):**
Closing date 6 April 2015
- **COBIS Student Achievement Awards (Secondary):**
Closing date 20 April 2015
- **COBIS Art Competition (Primary/Secondary):**
Closing date 20 April 2015
- **COBIS Primary & Secondary Games:**
14-16 May 2015, St Catherine's British School, Athens, Greece
- **COBIS Senior Schools' Music Festival:**
6-7 June 2015, Prague British School, Czech Republic



To engage and participate visit
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COBIS AND WORLD STUDENT MAGAZINE

COLIN BELL, CEO, EXPLAINS MORE ABOUT THE

COUNCIL OF BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS AND

WELCOMES READERS TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF *WORLD STUDENT*

On behalf of COBIS, I am honoured and delighted to welcome you to the first edition of *World Student*. The magazine has been launched in partnership with COBIS in order to highlight the amazing things that students like you are doing in different schools all around the world.

As a talented individual representing the growing and significant number of students studying in British schools overseas, I have no doubt that you will thoroughly enjoy reading this inaugural edition which after careful selection is packed full of inspiring and thought provoking articles, all of which have been commissioned and published to highlight the achievements, adventures and aspirations of students worldwide.

Regardless of your age, gender, nationality or the geographical continent in which you are studying, the promotion of 'Student Voice' is an enormously important feature of COBIS school life. In fact the strong ethos which embraces student engagement and participation is one of the many common denominators which make COBIS member schools and indeed other high quality International schools such wonderful places to make life-long friends, to explore learning and via many diverse channels, to enjoy life.

In terms of developing your talents, ambition and international mindedness,

you are fortunate to have a dedicated and skilled network of teachers, teaching assistants, support staff and school leaders, who all contribute to the delivery of high quality education in British schools overseas. For this reason, you will find a number of articles from school based colleagues and other representatives from other non school based sources of expertise. In addition, it's worth highlighting that your parents, guardians and other family members also provide you with invaluable guidance and support which allows you to develop your unique set of skills, characteristics and personal values in an increasingly fast paced, competitive and challenging world.

As a premiere global association for British schools overseas, COBIS enjoys a long standing and solid commitment to student learning and personal development. This is through our work hosting and the coordinating student competitions, conferences and awards. For example, you'll read in this edition a feature on the spirit of COBIS Young Leaders Conference plus you'll find out more about forthcoming COBIS competitions which in addition to showcasing your intellectual, academic and sporting talents are designed to enable you to forge new international friendships and connect with students from COBIS schools in over 60 countries worldwide. So whether you have a passion for science, film making, poetry,

sport, debate, art or music, I'm confident that there is a COBIS competition for you and one in which you can engage, participate and excel!

As you will appreciate, with a magazine of such quality content, design and calibre as this, requires the expertise of many, including no more so than our publishing partners, John Catt Educational, and of course all students and fellow contributors who have shared their personal journeys, knowledge and energies.

So, before you dive into your copy of the new *World Student* magazine, wherever you are in the world, once again a warm welcome to your ongoing readership. Also, as eminent thought leaders of today and tomorrow, I'd like to encourage you to engage and participate in future editions by projecting your student voice, sharing details of your international life experience and your opinions with our growing and receptive worldwide student audience. Go on... this is a clear call to action and an open invitation to be published on a truly international scale!

With all good wishes,
Colin Bell, COBIS CEO

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PAYING IT FORWARD

JEFFREY BEARD, OF GLOBAL STUDY PASS, SAYS STUDENTS NEED TO MAKE THEMSELVES STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD



was watching a movie last week called Pay It Forward.

The story revolves around young Trevor McKinney who gets caught up by an intriguing assignment from his new social studies teacher, Mr. Simonet. The assignment: think of something to change the world and put it into action. Trevor conjures the notion of paying a favor, not back, but forward – repaying good deeds done to him by doing something good to three new people. In the end, his idea brings a revolution not only to his own life, but also to those of an ever-widening circle of people completely unknown to him.

I got to thinking that I should be doing something similar with you, the readers of *World Student* magazine. How can I pay a favor 'forward' by helping you as you try to figure out exactly what you need to do over the coming years to get a leg-up in life and be successful? The fact that you're reading this magazine and this article says that you're already motivated to do just that.

I have been in the education field for almost ten years, and, as I've travelled the world meeting and talking with students, I've gained tremendous insight in to how internationally-minded students, like you, are successfully preparing for the future. This is the reality of the world you're facing so here are some promises I would make to myself if I were in your shoes – this is my way of paying forward to you:

My first promise to myself: I will be unique and irreplaceable

Universities and employers are looking for someone who stands out from the crowd. If you're an A-grade student, you're one of thousands. If you're a student who has taken part in an international debate about peace, or cycled across America, or participated in a global leadership programme, you are different. You have a story to tell.

To survive in today's world, you must make yourself irreplaceable and you must do a job that makes you untouchable. For instance, do work that relies on special skills or talents that are immune from outsourcing or automation (*ie* think of athletes or singers); or highly specialized work (*ie* being a brain surgeon or providing a unique service); or doing work essential for a community or specific location (*ie* a hairdresser, chef, *etc*). Ideally do work that you're passionate about.

Be adaptable to changing times and industry needs because everyone who wants a job now must demonstrate how he or she can add value in a way that is better than any other solution; whether that's a different person or technology. Remember, the days of average are over. If you're unique, you're not average.

Second promise to myself: I will listen and reflect on the viewpoints of others

The International Baccalaureate has a great course for Diploma Programme

students called Theory of Knowledge. It teaches young adults to be aware of themselves as thinkers, to consider the viewpoints of others, and to think critically about the whole concept of what is knowledge and truth. It gets down to really listening to what others have to say, considering their viewpoints as legitimate opinions.

It's ok to disagree with someone as long as you show him or her the courtesy of really listening to what they have to say and taking their viewpoint into account...it's a sign of respect. It is amazing how you can change the dynamics of a conversation by simply responding in a respectful way, such as by saying: "you make a legitimate point".

The world is filled with different people; they all have their own hopes, fears, and ambitions and just because their opinions are different to yours does not mean they are wrong. Showing empathy and understanding will help you more than anything else in life.

Grab every opportunity to get out of your own comfort zone and to learn and work with others from different countries. The more you do, the more you'll appreciate and value cultural differences, priorities and perspectives.

Third promise to myself: I won't get hung up on the technology

Technology can make you smarter, but it can't make you smart. When I came into education at the turn of this millennium, the world was already getting 'flatter';

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more digitally connected so that people could connect, collaborate and also compete from anywhere. At that time Facebook, Twitter, cloud computing, LinkedIn, 4G wireless, ultra-high-speed bandwidth, big data, Skype, iPhones, iPods, iPads and cell phone apps didn't exist, or were in their infancy.

All of these tools might make you more efficient, and extend your reach, but they won't tell you what to say when you need to comfort a friend in need, make a presentation on a subject you're passionate about, or help you discover the next scientific breakthrough. For that you need to read, write, travel, reflect, and just plain interact with others.

Fourth promise to myself: I will learn how to learn

When you enter the workforce, your boss will have access to those same technologies I just mentioned and, by the time you begin your career, will, without doubt, have many more that don't yet exist. He or she will also have cheaper, easier, faster access to more software,

automation, and robotics than ever before; meaning everyone who wants a job now must demonstrate how they can add value better than the alternatives.

Throughout my working life so far, I've had eleven different jobs across three careers in 14 different locations, including 22 years abroad. I may be the exception among my peers, but this will be the norm for your generation. You will most likely have over twenty or thirty different jobs, some in fields that have not yet been invented. Therefore you need to learn how to learn, how to think in an entrepreneurial way, and how to reinvent yourself every few years. It's education for life in today's flat world... always be learning something new, and don't be afraid to try something new.

If I have had any success in my career since I started out some 45 years ago, it's because I found a way to enjoy the journey as much as the destination. I had as much fun when I was a naval officer sailing the seven seas as I now do travelling and working with students,

teachers, and school administrators. I've had my dull moments... but I've found ways to learn from and enjoy some part of each job. You can't base your whole life on reaching a destination; you've got to make the journey work for you too.

So, that's my advice... my 'paying a favor forward'. Since I'm an American, let me leave you with some wit and wisdom attributed to one of my favorite American authors Mark Twain: 'Always work like you don't need the money. Always fall in love like you've never been hurt. Always dance like nobody is watching. And always – always – live like it's heaven on earth.' ●

Jeffrey Beard served as Director General for the International Baccalaureate Organization from 2006 through 2013. He is now the Chairman and Founder of Global Study Pass, a UK-based organisation that offers international study abroad programmes that give high school students from around the world opportunities to learn and collaborate together to develop essential skills for university and employability
www.globalstudypass.com





GOING FUTURING

How this unique life skill
can help broaden your
possibilities – and your mind

The middle school students had just finished their time machine. They looked happily around, proud that the McDonald's restaurant they had taken over was nearly unrecognizable. There were different signs, uniformed staff, and an altogether different feel. People who stepped inside the restaurant were transported to a creepy future where people could choose to become immortal. This exercise was the final project of Duke University's foresight and design summer camp. High-potential youth were being trained in foresight because a leading university realized futurists have indispensable skills; the ability to think expansively, design resourcefully, and capture others' attention. In this article, we'll explore what futuring can do for you and for the world. We'll also tell you how to start doing it.

Futures, not future

If I asked you to tell me what you would be doing tomorrow, you could probably tell me. What's more, you would probably be right. If I asked you to tell me where you will be and what you will be doing in twenty years, however, you might not be so sure. The future is like a cone of possibility expanding outwards from the present moment. We start from one point, 'now', and from there we can go any variety of ways. Each choice we make opens up new pathways and closes some, kind of like how walking around in a video game causes different parts of the landscape to load and others to disappear. As time passes, these different possible paths can become farther and farther apart. The 'actual' future is the one path that we trace through this huge cone of the possible.

Futurism is about creating, not predicting

There are an infinite number of possible futures. Not all of these futures, though, are created equal. Some are more probable than others, (eg climate change happening) and some are more preferable than others (eg that climate change becomes a spurring force for transitioning to an equitable, sustainable world). Unfortunately, many preferable futures are not currently probable. The choices we make, those that others make, and those that are ingrained into our world system swerve us toward a certain path. Contrary to popular opinion, futurism is not about 'predicting' the future. It is about envisioning, choosing and creating the future we want. Futurists explore many different possible futures, select which

IMAGINING THE MANY DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES FOR YOUR FUTURE CAN HELP YOU MAKE BETTER, MORE EXCITING DECISIONS

ones are preferable, and use this knowledge to convince others to make choices that move us towards these happy scenarios.

You don't have to save the World

Don't get misled into thinking that futurism is only about the fate of the entire world. Futurism is a skill that works at any level. You can apply futurism to your own life. Imagining the many different possibilities for your own future can help you make better, more exciting decisions. It can beef up your creativity, teamwork and design capacity. At the very least, it makes you a more interesting party guest. Here's a quick exercise to give you a taste of what futuring is like.

Beginner exercise: make your own future card deck

It can be hard to start thinking about possible futures if you don't know where to start. Using this simple technique, you can practice envisioning radically different possibilities for yourself, your school, or any domain you'd like!

- 1** Cut out card-shaped pieces of paper in three different colours. You only need 3-4 cards of each colour.
- 2** Assign one colour to the time horizon (how far into the future you're going), another colour to how the future might make you feel (happy? angry?), another for what you're exploring (your future? the future of basketball?)
- 3** Fill out each card with a specific time, emotion, or topic.

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4 If you're playing by yourself, shuffle each colour and place it in a different stack. Then, take the top card from each pile and lay them out. You'll have a time horizon, a topic and how the scenario should make you feel. This is the scenario you have to imagine.

5 Take some paper and draw/write the key parts of what future you imagine. If it's hard at first, don't worry. The strain you feel is your brain changing!

This game is fun to play as a group as well. Deal out the cards and have people contribute one of their cards to the scenario. Then, everyone has to come up with their own scenario. You'll be surprised at how different they will turn out to be!

This exercise is based off of Stuart Candy and Jeff Watson's *Thing from the Future* card game. Their game is a little more complex, and if you feel ready for the challenge, read about it here: <http://situationlab.org/projects/the-thing-from-the-future/>. If you're ready for an even more involved (but rewarding!) challenge, you can try the next exercise.

Advanced exercise: making a time machine

A time machine is a room that brings to life one small part of a possible future. Everything, from the decor to the people in the room, should convince someone that she has just stepped into a different time. Creating a time machine is a team effort. It requires a variety of skills. You will need a big-picture person, to brainstorm the future scenario (perhaps by playing the card game). You will need a detail-oriented person to imagine what one tiny part of that future would look, smell, feel and maybe even taste like. You will probably need someone who can make good graphics and signs, as these can be convincing final touches to a room. People who are good actors are necessary to interact with people who enter your machine. They should be good at keeping a straight face and keeping faithful to the world you've imagined. You will need someone who is resourceful, able to scout out places to use and materials to borrow, and someone who will convince other people to come experience your future. Of course, you can have more than one person for each task. A time machine is a serious undertaking, but it has the potential to be an awesome creative endeavour.

What's the point?

By now, you may have a little voice in the back of your head saying, "This seems a little too silly for me. No one else I know is doing this. How can playing games really help me or the world?". We think the game-like nature is not a problem at all! Hear us out. When you are playing the future card game, or making a time machine, you are hard at work building new skills, but it feels like play. Would you, of your own accord, sit at a computer and design different logos and signs just for fun? Probably not. But, once there are friends and a neat project to support, you would probably learn how to make convincing designs and enjoy your time doing it. The same goes for building your creative skills, or acting skills, or even woodworking skills.

Being able to think in a genuinely different way is a prized but rare skill, and futurism helps you do exactly that. You will be constantly thinking about different ways things could work, and the more practice you get, the better you'll be able to explain and convince others of your ideas. The fact few people your age are futurists is even more reason to start. Think about how you'll stand out to possible (and preferable!) schools or employers. As well, because of the time you spend thinking about your own future, you'll be in a better position to make interesting choices about where you might go next.

Where to next?

That's all the space we have. Hopefully we've whetted your appetite for futuring! If you are curious about building up your futurist skills, visit the World Futures Studies Federation (wfsf.org) for a variety of resources, including videos, visuals, and a list of post-secondary programs that allow for some concentration in futurism. Now go, dear reader! Practice, enjoy yourself, broaden your mind, and become a futurist! ●

Brianna Smrke achieved a perfect 45-point score for her IB Diploma at Michael Power St. Joseph HS. This accomplishment was soon matched by an exceptional university career, nearly completely funded by scholarships, where she was given the highest honor possible for an undergraduate at her institution, McMaster University.

Dr Stuart Candy is a futurist based in Melbourne who focusses on the design of experiences and futuristic scenarios.

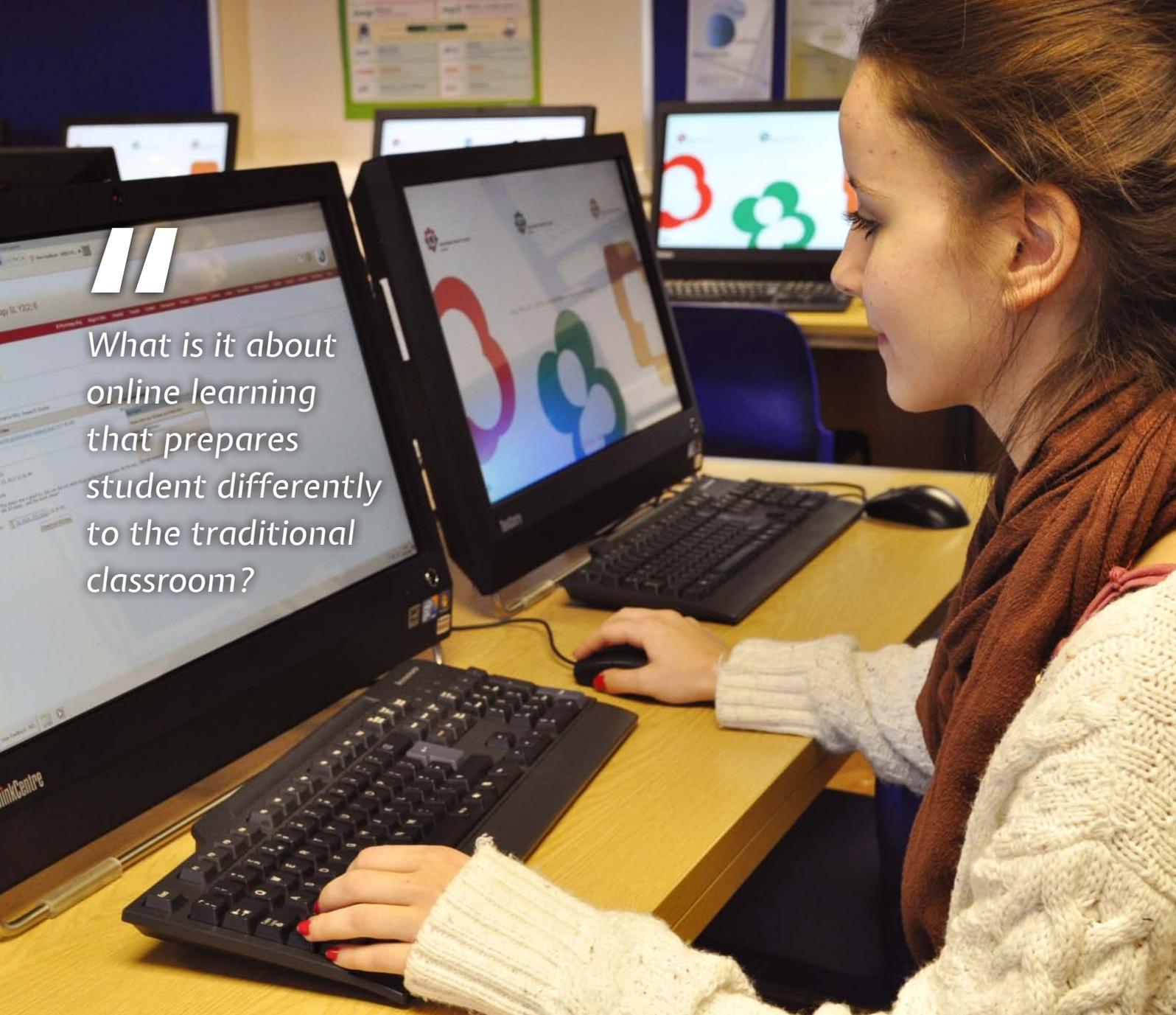


I'M AN ONLINE LEARNER

WORLD STUDENT MAGAZINE HEARS FROM STUDENTS

WHO TAKE ASPECTS OF THEIR IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

ONLINE WITH PAMJOA EDUCATION



//
What is it about online learning that prepares student differently to the traditional classroom?

Imagine no classroom, no timetable, no teacher at the front of the room. Imagine instead, scheduling your learning for when you learn best, learning with classmates around the world, a digital classroom and an online teacher. That's what it's like when you study online.

María Fernández-Martos Balsonis an Engineering student at the University of Cambridge in England. She studied her entire Maths Higher Level course online during her senior years at school. "It prepared me for university in ways that a traditional course cannot," she says.

There are high schools students all over the world currently studying this way. Over 1500 of them are International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) students who, like María, are choosing to take at least one of their Diploma Programme subjects online. All IBDP courses are provided by online learning specialist Pamoja Education, which ensures students get the best possible support, resources and learning approach to fully benefit from the experience. So what is it about online learning that, as María says, prepares students differently to the traditional classroom? Here, students from three international schools

around the world share some of the ways their digital learning experiences are making a difference:

Online learning at the International School of London

At the International School of London, online IBDP Psychology student, Anda Podaru is busy learning with her global classmates. "I can do everything in my own time. You get given all the tasks at the beginning of the week and it's up to you to figure out when you want to do it, just as long as you have everything done by the end of the week. I like it; it's a lot more free than the normal classes that I have."

Anda admits that initially she did have some doubts when deciding whether to take an online course. "I've always thought that the IB [Diploma Programme] was going to be really hard, and I thought an online course would have been even harder to communicate with my teacher and all of the students in my class. But it turns out that they (the online courses) are very organised and they have solutions for everything. You always interact with everyone weekly through discussions; it's nice. You have several ways to contact everyone."

In addition to the structured work, group projects, discussions and online textbook, Anda says there's a psychology blog that includes valuable articles and videos to supplement the learning. "It's a really helpful addition to the course," she says.

So what happens when she needs advice from the teacher? "Every time I feel unconfident, I can just tell my teacher that I need help and she'll contact me, either with a Skype session or through an email," Anda explains. "I feel that I'm getting very good quality education."

In addition to the subject learning, Anda believes a major benefit of the online classroom is the fact that she is developing independent learning skills. "I think that will really help me when I go to university and have more freedom, I'll know how to get everything done on time."

Online learning at the American International School of Rotterdam

In the Netherlands, at the American International School of Rotterdam (AISR), Carsten Spencer says online learning meant he could study Mandarin: "I fell in love with Mandarin when I lived in China," he says. "Our school did not offer Chinese. Because I loved it so much I decided to seek out a way to

take it." He explains that the range of online subjects is providing the Diploma Programme students at AISR with many more learning options than would otherwise be available.

Carsten's classmates are from five different countries. "We have group discussions, group projects and weekly conversations with an online tutor that the Pamoja system sets up so that we can practise our speaking. We do this through Skype," he says.

He thinks the online experience is preparing him well for higher education. At college, Carsten says: "You don't necessarily have someone always right there for you. This online course really gives you some independence; you're really on your own. You have an online person [teacher] that is always there for you and, of course, you have your supervisor [each school has a site-based coordinator who supports the online students with the learning challenges they may face]. But generally speaking you are learning through the website and it's down to you, not anyone else; it's your time. I find that is really important because time management is important when you go to college. All of a sudden you are on your own. Pamoja gives you that environment in a controlled way where you still have support so it's a stepping stone in my opinion."

Online learning at Yokohama International School in Japan

At Yokohama International School (YIS), Jun Sekiya and some fellow students wanted to take Film as an IBDP course. There is a very strong film club at YIS and this created much interest in film and the desire to study it formally as part of the IB Diploma. As student numbers were not large enough to allow a face-to-face class, the online course was a good option and was fully supported by the YIS IB coordinator. "It sounded

"EVERY TIME I FEEL UNCONFIDENT, I CAN JUST TELL MY TEACHER THAT I NEED HELP AND SHE'LL CONTACT ME WITH A SKYPE SESSION OR THROUGH AN EMAIL"

really interesting so we signed up for the online course," explains Jun.

Hopeful to be a film-maker and author one day, Jun says the online film course content is really interesting. "There's about four or five modules each week," he explains. "You click on one and it opens up a page with the course content which is your lesson for the week. Sometimes it has a video introduction for what you're going to do during the week and the content itself is usually organised into a theoretical and a practical aspect." Jun's course has included analysis of many aspects of film including cinematography, music and costume, and the production of several short films focusing on such creative processes as editing, lighting and sound.

One of Jun's colleagues at YIS is Helena Herzberg. She is studying Psychology



online and says it's the diversity of the online students that has had a big impact on her. "I always get to hear new viewpoints, especially on cultural aspects in psychology," she explains. "For instance, we talk about disorders and how they differ in different cultures and that's quite enlightening. We do group projects and that way you can really get to know people. It stretches across cultures that you don't necessarily experience in school."

Helena says that the online learning environment allows her to consider different opinions. "When there are discussions, you have more time to think about how you're going to respond to different viewpoints. That time definitely teaches you to really think about what the other person might feel or how their culture influences their opinion." The experience has been a very positive one for Helena. "The initial reason I took

Psychology online was to see whether or not I would want to continue with the course at university level, which I am. But I learned so many things besides that. I learned how to be open minded towards different cultures. I learned to manage my time better, and learned organisation much better and communication as well; being very specific when I ask questions."

Thinking about an online course? Advice from the students to help you decide

- Carsten says you can't procrastinate. Online learning takes a lot more perseverance. If you can work with technology, I would say that an online course is good for you.
- Anda says make sure you do a little bit of online learning each day to meet all the weekly deadlines concisely, rather than cramming it all in on the last day.
- Jun says the fact that it gives you

more flexibility prepares you for college where you have fewer classes and more freedom to schedule your own learning time.

- Helena says most people would say things like you need to be organised, you need to be able to manage your time, which is true but I think those skills can be acquired along the way. Once you're interested in the course, you can easily pick up those skills, and once you're interested, you're motivated to work hard for it. ●

Find out more

If you would like to find out more, this short video (<http://bit.ly/1voBys6>) includes explanations from students about how their online learning is structured. More information about all the IBDP online courses is available from www.pamojaeducation.com

CHICKENS, EGGS, AND THE IB

STEFAN SUNDE SAYS THAT THE IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

CAN FOSTER CIVIC AWARENESS IN STUDENTS BEYOND MANY

OTHER ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

Which came first: the chicken or the egg? A perplexing conundrum that students of all ages like to employ when unsure of whether A causes B, or B causes A. Recently I read of evidence that pointed conclusively in favour of the egg. Science now tells us that chickens are the descendants of reptilian creatures, so the egg must have come first. Interesting, huh? We might also view an IB Diploma Program (DP) education as a chicken and egg question. Does the DP foster civic mindedness in its students, or are civic minded students drawn to the DP? Chicken or egg?

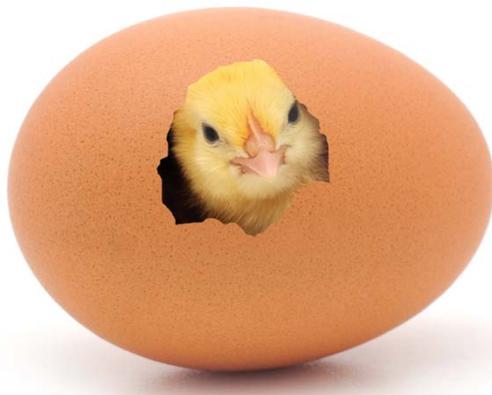
The quality of civic mindedness is broadly understood as an awareness of government, understanding of public policy, and recognition of the patterns that make up contemporary domestic and global society. It is a civic minded student who, more than likely, seeks to improve that framework, be it through personal or collective action.

The hypothesis is that the diploma promotes this approach to the world. But how is the DP, a two year secondary school qualification, able to foster a mind-set? After all, I don't recall sitting the paper 1 exam in civic mindedness. Surely the DP is about getting a good grade to be successful in either university or being competitive on the job market? Think this and you would be wrong; dig just a little deeper and it becomes easy to see how the diploma is more than just business as usual at school.

Remember that dreaded literature subject you do (or in my case did)? Are you reading texts like *The Great Gatsby*, *Othello*, *Mother Courage*, *The Crucible*, or *We*? The texts reflect a cross section of thematic concerns which are the face of civic debate every single day, be it poverty, suffering, greed, unfreedom, race, or conflict. Never a day goes by when the political and economic heavyweights discuss much else. And IB students are doing it too, right in the classroom. Regular exposure and debate on these themes will inevitably foster civic awareness. Likewise, Theory of Knowledge encourages us to question the status quo of our knowledge and challenge accepted norms. I challenge you to find another secondary course which is designed, taught, and assessed according to a student's ability to question the critique his or her knowledge base.

I was a student at Kristin School in New Zealand (Class of 2010), and had the benefit of this holistic education. Now an active member of a political party, I find it hard to refute the suggestion that DP had a hand in my passion for betterment of economic and social outcomes in New Zealand.

Possibly a more contemporary case study of the DP's civic minded orientation is a current student at Kristin, Matthew Flower. As part of a group, Matthew is involved in a CAS (Creativity, Action, and Service) Project which seeks to combat political apathy and reach out to a disaffected young generation. The project will include distribution of local body political material, and will culminate in a mock Parliament session including debate and





The United Nations offices in Geneva, Switzerland

select committee sessions. It is further hoped that buy in from student leaders at other nearby schools will be achieved. Despite being only 16 and 17 years of age, these students are aware of, and trying to solve, one of the greatest risks to democratic and political legitimacy in the 21st century. And this is just part of the CAS project, a compulsory component of the diploma.

Matthew recently participated in the New Zealand United Nations Youth Assembly. Students from across the country debated issues of global food security, UN Peacekeeping, and the privatisation of war, all from the perspective of a country which the student may not have even heard of before the start of the day! Matthew was also selected, and took part, in the prestigious UN Youth's flagship national event, the New Zealand Model United Nations, in Finland, earlier this year. 60 students from around the world came together to "plan for sustainable development through innovative uses of science and technology". The ability to meet

and discuss with other young people in this kind of global forum carries positive implications for cross-cultural and societal understanding far in excess of the personal benefit Matthew derived. It is exactly this sort of civic participation which we see expressly linked with the diploma on such a regular basis. But can we attribute this kind of extra-curricular participation to the DP itself, or is civic minded action just more attractive to some students than others?

Matthew described the DP as "more than just school, it's an education". This seems an important point to touch on. Discussion and debate of global security, economic, and social issues will inevitably develop a deeper appreciation of the public world. In this sense we might argue that the DP does not force a civic orientated mind set on students so much as it fosters an attitude where students decide that actually they do give a damn about the world around them. These students want



OXFORD ROYALE SUMMER SCHOOLS

#SayNoToSummerBoredom

What do you do with your summers? Do you find they speed by with the weeks merging into each other? Do you stop school work entirely, only to find that the new term push is harder than ever and that even writing the date feels alien?

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To balance the time spent in lessons, there are trips, events, workshops, and best of all, lavish and glamorous parties. In summer 2014, students based at the beautiful Balliol College were treated to a James Bond-themed party held at a stunning 1700s stately home, and the grandeur doesn't stop there: our students live and study surrounded by the magnificent and historic buildings of the Oxford Colleges and our Jacobean manor house, while being only an hour from all the excitement of London - the sights, the shopping, the shows.

With students coming from nearly 100 different countries every year, meeting people from a diverse mix of cultural backgrounds is characteristic of life at Oxford Royale Academy. There are plenty of advantages to this multinational environment, as seen in the fabulous diversity of performances put on at our ever-competitive talent shows, in the forging of friendships between students who would otherwise never have met, and in the lively debates in Public Speaking and Debate classes.

Such competitive spirit was particularly evident this summer in our first ever #ORASELFIE competition. Students squeezed into the frame on punts, stood next to giraffes at the Cotswold Wildlife Park and posed in front of the famous gates of Buckingham Palace. The winning photographer received a brand-new iPad - which they will no doubt use to take many more excellent selfies.

The overall aim of our summer school is to remind students of how great the subjects you love can be, as well as to introduce you to things you might never have had a chance to study before. The expertise of our teaching staff is another plus, as students get to learn from those working at the cutting-edge of their fields. The courses couldn't be more different from poring over dull revision guides, and there is the added bonus of gaining a unique international perspective from your classmates. The reviews we receive every year from delighted students show what a great time has been had, and each year we aim to be even bigger and better. Taking your studies to a new level can be easy when you try studying by our principle: don't be afraid of new ideas, step a little out of your comfort zone, and be inspired by the surroundings of Oxford!

If you want to break up the long summer with a refreshing and fun-packed stay in a location of extraordinary beauty, working with top-notch tutors and enjoying leisure activities with new international friends, Oxford Royale Academy's summer school is the place for you.

You can register for summer 2015 now, via our website:
https://bookings.oxford-royale.co.uk/apply_secure_hosted.php



Matthew Flower and other students at the New Zealand Model United Nations 2014, in Wellington, New Zealand

to be better global citizens. Matthew and thousands of others like him self-direct themselves into CAS projects, TOK discussions, and extended essay questions that confront civic issues head on.

A personal stand out is in the subject of economics. Similar to other equivalent courses, DP economics teaches theories of microeconomics, macroeconomics, and trade. However, the point of difference lies in the final section of the course, Development Economics. The topics here harness the skills and techniques of earlier sections and apply them to improving the standards of living for people in less developed countries. Students explore the relevance of government policy, aid, trade, and debt as tools to develop an economy. This is the DP difference, a practical solutions based approach to education that is, at least I have found, surprisingly uncommon.

Matthew confesses he felt it inevitable that he would choose the IB diploma program. He felt that the international

mind set and enrichment opportunities were a perfect fit for the education he wants. It seems that students with an interest and passion in civic issues will gravitate to the DP anyway, but this should not lessen the importance we place on its ability to then develop this passion further.

Some students are attracted to the IB diploma, aware of its globalised approach to learning. That said, in unpacking the intricacies we find examples of how the DP fosters civic mindedness in its students. In providing an empiric answer to this uncontrolled, and probably biased, experiment, the chicken and the egg seem to both come first. The “IB [diploma] inspires an interest”, and this empowerment in different ways. This is the DP difference. ●

Stefan finished the IBDP in 2010 obtaining a score of 43. He is currently in his final year of a Bachelor of Commerce / Bachelor of Arts Conjoint degree at the University of Auckland, majoring in Economics, Taxation Law, and Political Science



These students want to be better global citizens. Matthew and thousands of others like him self-direct themselves into CAS projects, TOK discussions, and extended essay questions

THE POWER OF STUDENTS

DAWN HAYWOOD, OF THE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TRUST,
SAYS STUDENTS NEED A MEANINGFUL VOICE TO MAKE
SCHOOLS TRULY INSPIRATIONAL PLACES



“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?”

Marianne Williamson

Students are powerful! You are powerful!

As students you are asked to respond to questions each and every day. Of the millions of questions you are asked in your educational journey, there are three that we believe students are rarely asked to consider: Do you realise how powerful you are? Do you hide away in the shadows of your education and relinquish responsibility and control to the adults in your school? Are you brave enough to be the author of your destiny and a leader in your school community? If you, and students in schools around the world, are to reach their unending academic, personal and social potential then we need the light of each and every student to shine. We need you, as Marianne Williamson's quote advocates, to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous. We need to unleash the voice, leadership and power of our greatest untapped resource in education: you, our students.

Consider for a moment the number of school leaders, teachers and support staff in your school. Now contemplate the number

of students. There are, on average, around nine times more students in schools than adults. Students have a different perspective on schools than the adults in the building, because students experience in school is different. We believe that it is only when students have a meaningful voice and are responsible leaders that schools become outstanding and inspirational places to learn and all students' potential is truly unlocked.

There are three lessons we have learned about changing for good the power of students, and in doing so, bringing about change for good in schools around the world.

Lesson One: 'ALL students' voices and leadership matters'

One of the greatest barriers to student voice and leadership having the transformational impact in education it is capable of; is that not all students want, or have the confidence to speak out and lead. It is, of course, important that adults create the opportunities for students to be listened to and to lead change, but you, and all students, must also awaken to the importance of your voice and actions. Students must stand-up and be counted and take responsibility. Student leadership teams need to reflect the diversity of the entire student body, communicate regularly with all students and encourage the 'reluctant voices and leaders' to emerge. Student voice and leadership needs to transcend purely student councils to become an expectation of



Student leaders from Banbury Academy, UK

Undoubtedly, students' voices are important. However, all too often, not all students' voices are heard, which is generally due to the fact that only the 'special few' students get, or create, the opportunity; they're in all of the student councils and do invaluable leadership work which is great – but what about all the other students? Either too shy or too 'cool' to express their voice, or even simply not getting the right opportunities, they complain about the changes or the issues but to the wrong people; they take no action and consequently, go unheard and unhappy. This is not how it should be, for all students are valuable, important and full of potential and their unique perspectives and actions can prove invaluable. A school simply cannot reach its best without all students being confident, engaged and feeling as though they belong; ensuring that every student voices their opinion and takes a lead means that a school can thrive and allows all students to do the same.

Leadership within a school should represent the voices of all students – not just the ones with shiny badges, as without all voices heard, how can a school make changes that are right for everyone?

The impact of all student voices and student leadership is undeniably extraordinary.

Bryony Clifton



Are you brave enough to be the author of your destiny and a leader in your school community?

Working as partners with the senior leaders, teachers and support staff has proven to be a huge advantage to our school. There are various student-teacher partnerships in our school where students and staff come together and drive change in areas covering all aspects of school life.

As students we have a different opinion or view to teachers and school leaders. Most of the changes in schools ultimately impact the students so students working collaboratively in the change process, ensures the school makes the most positive changes for all.

Central to genuine student and staff partnerships is a relationship built on reciprocal trust and respect, where everyone's contributions are valued and listened to.

When students and staff work as genuine partners the change that takes place is amazing.

Jason Barlow

Being in a school with multiple student voice, leadership and change initiatives, has taught us that we cannot only have a voice; we need to follow that voice with actions that lead to change.

We have learned, understand and believe that it is not student voice that leads to change but the actions students take from that voice that results in change. We learned from the many meetings that took place where students student voice was expressed that it was only when we; the students, took action following those meetings, that we recognised the positive change.

We believe that student voice has played an important part in decisions made in our school. Student leadership and action has changed our school for good.

Emily Brogden

all students and a part of every aspect of school life. Student voice and leadership needs to be 'always in all ways'.

Lesson Two: Students must be genuine partners with adults.

Students need to be considered by school leaders and staff as partners in striving towards common goals. Students have a responsibility to demonstrate the ability to look beyond oneself and value the perspectives of other students and adults in the school.

There are a multitude of ways you as students can work as partners with staff: in change teams; as learning partners with staff in planning and leading engaging lessons; supporting and leading staff professional development and the recruitment of

new staff are just a few examples of the plethora of student-teacher partnerships.

At the heart of effective student and teachers partnerships is a mutually respectful relationships underpinned by openness, honesty and trust.

Lesson 3: Actions speak louder than words

Our final 'lesson learned' is that we need to turn up the volume on student voice by combining it with student action. Students cannot simply express their voice and then expect the adults in the school to 'fix things'. We encourage you to breathe life into your words and have the courage of your convictions by taking action. Only then will student voice be a loud and powerful force for change.



'My Education' Student Ambassadors at Number 10 Downing Street, at the Launch of the 'My Education' report

Students are powerful! You are powerful! Now is the time for you and students around the world to shine. The light of students has the power to bring about change for good. ●

Dawn Haywood is the Chief Executive and Founder of the Student Engagement Trust. She is dedicated to making student voice and student leadership a bigger part of learning and teaching today. She is a firm believer that students have something to teach all of us.

Bryony Clifton (14 years old), Jason Barlow (15 years old), Emily Brogden (15 years old), Georgia Smith (13 years old) are all student leaders from Banbury Academy.

Our school is a better place for students, teachers, support staff and school leaders because of the impact we have had.

Students in our school feel empowered. Students in our school are powerful.

Georgia Smith

INSPIRING YOUNG LEADERS

LUKE ADDISON EXPLORES HOW YOUNG PEOPLE
RESPOND TO THE IDEA OF WORLD PEACE AND HIS
OWN REACTION TO ADVICE FROM DESMOND TUTU

What is 'world peace'? What can it mean to an individual, even more so to a young individual in today's community? The concept of peace can be a mountainous subject to tackle. Do we start by tracing its roots, where 'peace' first began? Or do we look into the future; will there ever be 'peace'?

The truth is that peace can be both direct yet still ambiguous, but the understanding and therefore the practise of peace lies entirely in how we educate our young people about it. Children are not born with hatred or intolerance inside of them, yet there are adults full of both. Children are not born

with the immediate ability to love either; it's something they emulate from their surroundings. Children pick things up so fast, and it is therefore so important that the right messages and attitudes are presented to them early on. The quality of our future depends on our capacity to learn, and ability to teach.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of being invited to an International World Peace conference in Monaco, the conference was held by an organization called PeaceJam, who aim to inspire, educate and guide young people towards international fellowship by introducing them to Nobel Peace Laureates, and allowing them to be in an environment

where they can ask as many questions as they want and receive honest, meaningful responses.

This particular conference that I went to was attended by the Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and we were able to watch the premiere of his film *Children of the Light*, something the young people taking part in the conference found moving and inspiring. The honourable Archbishop delivered a 40-minute speech and welcomed questions towards the end, as well as watching the young people deliver their own presentations about service projects they have been doing in their own community, something which was very close to Mr Tutu's heart.



It was after these presentations that the Nobel Peace Prize Winner spoke on his own opinion on the importance of young people, and sheer gravity that correct guidance can hold for them. His words were:

“I want to take my hat off to young people, because you are fantastic in your idealism. Young people actually believe that this world can become a better place. They believe that poverty can become history. They believe that war can be stopped, forever. I get very angry with people who, because one or two kids get in trouble with, say, drugs then they are dismissive of all young people. I get very annoyed because I know the opposite.”

As a ‘young person’ myself, this was certainly one of the most impacting parts of the speech. He spoke so passionately and held the young generation in such high regard and you could instantly see how and why he wins over their hearts. It is through his respect, the respect towards them and respect for them. It is this respect which is an essential tool of guidance. To simply instruct a young person to do something, or to make a decision that could affect their life without any grounding or consideration of that person’s beliefs, feelings and aspirations will cause them to not make the decision fully for themselves. The respect is so important.



The quality of our future depends on our capacity to learn, and ability to teach



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Desmond then expressed his opinion of negative attitudes towards young people, and he makes an incredible point that: “What ought to surprise us is not that some young people succumb, and go off the rails. What should be surprising us, what should make us say ‘Yay?’ What really is fantastic... is that so many don’t!”

Again, in relation to guidance, this sort of response was encouraging towards those in the audience, of course they want to be respected and praised for the good they do. Not demoralized and held accountable for the faults of those in their age group. When talking to a young person about what they want, it is so important to recognise that they are an individual, no sentence should ever start “All young people are...” or “...That’s what most young people want.” Tutu goes on to praise and admire the younger generation, and offered great words of inspiration towards how to ‘become’ a Nobel Prize Laureate;

“I was asked by a young person ‘What does it take to be a Nobel Peace Laureate?’, I said, Nobel Peace Laureates don’t come ready-made, they are ordinary people like you and me, there is no earthly reason why you cannot become one. But even if you were not able to get a Nobel Prize, each young person has the capacity to reach for the stars. In whatever way you choose to want to do so, do that to the best of your ability.”

This last part is itself some of the most useful guidance some of the young people at the conference had received, as was clear from their feedback sessions and from their attitudes throughout the rest of the day. The quote also inspired me, to not only work on how to deliver guidance to young people I work with back in Winchester but also that no matter how old you are you still have so much to learn and sometimes it does take someone phenomenal like Desmond Tutu to really inspire you, but the truth is, good guidance can come from anywhere. All it takes is the ability

to be understanding and to be a good listener.

Following the conference in Monaco, I returned home to Winchester and actually approached my University to set up a PeaceJam Centre at the University, which will hold annual conferences which will aim to educate and inspire young people from local schools and colleges in international fellowship, world peace and leadership, the centre will invite Nobel Peace Laureates to the University and have huge national and international benefits.

Good guidance can change the world. The organisation I work with, Step One provides good guidance. ●

Luke Addison balanced university exams with an effort to promote peace. His involvement as a Peace Jam mentor at the International Peace Conference connected him with human-rights champion Archbishop Desmond Tutu.
www.step1.ac



**OUR
SCHOOL?
OUR
VOICE!**

THE STUDENT COUNCIL AT THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF ALMATY ARE FULLY INVOLVED IN KEY DECISIONS – TO THE BENEFIT OF ALL

When was the last time your school listened to you? Do your teachers ever ask if you enjoy their lessons? Does anyone ask you what you think of your school? Teachers write reports about us all of the time. When do we have our say?

Perhaps your school has a Student Council. Student Councils are a great idea, but the reality tends to be a disappointment. How many times have you mentioned school dinners, yet they still serve the same old slop? How many times do you need to say that breaks are too short for students to eat, play football, and go to the bathroom?

Our school is doing something different. Since last year our Student Council has been given Special Powers. For example, we interviewed candidates to be our new Deputy Head. Not only were our questions much more interesting than those asked by the adults – and we learnt a lot from the answers – but we were asked what we thought of their lessons and assemblies. Finally, we were asked our opinion about which candidate we wanted to join our school.

This had several advantages. The school made a well-informed decision, which both staff and students are happy with; the candidates understood that our school trusts us with serious responsibilities;

and we had the chance to take part in a formal interview situation and show our maturity. Win. Win. Win.

Our Student Councillors will be invited to meet with the school's leadership team, and present students' opinions directly. We want to set up a Student Forum on our VLE, where ideas could be shared and discussed. We would also like a student budget for social events, and to have some say in how the school budget is spent – so that the school buys books and other resources we really want.

Recently we were asked what else students could help with in our school. At first we thought of small things. As Daria (Y6) says, we suggested “nominating the star teacher and star class of the week; extra-curricular activities led by children, for example the Green Club; House competitions for sports of the pupil's choice; and pupils could participate in the selection of charities that the school will support.” Recently the weekly Headmaster's Newsletter has been opened up to students, and now it is full of stories and articles written by us. This way our voice is heard by our parents and the whole community. But then we thought about the Big Picture. What really matters to us? What are students never involved in, when we really should be? Things got more interesting!



What really matters to us? What are students never involved in, when we really should be? Things got more interesting!



We thought about food first. (Some of us are teenagers, after all.) As Caroline (Y10) and Georgia (Y8) suggested, “Firstly, we should have a survey throughout the whole school, to see what is good and what is bad about the food. From that, we can work on how to improve the food. Students would have their say on what goes on the menu and what gets kicked off it. We could suggest recipes, and work on making the food healthier.

“Secondly, international cuisine weeks are extremely popular here; we should have those more often, and vote for the most popular dish to become part of our normal menu. Mexican week should be next on the list since we were promised edible sombrero hats!”

Aida (10) thought about school facilities, because “the teachers have taken away

our locker room and turned it into a new staff room instead of the old one, which was perfectly fine for us” – typical teacher behaviour. “We think that Student Council could help the maintenance staff to organize school well for those people who are using it the most – students.”

A popular topic was discipline. As Dariya and Karlygash (Y13) said, “Every school needs to prepare students for real-life problems. Pupils need to know how to stand for themselves and this opportunity could be given by our Student Court. It is important for our students to have their voices heard to make the school safe and supportive environment.

“The Student Court could consist of a judge (e.g. the Headmaster) and student jurors to ensure a fair trial. Every accused student would have a chance to speak up

for themselves and explain the situation from their point of view, with the help of someone they trust. It is important for students to know that they will be treated fairly, and the Court would not always rule in their favour.

“This way every student would understand that what he or she had committed is wrong, instead of feeling that he or she was treated unjustly. Moreover, programmes like that would develop our problem-solving and debating skills. In addition, the Student Court would give students a chance to take responsibility for their actions and be aware of the possible outcomes.”

We talked about how we could be consulted about timetabling and the school day, but as Lara says, “Actually, this is not the main problem. It is just an



"I BELIEVE THAT
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example of an important issue. And this issue is asking students about everything that happens in the school. This is a great opportunity for us, students, to be heard!"

What about teaching? Yeshin, Daria and Sofiya thought "It would be a great idea if not only the teachers would teach but the pupils would teach the class," while the teacher makes sure you get your facts right! We could even set each other homework, as we know better than most teachers what our friends are good at and what they need to work on. We definitely want to continue being involved in helping to recruit the best teachers.

We all know how annoying it is when your teacher teaches you the same topic – sometimes even the same lesson – that you had last year. So why not involve us in planning? Aidana says, "In Year 1 we voted

for what we would like to learn about. I chose dinosaurs because I would like to know more about where they live, what they eat and what they look like. I felt happy when my topic was chosen. I think it is a good idea because it feels like our teachers are listening to what we would like to do."

Learning doesn't just take place inside school. But most school trips are organised by teachers. Sofiya suggested that if students decide where to go, based on what we want to learn, help plan the trips (e.g. choosing what to eat on a camping trip), and write the letters to parents – then we would learn a lot more.

Daria has the last word: "I am very proud to have been selected the Head Girl of Primary School. It is a great honour and responsibility and I will do my best to help make our school even better than

it is now! Our school has great facilities, our teachers are strict but fair, learning is fun and I have lots of friends in the school. I also enjoy the view outside my class window.

"I believe that letting pupils be more involved in the school life will help the children to act responsibly and prepare them for grown-up life." ●

Haileybury Almaty wishes to thank all of our student contributors: Aidana (1RS), Martha (4SD), Josh (4ABI), Sofiya (6NSO), Yeshin (6RB), Jan (6NSO), Daria (6JW), Bengu (7SJ), Georgia (8MZ), Inna (8AY), Alizhan (8DP), Jun (9SW), Ludo (9SW), Aida (10ASE), Caroline (10NG), Lara (11PD), Karlygash (13KN), Dariya (13KN), and Aidana (13SED).

CELEBRATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

THE CIS INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AWARD

CELEBRATES STUDENTS WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT

MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE, SAYS KATIE SANDWELL

International students make international schools, but what does it mean to be an international student? In an increasingly mobile and connected world it might mean that you study in a country that is not the one that you were born in, or that your parents were born in, but it might mean a lot more than that.

Today, international schools are not just schools that teach children of expatriates, or that teach a special curriculum in a language different from that most common around them. Instead, schools that offer international education are promoting global citizenship and international perspectives. Students are learning the skills they need to live and to lead in a world where we are

all connected to each-other and where working with people whose backgrounds and life experiences may be very different than ours will be the norm rather than the exception.

The Council of International Schools (CIS), a membership organization of more than 650 schools and 490 colleges and universities representing 109 countries around the globe, wants to recognize and celebrate young people who show us the possibilities of internationalism.

The International Student Award is a way that CIS can do this, sharing the stories of students at CIS member schools who are passionate about making the world better, for everyone. Every year our member schools can nominate

students whose projects, either group or individual, have gone well beyond what was required of them in their classes, and have demonstrated a commitment to internationalism. Awards are given to students whose projects involve inspired and inspiring ways of working with people from different backgrounds, countries, cultures, languages, religions, and ethnicities to find solutions to shared global problems. Whether projects bring people together to work towards a specific goal, or give people opportunities to learn first-hand about a different culture, they all help to build a more connected world and embody the ideals of internationalism.

Here are just a few of the amazing things that award-winning students around the world did, in 2014 alone:





LEADING YOUR LIFE

STOP THINKING, START DOING, SAYS DUNCAN

PIPER OF THE YOUNG LEADERS CONSULTANCY

Once ran up a hill, and it changed my life. In the years before my 15th birthday, I was unacademic. I was bullied at primary school. I was the son of divorced and bankrupt parents and couldn't throw or kick a ball. I grew too quickly and, not knowing how far my eyes were from my feet on any given day, would invariably spend my lunch-breaks falling over myself.

I decided, when I was 14, that this just wasn't good enough. Every morning for

over a year, I ran up a hill. The great thing about running is its simplicity – the more you do, the better you get. Within just over a year, I beat my school's Junior Cross Country record, and soon went on to be my school's fastest 1500m and 800m runner. Running taught me something – it taught me that I could own my future...that I was in charge. I could put my mind to something and, with raw determination, could change my trajectory. My confidence soon began to grow, as did my academic standing. I

got my straight A*s and As at GCSE and A-Level, was appointed Head of School and secured a First from university. But it was that hill that introduced me to the power of self-leadership, something that I define as “looking at yourself and being visionary”. It's about being “dissatisfied with the status-quo, imagining something better and rising to the challenge of realising that ideal”.

I, along with my company (The Young Leaders' Consultancy), work to help



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BOARDING SCHOOLS: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

By Victoria Davies Jones and Jennifer Ma



Based on 500+ Interviews
with UK Schools, Top Educational Consultants,
Students and Parents

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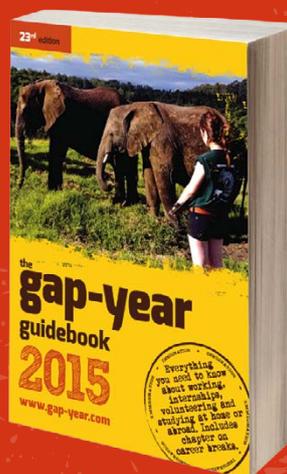
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thousands of students across the UK take ownership of their lives in a similar way, because this is your life.

So, what the hell are you going to do with it? In June 1997, Mary Schmich wrote a column for the Chicago Tribune, entitled *Advice, like youth, probably just wasted on the young*. This column, written as a potential commencement (graduation) speech, was popularised by Baz Luhrmann's memorable spoken word song, *Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen)*.

Of her many wonderful nuggets of common-sense advice, one stands out as being particularly sage:

"Don't feel guilty if you don't know what you want to do with your life. The most interesting people I know didn't know at 22 what they wanted to do with their lives. Some of the most interesting 40-year-olds I know still don't."

We are pressured from such a young age to sit in a room, and think about how we are going to spend our future. This, to me, seems a total waste of time. How are we meant to know? What frames of reference do we have? By the time you're pushed to make such vast decisions, most of us have seen and experienced so very little.

If you have absolutely no idea what you want to do, there is something you must do: keep pedaling. Stop thinking (it won't come to you in a moment of inspiration)...start doing. If you try your hand at something that you end up truly hating (fire-fighting?), fantastic – cross it off the list. Try something else (polar exploration?), and see if that's a better fit – we cannot know how we'll respond to these things until you're on that melting icecap, aiming your rifle at that hungry bear. Your time at school and at university is the perfect playground to explore.

You might whittle it all down and decide you want to be an accountant, a doctor,

a lawyer, a banker or a teacher. But do not make that decision by default. If you do, you'll end up laying on a psychotherapist's couch in 30 years, having realised that you've led someone else's life.

I joined Procter & Gamble's competitive graduate leadership programme on leaving university – a great job at the world's largest consumer goods company. Two years in, with my shiny white BMW (with cream leather seats...I don't know what I was thinking), good and secure salary, impressive future career trajectory and private health insurance, I realised that this wasn't me – I decided I couldn't dedicate 10 hours a day to something I wasn't passionate about. I don't judge those that lead such lives – we need exceptional people working for the world's most influential entities. But we also need to ensure that they proactively wanted to be there.

The pressures to "settle", or to lead someone else's life, are stronger than ever. We are all vain, and parents aren't perfect. Many of them live their dreams through their children. They often want, whether consciously or not, to be able to say to their dinner-party guest how their son or daughter is studying at Cambridge and is on track for a First – "Emma wants to be a neurosurgeon". Does she? Maybe there's an inconsistency between what your parents want for you, and what you want. One of the most inspired Heads I know, on noting such a gap, invites the parents and student to her study. She listens to all sides of the conversation, and encourages the student to do so too, before calmly turning to the mother and father and saying, "you've made your choice – it's now time for your child to make theirs".

Whatever choice you make, we note George Bernard Shaw's eternal wisdom. In 1903, he wrote that,

"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists

in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

In all the leadership programmes that we run with our thirty partner schools, we work to ensure that young men and women commit to unreasonableness in whatever they do, or go on to do – we challenge them to be unreasonable in their expectations of themselves, and in their aspirations for the world around them. If you are not satisfied with this world, we challenge you to stand against the tide and do something about it – to change it. We help students find the thing that frustrates, horrifies, confuses or concerns them and then support them to develop the skills they need to make an impact. This is good for our world, but it also will stand you out as an exceptional candidate for whatever job or university you go on to apply for. And, it will help you avoid the therapist's couch.

As Arnold Bennett said, "The chief beauty about time is that you cannot waste it in advance.

The next year, the next day, the next hour are lying ready for you, as perfect, as unspoiled, as if you had never wasted or misapplied a single moment in all your life.

You can turn over a new leaf every hour if you choose."

Your future begins today – keep pedalling, and be bold in your determination to find the thing you truly want to dedicate your future to. The fun's just about to start. ●

We're always interested to hear from people like you – the world's future leaders. Please get in touch at contact@TheYLC.com. Follow us on Twitter @TheYLC



OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

GAURI PRITHVIRAJ, A STUDENT AT THE BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF VIETNAM, EXPLORES THE CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP IN SCHOOLS



International school students are part of a unique world in which they are exposed to different cultures and languages, and gain insight into the diversity of the global community through contact with their peers and teachers.

The emergence of more international schools around the world brings further opportunities for the development of cross-cultural friendship and collaboration. As an international student myself, I have experienced firsthand the challenges and opportunities that moving between schools and countries can bring, and I have observed common patterns in the formation of friendship

circles which have held true across my three different international schools. In this article I will discuss to what extent friendships form between students of different cultures in international schools and consider how schools can further promote intercultural friendships.

I am currently in my final year of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme at the British International School (BIS) in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. BIS has over 500 students in its secondary campus, many of whom are third culture kids, children whose developmental years have been spent outside of their parents' original culture.

Nationalities at BIS include Chinese, Indian, Korean, British, American, Australian, French, Austrian, Russian, Vietnamese and a great deal more.

On the surface, it appears that at BIS many friendships form according to nationality. Walking down the halls, one might crudely label groups of students as, for example, 'the Koreans' or 'the Vietnamese'. It is certainly true that students of the same nationality often gravitate together.

A simple explanation for this is the basic human need to develop a feeling of belonging and security within unfamiliar surroundings. People, and perhaps

especially teenagers, want to be with others with whom they feel comfortable and a shared language goes some way towards providing this. The term 'safety in numbers' certainly applies to this situation, and this is especially true for students who are new to an international school. When entering a new country and school, it is an automatic response to find someone to whom you can relate, and this is often someone of the same nationality and who can speak your language.

More complex than simply a shared nationality or language, culture comprises the customs, attitudes, beliefs and ideas of a social group. Those friendships which at the surface look to be simply due to nationality may actually form due to shared interests or attitude towards school work, similar daily or weekend routines, or a comparable upbringing. This shared way of thinking, acting and interpreting the world often leads to the formation of a friendship group or 'clique' within an international school setting. Many Vietnamese and Korean IB Diploma students, for example, lead a fairly traditional home life, in which they spend their free time with their family and rarely socialise outside of school with their peers. Their peers from Western Europe, on the other hand, regularly go out together at the weekends, partaking in the vibrant nightlife that Ho Chi Minh City has to offer. Is it any wonder when you consider this difference in culture that distinct friendship groups emerge within the student body?

Not only are the teenage years often the most confusing time in one's life, it is also where teenagers construct and recognise their personal identity – and what could be more challenging than trying to find out who you are when you are a third culture kid? This is perhaps another reason why friendship groups form between those of similar cultural backgrounds. The shared identity found

in supporting the same sports team, knowing the same TV programmes or having a similar sense of humour may help teenagers to navigate through the difficulties and pressures that come with the teenage years, including exam stress, relationships and puberty.

I asked some students at BIS if this divergence in friendship groups is a problem. A Vietnamese student commented, "Yes, I think people are segregated and for some people it might be a problem but not for me, I'm comfortable this way." An Austrian student said, "People are segregated, but it's their choice and no one is isolated" and a French student added that "Everyone gets along in both the common room and in classes, even if we are divided at times, we still value each other and get along."

In spite of these divisions, there is one friendship group that stands out in the BIS IB Diploma Programme – let's call them the 'old hands'. These are the students who have been at BIS since their early years, comprise a wide variety of nationalities, and have strong bonds of friendship in spite of their cultural differences. Members of this group can float between the more distinct friendship groups, finding shared ground with many different students. These are the students for whom BIS is home. Some are third culture kids, but many have not moved very much and have benefited from an international education without the pressures that come with moving between schools and countries.

When you consider the diversity of students in an international school, both in terms of their cultures and their previous experiences, not to mention their individual personalities, beliefs and ideas, it is unsurprising that many schools and organisations have made it their focus to promote international mindedness and cross-cultural friendships, and to develop globally minded individuals. BIS,



for example, opts for the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum for post-16 students. The IB defines international education as fortifying a student's sense of identity and developing their awareness in culture with an aim of enhancing their knowledge in how to accept and coexist amongst a range of varying nationalities. Similarly, the BIS mission statement states, "The British International School is a caring and multicultural community... We act with integrity and treat one another with respect, learning together as responsible global citizens".

After one year of studying for the IB Diploma Programme at BIS and being surrounded by friends who also take the



course, I believe that both the IB and BIS are on track to achieve their missions. Although my interviews with the Year 12 students did highlight divisions between the friendship groups based upon culture, all the interviews ended with a common theme; the belief that studying for the IB Diploma breaks down cultural barriers and facilitates the development of more friendships with those of different backgrounds. This is achieved at BIS through multiple events and activities which help to integrate students, such as house competitions, the service programme, Theory of Knowledge lessons, International Day, Model United Nations, the Student Council and the annual Internationalism Award, which is presented to one student each year who

promotes intercultural understanding in the school.

Leila Holmyard, Assistant Head of Sixth Form at BIS, believes that it is important for students to step out of their comfort zone and extend their friendship to students of other cultural backgrounds. She says, "We strive to help our students develop a strong sense of self, a challenge in many cases for international students because their cultural identity is different to their parents. We encourage them to think beyond their own culture and take an active interest in others, as the world is becoming ever more interconnected. Students today face a future with many complex challenges on a global scale

and they need to be able to view issues from multiple perspectives and with a profound understanding of other cultures."

My experience at BIS has made it clear to me that schools cannot just place students in the same classroom and hope for them to naturally mix. Students will always seek to socialise with those with whom they have the most in common and, therefore, schools must actively promote intercultural friendships through organisational structures and activities which unite students. After all, is it really an international school if the friendships within it are based purely on culture and nationality? ●



LIVING IN

SOPHIE DAVIES JONES, A STUDENT AT
BENENDEN SCHOOL IN THE UK, SAYS
BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME HAS
TAUGHT HER INVALUABLE SKILLS



When I was 13 I started boarding at a large, girls public school nestled in the English countryside. Up to that point my only real experience of boarding was through my childhood books such as Harry Potter and Mallory Towers. However after visiting my soon-to-be senior school at an open morning, I realised what boarding in the 21st century is truly like, and just how great it can be.

Many people seem to be under the misconception that English boarding schools are old-fashioned institutions, filled with rituals dating back to the 1500s, ridiculous uniforms and strict rules enforced by stern teachers. I admit that if you were to travel down my school's drive, you'd be greeted with the ultimate stereotypical image of an English boarding school: the campus is built around an imposing Victorian building, we wear kilts and our teachers roam about in their university gowns. However if you were to delve a little deeper into the heart of my school, you'd find it to be a forward thinking, close-knit community, where pupils learn skills which are relevant to the 21st century – skills which are enforced through the experience of boarding.

There are some wonderful advantages

to boarding and I feel I have learnt, and am still learning from the whole experience. The best thing, which any boarder undoubtedly will tell you, is the friendships you make. I was always told before I started school, "you'll make friends for life" and now a few years on, I believe this to be true. I think it's the fact that we were thrown into a dorm together as strangers from all over the globe, and forced to mix that ensured such strong bonds were made. These friendships were developed not only by years of "dorm raids" and midnight feasts, but also during difficult times (coping with stresses like bereavement or divorce can be a huge challenge when far away from home.)

Another brilliant aspect to boarding is that it has taught me how to live and deal with people – a skill I will use for the rest of my life. As you can imagine, living with hundreds of hormonal teenage girls is not always smooth-running – it requires tact and diplomacy – indeed I felt quite proud that I managed to complete the stressful GCSE period unscathed! Boarding school allows its pupils to become more tolerant, understanding and patient people – plus your average boarder can sleep through anything!

Since I started boarding, I have also become considerably more independent.

I have learnt to take responsibility for myself. A few years ago, the very notion of doing my own laundry, or organising my time between work and play seemed alien. Now, admittedly after a few mishaps, these trivial tasks are part of my day to day life. All this will stand me in good stead for university and beyond. Finally, I've learnt to be resourceful and make the best of any situation. For example; if the house kitchen runs out of chocolate spread (which it often does) I've discovered that butter and coco powder acts as a great substitute! Likewise, my friends and I have found that wearing multiple layers of socks on our hands provides the best protection from the cold when playing lacrosse in the snow! I'm aware it sounds petty, but little discoveries like these are surprisingly satisfying, and it is boarding school which enables me to experience this.

There is so much boarding has to offer: friendships, a great education and fantastic teachers who are on hand at all hours, but also the sense of community. I've found that, since being at boarding school, I feel like I am part of something big; a huge collective network of people, pupils and staff alike, all connected to the school by the common cause of trying to make it a better place. It is a sensation I love and will always treasure. ●

AP: PREPARING STUDENTS AROUND THE WORLD FOR UNIVERSITY

When Sonia Curtis, a former student at the Ecole d'Humanite in Hasliberg, Switzerland, was deciding which curriculum to follow in high school, she chose the Advanced Placement Program (AP®).

"My school didn't have grades, and I saw AP as my chance to show universities my academic strengths," said Sonia.

For more than 50 years, the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) has been helping students prepare for university success by providing them the opportunity to experience university-level learning while still in high school. The rigorous, globally recognized academic program is comprised of over 34 courses and exams in the arts, history and the social sciences, mathematics and computer science, science, and world languages and cultures. Secondary schools around the globe determine which AP subjects to offer, and in May 2013, more than 2.2 million high school students at over 18,000 schools worldwide took AP Exams.

At Sonia's school, Ecole d'Humanite,

a progressive international boarding school situated in the Swiss Alps, its student body of 150 students from various countries has the opportunity to select from two academic programs – AP or the Swiss system. The AP Program leads to a high school diploma and includes preparation for College Board's SAT exams. Students can choose from nine AP classes and also work towards the Advanced Placement International Diploma (APID), which can qualify them for admission to universities in Europe and around the world.

"I liked that AP was flexible and the curriculum was more in-depth," said Sonia. "With the Swiss system, there were 13 mandatory courses." Sonia took a total of eight AP courses, which included AP German Language and Culture, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, Psychology, World History, European History, U.S. Government and Politics and Comparative Government and Politics.

Although Sonia grew up in Switzerland, she aspired to pursue higher education

in the UK and is currently a student at the University of Oxford. While the university lists various entrance requirements, AP is among the academic programs recognized in its admission process.

AP Exam scores are reported on a five-point scale, with 5 being the highest score. In order to earn university credit or advanced placement, a score of 3 or above on a scale of 5 is expected. Each university determines its own AP acceptance and credit policy.

In Sonia's senior year of high school, she took three AP Exams in Government and Politics: Comparative, Government and Politics: U.S., and English Language and Composition and received a score of 5 on all three exams.

According to the University of Oxford website, among other criteria, "(The institution) would also expect Grade 5 in three or more Advanced Placement tests in appropriate subjects or SAT Subject Tests in three appropriate subjects at 700 or better."



In addition to the University of Oxford, AP is now recognized by more than 600 universities in over 65 countries outside the U.S. Country-wide AP recognition policies in which all universities acknowledge qualifying AP Exam scores in the admission process currently exist in Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

At the American School of the Hague (ASH), an international school in Wassenaar, Netherlands offering a university preparation program for students ages 3-18, AP is also among their academic offerings.

“AP is making a resurgence,” said Victor Ferreira, AP Program Coordinator at ASH. “More and more students are asking about the APID (AP International Diploma), and it’s great that students can also get acknowledged for the APID. If a student takes four APs (s/he) can go to Dutch university.”

The AP International Diploma (APID) is a globally recognized award for students

interested in pursuing university study outside of their native country. It requires students to display mastery on AP Exams across several disciplines, and represents an exceptional level of achievement.

“AP allows (students) to get involved in areas that they’re passionate about,” said Ferreira. “AP students seem to be able to sustain a high level of involvement in extracurriculars without compromising their AP grades. Moreover, there is no question that students who take AP are prepared and have no trouble at all when attending local (Dutch) universities like Delft (University).”

For Sonia, while she admits her current coursework is more challenging, she said her AP classwork helped smooth the transition from high school to university. “I didn’t feel unprepared at all,” she said. “All the writing I did in my AP classes really helped.”

“AP students generally transition really well into the English education system because they’re used to the style of teaching and style of assessment,”

said Geraint Fox, Student Recruitment, Admissions and International at Goldsmiths University of London.

Multiple research studies have shown that AP students who earn credit and advanced placement for the corresponding introductory college course perform well in subsequent courses within the same discipline. In addition, AP students take more courses in the discipline for which they’ve received AP credit.

At Oxford, Sonia still finds herself relying on the skills she gained from taking AP. “Even with my constitutional law class, I still apply the skills I learned in my 10th grade AP World History course. Also, learning about different political systems in AP Comparative Government and Politics helps with my current classes.”

As for future plans, Sonia is considering a career in international law or human rights law. After she completes her undergraduate studies, she may continue postgraduate studies at Oxford or secure an internship at an NGO. ●



BEYOND DOUBLE- DECKERS AND WILL & KATE

TRICIA QUINTERO
OFFERS A PERSONAL
PERSPECTIVE ON THE
DECISION TO LEAVE
HOME AND STUDY
AT A UNIVERSITY
OVERSEAS

‘I want to study in England.’ I said with conviction at the dinner table. My father looked at me the way one looks at someone who, with a history of quitting, suddenly decides to run off to a foreign country. The second semester of my first year of university in Mexico was only weeks away. ‘Are you sure?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Okay, then.’

I’m often unsure about, well, everything. From what book to read next to whether I really want to take up that job again. It’s always a crucial decision. About England, however, I was (about!) 87% sure, and that was good enough. Eight months later I was getting out of the minicab in Notting Hill, London, knocking at the wrong door. Ah, the memories!

After a wonderful first month (no sarcasm intended) of setting tables, working at an education centre in central London, it was time to go off to what the British call ‘Uni’. Now, it must be noted that central London does not provide a real English experience. I’d say about one in two conversations you might hear on the street or on public transport aren’t in English. It’s very exciting, but my university was in London’s ‘Zone 6’ the furthest place away from central in which you can still use your Oyster Card to ride the Tube. Now, that’s English.

Corner shops, somewhat-dodgy (yet tempting) food establishments, children riding their three-wheeled scooters to school: they’re all part of the Greater London experience. As for the university experience, there’s the sports clubs and societies, the accommodation halls, the much-loved lecture-free ‘Reading Week’, and, of course, the Straight-After-Reading-Week Essays. Contrary to popular belief, the English are welcoming and very willing to make friends. Like the vast majority of people, they love a good chat about common interests or experiences. Also, they’re rather respectful of other people’s



way of life and beliefs. I must admit, the nightlife scene is not everyone’s cup of tea; it isn’t mine, that’s for sure. English clubbing involves obnoxious amounts of drinking and not much socialising. Alternatives exist, though. Pub quiz nights, the cinema, and Domino’s Two-for-Tuesdays can make for the greatest of fun.

Have you ever seen *Harry Potter 1* through 6? Well, it’s not really like that. Unless you go to Oxford, of course. Unfortunately, professors are not addressed by students as, well, ‘Professor’. Instead, they’re called by their first name which encourages a causal relationship. This is actually quite useful when it comes to asking for advice on whether you should focus on talking chimpanzees in your dissertation or on the relationship between *Hamlet* and *The Lion King*. It becomes less intimidating to approach them. If you’re lucky, which I’ve been, you might get a good dose of comedy during lectures. In spite of their incredible knowledge, lecturers don’t take themselves too seriously and often crack jokes or tell an anecdote of the time they took their cat to the vet in Japan, which loosely relates to the Interaction Hypothesis. Another pro of the English higher education system is that students are treated as adults (which they mostly are). What I mean by this is that lecturers do not demand much of students. They insist and encourage their students to study and write their essays, but do not do so personally; not often, anyway. One must be careful not to abuse this freedom however, because exam and module retakes are not fun.



On a different note, being in Europe has quite a few advantages, one of which is cheap travel. Cheap travel. Yes, you can get a flight from London to Prague for £25.99 or to Dublin for £19.99. It is, for lack of a better word, insane. I have visited Spain, France, Italy, and will soon be exploring the streets of Cologne. If you are new to this side of the world, please, with your best interest in mind, don’t miss the opportunity to travel. Watching *Midnight in Paris* isn’t the same as actually sitting on the steps outside the Palais Chaillot waiting for the Eiffel Tower to light up. Also, Italian pizza and gelato. Travelling makes for good Facebook profile pictures and unreplaceable experiences.

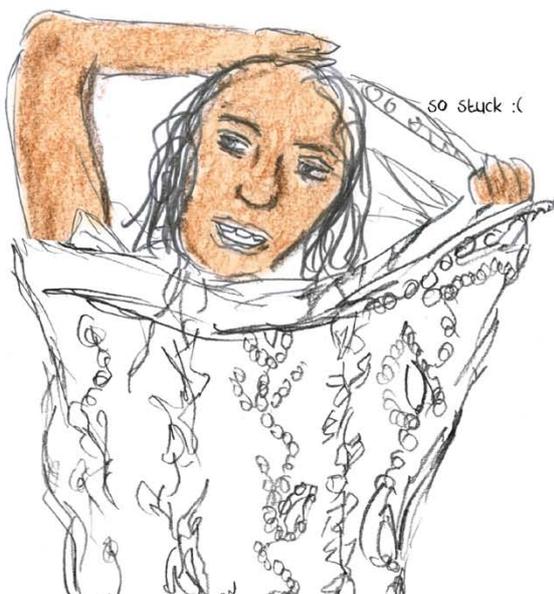
There is so many—too many things I could say about coming to England. Being away from home has many ups and downs, but the truly wonderful friends I’ve made, the good and bad experiences I’ve had, and the things I’ve learned would never allow me to regret the two, soon to be three, years I’ve lived in the UK. Forgive the cliché, but life is too short to stay at home watching reality TV.

Quoting a certain animated animated film, ‘Adventure is out there!’ ●

BROWN GIRL PROBLEMS

ILLUSTRATOR SAFEENA RAZZAQ INTRODUCES HER SERIES OF LIGHT-HEARTED DRAWINGS ON HER EXPERIENCES OF GROWING UP A MUSLIM IN A WESTERN COUNTRY

Attempting to wear a sari and then giving up and taking a nap in it instead



My name is Safeena Razzaq and I am an illustrator based in Plymouth. I have recently graduated from Plymouth University in the UK. I am interested in creating artwork, which tackles social and political concerns; my inspiration stems from my upbringing and background as a young 'Muslim' girl born and raised in the UK. My work reflects elements

of cultural diversity, cultural confusion as well portraying aspects of my own personal journey.

Brown Girl Problems is a series of drawings inspired by my upbringing and includes the cultural struggles I have faced and my personal conflicts with identity: British born, Pakistani family and Muslim background. The images are

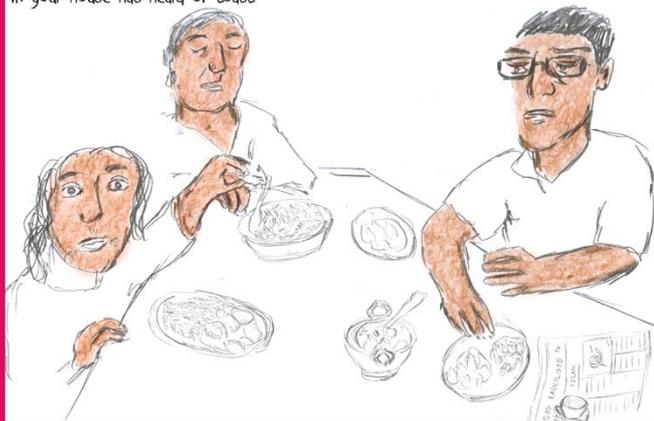
in chronological order depicting issues that I had when growing up to problems that I still face today.

I started this series initially as a personal project, however when I began to show my work to people I found it was very well received by not only ethnically diverse groups but also by people from a white background. It was then that I began to see

Having a ridiculously loud alarm clock go off telling you when prayer time is.



Eating curry for breakfast because no one in your house has heard of toast



Having samosas in your lunchbox instead of cheese sandwiches :(



Getting shouted at when someone is kissing on the tv, even though that person is not you.



the gap for something like this in the market. I believe this series of drawings provide a comical, satirical and autobiographical look at me growing up as a young Muslim. For people coming from white backgrounds I believe it provides an insight of the struggles that many people from ethnic minority backgrounds can face, in the same way people from the ethnic minority backgrounds can relate to these struggles and connect with many of the issues at a personal level.

The ultimate aim for this series for me is for it to be published as a book, I believe that issues like these should be spoken about more and feel that if these issues are displayed in a light hearted manner, people can relate and respond to them effectively. ●

A DAY IN THE LIFE

VERONIKA LACHINA, A STUDENT AT COBIS MEMBER SCHOOL

RADNOR HOUSE, WRITES ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE AS A STUDENT

BROADCASTER AT THE COBIS ANNUAL CONFERENCE, WHERE SHE

WORKED WITH LEADING ICT COMPANY MAKEWAVES TO GET A

TASTER OF LIFE AS A JOURNALIST

Finally I was ready. Shooting a final glance at the mirror, I walked out of the house with the most confident walk of mine. I remembered worrying about today last night, planning how I can do my very best before falling asleep but this morning, today, only excitement was left. The smart clothes I wore made me feel professional and important and in a little more than half an hour I was standing outside the gorgeous hotel doors ready to walk in.

I was fascinated with what I was about to hear on the annual COBIS conference. Being a student, I expected it to feel strange to hear advice for teachers about how to work with us – young people. Always sitting behind a desk while the teacher was the one on stage it never occurred to me before that their job is

not only about getting the information to settle in our heads but in order to achieve this they have to interest us, get our attention and there are numerous ways of doing it. This day was an opportunity to be a part of the everyday performance carried out by a teacher, a look at the backstage, if I can put it like this. I was going there to record the events at the conference and give an opportunity to a wider community to have a feel of the conference and the topics that will be touched. But also, I was going to understand more clearly the biggest challenges faced by teachers and what different strategies there are at dealing with them. What student wouldn't be excited?

Smile switched on, I was about to try myself as a broadcaster on an annual COBIS conference in spring 2014. Thing

is, you can never be completely certain in something unless you try it yourself. A wish to become a journalist started developing in me not so long ago, and I was eager to try on this new-made dream, in order to see whether it fits.

After my meeting with the reporters' team and speaking over who is to do what one more time, the first conference event began.

Dim lights threw shadows on the faces of newcomers. The round room was beautifully done. The stage opposite the entrance was lit up by a power point presentation that was about to begin. As far as I could see there were no empty seats left. Some, who did not get a seat, were standing, concentration was showing on everyone's face, many took out notebooks, ready to receive



and remember the knowledge that will soon be passed on to them. This clearly written concentration on the faces of so many different people, made us, the reporters feel the responsibility of doing our job well that day.

All the reporters from Radnor House School were also in that room, most of us with our notebooks out, ready to record, listen and plan the fore coming interview with the first speaker – Sir John Jones. I, on my part, was thinking about a blog that I should write once the speech was over.

When Sir John's speech was over, all I could hear were exclamations about how well he spoke and how right were the things he said. In a way he became my inspiration to acquire this crucial skill in life – the art of speech. I always wanted to be good at speaking but unfortunately this skill has to be perfected as nature wasn't generous enough to grant me it with birth. But as Sir John said – anything is possible as long as there is a desire on the student's part, a right tutor and an opportunity. I had the first one, that's at least something to start with. His speech, in fact, turned out to be very inspirational not only for teachers but



“Anything is possible, as long as there is a desire on the student's part”



Why Join Us?

COBIS meets the needs & aspirations of its global members by:

- Representing members with the British Government, educational bodies, the corporate sector & Ministries of Education worldwide
- Delivering high quality conferences, training programmes & webinars for leaders, governors, teachers & support staff. Plus access to DBS checks & child protection training
- Engaging, challenging & inspiring students of all ages & abilities by delivering excellent interschool student competitions & events
- Communicating news & research about developing practice in the international & UK education sector. Free posting of job adverts on the COBIS website
- Facilitating high impact 'Member to Member' professional networking

www.cobis.org.uk

members@cobis.org.uk

"I'D THOROUGHLY RECOMMEND IT!"

In November 2012, I attended the COBIS Head Boy and Head Girl Conference in Murcia with a fellow student. The first thing that got me excited about the whole experience was how friendly the students from the other schools were. We immediately made good friends with them all and still communicate with each other to this day. Spending three days with completely new students certainly allowed me to better my people skills.

The conference itself was extremely well organised and we attended many intriguing seminars, the most interesting for me being that on technology. Similarly, we were granted the opportunity to attend a First Aid class and a private, moving seminar with Simon Weston. However, the most rewarding aspect of the conference was the leadership and team building programme. The varied activities included within this programme taught us invaluable skills required in any work place, better preparing us for our futures at university and as young leaders. I would thoroughly recommend the

COBIS Student Conference to further develop your personal skills in preparation for your future; I am sure you will enjoy it!

As one of my fellow students said: "I enjoyed the conference very much, I think it was enriching and inspiring and it certainly made me realise the great amount of things that have to be changed at my school. It also made me realise what things I do well and where I have to improve in to become a good leader and how to communicate better".

The programme we have in mind is not of course the same as the original conference format but the focus is still very much on developing leadership skills. The COBIS website has information on this year's programme: www.cobis.org.uk/page.cfm?p=1166

***Craig Laidlaw, from King's College,
The British School of Alicante***

also for us, students. After hearing it, all of us felt that with time, if we chose to, we could get anywhere we wanted, thankfully this great understanding stuck with me.

The day flew by very fast as we had something to do all the time, not a minute to waste. Some of the reporters went to interview the key speakers. Sir John overwhelmed me so much that I found it impossible not to ask him for an interview with me too so I could use it in my blog. I asked him about a book he wrote, about his views on teaching and was very pleased with open, interesting answers I had received. After the fuss of the conference, I found myself enjoying the quietness of the small room, provided for the reporters' team while everyone else was out, doing various kinds of jobs. There, I could rethink everything I have seen and heard that day, I could slowly and thoroughly read over the numerous notes I made and decide which ones were either interesting or important and which ones I should leave aside. There, in that small room with a long desk and only five chairs, I could write my blog, resting in a way before my next journey out, during which I had to talk to people, concentrate and collect as much useful information as possible.

The questions which were discussed at the conference were very relevant to the main issues concerning educational life. Some of the main topics discussed were how to attract attention of students, how to keep moving forward and progressing, some of the techniques used in schools to communicate information using newest technologies, ways of running a school and many more other workshops. A thought that startled me the most was that to improve, we have to progress but our life is filled with automatic things that are taken as correct or right things to do only due to a tradition rather than rational thinking. Whenever something becomes a habit simply because 'we always did it that way' that hints at a



I can honestly say that the experience was priceless, not to mention the feeling of inspiration that was left in all of us

problem which should be solved. Often these habits are harmless but they stop us from moving forward. Everyone has to come to understanding of this themselves, no one can be forced to change against their own views. A change from what was always thought to be right for no reason can not come around easily or too fast, otherwise there is a high chance that as fast as something has changed, the faster it will go back to 'normal'. People are often resistant to any sort of change, as it feels uncomfortable going away from something done all their lives. For example, the speaker at the COBIS conference has asked men and women to change their watches from left hand to right. It is a small thing but a big change for people and an uncomfortable one. In 5 minutes, many changed their watches back to the hand they are used to wearing them on, and by the end of the speech nearly everybody had. As the speaker said this illustrates that the desire to rethink things taken for granted and change the ones that don't make sense is fast at going away, by the time these people get home, they will probably forget everything

about it. However, it is our duty to keep moving forward and changing together with the time for the better. Thus, if a teacher is doing something only because it was always done this way and for no other reason, then may be it is time to do something else rationally that will be more effective.

The two days flew by with impressive speed. After meeting and speaking to so many clever, interesting people, we all went home with a lot of things to think about and try to remember. We really enjoyed the conference and I was especially pleased to get a real taster of a life of a journalist and I am happy to say that I really liked it. I am sure all of us will take part in any other opportunity of the sort that will be given to us. In fact I acquired so many useful skills during these two days such as working with people, extracting most important information, making a lot of notes really fast while someone is talking, working within time limits and writing in a style of a blog that I can honestly say that the experience was priceless, not to mention the feeling of inspiration that was left in all of us. ●

LOOKING FOR SOMEWHERE FOR YOUR CAS?

BRYAN MASSINGHAM EXPLAINS WHY THE MAEKOK RIVER

VILLAGE RESORT IS THE IDEAL LOCATION FOR STUDENTS TO

UNDERTAKE COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND THE CAS COMPONENT

OF INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMMES

Over the years, so many people have asked the question, 'Why set up a student centre in the far north of Thailand?' A full answer would go beyond the word limit for this article, so let's just say it was a mixture of circumstance, coincidence and luck, combined with a long held desire to own and manage an outdoor centre. The result of that decision is that since 2002 over 15,000 students from 120 schools and 23 countries have passed through our doors. So we must be doing something right!

The best way to describe the subsequent development is 'organic growth', responding to the needs of international schools. My initial thoughts on these needs were however quite narrow, as in those early days, we provided a limited range of outdoor activities and an equally limited range of geography fieldwork. Given that this was plunge into the unknown we did not want to extend ourselves too much and we also wanted to make sure we got things right as we knew that reputation means everything.

It was also a considerable financial risk (which may not have been a good idea at the age of 50!!), but my wife and I did feel confident enough to leave two very good teaching jobs in Hong Kong, where we had been for 20 years. That confidence emanated from the simple fact that South East Asia did not have any suitable residential student centres. So therefore why not set one up!

We began by taking over a run down resort and converting this to our needs. The lease running out, combined with an increasing demand for places, led to the decision to build anew, with the advantage of designing what we considered important to make for a first class student centre.

So here we are. Twelve years after our opening, and in that year saw just over 200 students visit. Now we welcome over 2000 students every year who come to do a range of activities that we could not possibly have imagined back in 2002.

Essentially we offer opportunities in three key 'curricular' areas and although these are very much separate, we do find

that most groups carry out a combination of activities and on occasions, embrace all three 'prongs'.

Fieldwork from a range of geographical topics is a popular option, but in keeping with our 'organic growth' concept, we have responded to requests for studies in biology, environmental science, history, economics and business studies.

Our outdoor activity programme has also developed to the extent that we offer opportunities for climbing, hiking, biking, rafting, abseiling, high ropes, archery, team building and leadership and even Thai cooking. These programmes have been further extended to provide all the levels for AYP / Duke of Edinburgh Award. However what has really inspired us, and many visiting schools, has been our community service programmes which focus on local schools. Again, this has grown organically, starting in 2004 with some casual visits to organize informal English teaching. On these visits, it soon became apparent that the majority of schools were poorly funded and hence the facilities and the conditions were in dire need of improvement. The under-



funding then, resulted from schools only receiving government funds based on the number of students whose parents had Thai citizenship. As this area is populated by large numbers of ethnic Shan from Myanmar, as well as numerous hilltribes, the limited funds had to be 'shared' amongst a student body larger than those 'officially registered'. What typified the situation was at the first school we visited, comprising just hilltribe children, only one working toilet catered (or didn't!) for 400 students. A visiting school from Japan raised funds to allow us to build a new block of toilets and that heralded the start of our community programme.

In those early days a crucial focus was on health and hygiene. International schools raised funds and then came to assist in the construction or refurbishment of numerous toilet blocks, canteens and kitchens, medical rooms and water supplies. Later projects have resulted in many schools now having refurbished or new classrooms, libraries, nurseries and IT rooms. In the past ten years, a total of 125 projects have been carried out in 30 schools with a combined value of about

US\$500,000. It should also be noted that the funds are used to buy building supplies from local shops and employing skilled labour. This 'multiplier' effect has had a marked effect on the local economy.

Most visiting students also involve themselves in teaching English. Generally this involves one or two days of the week they are with us...not a great deal...but the cumulative effect of numerous groups visiting a particular school, is that most students become far more comfortable with 'foreigners', and for a good few, the standard of English has markedly improved. This is particularly so in those schools which have been the beneficiaries of another aspect of our community involvement; providing placements for gap year students to spend time teaching English. This programme was initially aimed at school leavers who can spend up to three months with us (living in school accommodation) but we have extended this to Year 11 and 12 students who would like an opportunity to do something valuable for a few weeks in the long summer holiday. Students who have done this have invariably said it

was the best experience of their lives. And at a time when universities are looking for candidates who 'stand out', having this experience to write about on your personal statement or to discuss at interview would be a distinct advantage.

Our reputation has spread well beyond the region and schools come from as far as the UK, Australia, and the Middle East. However the main body of schools are more 'regional' and our growth has coincided with the increasing number of international schools, many of which have adopted the IB Being able to offer the facilities and resources to cover much of the CAS requirement has been a central element of our philosophy. Needless to say we are delighted that we have been able to help schools and individual students in their quest for suitable programmes, be it fieldwork, outdoor adventure or community service; something that did not exist in the region 12 years ago! ●

So come and see for yourself! Just drop me a line and we can start talking.
bryan@maekok-river-village-resort.com

MIND THE GAP!

STEFAN WARING, OF THE YEAR OUT GROUP, TELL US WHY

STUDENTS SHOULD CONSIDER TAKING TIME OUT TO TRAVEL,

WORK OR VOLUNTEER AND THE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE

In 2013 the 34 member organizations of Year Out Group arranged structured gap year placements for just under 30,000 people in over 90 countries across the globe.

Seventy five percent of the participants were aged between 18 and 24 predominantly taking time between school and university or leaving university and taking up full-time work; twenty percent were between 25 and 40 mostly taking a sabbatical or career break or even looking for a change of career, while the remaining five percent are catching up on travel opportunities they may have missed out on and offering valuable skills in the process or even deciding that they too have a new potential career ahead of them.

Why take a gap year?

Those taking a gap year between leaving school/college and going to university arrive refreshed and focussed. They are also far more likely to complete their chosen course. Some may take time to get back into academic mode but this is more than compensated for in their social maturity. Their completion of a demanding challenge that they have initiated, planned and implemented successfully boosts their self-confidence significantly. They are also more globally aware which enables them to provide a

more know broadly based contribution in tutorials. In short they are better placed to make the most of their time at university and to succeed. They will also have acquired skills and experiences that will enhance their employability.

It is the enhancement to their employability that graduates most seek to gain from their gap year. Employers are looking for:

- **Communication skills.** The ability to express oneself clearly verbally and in writing so that one can argue a position, persuade and inspire. The ability to relate to customers is also important.
- **Courage to challenge and take risks.** The ability to manage a project, to identify and manage risk and to experience and learn from failure.
- **Planning and organization.** The ability to have an idea, to develop a plan and to implement that plan successfully.
- **Initiative and adaptability.** The ability to think on one's feet, to act on one's own accord and to adjust a plan as and when circumstances change.
- **Teamwork.** The ability to play a full part in a team. This links to adaptability as teams will often change as a project progresses.
- **Internationalism.** Knowledge of languages and being at ease

in diverse cultures is becoming increasingly important.

- **Business acumen.** Understanding figures, an ability to negotiate and having some knowledge of maths and science in order to make best use of emerging technology.
- Above all the **self-confidence** that comes from a successful gap year that enables you to start a job and draw on all your skills so that you become an effective member of staff as soon as possible.

These attributes can be acquired and developed during the planning and execution of a structured gap year.

As with any new experience the real learning often takes place back at home, when you have time to reflect on what you've done and what you'll do next. You keep a diary or blog or photo album on your phone to remind you of the thoughts, experiences and incidents you've had. You can then draw on these to illustrate your attributes as you draft a CV or prepare for an interview.

Popular activities

Voluntary Work attracts the most placements and the greatest variety of projects. Voluntary work placements are available in nearly every country where Year Out Group members operate.



*As with any new experience
the real learning often takes
place back at home*

Short and long term placements are both very rewarding. Short term bookings perhaps just for a week or two will get participants up to speed quickly so that the projects maximise the benefit of the volunteer's time which also makes a valuable contribution locally. Projects that run for 3-12 months allow more time for volunteers to get into the routine and culture of community life and deeper relationships tend to be formed as result which, such as in the case of teaching is more rewarding for both parties.

Courses: Year Out Group members offer courses in art history, drama, diving, game ranger, languages, mountaineering, mountain leadership, sailing, windsurfing, skiing, and snowboarding amongst others. All these courses are led by expert instructors or guides and most lead to internationally recognised qualifications.

Expeditions offer personal development opportunities through a variety of phases such as a community project, a conservation project and an adventure phase. Some expeditions involve small parties others are designed for larger, often international groups. All are led by experienced and carefully chosen leaders. Expeditions have become increasingly popular with graduates in recent years with many reporting success in the job market on their return. Opportunities have also opened up for young people who might not usually get the chance to take part in these events through the International Citizenship service supported by some Year Out Group members.

Structured Work Placements & Internships: The Year in Industry offers excellent opportunities for those

planning to read engineering or engineer related subjects at university to gain valuable work experience in engineering companies in the UK. Subsequently these placements, who are taken on the payroll of the host company and paid a fair salary, are often supported through university by their host companies and on graduation offered full time employment.

More and more members are starting to provide internships of some nature and across quite a wide variety of skills areas, including journalism and medical and micro-finance work. ●

*This is an extract from the gap-year
guidebook 2015, £14.99. Supported by
www.gap-year.com*

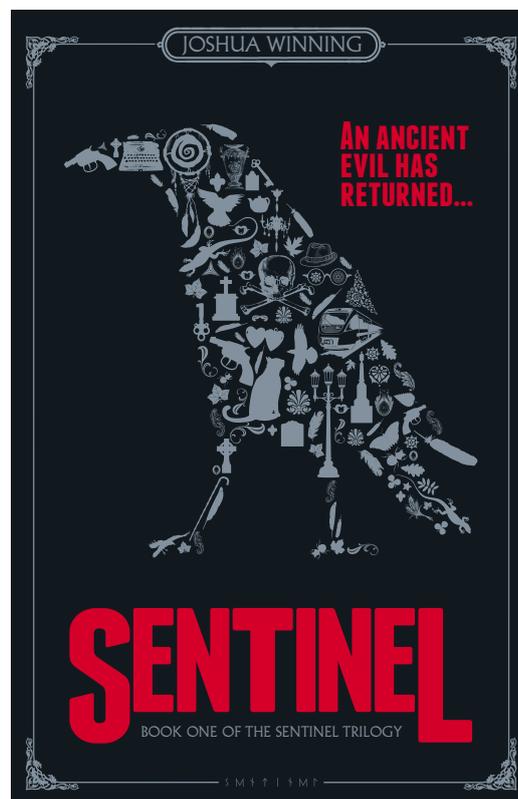
Photo provided by Gap 360

SENTINEL

SOPHIE DAVIES JONES REVIEWS AN

EXCITING NEW YOUNG ADULT

THRILLER, *SENTINEL*



What is a sentinel? A guard. A detective. A killer.”

If you love a good fantasy novel, magical worlds and intense adventures, you will not be disappointed with Joshua Winning’s debut novel and first book of the trilogy, *Sentinel*. Winning uses an imaginative blend of folklore, myth and mystery; the perfect components to ensure that any coming-of-age, fantasy tale will be a success. Indeed, *Sentinel* is gripping from cover to cover, and as ever with a trilogy, leaves the reader with a huge number of questions.

Sentinel follows the story of Nicholas Hallow, an ordinary teenage boy who unveils the secrets of an unknown world to which his parents belonged. This is a world of demons, hunters and evil. Soon into the book he is orphaned and forced to make his way through this new, terrifying world alone or with strangers. What separates *Sentinel* from other novels in the same genre, is that Nicholas is as normal as can be. Nicholas has no preconceptions of what is out there, this

allows the reader to travel on Nicholas’ journey with him; every surprising twist for the protagonist was just as surprising to me as the reader!

It is not always intense though, Winning offers some light-relief with the use of humorous characters and lines. For example, when one elderly woman exclaims “I’m not a cat. Not normally, anyway. This is but a temporary inconvenience.” Winning’s use of humour and intensity proves very successful and makes the book an enjoyable read.

Winning uses his fabulous set of characters to tell the story, these characters within the novel are central to the plot; they carry the reader through the story. The intense characters and their own individual stories become familiar which ensures that the emotions in the story become far more poignant to us as the readers. The characters develop throughout the novel, which makes the story far more realistic and therefore relatable.

Some would take issue with the lack of

a romantic interest for Nicholas. Often in coming-of-age novels, the protagonist is exposed to the first experience of love; however Winning has decided not to include a romantic aspect to the tale. This is no bad thing. Nicholas is only fifteen, and his life has changed dramatically at a ferocious speed, I think if there had been a romantic interest it would have detracted some of the passion which makes the novel so exciting.

Overall I finished the book knowing I had experienced something unique although what it was I am still not sure! I sought answers; the last few pages of the book are particularly exhilarating before the book abruptly concludes. This is obviously the sign of a successful part one to a trilogy. In short, *Sentinel* is a great read and has managed to make a clear imprint on the competitive young-adult fantasy market. I look forward to the second book! ●

Sentinel is published by Peridot Press, £6.99

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World Student is YOUR magazine! We are looking for articles for forthcoming issues written by students in schools all around the world.

It could be an article detailing your own personal experiences in different schools; you might want to offer some revision tips; or some advice on how to settle in to a new school. Your article

could be on any aspect of school life, or your plans, dreams and ambitions for the future.

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