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Honestly acknowledging the dissonance that exists about homework, and recognizing its risks as well as its benefits, can lead to the type of informed and balanced resolution school communities seek.

Brett D McLeod, page 45

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Globalising the mind

Richard Pearce considers what we can learn from some startling world events

Currently we are still reeling from the impact of two elections, the Brexit referendum in the UK and the presidential election in the USA, and nervously watching a cycle of elections due in several European countries. What will happen next?

But we should have known. The majority vote isn't always what we expect. There was an election in Gaza a few years ago, and we all know what happened there. The question for us small 'd' democrats is: if the people in power don't like the popular choice, under what circumstances should the popular vote be overruled or, as Richard Dawkins put it, on what issues should the people be consulted?

This debate, repeated around a thousand dinner tables and at a thousand bars, will run and run. But if we move from our dinner table to the wider world there may be a different question being asked. The so-called 'Remainers' in the UK should have listened to the British politician who said 'the people have had enough of experts'. In the event, it was those who thought themselves well-informed, articulate, and educated who were outvoted. Instead of just looking at 'them', who made such crazy choices, perhaps we ought to ask who are 'we', the right-thinking folk who suddenly find ourselves in the minority. In Anthropology there is talk of the 'WEIRD' community: the Western, Educated, Intellectual, Rich, Developed societies, to which most people in education belong. International school careers provide an even wider experience of the ways of the world; surely we know best? If we are the ones who know about these things, we tend to conclude that the only possible reasons for taking the illiberal side in these elections are ignorance or stupidity.

How did it look to Them, the non-liberals? Surely they hear the same stories, read the same papers, watch the same TV news as we do? If we are all in the same community, our knowledge and our attitudes are built from shared ideas and a common picture of the world. Above all, the way that digital media allow us to converse through the universally-available, universally-accessible social media networks should surely bring us all together.

But this is exactly what social media do not do. Despite

the protestations of some of its devotees – and they are truly devoted – the Internet is actually structured to narrow our vision. For a start this universal participation is an illusion; it is only universal among the young and modern. Then it has various devices that trace our previous searches and offer us reiterations of those searches. Governed by advertising, they want to classify us and then sell us what we are likely to buy. Everything is there on the Internet, but we are steered away from conflicting or dissonant encounters. We reinforce this ourselves, by the way we use it. Since the 'death of distance', to quote an influential book of the 1990s, we have had such wide contacts that we are able to populate our social lives entirely with congenial people. There was a time when the Flat Earth Society only met once a month in a room above a pub in Clapham, London, but now they can chat for as long as they want, every day, with all their members. We no longer have to deal with those awkward people who think differently, and who might occasionally make us question our own view of things. We can simply share our laughter at the stupidity of others with like-minded friends around the world, reassuring ourselves that we are the ones who are right. But without difference we are oysters with no grit to form the pearl, no reflection to develop our ideas. On the one hand is the comfortable certainty of our cliques, and beyond it a post-fact world in which knowledge is instant thanks to Wikipedia and truth is a matter of personal choice.

It is a challenge that we are well positioned to meet in international schools. The diversity of the world is right in front of our eyes. In school we can encourage a critical approach to online information. In class we can give students the confidence to display their own beliefs and values. Outside of the class we can promote genuine interaction with the host country. We can show by our example that we respect and want to understand all of the communities we serve, and not just the ones whose syllabus we teach. Of course each situation is unique, but that is the way of the world. Perhaps this is the biggest lesson of all – that not everyone sees things the way we do. Isn't that where we started?

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International School© is published by
John Catt Educational Ltd,
12 Deben Mill Business Centre, Old Maltings Approach,
Melton, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1BL, UK
Company registration 5762466



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International School© 2016
ISSN 1461-395

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'Integrated learning with a purpose may motivate students to take some action in school, at home or in the community.'



Interdisciplinary learning and the real world!

Malcolm Nicolson applies some context to a key curricular theme

Many educators have spent the last two decades or more telling colleagues, parents and students that interdisciplinary learning is crucial and must be incorporated in any quality curriculum. We point to skills, knowledge and attitudes that deepen understanding, and we emphasise solving of global issues. However, saying that interdisciplinarity is required to provide solutions for global challenges such as poverty and climate change has always felt like a throwaway comment. It seems intuitively right, but if we were to dive deeper, can we really explain what that means and why?

The International Baccalaureate (IB) defines interdisciplinary learning in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) as “the process by which students come to understand bodies of knowledge and ways of knowing from two or more disciplines or subject

groups and integrate them to create new understanding” (IB, 2014). As guided by Veronica Boix-Mansilla, they describe three qualities of interdisciplinary learning: integrative, purposeful, and rooted in the disciplines. How does this theoretical description relate to life beyond the classroom? How does it relate to the students of today addressing the challenges of tomorrow? Do we really need interdisciplinary learning to address global issues?

The development of Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills across IB programmes has supported the possibilities for unlocking interdisciplinary learning through subject-specific and generic skills across five skill categories: thinking, social, communication, self-management, research and communication.

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Exploring emissions performance

I recently completed research that made me reflect on interdisciplinary learning, and its importance in 'real life'. The focus of the research was exploring links between the emissions performance of countries, country policies and rhetoric. Anthropogenic warming of the climate system is happening, with a range of potential impacts. My research used an economically sustainable decarbonisation matrix to interpret emissions and GDP data for all countries in the world in order to produce a league table of sustainability performance. The ideal balance of changing performance between environmental and economic sustainability allows direct comparison between countries.

In general terms, Annex I (developed) countries demonstrate economically sustainable decarbonisation, while most Non-Annex I (developing) countries are dominated by unsustainable performance and focussed on economic growth at the expense of sustainability. The best performers are countries from the European Union, Caribbean and former Soviet republics. The poorest performers are in Asia and Africa.

The Kyoto Protocol was partly successful in addressing carbon emissions through carbon pricing and regulations. However, allowing Non-Annex I countries to have no obligatory targets has led to performances on unsustainable paths, and resulted in the weaker performances of Annex I countries such as the USA and Canada. The UK has seen recent rhetoric that is not matched by action, whereas in the US there has been little of either rhetoric or action. The rhetoric in Canada is now encouraging and starting to be supported by action.

Interdisciplinary skills and knowledge

Even though I am including here only very brief reference to my research, it is easy to see how many disciplines have been incorporated: economics, physics, ecology, geography, politics, language and mathematics. In developing a deeper understanding of the main issue, it is essential that learning is rooted in the disciplines and that we apply knowledge, concepts, strategies and ways of communicating. The study was purposeful, addressing societal needs and showing global successes and failures; another essential element of interdisciplinary learning. This was always the essence behind the development of MYP global contexts as a replacement for Areas of Interaction.

Integration is the most difficult part of the equation for interdisciplinary learning. What is it? How do we see it and know it has happened? We want students to integrate disciplinary perspectives in a productive relationship to develop a new and deeper understanding of the issue that may motivate them to take some form of action. In my research example, integration can be seen in many areas and as a result of developing and using a range of ATL skills from each of the five categories. Amongst other examples, the work included:

- a large amount of mathematical data transformation using vectors and matrices;
- results analysed through the lenses of economics and politics;

- investigation of politics through forms of language around policy and rhetoric;
- an appreciation of the impact of policy that was enhanced with scientific knowledge; and
- a central interplay between economy and the environment.

Implications for the school curriculum

Meaningful inquiry and research could not have been produced without genuine integrated learning which is rooted in the disciplines. This supports the emphasis we place on solving future challenges through interdisciplinary learning and shows that an understanding of problems and solutions can only come from interdisciplinary thinking. Interdisciplinary learning is essential in the curriculum, not because of any external requirements or assessment, but because it is important in preparing students to make an impact in the real world.

There are hurdles to developing interdisciplinary units; it is not easy and requires collaboration. While schools still teach through disciplinary lenses, it is vital that interdisciplinary units are developed. There is no hard and fast rule about how such units are planned, but one recommendation is:

- start with either concepts, content, assessment, skills or context;
- build in research skills and independent learning;
- plan for authentic and contextual assessment which provides purpose; and
- create assessment opportunities that may include teams presenting ideas and solutions – in the role of government ministers for example, so that we can observe skills, measure knowledge and evaluate understanding.

The last question is: what next? Integrated learning with a purpose may motivate students to take some action in school, at home or in the community. Encourage colleagues to connect; collaborate through existing online tools, set small but significant goals, investigate systems and complexity thinking, and review current learning, as an interdisciplinary unit might not be so difficult to incorporate into what is already taking place.

Interdisciplinary learning is a powerful way in which to engage students. It helps them to develop the skills needed in future employment, and the understanding that will help them to tackle the global challenges of today and tomorrow.

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Designing space for optimal learning

Anne Keeling introduces a school campus designed for 21st century needs

In September 2016, Geneva English School (GES) in Switzerland opened a secondary school, and next academic year will see GES Secondary move into a new building. Its primary school is based in an elegant 19th century mansion designed by architect J-L Brocher. The new school will benefit from the skills of another renowned architect, Dirk Jan Postel, this time creating a contemporary learning environment that is designed for the needs of young people of the 21st century.

Dirk and his team at Dutch-based Kraaijvanger Architects have carved a niche for designing innovative educational projects. Previous work includes The British School in the Netherlands Junior and Senior Schools, American School of The Hague Early Childhood Centre, Almere Art School, Voorlinden Museum, and Amsterdam Art Centre. He is currently leading the design of BSN (The British School in the

Netherlands) Connect due to open in 2018, and the interior of the new GES Secondary.

Designing where it matters most

The process of designing a new style of school interior – one that reflects life today, that welcomes and inspires young people to learn, that responds to their huge developmental needs, as well as providing the best possible environments for teaching – has taken many months. Significant time has been devoted to collaboration between the architect and the entire school community; a process that Dirk is following at both BSN and GES to create a design that exactly meets the learning needs and ethos of each school.

Dirk talks about the experience at GES: "There have been very intense conversations with so many members of the

GES Secondary's classrooms were designed in collaboration with the school community. Photograph below left shows Dirk Jan Postel (left) and Headmaster Tim Meunier. Photographs: Christopher Cordey and Gianluca Colla



school community", he explains. "It started with us forming a story for the way we wanted the space to be. Our vision is one that gets away from the traditional classroom and moves to one that provides an environment with variety for the different ways we can learn, to create different atmospheres. Classrooms along a corridor are a very efficient use of space, but if that's all they achieve then you've missed the point."

Most children at the school will be preparing for university. "So we want to give them a hint of that; a lecture hall, tutorial rooms,

lots of areas for independent and collaborative learning," says Dirk. "Traditional classrooms don't make it easy to collaborate or to handle information in different ways; they are very inflexible and isolating." The common thread within the new building will be cooperation and a place that promotes students to learn from each other. "That's how the children at GES are learning today and we need to create an environment that enables this to happen in the best possible way," he says.

On monthly visits to the school, Dirk talks extensively with the teachers and secondary planning team. "It's so important for me to listen to them; most teachers are passionate about the way they want children to learn and they know how they want to use their space," he says. "I sketch out roughs as we talk, putting their ideas onto paper so that we know we're understanding each other. But it's never the whole story. Even in a small project, combining the functionality, the vision and the design is complex."

Student participation

Collaboration between architect and school community has also involved Dirk working with the current cohort of Year 7 students. "This helps me to find out what they want in a learning environment and gives them a sense of ownership of their new space," he explains. He helps them along the way, reminding them that in four years' time they will be very different people from who they are today; that they'll be choosing to move away from the familiar, preferring their own realms instead. "I want to give students a learning space that will work for their social, emotional and neurological needs; for the way they are today and for the people they'll be at age 16, 17 or 18," he says. "They will recognise some of their ideas in the final design, but at the same time I have to go beyond their expectations; to give them the next 'iPhone'; a space they can't even imagine."





The children at GES already have a sense of the way the architect uses space. This year the pioneering secondary students are based at the primary campus in an area that the architect is using to test out some ideas. Within a single classroom there's a snug 'room-within-a-room' for quiet relaxed study and discussions; a white-wall (an entire wall-and-floor-whiteboard) allowing for the sharing of ideas and learning in an engaging, 'think-big' way; high laptop benches; and tessellating tables that can easily move to form different learning settings. "This pilot has been perfect for identifying what works within a single space, and what can be improved," explains Dirk. "It's helped us to see opportunities that might not have been clear before, opened the children's and teacher's minds to possibilities. We are taking some of these ideas in our design for the whole school"

A learning environment with contrasts

A state-of-the-art, adaptable environment to suit many different learning scenarios is at the heart of the design for GES Secondary. "There will be complementary elements for different functions: soft and quiet; technical and dynamic; primitive and raw; sophisticated and simple," says Dirk. "The space should not only teach children knowledge, but enable them to co-operate, be creative in a group, and learn how to learn."

He values contrast. "I don't believe in breaking down all the features of the classical school to have people staring at screens all day," he says. "We're living in a time of stress overload, where there is an over-supply of information. At times, we need some places that break away from the technology, that allow us to think for ourselves, where we can read a book or talk together without distraction. We want low-tech areas, as well as learning spaces with big screens that connect everyone to the world." And when he talks about low-tech, he means it: "Somewhere that feels like you're in a cabin in the countryside, away from it all, with chalk, paper, traditional mediums that gives real contrast to the day." Dirk explains why this is so important: "What I'm hearing from teachers, leaders and students everywhere is

that we need to help young people to facilitate different ways of learning at different moments. Maybe you want a more quiet, secluded space to learn in, and at other times more dynamics and energy. Young people, as well as teaching staff, need the chance to choose their working space. Not always of course, but when they can be given the choice, we want to respond to this; not give them just another classroom along another corridor."

Learning from other environments

Dirk's work on the Voorlinden and other museums and galleries has had a big impact on his work at GES Secondary and other school projects. "People visiting a gallery or museum want to look, learn and appreciate in many varying ways," he explains. "They react differently depending on the environment. The same should happen in a school." He also draws on influences of the modern workplace: "In many companies, people are now hot-desking; where you find the right space for the work you are doing and for the mood you are in. There should be some parallels between modern educational spaces and the way we work today. We want to give students a sense of adult life to come." At GES Secondary, a Grand Café promises to be one of these areas; the heart of the learning community, where students go in order to collaborate, or to seek out a quiet corner to study alone, where teachers meet with their peers or with a student or parent, or to eat and refresh. "It's an example of how we are focusing on best possible engagement in learning within a space that fosters collaboration and creativity," he adds.

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LOOKING FURTHER



The Move to Learn programme maps its exercises to the hierarchical development of primitive reflex integration.

A floor-based movement approach to learning concerns

Mary Mountstephen looks at programmes for physical and cognitive development

The early years in school are critical in providing firm foundations for learning, and it seems that increasing numbers of children now are causing concern in terms of learning readiness and classroom behaviour. Why do they have difficulty with focus, expressive and receptive language, fine motor skills and self-help skills? Can it all be 'blamed' on modern life styles, busy parents and over-reliance on technology, or are there less obvious contributory factors? Regardless, there are implications for schools to consider in terms of interventions that are time- and cost-effective, and measurable in terms of impact. Here I outline one programme that produces positive results in schools internationally, through practising early movement activities in a structured, systematic and sequential process, carried out on a daily basis as a whole class activity. This approach revisits the physical experiences that infants typically engage in on a daily basis and that may contribute to overall physical and cognitive development.

Why isn't Alfie doing better?

Alfie (age 7) is struggling to concentrate in class activities, producing poorly organised and presented written work with an awkward pencil grip, and growing increasingly frustrated and emotional both at home and in class. His teacher has provided resources to help him produce neater writing and to help with reading, but progress remains slow. He presents as a child of at least average ability, whose performance is not in line with perceptions of his potential. He is well supported at home by busy working parents and has a younger sister who is performing to expectations. There are no obvious reasons for his difficulties. A regular optician has tested his eyesight and there are no concerns about his hearing. From a developmental perspective, it is possible that Alfie's difficulties may be partly related to early experiences that have left him underprepared for the classroom. He may be a child whose early physical development was compromised by pregnancy, birth trauma and/or early movement experiences that are

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contributing to immature fine motor skills and poor visual performance. Although his eyesight has been judged as no cause for concern, it is possible that his eyes are not working well together as a team and that tracking and convergence issues are present.

Archer and Siraj (2015) summarise the influence of movement on a child's neurological system, learning and development, and explain how early movement experiences such as crawling, rolling and tummy time contribute significantly to learning readiness. These deceptively simple movement patterns contribute to the maturation of skills such as visual tracking, motor control, postural development, efficient coordination and visual processing. So if Alfie, for whatever reason, has gaps in these areas, his profile may remain immature and compromise his potential. These movement patterns can, however, be revisited for Alfie as part of a school intervention programme which may result in him becoming more able to meet expectations, being less frustrated and more emotionally resilient.

My interest is in researching how targeted physical programmes may contribute to improvements in classroom performance for children in the early years and primary years with learning differences/delays and early indicators of dyslexia and specific learning differences. Is it possible that a physical programme can exert measurable impact on classroom performance and on the extent to which some pupils can improve functioning in specific areas? Can some pupils acquire the skills to cope with more complex processes without the need for extra resources? Is it possible that daily sessions devoted to physical aspects of development can reap later rewards in terms of improving pupils' cognitive motor development and help them learn to focus inwards on the quality and speed of their movement, and to become more aware of posture and balance and body awareness? Will this then transfer to improved classroom performance?

Signs that may indicate difficulties of this type are:

- Difficulties with balance and the control of slow, precise gross motor skills
- Poor pencil control and letter formation
- Difficulty tracking text when reading
- Difficulties sitting still/ attention
- Academic underachievement

The *Ten Gems for the Brain* programme was developed by the Australian company *Move to Learn* over 30 years ago. It 'begins at the beginning', replicating the movements of an infant in the first year of life, and was developed by a specialist teacher and occupational therapist. It is intended to be a low cost, whole class approach that is integrated into the school's daily routines.

The rationale for addressing identified weaknesses through a physical intervention

Reading and writing are executive functions that are dependent on developmentally mature sensory systems. Movement programmes apply 'spiraling' principles similar to classroom overlearning practices that are repetitive and build fluidity, awareness of tempo and rhythm. Physical interventions can therefore provide the means to build



or rebuild the child's perception of spatial awareness and timing that are necessary to access learning more effectively. They help the child to develop greater awareness of proprioception: the reception of information received from the body and positional feedback. The *Move to Learn* programme maps its exercises to the hierarchical development of primitive reflex integration. Each floor-based exercise addresses specific reflexes and builds a foundation for more effective functioning. Children from a very early age can engage in activities such as rolling, creeping and crawling to provide the brain with additional opportunities to revisit these fundamental learning processes that, for a number of reasons, may have been missed.

Practical implications

For children like Alfie, it is important that interventions are effective and that a programme is inclusive; that it not only benefits him, but also provides the teacher with a tool to identify other pupils whose full potential might not be developed due to developmental immaturities. *Move to Learn* was developed to address those with learning differences; however its use as a more general screening and intervention programme is, I believe, a potentially powerful tool that is not intended to replace more conventional approaches for learning differences; rather it acts as an additional resource in the teacher's toolbox. *Move to Learn* provides one-day training courses for teachers, other professionals and parents, and currently has a presence in countries as diverse as UK, Singapore, Cyprus and Eire.

Reference

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Bart van Straten
General Manager,
Van Straten Medical
Alumnus 1996

Emilija Petrova
Managing Director,
Trade Resource GmbH
Alumna 2002

YOU!

Roxana Flores
Founder,
BeCaridad
Alumna 2011

Peter von Fortsner
Managing Director,
Häusler Automobiles
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Managing classroom behaviour to enhance student learning

Maryam Hussain shares some fundamentals for students and teachers

Although managing children's behaviour has increasingly become a topic of interest and debate over the past decade, the notion of how to manage students' behaviour in schools has been around for as long as there have been schools. Indeed, behaviour management has been and still is the chief concern of many educators across many countries. When students do not behave, they learn less individually, and at the same time prevent their peers from learning. In fact, the difficulty faced by teachers in managing student behaviour is cited as a crucial factor in relation to teacher burnout and dissatisfaction (McKinney, 2005).

What is behaviour management? According to Porter (2000), behaviour management has two meanings. The first is preventing disruptions proactively; the teacher meeting the children's needs, these being educational, social and emotional. The second definition states that behaviour management is proactive intervention by the teacher in order to get his or her students to display acceptable behaviour. Behaviour management is crucial in ensuring an adequate climate for learning, as well as illustrating how effective school systems can be in managing classroom behaviour.

Upon taking a closer look at approaches to behaviour management it becomes clear that teachers have adopted different techniques. Despite many different theories on behaviour management, one common theme is positive management that emphasises the need to teach children how to behave appropriately: in other words, making them aware of their rights and their responsibilities. While each teacher has their own behaviour management strategy suited to their personal teaching style, it is important that all teachers have some sort of behaviour management programme in place: a programme that is structured in

a manner that allows them to have control over their class whilst also providing a stimulating and productive learning environment. The work of Lee and Marlene Canter (2001) is very much focused on using positive response to encourage and teach children how to behave in different situations. Discipline rests on how the teacher responds to misbehaviour and it is up to the teacher to keep students in order during class. The principles are basic; teachers are to promote positive behaviours by continuously demonstrating expected behaviour, implementing classroom rules, and using rewards and sanctions consistently.

As noted in these principles, consistency is key. Consistency not only paves the foundation for the teacher, but also allows students to know where they stand, which leads to a positive learning environment. In order to achieve a positive learning environment, it is crucial to set classroom rules for the children to be able to incorporate aspects such as differentiation. From my personal experience, I feel it is essential to create an atmosphere of high expectations of the students from the first lesson and to uphold those expectations. This is because even if a lesson consists of creative activities, successful learning does not take place if students are not listening to the teachers' instructions. Thus while giving instructions for activities during my teaching I insist on silence. Of course silence does not necessarily mean that students are listening actively; so asking students to repeat the instructions using the 'no hands up' questioning technique is an effective way of checking.

Moreover, it is essential to be fair to students: teachers must remember that behaviour management does not consist only of sanctions but also of rewards and praise. One key aspect of the assertive discipline model is that teachers should provide positive consequences to show

Teachers sometimes worry that, with challenging classes, providing a variety of activities may result in students misbehaving.



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I...	So, I...	To help me, my teachers and parents...
have the right to live out the RSHM Mission "That all may have life"	have the responsibility to be healthy and safe, and help others to be healthy and safe at school, by not bringing any dangerous toys or games	will use morning meetings, teacher conferences, and family discussions to remind me how I can live out the RSHM mission
have the right to dignity and respect	have the responsibility to use good manners and show respect to all students and adults in class, halls, assemblies, lunchroom, & bus	will speak and interact with our students respectfully at all times
have the right to learn in a peaceful learning environment	have the responsibility to engage in healthy relationships treating and speaking to all respectfully	will actively help students with engaging learning programs and to help resolve issues peacefully and with kindness
have the right to be accepted in the community	have the responsibility to welcome all members of our Marymount community	will show how to welcome new students and encourage new friendships
have the right to speak and to be listened to respectfully	have the responsibility to get to class on time, to follow teachers' classroom rules, and to not disturb others who are learning	will speak with our students respectfully and show how to listen patiently
have the right to information	have the responsibility to use technology responsibly	will help us by giving guidelines and advice for using technology positively
have the right to be healthy	have the responsibility to make healthy choices & to behave properly in the lunchroom	will set good examples of healthy lifestyles and provide healthy food and drinks for meals and snacks
have the right to be proud of my appearance as a Marymount student	have the responsibility to follow our Marymount uniform and to not chew gum at school	will monitor the uniform policy & provide appropriate consequences when necessary
have the right to celebrate hard work	have the responsibility to try my best at all times and reach my goals	will celebrate my learning and growth, & help me become an independent learner

Signed by Students, Parents, & Teachers



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have the right to live out the RSHM Mission "That all may have life"	have the responsibility to be safe at school bringing no dangerous toys or games	will use morning meetings and family discussions to remind me how I can live out the RSHM mission
have the right to kindness and respect	have the responsibility to use good manners and be polite to all children and adults in class, lunchroom, playground, & bus	will speak and interact with all children respectfully at all times
have the right to learn peacefully	have the responsibility to be kind, with gentle hands	will help children treat each other with kindness
have the right to have friends	have the responsibility to welcome all new friends to Marymount	will show how to welcome new students and encourage new friendships
have the right to speak and to be listened to respectfully	have the responsibility to use inside voices and walking feet, to follow classroom rules, and to not disturb others who are learning	will speak with our children respectfully and listen patiently
have the right to be healthy	have the responsibility to eat the food served to me & to behave properly in the lunchroom	will set good examples and provide healthy food and drinks for meals and snacks
have the right to dress to be proud as a Marymount student	have the responsibility to wear our Marymount uniform, no gum	will monitor the uniform policy & provide guidance
have the right to celebrate my learning	have the responsibility to try my best at all times	will celebrate my learning and growth, & help me become an autonomous and independent learner

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have the right to live out the RSHM Mission "That all may have life"	have the responsibility to be healthy and safe at school bringing nothing that could be dangerous for myself or others	will use posters, morning messages, assemblies, or discussions to remind me how my life as a principled individual reflects the RSHM mission
have the right to a healthy lifestyle	have the responsibility to sleep enough, eat healthily, and not chew gum, or have food, drinks where not allowed	will model good examples of healthy lifestyles and provide healthy food and drinks for meals and snacks
have the right to education in a positive environment	have the responsibility to respect Marymount's property, have orderly behavior in class, hall, assemblies, lunchroom, and bus	will establish comfortable and safe learning environments with clear reminders of positive behavior expectations
have the right to right to learn	have the responsibility to follow teachers' classroom directions and participate in a positive way	will offer challenging and interesting learning activities, use our social contracts
have the right to dignity and respect	have the responsibility to engage in no discriminatory behavior, showing respect to all students and adults	will model respectful behavior and open dispositions with all adults and students
have the right to a peaceful learning environment	have the responsibility to engage in healthy relationships - treating and speaking to all respectfully	will actively engage in our social environments to model and encourage empathetic and peaceful behavior
have the right to be accepted in the community	have the responsibility to welcome all members of our Marymount community	will provide opportunities for civic responsibility and encourage me to take initiatives as young leader
have the right to speak and be listened to respectfully	have the responsibility to get to class on time and be attentive to adults and classmates	will help me organize my time and provide learning opportunities that ignite my curiosity
have the right to information	have the responsibility to use technology responsibly, and not use laptops or devices on campus without permission	will assist me to become a responsible digital citizen by discussing appropriate times & situations for technology
have the right to take pride in being a Marymount student	have the responsibility to represent Marymount well at events at school or outside my school	will educate me about the unique privilege I have as a member of a global learning community
have the right to dress to be proud of my appearance	have the responsibility to wear clothing that respects our Marymount uniform	will ensure my clothing respects the uniform policy & provides appropriate consequences when required
have the right to celebrate hard work	have the responsibility to do my best at all times and always practice academic honesty	will emphasize my ownership of my learning and growth, & provide appropriate consequences when required

Signed by Students, Parents, & Teachers

students that it is to their benefit to behave appropriately. Throughout my initial teaching practice, with challenging classes praise was sometimes forgotten. This is because it is easy to focus on children with poor behaviour and marginalise students who are working to the best of their capability and deserve praise.

On the other hand, it is not only strategies of rewards and sanctions that are important within behaviour management. It is often the case that even with strategies in place behaviour can still be an issue, and it is essential for teachers to consider and reflect upon other reasons why students may misbehave. Thus student accountability is important in behaviour management because when students are involved in lessons there will be less opportunity for them to misbehave. Many language teachers may believe that this is a challenge when teaching grammar, for example. One effective approach is to ask students to devise a grammar rule and explain that rule to their partner. Students can then receive feedback and explain the rule to the teacher, who can check and consolidate their learning.

Teachers sometimes worry that, with challenging classes, providing a variety of activities may result in students misbehaving. However, if a teacher uses the Canter and Canter (2001) model of assertive discipline by providing rules, and consistently following through with these rules, students can generally be trusted to take in the information. During my teaching, I initially feared that implementing kinaesthetic activities might result in chaos with lower sets or challenging classes. However, behaviour is in fact less of an issue when

kinaesthetic activities are involved, such as looking for vocabulary for an exercise around the classroom.

It is evident that in order for teachers to achieve positive learning environments, they must determine the fundamentals such as rules and expectations for successful behaviour management. Once high expectations have been set, it is important for teachers to be consistent and to remember that behaviour management is not only based on sanctions and punishments, but also on praise and reward. Lastly, it is essential that teachers are enthusiastic and use a variety of activities to motivate and engage their students in order to establish positive behaviour. Once students have a positive outlook on lessons they will be more encouraged to learn and less inclined to misbehave.

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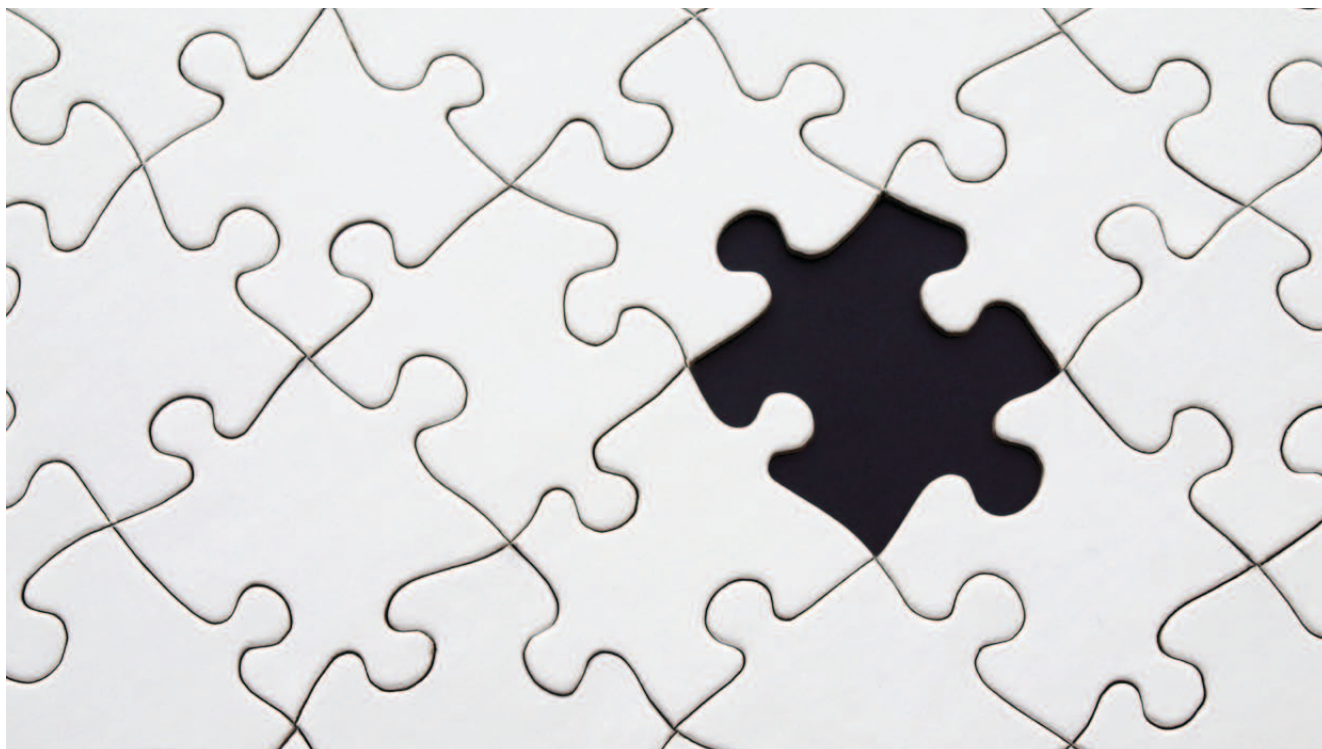


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The power of technology in facilitating personalised learning

Seb Francis explores some new techniques

The importance of personalised learning programmes in maximising learning outcomes has long been recognised, but has not always been possible to implement in the majority of schools. While, as the name suggests, the focus is on empowering the student to take control of their own learning, the nature of personalised learning requires systematic monitoring and assessment on the part of the teacher in order to anticipate where intervention or guidance is needed. This has traditionally posed a challenge to time-poor teachers with responsibility for large groups of learners. However, with the emergence of new software and hardware tools, it is possible for teachers to enable a high degree of personalisation without an associated increase in workload.

One key use of technology in this way is the learning management system, or virtual learning environment. Having started life as relatively simple online repositories of resources and activities, learning platforms have evolved to become more sophisticated tools for stimulating, guiding and assessing

learners individually. From the teacher's perspective learning management systems give greater flexibility in defining personal learning plans, either by manually refining and adjusting a course to better fit an individual student's needs or by allowing students themselves to take some control over the definition of their learning goals. Furthermore, a degree of automation is possible; for example, defining steps in a course so that learners are presented with a different set of activities depending on their current progress. This type of conditional activity is well suited to mixed ability groups where a single teacher is required to give extra support to certain learners while providing extended stimulus for others.

Using technology to differentiate learning in this way is a key advantage. While teachers are limited by the amount of contact time they have with their students, in some cases only a couple of hours per week, using software to direct learning in this way means learners can work through topics at a pace that suits them. Communication

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While teachers are limited by the amount of contact time they have with their students, in some cases only a couple of hours per week, using software to direct learning in this way means learners can work through topics at a pace that suits them

tools within the platform allow learners to request help and teachers to intervene either in real time or asynchronously, as appropriate. The limited contact time available can then be used to address issues which have been explored or identified outside the classroom.

Personal devices such as smartphones and tablets have an important role to play in facilitating personalised learning, giving learners uninterrupted access to learning management systems or educational apps, as well as resources on the wider web. The ease with which learners can use personal devices for real-time communication via messaging apps also enables peer-to-peer learning, which is an important component in empowering them to learn outside the classroom and beyond the curriculum.

At the same time, careful monitoring of such tools can give teachers valuable insight into learning styles and provide more detailed information on what activities the learner undertook, how much time was spent on an activity, what incorrect attempts were made in answering a question, and other key data which goes further than simply a pass or fail grade. This ability to access both overall trends and granular data is vital for teachers adopting a standards-based grading system where proficiency is measured by progress towards carefully defined goals rather than simply by comparing numerical grades. Being able to assess how a student

has approached an assignment or exam question can be equally as important as knowing what their answer was. This information is vital in guiding and formulating future personalised learning plans.

Another vital ingredient in personalised learning is parental support. Here too technology has an important role to play, not only in making available relevant information and resources but also in providing a communication link between home and school. Allowing parents access to their child's learning plan and giving them sight of the child's progress towards defined goals empowers them to offer greater learning support.

The key areas in which technology can enable personalised learning are those in which they enhance, rather than replace, the roles and responsibilities of the teacher, the parent or the student. For many teachers, tools such as learning platforms, virtual learning apps and communication services allow them to offer a degree of personalisation for their students which simply would not be possible otherwise.

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The key to success – learning how to learn

Bambi Gardiner advocates a multi-sensory approach

Each and every child – or every person, for that matter – has their own unique way of learning, but with a class full of minds to mould, teachers don't always have the time or resources to cater to every single learning style. Therefore, generic ways of learning – such as taking notes from textbooks, conducting online research, or sitting mock exams and formative assessments – are relied upon to help children absorb and retain information.

While this may work well for some, the chances of these techniques bringing out the best in every child, especially those whose learning styles are more visual or kinaesthetic, or who struggle to navigate great passages of text, are slim to none. Visual learners and children with dyslexia learn more effectively, for instance, when information is brought to life – lifted up from the page or the screen and made to dance in front of them, in ways which allow them to truly engage with it. They need to be able to see the concepts in action and partake in the process, especially in a classroom environment which can, at times, be overwhelming or stifling.

Before children can start to learn anything, they first need to learn how to learn. If they're not encouraged to explore different ways of learning and to discover which one, or which combination, works best for them at an early age, children can go from primary school right through to college or university – and into the world beyond – struggling to make information stick. If, for example, a visual learner is only ever given the option of reading information from textbooks or the internet, or from taking notes while the teacher speaks at the front of the class, their learning becomes limited; they may never know how much more the information can come to life for them when they experience it in a visual way. It may never occur to them, therefore, to use imagery, graphics and diagrams to help them study, and so they will always fall short of their full potential. This can lead to students feeling 'stupid' or unwilling to learn, when in fact they simply haven't been exposed to the things which give them that lightbulb moment – the learning techniques which transform abstract and alien

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concepts into ideas that children can truly engage with and relate to.

For this reason, I am a big believer in taking the time to expose children to a vast array of different learning methods, and encouraging them to discover for themselves which ones work best for them. This can be a long process, and what works best for a child one year may not work so well the next year; learning styles evolve and adapt in the same way that children's tastes and personalities grow and develop. Therefore, teaching children how to learn should not be a one-off or tick-box task; learning skills ought to be weaved into the curriculum. This is especially true in this digital age, where new ways of learning using the internet, apps, video, virtual and augmented reality, and even gamification are emerging all the time.

It is the general consensus that, whatever your learning style, a multi-sensory approach to studying is the most effective. It is thought that we fully absorb somewhere in the region of 10 per cent of what we read, 20 per cent of what we hear, 30 per cent of what we see, 50 per cent of what we hear and see, 70 per cent of what we discuss with others, 80 per cent of what we experience personally, and 90 per cent of what we teach others. Using this concept as a basis and adjusting it to suit each individual learner – so that, for example, visual learners focus their attention on what they can see, kinaesthetic

learners spend more time doing physical activities that engage their senses, auditory learners use their keen listening skills to absorb information from others, and so on – is a great way of ensuring all children are 'on a level playing field' when it comes to learning new information.

By exposing children to a range of learning styles, and doing so on a frequent basis, they will become increasingly in-tune with their own unique skills and learning styles, and will be able to use this vital knowledge to study in ways which truly engage and excite them. This is a life-long skill that will make it easier for students to learn new information, approach difficult concepts with confidence, and retrieve facts and figures in pressurised environments – such as the dreaded exam hall. So, before you start teaching your class something new, maybe take a moment to consider whether the students are equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to make the most of what you're about to teach them, or whether they need more support and guidance on learning how to learn.

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Building and leading a school culture that values data-informed dialogue to improve student learning

Megan Brazil says we need evidence to ensure our messages are being received

In a 'silo schools' approach, teachers have generally been left to work independently on collecting, understanding and using their own classroom data in order to make decisions about instruction, planning and assessment. Many schools have not yet made the successful transition from individual to collaborative: to enable teams of teachers to collectively analyse learning data in order to improve learning outcomes for all students.

What we know to be true in many schools is that teachers still spend a disproportionate amount of time planning instruction, but don't place the same emphasis or effort on finding out if the instruction really worked. Perhaps, then, less importance has been placed on finding time for teams of teachers, coaches and administrators to take a look at the 'back end'—the learning that has taken place as a result of the planning and teaching. We advocate that the input should not be valued more than the output. Data produced through student assessments is commonly used at a systemic level and for reporting back to parents. 'Data' in many schools has been used as an accountability-laden end product – to judge students, to evaluate programmes

and to rate performance. A rich opportunity exists for teams of teachers to use student learning data not as an end product, but as a tool for developing deep understandings of instructional practices, to shape collaborative approaches to improving student learning, when data is used as a tool for improvement rather than a final unit of measurement. While this is nothing new to us, the challenge is putting successful structures in place to allow it to happen regularly, and effectively.

In our quest as educators to honor the 'whole child', many schools have dishonored the place of empirical evidence in the decision-making process. In our desire to value the 'art' of teaching, we have devalued the 'science' of teaching. We propose that, rather than an either/or approach, we should take a 'yes, and' approach to allow us to use learning data to make effective decisions about instructional, programme and school improvement. We believe that data does not detract from looking at the 'whole' child, but in fact is an essential part of that picture.

There is, however, a caveat: that an overuse of data at every turn may in fact decrease teachers' natural intuition

What we know to be true in many schools is that teachers still spend a disproportionate amount of time planning instruction, but don't place the same emphasis or effort on finding out if the instruction really worked.

and flexibility within a dynamic classroom environment. We aim for a healthy balance that honors Marzano's (2007) 'art and science' of teaching—that understanding children, their behaviour, the relationship dynamics that impact learning retains equal importance and status as the empirical data that can be analysed to support intuitive thinking. Susan B Neuman (2016) encourages schools to be 'data informed' rather than 'data driven' as we seek to make meaning from a broad definition of data that may include test scores, student work samples and observations of behaviour, to name a few.

Our work as a leadership team at UNIS Hanoi has focused on the intentional creation of school culture, growth mindsets and open attitudes around effectively understanding and using quality student learning data. Bill & Ochan Powell (2015) strongly advocate that the most effective way to improve learning for students is when teachers observe one another, participate in collaborative instructional rounds and engage in meaningful conversations around successful practice. We at UNIS Hanoi extend this thinking to bringing all de-privatised learning data into the realm of 'ours' rather than 'mine'. Just as teams of doctors examine patients together on medical rounds, we are working hard to equip our teachers with the right data and tools to be able to collaboratively analyse, diagnose and create treatment plans for our students that will add value to their learning of every child.

Jim Knight shares his thoughts on the creation of Intensive Learning Teams (ILTs) – teams set up for purposeful inquiry, collaboration and shared purpose. Knight describes a number of partnership principles required for effective ILTs: equality, choice, voice, reflection, dialogue, praxis and reciprocity. He also talks about the important role that principals play in this teaming success – principals must understand and support the work that teams are doing. "Most important, this means that the principal must lead change so that what occurs in teams, like ILTs, is designed to address the target." (Knight, 2011, p 182)

The establishment of quarterly "Learning Retreats" at UNIS Hanoi aimed to address the need for teams of teachers to gather for purposeful inquiry around student learning. Facilitated by members of the Elementary Leadership Team, with clear meeting structures and protocols in place, our Learning Retreats aimed to meet the following goals: 1) to build the capacity of our teachers to analyse, infer and take actions to improve teaching and learning for students based on a collaborative study of the learning data, and 2) to develop strong, healthy teams who bring conversations about student learning into their regular, collaborative conversations. By working to develop 'assessment literate' teaching teams, our hope is that all teachers will feel empowered to use data in a way that helps them to celebrate student achievements and create meaningful plans of action towards instructional improvement. (James-Ward, 2013)

Establishing Learning Retreats began with crafting our compelling 'why'. Simon Sinek (2009) reminds us that "people don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it, and what you do simply serves as the proof of what you believe." We also needed to define the 'what' and the 'how'—what and when data would be collected, how it would be used, and who would benefit from its use. Our criterion was that the data we required teachers to gather had to be useful in providing information that will help to improve student learning. We aimed for a relatively lean approach, rather than collecting

too much. An assessment calendar of common assessments guides teachers as to what, and when, assessment data needs to be gathered.

Another leadership goal for our team has been to empower teachers to be confident consumers of data. In our efforts to achieve this, we used the data visualisations built by the Learning Analytics Collaborative (LAC) to provide us with our data *already* visualised. Working with the LAC has taken away the need for data (eg spreadsheets, tables, charts and graphs) to be produced by teachers – many of whom do not come equipped with the skills to do this, which can be a contributing factor to data not being used successfully in schools. Having assessment data turned into useful and easy-to-read interactive graphs ensures that teachers can immediately get to the work that they are best at – talking about student performance.

As we have set about building our culture of data-informed practice, increased shared accountability, and transparency around the learning data of all students, we have been mindful to manage the delicate balance between remaining data-informed, and not being too data-driven at the expense of all else. Below, we share a range of tips for effective conversations with teachers around student learning data. These come from the lessons we've learned, and the specific actions we've taken to build the culture, climate and teacher capacity that are needed to create the dynamic learning community that we desire.

- Create a safe and comfortable meeting environment – de-personalise the data to reduce any sense that talking about learning data may make people feel vulnerable and unsafe.
- Assign a facilitator to keep the process moving and well structured, and to monitor the group. I would advocate that this should be the Principal or a key member of the leadership team as long as this doesn't detract from the aspect of psychological safety (above). The relationship with the facilitator will strongly influence the group's behaviour. If we value the data and are committed to improvement, it's essential that the leadership team know and understand what the data are saying, and can identify commonalities across grade levels.
- Use protocols. "External structures maximize efficient use of time and increase psychological safety for individual group members." (Wellman and Lipton, 2004, p 12). Wellman and Lipton propose their 'Collaborative Learning Cycle'. Our preferred tool is the 'Atlas Looking at Data Protocol' provided by the National School Reform Faculty.
- Start small. Start with one data set – eg grade level reading scores or beginning of year math assessments. Make sure the data is personally meaningful for the participants. It would be best to start with more meaningful internal data, rather than external, standardised test data. This can be triangulated at a later time. More trust will be built with teachers by using their data first.
- Consider timing and workload. If a meeting focused around data conversations is 'another thing on the

In our desire to value the ‘art’ of teaching, we have devalued the ‘science’ of teaching. We propose that, rather than an either/or approach, we should take a ‘yes, and’ approach to allow us to use learning data to make effective decisions about instructional, programme and school improvement.

plate’, what is being taken OFF the plate in order to ensure that participants have the mental space to deal with this content? At our school, Learning Retreats are scheduled during the school day, class cover provided, and last no longer than 90 minutes. Dates for 4 learning retreats (September, November, February and May) are scheduled at the beginning of the academic year and shared with all teaching teams. Teams know in advance which data sets and student work samples will be needed in advance of each Learning Retreat.

- Have the data already visualised – this takes the ‘hard work’ away from teachers. We do not need or want teachers to spend hours creating spreadsheets, graphs and tables. The value of our work with the Learning Analytics Collaborative is that the data are visualised for us, ready for teachers to do their real work – observing, analysing, and considering implications of the data that lead to action.
- Have the visualised data shared in one location (eg. charts or screen). Do not have teachers using individual computer screens. One location for the data ensures that all participants are looking in the same direction (shared ownership, group safety) which increases the collaboration. “The focus on the third point increases psychological safety, separating the information from the facilitator and allowing group members to talk with and about the data without having to make eye contact with colleagues.” (Wellman and Lipton, 2004, p 16).
- Document the group’s thinking publicly. As soon as comments are publicly charted, they belong to the group, not the individual.

Our next steps

Ron Berger observes that students are often left out of the process of using and analysing their own data. A next step for us might be to consider how we move towards transparent use of learning data WITH students, rather than simply FOR students, in a way that is meaningful and relevant.

Following our first two Learning Retreats, we are now ready to gather feedback from teaching teams about how the Learning Retreats may have impacted their planning,

instruction, understanding of their students and so on. Are we making an impact on school culture? Do teachers feel we are balancing hard and soft data? What changes might we need to make? These are some of the questions we hope that teaching teams will be able to help us answer.

Another of our future goals is eventually to move from Learning Retreats facilitated by an administrator to having team leaders using the data protocols in team meetings as a tool for looking at all manner of student learning data. Our desire is to see ‘evidence of learning’ meetings become a regular part of what teaching teams do, as is the case for planning meetings. When this is happening on a regular and systematic basis, we will feel like we are making an impact on building and maintaining the culture around data-informed practice that we desire.

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Safe spaces are the enemy of critical thinking

Our risk-taking and open-minded graduates could offer an education to the universities they join, writes Paul Regan

The 18th century French writer and satirist, Voltaire, famously wrote that he disagreed with what another (sometimes claimed to have been the French philosopher Claude-Adrien Helvétius) had said, but would defend to the death his right to say it. He was only one of many towering figures of the period known as the Enlightenment; philosophers, writers, polemicists and scientists, who opened up the post-mediaeval mind to reason, and the public and political institutions of the time to the principle of free speech. The road taken has since been a long and winding one; until quite recently in the United Kingdom, for example, charges of blasphemy could be made for challenging religious authority, something we might now expect to find only in theocracies such as Iran. Each generation has its fresh struggle to define and explain the parameters of what it is acceptable to write or to say, as social policy and public opinion create new ways to give offence, and new barricades to defend.

Since the advent of ubiquitous social media it has without doubt again become much easier to offend someone or something and to be punished for doing so. The frantic echo chambers of Twitter and Facebook are awash with vile insults, irrational condemnations, one-line political judgments and personal abuse, whilst Google and YouTube allow the peddling of fake news and extreme propaganda. Citizenship can be exercised with one press of a button to support a petition, and the call to take up your placard can be passed around in minutes to thousand of users. Confirmation bias

is encouraged as a virtue and raised to the level of art as *ad hominem* rants replace rational debate.

As we assemble in cyber crowds to pass instant judgments on anything from climate change and presidential elections to the inappropriateness of using certain words, individuals increasingly suffer for speaking out against orthodoxies which happen to be in trend. It has become the lazy default option of activists to 'no platform' speakers, to condemn reasonably held views as unacceptable, to pass off opinion as incontrovertible fact and to claim a monopoly on truth. This is happening every day in many ways and, left unchallenged, could in time become the political norm. Totalitarian regimes thrive on creating a vicious hysteria around any activity or view which does not agree with their accepted doctrines. Nazi Germany had its vilification of Jews and its myths of the Aryan race, and Soviet Russia saw wrecking and sabotage in every simple expression of individuality. Worryingly, we now seem to be witnessing simultaneously the deaths of oratory and debate in the very places where they should be cherished and protected.

The most egregious examples of this stifling of debate are coming from some universities in the UK and the USA. No-platforming of speakers who have at some time expressed a view which might disagree with a particular orthodoxy, no matter how nuanced the disagreement might be, has become all too common. The celebration of diversity and the pursuit of equality are noble undertakings, but they

As we assemble in cyber crowds to pass instant judgments on anything from climate change and presidential elections to the inappropriateness of using certain words, individuals increasingly suffer for speaking out against orthodoxies which happen to be in trend

are now defended by a militancy which has encouraged witch hunts against anybody who may not have used the correct jargon or who may choose to adopt a wider perspective. Lecturers can even be called out for failing to immunise their students against opposing views, and may be forced by student protest to change their teaching content where facts are deemed to be offensive or upsetting. The individual right to take offence is now paramount on some campuses and the right to give offence is being outlawed by new academic rules.

Meanwhile, in schools and particularly those schools which teach a form of critical thinking, the opposite trend can be observed. Rather than allowing school students to become victims of the new offence culture, teachers can use incidents of it where it is seen to occur both as a warning and as a tool. The Theory of Knowledge (ToK) core component of the IB Diploma programme rewards students not only for understanding and examining why they have chosen a particular perspective, but also for taking the perspectives of others into account. It seeks to separate opinion based on prejudice and ignorance from informed opinion based on full review of facts from a variety of media. It aspires to identify the truth as the most plausible explanation, not the most popular or most loudly held one. It holds up to the spotlight fallacy, invalidity and falsehood, and demolishes them by using the full array of tools passed down in the forms of logic, structured argument, experiment, reflection and empirical observation. It recognises the centrality of belief but notes that both truth and justification need to be added to it in order to elevate it to the status of knowledge. Most important of all, it treats all knowledge claims with a reasoned scepticism based on a hierarchy of reliability.

So what happens when the IB student graduates to a university where safe spaces, no-platforming and intellectual mob rule prevail? Does it become an opportunity to put into practice what had previously been a mere classroom exercise, or do fear and natural desire to conform take

precedence? The answer of course is that it will vary from student to student.

Of equal importance is what voice the International Baccalaureate will bring to this debate. In seeking quite rightly to nurture a generation of open-minded and inquisitive students prepared for the rigours of a university education, how can it ensure that its own values are not subsequently undermined? Firstly, there should be a call for research to determine how critical thinking is continued and encouraged at universities, and how much the university authorities actually value it as a criterion for effective learning and positive thought. Secondly, the IB should endeavour to highlight academic practice wherever it seems to go against freedom of thought and expression. And thirdly, it should be challenging such practices wherever they occur as inimical to a moral and fact-based modern education.

In addition to its core component (Theory of Knowledge (ToK), Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) and the Extended Essay), the IB Diploma programme boasts of its Learner Profile, an Aristotelian list of virtues for right action and a moral life. Amongst other attributes, risk-taking and open-mindedness are regarded as essential. In fact, these two qualities are becoming largely absent from the expectations that some universities now have of their own students. It is a strange possibility that our school leavers may have something useful to impart to the university departments they are joining. They might become the new ambassadors to ensure that the light of reason is not extinguished, and that the spirit of Voltaire and the Enlightenment is kept alive. The IB should watch this space.

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Forthcoming Conferences

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

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

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

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

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

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

October 26-28, IB Global Conference, The Hague, Netherlands.

October 26-28, EARCOS Leadership Conference, Bangkok, Thailand.

What's so challenging about leading an international school?

Barry Speirs, from RSAcademics, answers questions about its recent research into 'the Art of International School Headship'

What did the research involve?

The analysis of over 100 questionnaires from school leaders of international schools in Asia and the Gulf region. This included the views of 76 current heads, as well as board members and deputies. We asked them to describe their school context, the particular challenges of leading an international school and what they saw as the characteristics of the best leaders. We gained additional insights from follow-up conversations with a selection of participants.

What's different about leading an international school?

As well as the usual challenges of school leadership, international schools are often seen as having far greater complexity and diversity. For example, take parents. Although managing parents' expectations is nothing new for a school leader, many international schools will have 30+ nationalities of parents with significant differences in their expectations. What a typical Chinese parent sees as a good education might be very different to, say, the perspectives of a Dutch expatriate. International schools may also experience far

greater churn among staff, students and parents – often 20-30% per year. This puts much greater pressure on all systems and communications. If leadership is about bringing people together to make progress towards a common goal, then this is particularly challenging given the diverse and changing school community.

Can you really talk about 'an international school' – aren't all international schools different?

Schools are indeed very diverse, and a key theme to emerge from our research is that a significant success factor is finding a good fit between the head and the type of school. Consider, for example, the difference between a start-up school in China which is run as a for-profit enterprise with a bilingual curriculum for Chinese students, and a well-established, oversubscribed not-for-profit school in Singapore with expatriate families and parent trustees.

Many respondents talked about the importance of prospective heads and boards undertaking the necessary due diligence to ensure the right fit. Having said that, in responses from very different schools there were many common themes. Our report identifies these and illustrates

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how they apply in different contexts, with many examples and verbatim comments.

What are the top leadership challenges at an international school?

We identified seven main categories summarised in the figure above. What follows is a series of verbatim quotes from participants in our research.

Parents : As well as managing diverse expectations, there are all the language and cultural communication challenges to be managed, as well as the particular characteristics and idiosyncrasies of expatriate parents – for instance that they are often intensely involved with school life:

“International communities are easily subject to bouts of paranoia; add in the on-site coffee shop and you create the perfect storm for school-focused anxiety.”

“There is often very little tolerance for mistakes and experimentation, which is contrary to what we are trying to instil in our learning programme.”

“The polarity between expat and local parents’ expectations can be extreme.”

“Due to cultural differences it can be very difficult to get to the heart of an issue.”

“Sometimes expectations are crazy, literally”.

Students: Integrating students with varying English ability, transience, curriculum requirements and SEND issues:

“The biggest challenge is trying to provide an international standard curriculum at all grades while the majority of students enrolling have limited English language skills.”

“Students can become very isolated and the school needs to take the necessary action to try to create an inclusive environment.”

“The transitions must be paid attention to, otherwise we run the risk of eroding educational opportunities or, worse yet, leaving individuals scarred from the experience.”

“SEND is often not declared, or is presented as a problem of language”

Staff: The challenges of remote recruitment, skills shortages – especially in IB, retention, managing a diverse workforce and all the issues associated with mobilising and managing expatriates:



"Staffing is the biggest challenge facing international schools today."

"Recruitment is the most important thing I do all year."

"The main challenge is to bring a common sense of purpose across such a diverse group of staff."

"My pastoral challenges are staff issues, not student matters."

Governance: often seen as the number one issue by heads, who comment on the complexity of governance structures, dysfunctional operations, cultural dissonance and some specific challenges of proprietor boards and expatriate parent boards:

"I have 5 different groups that I report to and communication between those groups relies on me."

"85% of my teachers are international but 100% of the board are local."

"I am the 6th Head in 11 years!"

"Monitoring of performance is too close, delegation of authority is too slow, and "audit" is valued over innovation."

"Between my appointment and start date, 75% of our parent board had changed!"

External local environment: the pace of change in many markets, dealing with local regulations and legalities:

"The political world is unpredictable and remains the hardest part of my job."

"The market has moved from under-supply of school places to excessive over-supply in the space of four years."

"The pressure of annual inspections leaves little room for genuine long term development."

"20% of timetable time must be ring-fenced for local additional cultural or language studies."

"Oftentimes nothing seems to make sense and you can feel like the most ignorant person in the room."

Internal school community: often managing ambitious growth, the instability caused by the churn of students, parents and staff:

"As we grow so quickly, a major challenge that I face is that we do not lose sight of our vision, mission and purpose as a school."

"A tradition is defined as something you did once last year! Learn to expect the unexpected. Learn to tolerate ambiguity."

"Imagine starting with a blank slate and having to decide on every minute aspect of the school. It's hugely complex and a completely different challenge to just running a school."

"We have 30% turnover of students each year with 2 or 3 new joiners each week."

Personal and family issues: isolation, lack of support and family pressures which can be a deal-breaker:

"It can be very lonely – it's difficult to find real friends when everyone you know is inside the school community."

"I wish I had known where to reach out for support."

"Several heads leave due to personal and family reasons – the head is looked after, but the family has a much harder job to cope."

"It's crucially important to look after yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually."

Leading an international school is clearly a hugely challenging and personally developmental experience. A future article in *International School* magazine will focus on what leaders see as the key qualities needed to be successful when running an international school.

Barry Speirs is Head of Leadership Consultancy at RSAcademics and author of 'The Art of International School Headship', which is available for free download at www.RSAcademics.co.uk. Email: BarrySpeirs@RSAcademics.co.uk



'A Mile in my Shoes' director Clare Patey (left) and assistant Patty Ross.

Walking in the shoes of others

Anna Stadlman reports on a visit to the Empathy Museum in London

It was a crisp September day as I walked briskly along the southern embankment of the river Thames in London, headed towards an exhibition organized by the Empathy Museum entitled 'Walk A Mile In My Shoes'. I first heard of the Empathy Museum during the summer vacation when I had been thinking of ways to encourage my students' eagerness to respond to the needs of others, while avoiding the danger of falling into the 'us and them' mentality. I had just re-read 'To Kill a Mockingbird', Harper Lee's classic novel set in Alabama during the 1950's, and the words of Atticus Finch to his daughter Scout: 'You never really know someone unless you jump into their skin and walk around in it' leapt from the page. These words, coupled with the notion of a museum dedicated to empathy, prompted me to find out more about the exhibition.

The Empathy Museum is a project conceived by Roman Krznaric, philosopher and international expert on empathy. He strongly believes that empathy is a powerful tool to help develop compassion for others and implement social change, goals which resonate with international educators. 'To understand others', says Krznaric, 'we need to walk in

their shoes – literally'. In his book, *'Empathy: Why it Matters and How to Get it'* Krznaric (2014) suggests that every city should have an Empathy Museum that is completely interactive, not typical of traditional museums. 'The point is to create an *explosion of empathy* in everyday life,' he explains. 'We're creating an experiential and conversational space ... taking empathy into everyday relations and culture.' Examples of the exhibits included in an Empathy Museum include a room set up like a factory for making mobile phones, where workers work long hours putting minute mechanisms together. The visitor sits and experiences at first hand how it would feel being in a sweatshop doing that job. An additional section would feature a darkened room set up like a café where the visitor could get a sense of being blind, while ordering, eating and drinking in a restaurant.

The exhibition I was on my way to see in London, 'Walk a Mile in My Shoes', is the first such exhibit and is now travelling the world. As I approached I saw in the near distance a large shoebox-shaped construction with the words 'Walk a Mile in My Shoes' printed on the side in large black letters. I entered and was warmly welcomed by Clare Patey, the Museum's

Features

director. The inside walls of the 'shoe box' were lined with shelves containing about forty shoeboxes labeled by shoe size. I told Clare my size and she found me something close: a pair of rather large green wading boots that reached beyond my waist. These were the boots of Gary, a worker in the sewers below the River Thames. I was to walk a mile in these boots. I also received a small recording device and earphones to wear as I walked. The voice recorded was Gary's, relating the story of his life beneath the river.

I set off on my walk and listened. In an enthusiastic, at times philosophical and poetic, voice Gary described a life I would never ever have thought about or imagined. I was transported as he related his encounters with bats and the difficulties he had in detaching the detritus from the underground passages and substances such as sticky chewing gum from the gridded sewer covers. His respect for the quiet darkness was uncanny, and lent an unworldly aura to a setting which others may associate with only gloom and decay. The waders I was wearing were uncomfortable, but that is often the case when walking in the shoes of another and experiencing life from that person's perspective.

After my walk listening to Gary, I talked with other walkers about the owners of their borrowed shoes. One young girl, a university student, was listening to the life experiences of a doctor working in a hospice for the terminally ill. Her boyfriend was walking in the shoes of a reformed drug addict who had started a new life as an artist. A girl about the age of my students at school was walking in the red shoes of a ballet dancer from Sadler's Wells.

Back at the 'shoe box' museum I spoke with Clare, who had worked with Roman Krznaric in the creation of this exhibit. The project, Clare explained, was devised to enable people to develop empathy by listening to the stories of others. In part the goal is to improve personal relationships by connecting people via their stories, helping them to see multiple viewpoints. Through the power of empathy, as Clare explained, it is hoped that inequality, prejudice and conflict may be diminished.

Empathy and its place in education

Empathy is the ability to see life from the point of view of another and, by so doing, to gain an insight into why that person behaves as he/she does. We are born with the capacity to be empathetic; being able to understand others. However, this important skill can also be learned, taught in school, and improved with practice. Sir Ken Robinson, international advisor on education, believes empathy has a key role in education today. When asked 'What skills are essential for humanity to thrive in the modern world?' he selected compassion and empathy, saying these critical skills go together and are needed to promote our capability to live together as communities. 'Compassion is rooted in empathy and empathy is our ability to step into other people's point of view to see the world as they see it.' (2017). Ken Robinson believes that empathy can and should lead to action, and cautions 'it's one thing to empathize with somebody else's situation ... it's something else to do something about it.' Empathy must lead to action on behalf of somebody or prevent others acting against them.

Empathy in the classroom

The visit to the Empathy Museum reinforced for me the importance of infusing empathy into our curricula. The many ways in which this can be accomplished are not included here. In brief, however, developing empathy can be integrated in all subject areas, such as in literacy classes. Researchers at The New School in New York City, for instance, have found evidence that reading literary fiction improves one's capacity to understand what others are thinking and feeling.

Another area concerns teaching strategies. We know that being empathetic improves the quality of teaching. Therefore, as Robinson suggests (2015), teachers should consciously develop their capacity for empathy. Speaking in the 'language' which students can understand – using images and metaphors to which they can relate and with which they can identify, for example, engages them and gets them to listen and respond. Connecting learning to students' daily lives is also crucial. In the same way, when teachers empathise with students by getting to know their interests, talents, fears and challenges, they can develop a series of steps to direct their students' learning. Similarly, being empathetic in international schools towards the difficulties faced by our internationally mobile students and families, uprooted from friends and familiar traditions, is imperative and can be addressed by providing effective channels of support and an emotionally safe environment.

Empathy as a tool for service learning and social action

International schools often make claims in their Mission Statements, such as that they 'develop global citizenship', 'raise awareness of the need for social justice' and 'educate for international understanding.' We endeavour to develop in our students a sense of the 'other' and an appreciation of the need to respect and understand others' viewpoints, with the goal of countering conflict and taking action when needed. Developing empathy in our students is intrinsic to these goals, helping them to act compassionately towards other living beings.

In today's world, where dissent and intolerance seem to be re-emerging, teachers, staff students and parents must implement their inherent skill of empathising, so as to create within our school communities an 'explosion of empathy' that leads us on the path towards compassion and effective action in the wider world.

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How feasible and how pragmatic is it to be an eco-school, asks Nicole Andreou

curriculum practices (Shallcross, 2003). This figure shows the framework applied to achieve this approach.





Although the Eco-Schools programme was not based on Shallcross to begin with, it does work in the same type of framework as the approach shown in the figure. Using the Seven Steps Methodology, students embark on a journey towards sustainability. As Eco-Schools is a student-led programme, first the students have to form their own Eco Committee; we ask that at least 50% of the Eco Committee members are students. Teaching and non-teaching staff and management are invited to take part, while in kindergartens, parents and representatives from local council groups and voluntary environmental groups can also be invited. This group then conducts some research, called the Environmental Review, which helps them to identify the current school status on specific Theme areas.

As argued by Posch (1999), it is crucial that students engage with the social/organisational and technical/economic aspects of their school management. The Environmental Review allows them to understand the operational features of management, while working on a diverse range of sustainability themes. In line with Shallcross' suggestion (2003) that the curriculum should emphasise interconnectedness through a thematic approach, Eco-Schools has introduced eleven Main Themes to date, addressing familiar guidelines for students to use in their research.

Following the Environmental Review, the Eco Committee chooses a minimum of three Main Themes on which to act. With the formulation and monitoring of an Action Plan, they decide what the programme will look like in their school and local context. They are free to adapt it to the local or national setting, and they can focus on the areas that they all agree are relevant in their community. To tick the boxes on Self Evaluation, and Formal Curriculum Learning and Teaching, two more Eco-Schools programme steps follow – Monitoring & Evaluation, and Link to the Curriculum. Here is where it can get challenging, and where the programme can become a reference point for the long term. Depending again on local and national conditions, it can be easy or less so to link to the curriculum. In Denmark for instance, the teacher has power to make decisions about the curriculum, while in some other countries it is the government that decides.

How feasible and how pragmatic is it to be talking about green schools and green communities? We have ourselves often questioned whether this programme really makes a difference, even though it has been called an ESD phenomenon, present in over 75 countries across the globe. Through Steps 4 and 5, as mentioned above, we have a case for making an impact; schools can report on their progress and their actions and, ultimately, we can start talking about sustainable schools and communities.

Figures record impact

If change can be recorded, and these themes are embedded into the school's curriculum, then we can say we have achieved something. We were proud to learn that over 9,000 kg of waste was recycled in the Dominican Republic by Eco-Schools, over 80% of Eco-Schools in France now offer biological and/or local products in their canteens, and 260 litres of water was saved by Eco-Schools institutions in Ireland. And it doesn't stop there. Results from our external programme evaluation research, based on survey results from 650 schools in 22 countries participating in the programme, suggest that the Eco-Schools programme created a significant positive change in both behaviour and opinion leadership on the themes of Litter and Waste compared to non-Eco-Schools (An Taisce, 2017).

To ensure awareness by all, students Inform & Involve the community, and produce an Eco Code, which reflects their commitment to their own environmental potential. At the end of this process, schools can apply for the Green Flag Award. In international schools, a School Procurement Policy is a requirement for the renewal of this award. At the moment, 30 international schools are registered with the programme directly through the FEE head office, and two Green Flags have been awarded.

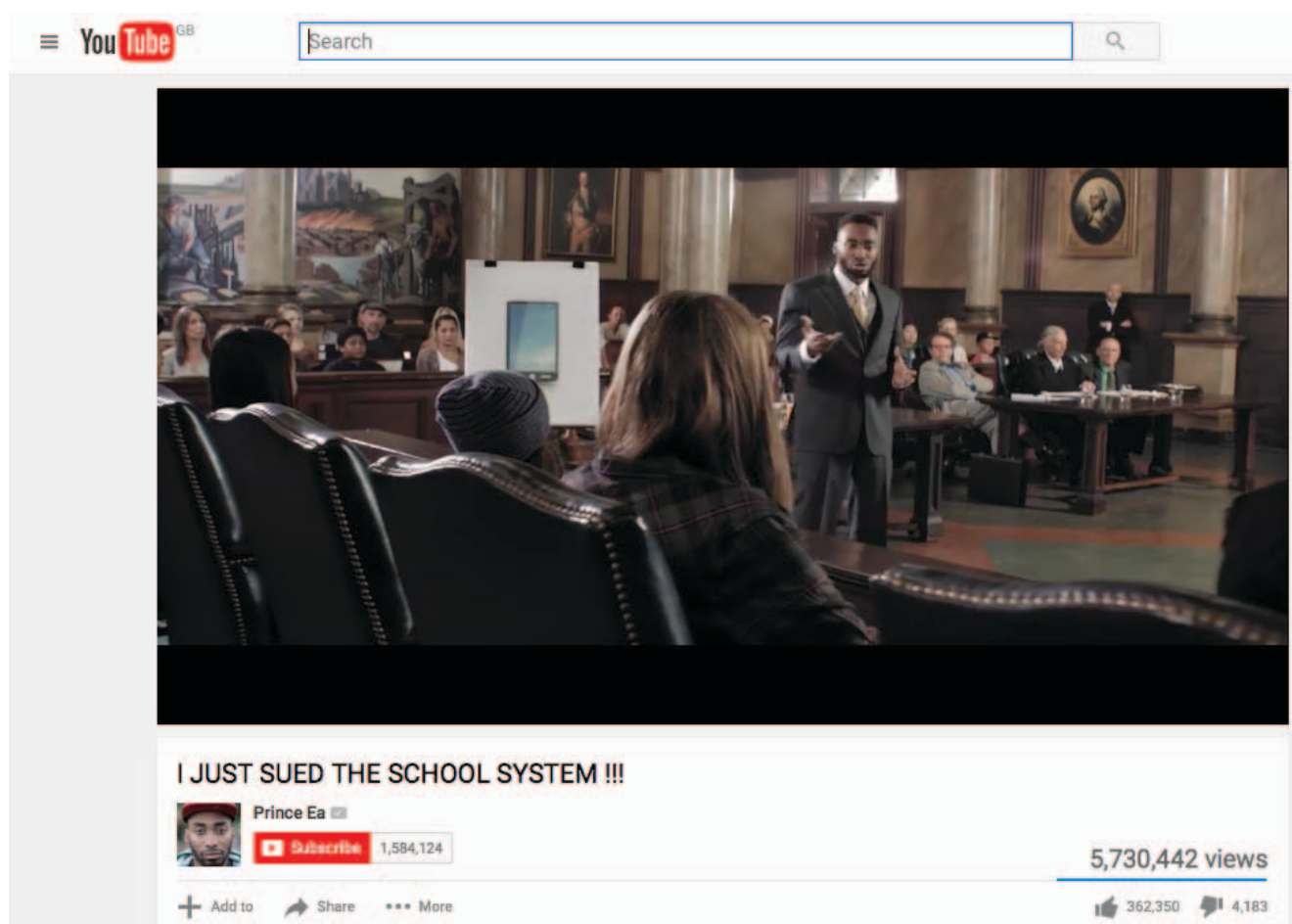
Through this Seven Steps process, students start considering the environmental, social and economic impact of their everyday decisions, as well as how their behaviour can influence the surrounding school community, their families' behaviour, the municipality's behaviour, and so on. The sense of student achievement that is instilled, along with the feeling of ownership and responsibility, can be the initial stage in turning communities green.

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‘The times they are a-changing’

Smita Shetty considers what we can learn from the success of ‘viral’ stars

A video called ‘I just sued the school system’ by Prince Ea is doing the rounds on social media. Within just two weeks of being posted, the video had been watched 1,260,090 times. This American rap song highlights the trauma that standardized teaching (the ‘one size fits all’ approach) puts students of diverse potential through. It is no wonder that this has become hugely popular and is being shared widely on Facebook, we chat and other media.

It is the nature of rap music to highlight social issues and Ea brings to light a grave issue. He deserves applause. The video abides by the characteristics of popular culture – it is dramatic (right from its title), hits out at authority figures, and uses strong accusing language. Certainly the role reversal where educationists/school management are accused of the damage they are determinedly causing captures popular emotion when Ea asks “Do you prepare students for the future or the past?” Ea points out that telephone and car

models have transformed their appearance and function in response to changing times, but education has not! He highlights the variety in human potential using prominent public figures such as scientists (Einstein, in particular) and tugs at the heart strings of parents to back the atrocities with which, he asserts, demonic schools bludgeon their victim students. The popular artist uses all the buzz words – “innovative, creative, independent” – to call for reform in education, and the video and lyrics shout out for reform. Ea points to the education systems in Finland and Singapore as beacons of hope and the solution to learners’ troubles, but is there any such instant remedy? He advocates customised teaching, but is it practically possible in every class?

Theoretical frameworks exist that recognise differences in students and are pushing towards adapting teaching to acknowledge different ways of learning. The idea of differentiating instruction and customising teaching to

the needs and interests of students is not only aired by this viral video in popular media; educational theory is brimming with literature on differentiated teaching. Corno (2008) describes differentiation as “tailoring instruction. By using various strategies for individualizing, for creative grouping, or for challenging students, teachers begin to accommodate the needs of a range of learners. On one hand it is trying to circumvent weaknesses and on the other it is capitalizing on strengths” (p.162). Powell and Kusuma-Powell argue that international teachers understand that students “represent great diversity in culture, language and educational experience” (2008, p.10). However, as there is now increasing recognition of diversity in student learning needs, “consequently differentiation is a word that enters our vocabulary with increasing frequency” (ibid). The Powells are known for their practical strategies and devising teacher skills in a bid to “teach them all”. The business of education needs more sensitive handling, it needs an acknowledgement of the vicissitudes of context and critical thought as they are more complex processes. A mechanical approach to teaching, the competitive nature of education and the robotic nature of assessments in popular education systems are criticised, as they should be.

There is no quick-fix remedy in sight. Educationists are dealing with complex individuals living in a rapidly changing world, and the solutions that have worked in Finland or Singapore may not be easily applicable elsewhere due to major differences in cultural and socio-economic contexts. For example, a four day week, shorter school working hours and no homework works well in Finland as a child's leisure time is used productively in reading books, watching documentaries, playing games and indulging in sports and creative arts that help enhance children's overall development. This model may be difficult to replicate elsewhere in the world where cultural practices are different.

One example of a move towards improving the education system is visible in the International Baccalaureate's (IB) Approaches to teaching and learning (ATL). The ATL has a solid focus on differentiation, and guides school management and teachers towards incorporating differentiation into everyday teaching and assessment. Subject guides offer clearer guidance on including differentiation in every classroom which, when implemented as regular practice, ensures that no child is left behind. IB has also incorporated Powell & Powell's guide to reflection for teachers that can be pursued

voluntarily as part of a teacher's professional development. It cannot, however, be assumed that all teachers are infusing these methods into their regular practice: “Teachers are often overwhelmed at the thought of differentiating instruction when the children in their classes exhibit such different learner characteristics ... but it doesn't mean they have to think of 24 different lesson plans” (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2008 p. 164)

Schools and teachers are therefore important in making differentiation practical and possible in every class. This is a concern in international schools that are characterized by their aspiration to embrace differences and create global citizens. We are living in a world which empowers robots through artificial intelligence, while ‘big data’ is getting bigger by the day. Not only are science and technology promoting this change; the very social system is going through massive change with terrorism and economic wars, as well as the current refugee crisis. Schools must keep up with this change and embrace it. There is a need for schools and teachers to accept change, to be leaders who welcome this paradigm shift, to ask ourselves how best to prepare our students for the future and to ensure that all of our students are equipped with skills to adapt to whatever the world has in store for them.

Prince Ea's song has gone viral on social media, signalling that this issue is universal and hits at the core of learning and teaching concerns. As teachers we need not only to incorporate variety into our forms of instruction and assessment, and reflect on our practices, but also to reconsider our teaching content to include a focus on lifelong skills that will empower students in times that are a-changing.

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We are living in a world which empowers robots through artificial intelligence, while ‘big data’ is getting bigger by the day. Not only are science and technology promoting this change; the very social system is going through massive change with terrorism and economic wars, as well as the current refugee crisis.



'Teachers shared, and experienced, their inner transformation of their own perspectives and beliefs.'

Inspiring professional development for Early Childhood educators

Nicola Weir reports on a 'Reading and Action Research Forum'

It is well known that the professionalism and quality of teachers has direct influence over the quality of learning for students, thus making professional development a key factor in effective leading and managing of a school. Set in the international kindergarten of Yew Chung International School Hong Kong, catering for almost 550 families and hosting over 70 staff from around the world, we found professional development aimed at bringing about 'best practice' to be challenging. We had teachers from all corners of the world, as well as local Cantonese teachers, co-teaching of East and West, along with bilingual delivery of our programme on a daily basis. It is evident that early childhood educators from around the world bring with them their own beliefs and experience of what they deem 'quality early childhood education'. We have also encountered the varying tertiary qualifications offered to early childhood educators worldwide, as well as the breadth of culturally diverse views

on young children's learning.

With teachers from around the world, we asked questions such as: How does leadership provide a platform for such a varying group of teachers to journey together, in providing an effective 'international education' for young children? How do teachers of such diverse beliefs about how young children learn, and what values they hold to in their practices, come together to provide a 'common' approach within a school, and yet bring with them their unique qualities, allowing children to experience 'international' views and thinking through the building of relationships with their individual teachers? How does leadership collaboratively and collectively journey the 'school's vision', while receiving willing participation and engagement from all stakeholders?

The diversity of practice and beliefs were particularly evident to us in our teachers' varying views on the role of play in learning. In our 'international' setting in Hong Kong, the

Features

local Cantonese culture of teaching values academics, where children are seen as empty vessels and the role of the teacher is to fill them with pertinent knowledge and information (Wu, 2014). This view guides the teachers into a teacher-directed approach to early childhood education, where children are seated for the majority of their day at school, engaged in lessons. On the other hand, many teachers from the 'western' world see play as an effective medium of learning, although what that looks like in practice varies a great deal between countries and individuals (Wu, 2014).

In researching professional development, Davis (2012) and Lazzari (2012) discuss the importance of teachers' unique personal and professional journeys, and suggest that leadership should provide opportunities for teachers to voice their values and views on education. Hallet (2013) would agree with the value of colleague discussion and dialogue, and further explains that this type of professional engagement amongst teachers allows for deeper understanding and growth. Guskey (2002) discusses the importance of teachers having hands-on experience of the curriculum or pedagogical reform required of teachers, in order to see first-hand the outcomes the 'new' approach has on their learners; only then do teachers commit to the espoused values as they experience the direct effect on their learners.

Mardell et al (2009) encourage teachers to engage in regular action research, generating relevant questions to research in the classroom by engaging in the focal practice or issue of interest. Gathering data and real-life evidence, teachers return to discuss and share their findings, further informing their questions and, in turn, quality practice for effective learning in early childhood settings. Mardell et al found that action research was the best way for teachers to link theory to practice as they continuously question and 'test', developing their practice through informed experiences.

Taking into account the complex set-up with seventy two teachers from all around the world, and recognising the importance of open discussion and dialogue, teachers' hands-on experience, and posing pertinent professional questions regarding quality practice and learning within early childhood education, we developed the 'Reading and Action Research Discussion Forums' as a professional training and development initiative. Our aim was to provide an effective platform that gave each teacher the opportunity not only to voice their own unique perspectives, but also to hear from others, as well as to arrive at a deeper understanding of what the early childhood arena considers 'best practices' through the readings of professional documentation, followed by a chance to 'test' it for themselves in practice, for further reflection.

Each forum starts with each teacher being given the same professional early childhood book or relevant articles/research journals (related to the current 'place' or 'need' of professional growth within the school), and assigned readings for the session. Alongside the relevant reading would be a question or research observation teachers were required to implement in class, and bring along to the discussion. Once a month they would come together in small cross-cultural groups to discuss the reading, along with their 'research'-related observations. This allowed teachers to put the theory into practice, experience it for themselves, then come together to discuss their perspectives and challenge

each other's beliefs. At the end of the year, teachers each presented on a personal action research question that underpinned the year's discussions.

The 'Reading and Action Research Discussion Forums' were a positive move forward for our context, as teachers share, and experience, their inner transformation of their own perspectives and beliefs. This initiative has allowed us as an early childhood setting to contextualise and remain relevant to the families and society we cater for, while being progressive in equipping our children for a global and international world.

The views of three teacher participants sum up the benefits as follows:

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the discussions and the interactions with my colleagues during the reading and forums. These reading sessions have provided a wealth of inspiration and have transformed my teaching practice. I have become more observant, and have started valuing children as competent individuals and believing in their capabilities: that they are engaging in a process that is not static; it's unfolding". (Teacher from India, teaching four and five year old children)

"I think the Reading and Forums have made me realize how important detailed observations are. For example, we are not just observing their language, we are observing their tone, expressions, emotions, connections, etc. I also think it is great that we can share ideas about how to observe, and extend the children's interests. We can learn from each other". (Teacher from Hong Kong, teaching three and four year old children)

"Engaging in the Reading and Forums in discussions and activities with my colleagues has definitely broadened my thinking and awareness. I am able to have more insight and respect, and value, for different approaches and cultures. I am also able to reflect upon, and improve on, my own practice". (Teacher from South Africa, teaching one to three year olds).

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The Homework Conundrum

Brett D McLeod tackles an emotive topic

Homework. We have all had it, and are familiar with the many emotions associated with it. From triumph to exasperation and even despair, this gamut of feelings is something we have all experienced as students, and those who are parents inevitably encounter them once more through their children. Perhaps this is why homework can be such an emotive topic.

Invariably, as a school year gets underway and expectations regarding homework unfold, teachers and administrators are fitfully confronted by parents irritated by the struggles and complaints of their children with homework. These complaints are often not without merit, and herein lies the conundrum. How do schools strike the right balance between homework and the personal needs of their students?

Research has revealed that too much homework can be detrimental to young people. In such instances, opportunities for play, socialization, and family time suffer. Even student health can be negatively impacted when

homework becomes a source of constant anxiety, stress, and chronic fatigue – as it can with some students (Ossala, 2015). This may be especially true in international schools with cultures that have very high expectations of their progeny in terms of academic success.

Still, the finding of most studies is that homework is statistically linked to improved academic achievement (Cooper, Robinson, and Patall, 2006). Additionally, supporters contend that homework encourages independent learning, promotes responsibility as well as good work and study habits, and ultimately supports students in developing the character traits necessary for success in life (Cooper, 2010). So, how exactly can these tensions be reconciled? Through transparency, discussion, data, and communication.

At the very outset of a new school year, schools should broach the subject of homework by way of a formal presentation. Yes, it means additional work on the part of

administrators, but the understanding discerned from such a discussion will help protect their time and that of their faculty from the likelihood of difficult homework-related meetings later. Honestly acknowledging the dissonance that exists about homework, and recognizing its risks as well as its benefits, can lead to the type of informed and balanced resolution school communities seek.

Naturally, some will remain intractable in their views. They will argue that homework is an unnecessary imposition on children who have already spent their day at school learning. Others will claim that the amounts of homework prescribed are insufficient. But having an opportunity to be heard, and being exposed to the views of others, can often lead to conciliation, especially when the clinical salve of credible, research-based data is applied to the discourse. Indeed, the role of such data in helping establish a position upon which a majority can agree cannot be overstated.

No less important for amelioration is the need to educate parents and students on how to manage homework responsibly and effectively. Assuming that students and parents know how to do this instinctively is erroneous. Knowing how to establish a regular study routine, how to plan and prioritize assignments, and how to assist children without interfering or completing assignments for them, are skills. They need to be learned and developed. The provision of information and workshops would help to realize these skills.

Guidance making clear how much time a child should spend on homework is similarly essential to communicate. Schools often advance this information in handbooks. Posting the same on their websites, and emailing periodic reminders, would likewise prove advantageous. Adding that teachers are approachable and ready to assist in the event a child is experiencing frustration or angst because of home assignments would also ease the possibility of consternation, as would emphasizing that too much homework and outside

tuition risks student burnout, thus inadvertently sabotaging the academic outcomes expected and sought.

The objection to homework from opponents might also be lessened by calling it something more germane, like home- or focused- practice. The word 'work' for many suggests drudgery, tedium. Add the prefix 'home', and it is doubly charged and unappealing. Homework should be called exactly what it is and is meant to be: practice, and focused practice at that. It should reinforce material covered in class, extend it realistically in terms of each student's capability, and focus on what is both meaningful to, and needed by, the learner. After all, what benefit is there in assigning a student work that he or she has already mastered unless it is as review for an impending examination?

Finally, if schools are to lay the conundrum of homework to rest, it would behoove them to repeatedly state its intended purpose: to fortify the understanding and learning of students. Seems obvious enough but, by going one step further and conscientiously linking this with people celebrated in the fields of human endeavor, homework might yet be rendered more embraceable to those currently opposed to it.

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At the very outset of a new school year, schools should broach the subject of homework by way of a formal presentation. Yes, it means additional work on the part of administrators, but the understanding discerned from such a discussion will help protect their time and that of their faculty from the likelihood of difficult homework-related meetings later. Honestly acknowledging the dissonance that exists about homework, and recognizing its risks as well as its benefits, can lead to the type of informed and balanced resolution school communities seek.

Core work – strengthening the core of the IB Diploma

Ann Lautrette explains how her school developed its own bespoke curriculum

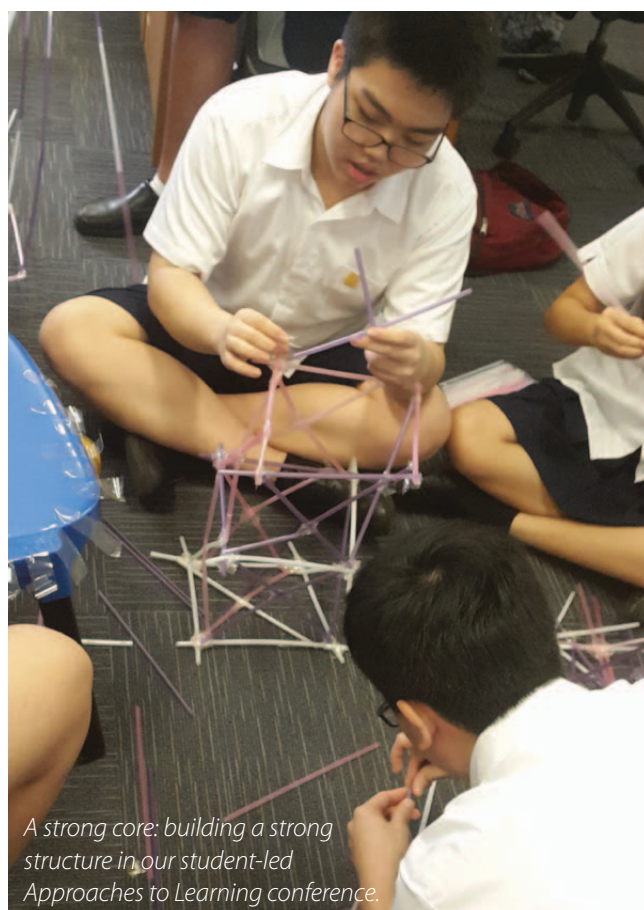
For those of us who love fitness almost as much as teaching, ‘core work’ conjures images of endless sit-ups and 3-minute planks: hard work, but vital for strength, stability and improved performance. And when we picture the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) model, the core – similar to our abdominal muscles – lies right at the centre of the six subject areas, touching each and holding them together. This suggests that like those abs, the core of the DP can be strengthened with some hard work, and that this strengthening will result in improved performance, not only in the core but in all six subject areas.

How, though, do we give the core its rightful place at the heart of the Diploma, coherently integrating Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS), Theory of Knowledge (TOK), the Extended Essay and the development of Approaches to Learning (ATL)? At the British School Jakarta we took the approach of creating our own bespoke Core Curriculum, built upon holistic units underpinned by TOK and integrating CAS, the ATLs, generic Extended Essay skills and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). The development of this programme was based on four agreed principles:

1. Students need to understand the connections between the elements of the core, and of the core to the subject areas.

Every Core subject guide refers to ‘coherence in the core’, and every subject guide refers to integration of the Core. But in reality, when subjects and core elements are operating in relative isolation, how easy is it to create the kind of interdependence and understanding of interdisciplinary application we desire?

We designed our Core Curriculum in layers. In each unit, layer one is the conceptual understanding we want in TOK. Layer two is the explicit ATL skill on which we want to focus. Layer three is the PSHE content we want to explore with students, and layer four is the link to the CAS Learning Outcomes. We start our course, for example, with a unit titled ‘Defining and Generating Knowledge’. This asks the big TOK questions of what knowledge is, and where it comes from, and allows us to explore Ways of Knowing, Areas of Knowledge, Personal and Shared Knowledge, and



A strong core: building a strong structure in our student-led Approaches to Learning conference.

the Knowledge Framework. The ATL focus in this unit is affective self-management skills: Where does knowledge about ourselves come from? Why do we think the way we do? Where does emotion come from and how does it affect us? And from here the link into PSHE becomes apparent: How can we better manage our self-talk and inner voice? What motivates us? What’s our passion? What do we want out of IB and life? How do we get there? And, finally, What does this have to do with CAS? [Learning Outcome 1: ‘I identify my strengths. I identify areas for growth.’]

Each unit then weaves fluidly through these connected threads of the core, strengthening the links between the

core and strengthening students' ability to apply the skills they develop to their subject areas and to life as an IB student.

2. Students need to develop Approaches to Learning and these can and should be explicitly taught.

In each unit we worked to include development of all ATL skills; however, we ensured that each unit focused explicitly on one skill. For example, when focused on 'Communication' we teach presentation skills and effective use of visual aids. To improve 'Thinking', we teach visible thinking techniques such as 'claim, support, question', '3-2-1-bridge' and 'connect, extend and challenge'. We explicitly teach online and offline research skills, from formulating research questions to referencing. We teach social skills, such as how to run an effective CAS planning meeting and work well as a project management team. And we build 'Self-Management' skills by teaching how to meet a deadline through planning, using to-do lists, calendars and prioritization, how to use email, effective study methods and managing emotions through positive self-talk, mindfulness and reflection.

3. The IB Diploma Programme is challenging and students need support.

We structured the timetable for the Core Curriculum so that each Core class had one permanent teacher rather than a TOK teacher, a CAS supervisor and a tutor teaching PSHE. Teachers are better able to get to know the working habits, pastoral concerns and academic achievement of their students and support them through a challenging programme. Because core lessons are collaboratively planned, reviewed and reflected upon through weekly core meeting time, we can discuss student concerns and provide support to one another.

4. Students need the space and time to develop the ability to reflect.

The elements of the IBDP core are linked by reflection, but the ability to reflect is not necessarily innate. It takes an understanding of what reflection is and an appreciation of its importance, and it needs time and space dedicated to it. In developing our Core Curriculum we introduced a campus network of student blogs. At the beginning of IBDP Year 1 we gave students a blog, taught them some digital citizenship skills, and helped them not only to build a reflective space where they could write CAS reflections, and reflect on their Extended Essay progress and their learning in TOK, but also where they could build a positive digital footprint and record of their growth and development over the two years of their IB Diploma. Our blog network can be visited at blogs.bsj.sch.id

So, with the programme written and implemented, how do we now measure success? This is something we've wrestled with, and thus far our best answer is that while we can directly measure impact in TOK and the Extended Essay, to a large extent the success of the Core will be seen in the six subjects, in the student's ability to cope with the demands of the IBDP and in their health and well-being. Like the muscles of the body, the strength of the Core improves performance. And what better reason than that to do Core Work?

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If you are interested in writing an article for International School magazine, we would like to hear from you!

The editors of *International School*, Dr Mary Hayden and Prof Jeff Thompson, would like to encourage teachers and leaders/managers/administrators to consider what they could offer to this magazine. We would love to hear from you with your article ideas.

Articles have as their focus the sharing of ideas and good practice which may be of relevance to others with an interest in international education in schools – whether international schools, or national schools and other organisations encouraging an international dimension to education.

We will be pleased to receive articles relating to international education including:

- good news stories
- articles about good practice
- articles about interesting initiatives
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Articles should be submitted as Word files, ideally accompanied by a good quality photograph, to editor@is-mag.com [Please note that a photograph relevant to the theme of the article is preferable to a photograph of the author(s)] A one-sentence biographical note about the author(s) should also be provided, as well as email address(es), which will be included if the article is accepted for publication.

Please also include a postal address so that, if the article is published, a copy of the relevant issue of *International School* can be posted to you.

When including photographs for publication, please note that:

- photographs need to be of high quality (at least 300dpi, file size at least 6MB), and supplied in JPEG or TIF format. Images taken from the internet are not suitable.
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Positioning international schools through teaching and pedagogy

How can schools focus on the key attributes that parents desire? Stephen Holmes reports

More than ever, approaches to teaching pedagogy are being scrutinised by students and parents, yet remain underutilised in the definitive positioning of international schools. Schools are all too often seen as generic or having a sameness around teaching and pedagogy. In no small way, how students and parents choose a school points to a need for more strategic consideration about how teaching and pedagogy should be integrated into positioning. Parents now seek:

- Both short term and lifelong benefits linear of a school focus on teaching and pedagogy.
- Personalised learning and more broadly a customised (curated) experience – how does teaching and pedagogy play a key role here?
- A service and convenience orientation – how can teaching and pedagogy be positioned as supportive of this?
- Schools with 21st century ambitions – what is the horizon plan for teaching and pedagogy to fit with known and unknown future requirements?
- A consistent (seamless) student/parent journey (pre-enrolment forward) – how teaching and pedagogy is a consistent theme and authentically delivered across the school.

- A school that can act as a 'passport' opportunity (so-called global citizenship) – how the teaching and pedagogy support global perspective, and portable soft skill development.

The figure shown is an organising framework for considering the centrality of teaching/pedagogy in aligning with four key attributes among parents to influence their school choice:

What is positioning?

Positioning, in a school, means designing the offer in order to occupy a distinctive place in the minds of target audiences. It requires a cogent and compelling reason why the target audience should choose your school over other alternatives. Ideally, the aim should be to 'own' a word or concept (identity) and to be consistently known for something that it would be hard for others to replicate.

My observations of schools over three decades suggest that a more dedicated harnessing and communication of teaching/pedagogy approaches can deliver a cogent and compelling positioning. In relation to teaching and pedagogy, however, the sector is characterised by:

- Generally weak and indistinct mission and vision statements.
- Not many have defined flagships.
- Rarely a conscious, long term investment to elevate differentiating factors.
- Most schools try to cover all bases (inclusive) in their positioning – rather than narrow and deep approach to say teaching and pedagogy.
- Location and history are over relied upon as primary differentiators – real differences such as teaching/pedagogy are often buried.

The case for a teaching/pedagogy-led positioning

Research in many countries consistently shows a central factor in success of schools is quality of teaching, pedagogy and associated services. International schools don't say enough about it – look at almost any website or brochure! It represents an opportunity in an increasingly crowded



international school sector. A systematic process to find the 'right' messaging around teaching and pedagogical quality is required to build clarity in positioning. Five metrics that may be applied in schools to guide this process internally (that first require robust evidence) are:

1. Parent and/or student choice, and motivation to choose the school (alignment and place of teaching and pedagogy being the goal here)
2. What the school already does exceptionally well around teaching and pedagogy (recognising that it is much easier to build on existing strengths than to create new ones)
3. Sustainable (something to embed around teaching and pedagogy)
4. Authentic (such as a theme or 'golden thread' that runs across year levels and/or curriculum that connects or is seen as valuable)
5. Applicable to your school culture (best fit in your context).

What does implementation look like around positioning on the basis of teaching/pedagogy? Below is an example of evidence 'levers' (proof points) that could be developed and applied to generate a compelling and cogent positioning based on teaching/pedagogy.

Key driver for institutional choice:	Teaching/Pedagogy Quality
Positioning 'Levers':	Teacher Recruitment processes Quality of candidate field Previous employers Ex-teaching staff in high places Employment record – experiences and innovations Student/parent evaluation processes and feedback Teacher exchange and other professional development Teacher support quality Profile of teaching with industry partners Teamwork/sharing of expertise Salaries and rewards that are teaching directed

Turning a 'teaching and pedagogy' positioning into communication narrative

How do we translate a teaching/pedagogy-focused positioning into communication narrative?

Again, options first need to be explored and tested by a school in their own context. However, the following stand out as valued messaging narrative (a checklist) to consider:

- How enquiry and problem based learning is incorporated
- How pedagogy/teaching promotes and delivers critical thinking and new ideas
- How pedagogy/teaching is linked to life/employability skills such as communication, negotiation, analysis, entrepreneurship, creativity, etc
- How pedagogy/teaching can be linked to 'in vogue' concepts and programs in areas such as positive psychology, emotional intelligence
- How the learning environment is conducive to and supports contemporary and flexible (diverse) learning styles

- How management and institutional structures and processes provide a supportive context for high quality and professional teaching/pedagogy.

My experience is that where the following are crafted within a communication narrative, there is better understanding and resonance of the link between pedagogy/teaching and success:

- Linking student results overtly to teaching/pedagogy (through staff development, staff evaluation and student satisfaction)
- Linking teaching/pedagogy to a one-to-one student focus (personal attention)
- Measurement of pedagogical impacts on student attitudes, behaviours such as independence, problem solving etc.
- Testimonials of third parties that attest to the longer term benefits of teaching/pedagogy (eg via alumni – resilience at university job readiness, skills, and career progression)
- Focus on an approach or concept that is central to the teaching/pedagogical approach, eg group work.
- Contrast your own with 'local' education system pedagogies – draw on subject/research literature to support the value in such differences.
- Present rolling case studies on teaching/pedagogy and teachers themselves on the website
- Boldly make teaching/pedagogy central to the core outreach of the school eg 'Learn at school – just as you will later on, in your career'.

A whole-of-institute process to build teaching/pedagogy as positioning

Just as with any strategic objective, schools need a step by step process to embed a position/narrative around teaching/pedagogy. I propose a 4-step model:

1. Map competitor messaging around teaching/pedagogy (if any)
2. Secondary evidence eg draw on supportive subject literature such as likely graduate skills for the future
3. Solicit opinions of alumni, current and prospective students, and parents
4. Concept checking and pilot testing of proposed positioning with current students/parents.

Despite what seems an obvious connection to education itself, remarkably few international schools have translated teaching and pedagogy into a defining part of their positioning strategy and reputational fabric. There is a striking imperative to look within for more strategic approaches in an increasingly competitive international school sector.

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Letter to the Editors

Complexity – a big idea for education?

Here we go again! As if the pre-referendum debate was not enough, the world's media will soon be giving us a ringside seat at the two-year-long negotiations that will determine how the United Kingdom will quit the European Union (EU). Let us hope that the intellectual quality of Round Two is a marked improvement on Round One, which became unpleasantly personal with polarised opinions, information misleadingly presented and the traditional languages of politics and socio-economics proving inadequate to the task of making sense of such a challenging issue. It soon became clear that although the process of departure could be described by the simple, memorable term 'Brexit', the reality of accepting the referendum result, and then actually embarking upon the overwhelmingly complex negotiations that follow, would be anything but simple.

Experienced commentators have described leaving the EU as the most significant political issue facing the United Kingdom since the Second World War, perhaps in 'living memory'. It raises fundamental questions about a nation's capacity to stem the tide of globalization in order to shape its own national economic policy; to preserve the independence of its own legislature and judiciary and to control the cultural composition of its own population. None of these factors operates in isolation. To take a simple example, many sectors of the UK's economy depend for their existence upon migrant labour, and in parts of the country that has changed the cultural complexion of the local community. But rarely did the pre-referendum debate venture beyond the simplistic positions that immigration is either a 'good thing' or a 'bad thing'.

It is in this context that I welcome the article *Complexity – a big idea for education?* by Jane Drake, Roland Kupers and Rose Hipkins which appeared in the Spring 2017 edition of *International School* describing the potential of 'complexity science'. International educators, and especially those associated with the International Baccalaureate (IB), are committed to the importance of acquiring critical thinking

skills. As the IB's key document *What is an IB education?* expresses it:

Critical reflection is the process by which curiosity and experience can lead to deeper understanding. Reflective thinkers must become critically aware of their evidence, methods and conclusions. Reflection also involves being conscious of potential bias and inaccuracy in one's own work and in the work of others.

However, Jane Drake and colleagues remind us that conventional methods of inquiry are reductionist, breaking the problem into its constituent parts and examining the effect on the system of one variable at a time. Conventional methods of inquiry assume that every problem has a correct answer or at least a provisionally correct answer: there is no place for ambiguity or uncertainty. The school curriculum is also organised along reductionist lines, dividing the whole into its constituent – and often isolated – subject areas. By contrast, complexity science offers techniques for studying an issue in its diverse wholeness, recognising that systems evolve dynamically over time and self-organise, producing a whole that is more than the sum of its parts.

The concept is not new and it has developed its own vocabulary (emergent properties, self-organisation, complex causality, amplifying and absorbing effects, resilience and fragility) but – as will be very clear to readers – it is new to me, so I have gone back to the beginning to read Warren Weaver's classic paper from 1948: *Science and complexity* (American Scientist, 36: 536-544). I encourage readers of *International School* to do the same; in the years that lie ahead, our students will need every guide to understanding complexity that we can lay our hands on.

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March 2017

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To take a simple example, many sectors of the UK's economy depend for their existence upon migrant labour, and in parts of the country that has changed the cultural complexion of the local community. But rarely did the pre-referendum debate venture beyond the simplistic positions that immigration is either a 'good thing' or a 'bad thing'.



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Internationalising Schools

Sharing Good Practice and Addressing Challenges



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Alliance for International Education

World Conference: Amsterdam, The Netherlands

6 - 8 October 2017

Internationalising Schools

Sharing good practice and addressing challenges

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

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

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- **Internationalisation: definitions and meanings**
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- **Schools and their wider communities**
- **Learning and Teaching**
- **Curriculum implications: primary/elementary**
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- **Supporting teachers through professional development**
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Linking graphic design projects to real life situations

Keri Jolley on promoting international mindedness and project-based learning

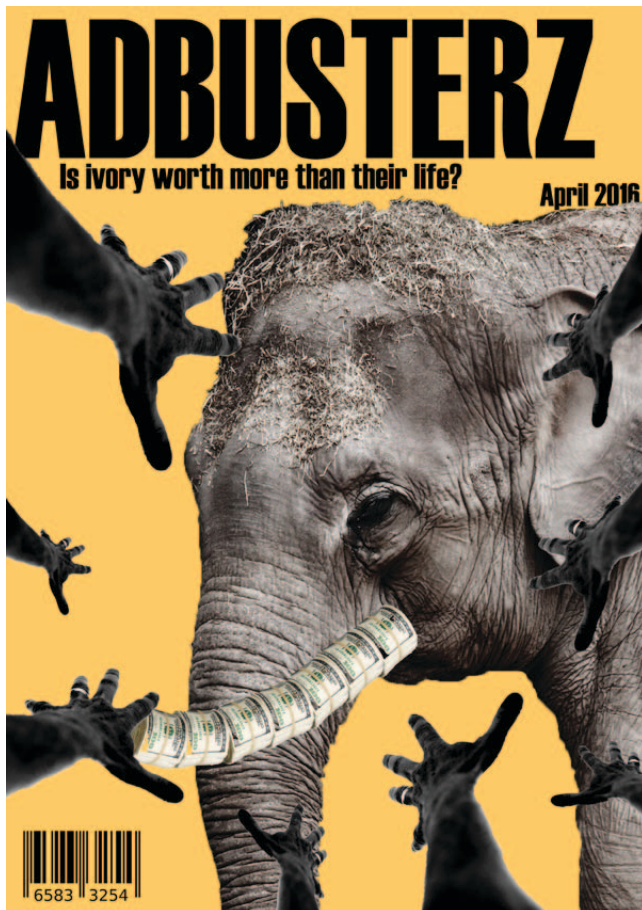
Since I arrived at Zurich International School (ZIS) six years ago, my goal has been to raise the level of the Graphic Design curriculum by integrating more project-based learning opportunities through linking projects to real situations, while learning the full Adobe Creative Suite. Along with that, there are other facets that I have found just as vital and important to foster. Some of these are utilizing the community beyond our four walls in order to broaden the scope of opportunity, vision and knowledge for our students, thus linking to the idea of 'international mindedness.' As international educators, we know that once students begin to interact with their neighbors, anything is possible – networking and new ideas develop and often the student's host country seems more accessible, as many international schools are separate from their neighbors not only by the physical architecture (often relating to security measures), but also in attitude. In this article, I give examples of my approach to starting to blur this separation.

For the first project, each student was given a letter from the German alphabet, since we are in the German-speaking region of Switzerland. There are 30 letters and I had 30 students between two classes. The task was to create that letter via line, shape, space and value within a square. We created an accordion book and poster and gave it to the ZIS lower school; the two campuses are in different towns and we do not see younger children daily within our building. The librarian exhibited it in the library as a gift from the upper school students. We also gave it to the Swiss primary school across the street as a gift from our older students, who often walk past their school on the way to the bus. This has been the first time our school has reached out to the school within the community.

The 'all important' project in any graphic design class is the logo. We took a field trip to a printing company in our town to watch our logos being printed onto t-shirts. This opportunity created a bridge between a local company and the school. For the Swiss German speakers, this was a time

Some examples of the student projects at ZIS.





to shine because they translated for those who needed it since the employees spoke very little English. Next year, we will make logos for real Zurich-based companies, thus connecting with the local community even more.

The logo led to the packaging project, which included a visit to a local museum at a grocery store which shows their history of packaging and world-renowned packaging company Amcor's nearby facility. We met with the senior graphic design team, one of whom we found out was a ZIS alumnus. The designers presented their work and process – everything from the brief, brainstorming and prototypes, to the machines that cut the cardstock and finishing 'shiny' layers. The students were able to understand how international the packaging industry is via visual arts and design, yet see logos and packages of local products on the shelves in Switzerland, including the famous Lindt chocolate.

For the Dada centennial in 2016 we studied this art historical movement, which started in Zurich based upon poets, actors and visual artists unable to make sense of the world during World War I, thus creating what seemed like

**We ultimately asked
the question: Have we
gone around in circles
since the last 100
years as a society?**

'nonsensical' work. Students created a collage for a mock cover of Adbusters magazine (pictured left), a Canadian magazine that lampoons society and especially government. Students were encouraged to deal with issues currently in the media. This prompted several questions: Do they know what is going on outside the borders of Switzerland, especially in the developed world? As we know, most international families travel frequently, but not all will come into contact with some of the intense issues that may surround them when traveling. We ultimately asked the question: Have we gone around in circles since the last 100 years as a society? What has history taught us? How important is it to be educated, especially about history?

Finally, all students at our school take a Classroom Without Walls trip in June. We have trips for each of the four pillars of our mission statement: Learn, Care, Challenge, and Lead. Trips are mostly within Europe, but also include several locations where we have on-going service programs such as Ghana, Morocco, Tanzania and Sri Lanka. Grade 9 students go to Romania to work with Habitat for Humanity and Grade 12 students may make an independent trip. Last June, students created a 'funky folded brochure' using photos from previous trips and contacted prior participants, including teachers and peers, for information. This was a great way to have students learn about a location and its culture including unfamiliar language, food, and customs before embarking on their journeys. It also required them to work with a person in the building who was new to them.

As a result of the knowledge gained in the graphic design classes, a student from last year contacted me to offer to liaise between several Zurich companies and our school to redesign logos next year, thus working with real companies and people. This is something I had been planning on doing, but in a summer business course with Ford, this student created a business model for them based upon logos and found that this project would work because he could create brochures of past student work before approaching them. Another student used his skills and knowledge to create menus, brochures and logos for a local company as part of an internship, and redesigned our Mission 10 logo for personal projects in Grade 10.

It is my hope that educators will inspire students by using project-based learning with SMART outcomes (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-related) and frame their teaching around international mindedness by meeting their neighbors and taking advantage of opportunities in their own communities. This is a basis for innovation and design as multiple minds come together, each with their own expertise, while continually growing, learning and challenging themselves to make the world a better place. No time is better than now to get to know our neighbors, and to be kind, inquisitive and perhaps collaborative in finding innovative ways towards their goals.

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Plastic litter washed up on a beach in Singapore.

The ‘Plastic Plague’ – a threat to the oceans

Richard Harwood examines a concerning blight

The oceans, and life within them, face a number of threats in this modern age. Acidification from dissolved carbon dioxide is becoming an increasing problem, potentially altering the patterns of algal life along our shorelines and causing the blighting of coral reefs. A further problem is the accumulation of various forms of plastic detritus, discarded on land but finding its way into the sea. It washes up on urban beaches and remote islands, tossed about in the waves and transported across incredible distances before arriving, unwanted, back on land.

There is a lot of plastic in the world’s oceans. It accumulates into great floating ‘garbage patches’ that cover large swathes of the Pacific. Such accumulations of waste are associated with the ocean gyres, of which there are five – the North Atlantic, South Atlantic, North Pacific, South Pacific, and Indian Ocean gyres – created by global wind patterns and the rotation of the Earth. Numerous studies have now catalogued the

rising mass of plastic debris being dumped, blown or simply washed out to sea, and it is having a deleterious impact on the marine environment. Data from the 1960’s show that slightly fewer than 5% of sea birds would be found then with waste plastic fragments in their stomach. Today this figure is of the order of 90% and, on current trends, it is estimated that by 2050 plastic ingestion will reach 99% of the world’s seabird species, with nearly every individual bird affected. Other marine species such as sea turtles also suffer harmful effects from plastic waste.

Ingested plastic litter is impossible to digest and takes up space in the stomach or gizzard that otherwise should be used for food. Alternatively, it can cause an obstruction that starves the bird directly. Studies of birds in the North Pacific have shown that ingestion of plastics results in declining body weight and body condition.

The use of the term ‘garbage patch’ is controversial and

possibly unhelpful, as it conjures up an image of floating masses of large pieces of plastic debris. In fact much of the significant plastic is present as microdebris from the degradation of the plastic waste. This links to a further source of plastic pollution that results from the use of microbeads in cosmetic products. Taken a shower today? Then you may have washed down the drain some 100,000 plastic microbead particles with just that one shower. And it's not just shower gels that can contain microbeads. Shampoos, exfoliators, face washes, suntan lotions and toothpastes can be hiding them too. The average 150 ml container of cosmetic product might contain 3 million plastic particles or microbeads. Microbeads are added as an exfoliating agent to cosmetics and personal care products. They create a 'ball-bearing effect' in creams and lotions, resulting in a silky texture and spreadability, while coloured microspheres can add visual appeal to cosmetic products.

The impact of microbeads is becoming a major concern as few water companies have the means to filter them out. Consequently, these tiny particles (less than 5 mm diameter) ultimately end up in the sea. This flood of plastic is affecting marine habitats and presenting a real danger to fish and shellfish, which can mistake it for food and ingest it. Microbeads are derived from petrochemicals, including poly(propene) and poly(styrene), and research has demonstrated that exposure to such materials can stunt the growth of fish, change their behaviour, or simply kill them outright. A 2009 study found microbeads in 36.5% of fish

caught by trawlers in the English Channel.

Up to 219,000 tonnes of microplastics enter the European marine environment every year. Of this, 4% comes from cosmetic products. Whilst there are also other culprits (including car tyres, synthetic clothing, cleaning products), getting rid of microplastics in cosmetics and personal care products presents a manageable prospect. As of 29 June 2016, the Federal Government of Canada added microbeads in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act under Schedule 1 as a toxic substance. In the US, the Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015 phases out microbeads in rinse-off cosmetics by July 2017. The UK government is committed to introducing a ban on microplastics in cosmetics and personal care products by October 2017.

Synthetic and natural alternatives to microplastics in cosmetics exist, such as apricot kernels, but even with these care must be taken to ensure they would not have a damaging impact if released into the ocean in large quantities. The hope is that action on cosmetic microbeads will pave the way to dealing with the much wider plastic pollution problems, including the 8 billion plastic water bottles thrown away each year, many of which end up in the sea, breaking down into smaller particles.

**Dr Richard Harwood is an education consultant (scientific and international education).
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The remains of this albatross chick show the plastic ingested before its death.

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In praise of 'good enough'

If something is worth doing, it's worth doing badly, says E T Ranger

I'm a great believer that if a thing is worth doing it's worth doing badly. Not by design, of course; but there are some things that under daily working conditions we are never going to do perfectly, though we should at least try.

If we limit ourselves to what we can perfect, how much would we ever achieve? Let's think of any recent initiative to develop our school. It could have been a campaign to develop a policy on international-mindedness. How did it go? The ambition is immense; to consult all stakeholders in a dynamic, mobile community, then to compile their views and reach a consensus, and then to ensure the consensus is communicated, adopted and practised by everyone in the organisation. Hands up anyone who thinks they have achieved all of that! But we attempt it because we know it is worth the effort. This is only one of the idealistic targets we aim for in international schools. It is difficult to communicate, let alone achieve, these aims when our work involves administrative and classroom levels, diverse colleagues and clients, and children. Often we are making demands on the host country staff which are unfamiliar to them or, more subtly, have a different priority in their eyes.

But what kind of a slogan does this inspire? 'Give it a go!'; 'Just do your best'; 'Never mind, you tried'; is this ever going to be the motto for a school, anywhere? Whatever happened to dreams and ideals? The problem is to find a valid rallying cry without going beyond the bounds of credibility. If we preach perfectionism when it isn't plausible, aren't we going to look like hypocrites? 'Make Poverty History': such a good cause, such a good slogan, but such an impossibility, surely obvious to anyone coming from an MDC (more developed country) and working in an LDC (less developed country). Quite likely the same outsourcing of work which brings the family to that country is the cause of unemployment at home. Working at the intersection of international inequalities, international schools are distinctive by their very inequality.

On the other hand, are we building in an excuse for ourselves by admiring the imperfect? I think there's a need to accommodate a range of expectations. Let's face it, what we tell a five-year old about the world is not what we tell a fifteen-year-old, let alone an adult. A small child lives in an immediate world, sometimes a fantasy world. 'We're gonna build a great wall!' Any talk of making things better means perfect – here – now. The only reason children can accept today's imperfections is that they know they will remedy all this when they are grown-ups. Theirs is a world of 'One day ...'

Youthful idealism arrives as children begin to see themselves as active agents, able to go beyond their parents, or in new directions: their own directions. Lots of natural

impulses play their parts, and our role is surely to encourage their energy and advise on their aim. We know more than they do about the targets the world offers, and about the difficulties they will have to overcome. We may have tried and failed here already.

I feel that one of the most valuable lessons we can ever give is that the distant aim of making a better world is to be pursued in small stages.

But how credible are we, the standard-bearers, if we are preaching compromise? There's a difference between directions and destinations. The Millennium Goals were steps towards an agreed ideal; over-optimistic steps to be sure, but at least considered, measured steps. As we grow up the dream changes. It dawns on us that astronaut, football star and supermodel are each full-time careers; we can only choose one of them. T S Eliot wrote that 'Ambition comes when early force is spent, and we find no longer all things possible.' In choosing between our targets it is helpful to try things out, and perhaps to experience failure at a scale that is not catastrophic. Then, as we learn about our own capabilities, we also learn to grit our teeth and direct our energies to a single purpose.

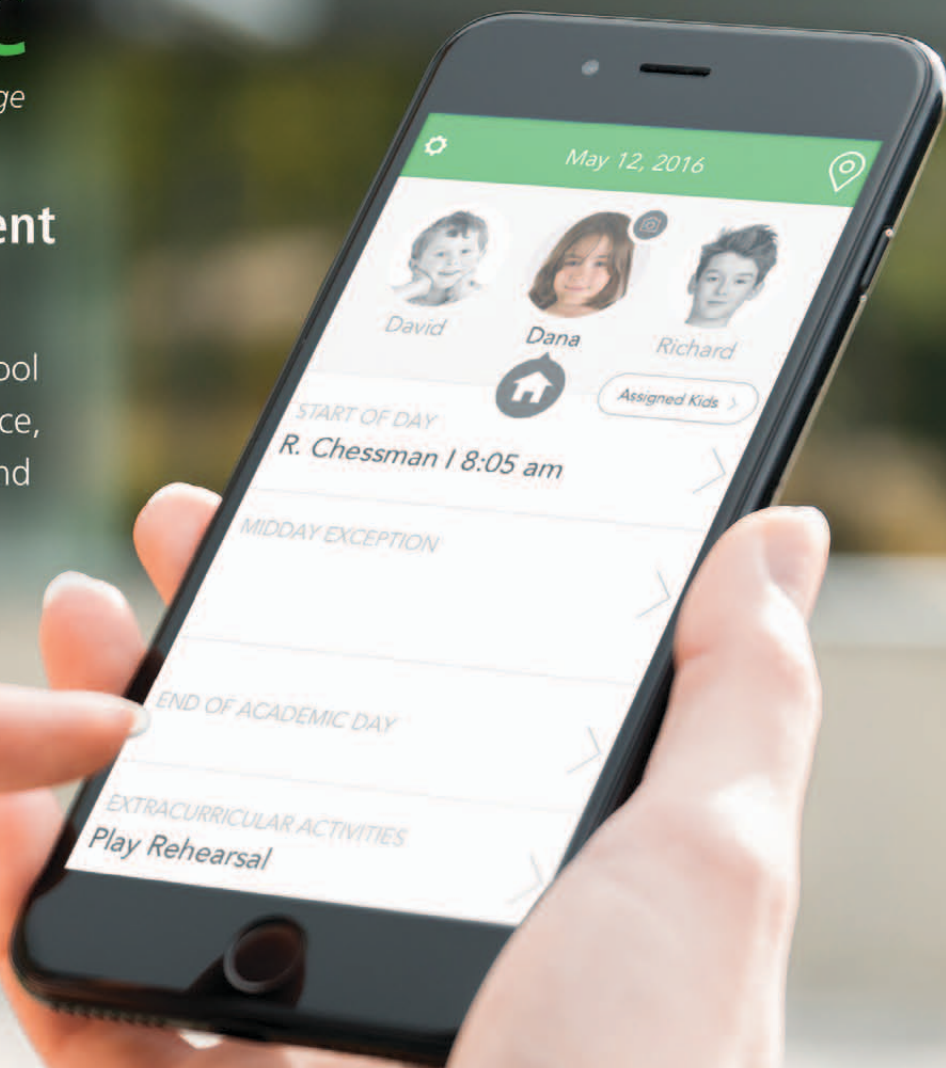
I feel that one of the most valuable lessons we can ever give is that the distant aim of making a better world is to be pursued in small stages. We need to hang on to our idealism so that we can override our momentary, local, personal pride in making everything look good in front of the audience of the moment. I do still believe it is worth trying, in the lifelong term, to make the world a better place, but also worth recognising that we are simply contributors who play our part, but play it ... as well as we can.



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Making strides towards equality

Clare Smith describes her school's initiative against discrimination

Working in education, we are often required to manage behaviour. It is part and parcel of helping students to mature. Nothing is quite as impressive though as when students challenge each other, holding one another to account and growing their environment into a self-governing landscape.

Last summer a group of Year 8 boys made an inappropriate joke. I imagine this is familiar the world over, but what they were not counting on was a sixth former stopping and

reprimanding them. Taken aback, they responded quite negatively to the challenge, yet when the sixth former came to relay the story, she quickly cut off my apologies with a call to action: Wouldn't it be much better if someone explained to the boys why what they had done was inappropriate? Couldn't we use this as a learning opportunity too? Out of this, Equality Week was born.

It started with a vision from three sixth formers to help our



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What began as a desire to lead an assembly about treating one another with more respect had become a week-long celebration of the diversity of our international community, and the longing to be an example of celebrating what unites, rather than creating division.

community reflect on the inequalities in society. They felt particularly strongly about the habitual sexism that pervades culture: Throw like a girl. Boys don't cry. If you wear that, you know what you're encouraging. Different voices added their views too: what about the casual racism you hear and see? Or the slurs that are made because of how people choose to dress, or how they identify? The discussion outgrew the initial idea, and now students were forging ahead with a new plan. What began as a desire to lead an assembly about treating one another with more respect had become a week-long celebration of the diversity of our international community, and the longing to be an example of celebrating what unites, rather than creating division.

The week began to take shape as each day was assigned a different facet of equality. Now we were exploring gender, identity, race and ethnicity, justice and sustainability – and people from across the school community were getting involved. A member of the HR team offered their time to talk about equality in recruitment practices; parents passionate about sustainable fashion established a student project; the International Criminal Court extended an invitation to students to work with them as a means of promoting their new Policy On Children to more young people. It also provided an invaluable opportunity for groups across school to come together; students from the MUN, Debating and Eco Societies sharing their expertise to promote the week and run activities. The unity we were hoping to inspire was being borne out in the very planning stages of the project.

I am very proud to work in a school where the question is typically how and not why. There has been unwavering support for the students and their aims; the senior team unanimously approved the idea and staff members are working with students to help their ideas come to fruition.

Our school is already a very accommodating one. The diversity of the student body is a joy, and somehow everyone finds their place. Through this whole project we want to ensure that we don't downplay what makes the school the safe and happy environment that it already is: that students are kind to each other and accepting of individual difference. That said, like most of society it is easier to be in the mainstream, and Equality Week is also about education. Students who feel on the fringes or in minorities have a safe forum in which to share their opinions, experiences and fears. Happily, the perception of many students in The Netherlands is that culture is changing; Evie beams with pride as she tells me about her friends, acknowledging that "it is much more accepted that men are identifying as feminists. Times are

really changing and we should appreciate it – it's no longer so much of a taboo". But there is still a way to go. When I asked another member of the team what this week meant to him, his response was considered: "It's important to widen people's horizons so they understand the challenges that other people face. Exposing people to that is the only way to change society to encourage more understanding of difference."

Time and again we have returned to our original purpose: to celebrate diversity and expose areas of inequality. Henry David Thoreau captures this desire so eloquently when he asks: "Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant?"

Our week is taking shape: the focus of each day has been agreed, students have split into smaller teams, proposals are being written and excitement is building. At a time when many are becoming discouraged with what they see happening around the world, I have watched with pride as passionate, determined young people are actively promoting equality. It has reminded me of a poem ('This Room') from the brilliant Imtiaz Dharker. She writes:

*"This is the time and place
to be alive:
when the daily furniture of our lives
stirs, when the improbable arrives."*

At the time of writing we are just weeks away from our first Equality Week, and staff and students are already talking about the developments they can make in next year's programme. Too often, perhaps, we hope that student leadership will allow the plans staff have to be put in place. This project feels much truer to real student voice: where engaged students come to us with their initiatives, help us to understand how their school experience can be enriched, and sustain the vision and energy to impact the whole school community. This is the improbable arriving and it is definitely stirring the daily furniture of our lives. But the journey is as important as the destination, and this has been a learning opportunity beyond any I have been part of previously. We would love more people to be part of this journey.

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How satisfied are teachers?

Kent M Blakeney shares the results of a test pilot survey of 'overseas' teachers

School satisfaction or climate surveys are common in overseas schools. There are many reasons for collecting data on parents, students, and teachers. Administrators and boards use the results for a variety of reasons such as developing a strategic plan, reporting findings in their annual reports, and accreditation self-studies. In my experience, the implementation, analysis, and reporting have run the gamut from very effective and useful tools used to make real change to poorly implemented general surveys that lead to misinformation and possibly do more harm than good. As such, "The General" Overseas School Survey was developed over several years to address some of the issues commonly found in school surveys. A test-pilot was conducted in late November and early December of 2016 with 104 teachers around the world. The results below show some of the highlights of the survey.

Who took the survey?

Here is what a teacher would look like based on the mode (most common response) from each of the demographic statements. You would live in Europe (31.4%), be married or single (both have 47.1% of the responses), female (73%), expat (96%), no children (65.3%), teach pre-K through 5 (57.1%), have been teaching for 11-15 years (29.4%), but only have 1-3 years at your current school (62.4%), have to commit to next year before December (39.2%), have a good benefits package (42.9%), make between \$50,000 and \$59,999 after local taxes (32.7%), save less than 10% of your salary (26.5%), and get paid in the local currency (47.1%).

The results

The survey was conducted using 41 statements across eight categories. For each statement, teachers were asked to rate

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on a 5 point Likert scale how much they agreed with the statement. Once the data were collected, the responses were categorized as follows; strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5).

When aggregating all the responses, teacher agreement fell somewhere between neutral and agree (3.61). Teachers agreed most with the statements from the category of Instruction (3.81) and least with Leadership (3.40).

The Top Five

Below, the five highest and lowest responses from the survey using the mean (average) are reported. After each statement, the mean and teacher comments are presented.

1. **Students are safe at school.** (4.29) No pertinent comments
2. **Students are generally happy.** (4.16) "Students are fabulous!" "Yes, overall I like the school – the head of school is useless, over-sensitive and insecure, but that's his problem ... the school is fantastic. Amazing kids, great colleagues and some good on-campus facilities."
3. **I have had good experiences when directly contacting the parents of my students.** (4.07) "The communication with parents, with the dawn of whatsapp, has almost been too much. Parents expect to be able to contact us at all hours in an entirely too casual manner."
4. **My students will be ready for the next grade at the end of this school year.** (3.99) No pertinent comments
5. **I am happy with the academic progress of the students I teach.** (3.96) No pertinent comments

The Bottom Five

1. **Children with special needs are supported.** (3.13) "If a head of school does not understand the requirements of students, they will never be able to get the appropriate support." "Our learning support department is not large enough to support all our learning support needs."
2. **Students know how to conduct research.** (3.15) "Teachers don't know how to do research, or to write." "As a math teacher my students do not tend to do any research – therefore how can I accurately assess whether students know how to do research unless they are doing it in my class?"
3. **Students get an appropriate amount of homework each night.** (3.24) "These kids are overloaded, 6 days a week, 4–6 hours of homework a night, imbalance in life as little time for sport, music, dance, and socialisation and family time." "The students have too much homework."
4. **The Board of Directors is effective in managing the school.** (3.27) "The board meddles way too much. The school pays for board training which seems to do absolutely no good." "Leadership is actually fantastic but our board of directors is very 'hands off' and relies completely on the advice and decisions of the CFO – who has no education experience."
5. **The school's English as a Second Language (ESL) program successfully prepares students for instruction in English.** (3.26) "Transition of new students not good." "The school accepts students

who have no English at all in the elementary program. We do have local assistants to help but the idea is that they need to know some English before coming to this school. Students are supposed to be given an assessment before they enter but money trumps language so it is quite difficult to teach when students have no English whatsoever. The middle and high school have no assistants yet there are students who don't know English at all. There is a pull-out EAL class but then they really don't get to learn the content from their other classes."

Significant differences

After analyzing the data responses, an effort was made to dive deeper to see what separated teachers. This was done by looking for statistically significant differences across the statements between two groups of responses. Few differences were found when looking at gender (2 of 41 statements), benefits package (3), and marital status (4). A larger number of significant differences were found across the statements when comparing years at school (7), and total number of years teaching (9). There were many significant differences in three demographic areas; children at school (10), salary (11), and potential savings (14).

Next steps

Four areas of the results stand out for further exploration. First, there is a need to expand the survey to include not only teachers, but parents and students. Surveys have been developed with the same statements, but different wording to reflect each specific stakeholder group. Second, further analysis of different regions of the world would be helpful. More than two-thirds of the responses from this survey were from teachers in Europe and South East Asia. Third, further study on salary, benefits, and saving potential is needed. With so many significant differences in salary and savings potential, a qualitative study to find out how much this affects the results is warranted. Finally, it would be interesting to analyze trends over time by conducting the survey again in the future to see if there are any significant differences over time.

Conclusions

There are many limitations of this analysis that should be noted. While the responses are believed to be from teachers, they were not verified. Several well-known overseas teacher Facebook groups were used to solicit responses. The analysis methods used only give us a general idea, rather than fixed answers on teacher satisfaction. Furthermore, the number of responses is too few to apply the data to thousands of international schools around the world.

Since completing the survey, many more iterations have been made with some notable changes. For example the word "happy" has been changed to "satisfied." As well a new category of statements has been added to include the Mission Statement.

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IWA NanjingLeanIn teaches Scratch programming to primary school students and launches a global competition with students from Jersey Connects Girls IWA Club.

Life-changing experiences at the heart of a global female empowerment network

Elli Heyes and Rachel Hayden give an update on the work of the International Women's Academy

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that empower the less privileged members of society. Students in schools and universities demonstrate leadership, creativity and entrepreneurial skills by connecting to their underprivileged peers across the globe. IWA club members develop the skills necessary to take their place as leaders of business, government and community.

Although primarily a network of clubs and projects run by students, the results are worthy of any large international agency. In Thailand, an IWA club based at the British International School, Phuket works to support girls in an orphanage in Kerala, India. During one visit, club members identified a talented young student as an ideal candidate

Time for Trees IWA Project offsets carbon emissions in Jersey by planting mango trees at the Crossover IWA Club in Ghana.



to attend their school, which includes boarding facilities. After much due diligence and persuasion, they succeeded in overcoming many obstacles and the young girl was admitted to the school in January 2017. She is 12 years old and has already shown signs of immense potential.

A group of schools in India, each with an IWA club, work on their own individual projects but as part of a local team. These schools have been very active in supporting their local community in different ways such as self-defence classes for girls at the school, a presentation on feminine hygiene and respect for women. Members of IWA start to form connections across the world collaborating on joint projects. For instance, JCG IWA from Jersey recently worked with IWA YCIS, in Shanghai, to jointly fund a student from the Crossover IWA (CIWA) Club Ghana to attend university. International connections, empowering the less privileged.

Projects can take any form, with creativity being at the heart of what we do. The Time for Trees project plants mango trees in CIWA Ghana to offset carbon emissions in Jersey while also offering a food source and potential business for students there. Additionally, thanks to fundraising activities of IWA YCIS, the students of CIWA Club in Ghana were given modern computer facilities to set up a new computer room, enabling them to link to all the IWA computer-based projects.

IWA is run by young female leaders like ourselves. We work

alongside three other global ambassadors to oversee and mentor IWA clubs around the world, ranging from China to Ghana to Barcelona. As we all have experience of running our own IWA projects, whether that be running a global female engineering competition, running a summer programme in central China or raising money to fund scholarships, we have all learned from the experiences we have had and aim to pass on this knowledge to the current IWA clubs.

We have all learned so much from being part of IWA. It has allowed us to think creatively and to lead projects that many would have deemed too ambitious for students to undertake. It has given us the opportunity to develop our own leadership and business skills, while at the same time helping those less fortunate than ourselves and giving them the opportunities that many of us take for granted.

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Global Citizenship Education and the Crises of Multiculturalism:

Comparative Perspectives

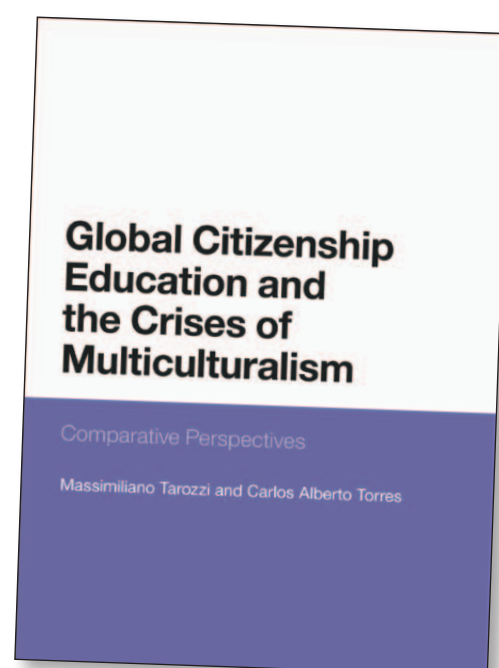
by Massimiliano Tarozzi and Carlos Alberto Torres
 London: Bloomsbury Academic (2016)
 Reviewed by Caroline Ferguson

This book focuses on an important and timely investigation that addresses an uncomfortable realisation that we have been reluctant to acknowledge. Policies of multiculturalism and interculturalism are in crisis. Multiculturalism, an approach applied mostly in North America, can overemphasise difference between cultures, while interculturalism, the official line in Europe, implies cultural dialogue but is politically limited and inconsistent. The authors, looking comparatively at the two policies, argue that we need an updated paradigm to underpin our new global diversity. Furthermore, we need to bring social justice and equality into the discourse of how we live together with different cultures.

The thorough theoretical analysis in this book reminds us that there is hope. Notions of belonging, citizenship and identity have always been sites of struggle. Yet we have work to do. Social disorder is serious, and education plays a crucial role in the transformative process. Tarozzi and Torres argue that a planetary citizenship, a democratic model of Global Citizenship Education based on human rights and social justice, can be a solution to our current predicament. For educators, this book is valuable for reflecting on why we teach. By considering the broader picture of political, economic and social forces, it can challenge our accepted perspectives of diversity, culture and democracy in international schools today.

Tarozzi and Torres state that there is a void in how education is responding to the reality of modern diversity and contemporary cultural politics. We have a political climate where right wing populism is feeding on feelings of threatened cultural identity. The global economy places power beyond the nation state, but nation states are where we expect our rights to be protected. The shifting balance of local and global relationships, and the flexible nature of cultural community, has resulted in a re-evaluation of citizenship.

In the context of widespread and growing inequality the authors illustrate the current complex tensions, from a



variety of mainly western theoretical angles, and the inability of our traditional concepts to understand them. Reading this book as international educators, we can appreciate the evaluation of contemporary political and social thought, and the impact of international events that have affected our local communities. It makes us acutely aware of the responsibility of education to work for social harmony.

Human migration is at the centre of the book's debate about how we can live together. Tarozzi and Torres view the immigrant as the quintessential lived expression of the current social confusion. The many experiences within the term 'immigrant' are not fully explored in the book. However, the migrant is presented as a symbol – a border crosser with unclear citizenship rights, a subject of globalisation yet often blocked where other capital moves freely, an 'other', and part of a phenomenon of cultural hybridisation – particularly evident in second and third generation immigrants.

This highlights a central claim in the argument for a new practical theory of education for diversity and democratic citizenship; culture is not fixed and identity is complex. Tarozzi and Torres state that we are all cultural hybrids. This is relevant to our experience in international schools, where we

In the context of widespread and growing inequality the authors illustrate the current complex tensions, from a variety of mainly western theoretical angles, and the inability of our traditional concepts to understand them.

see the relational aspect of identity. It shows the restriction of some versions of multiculturalism, which lean to essentialist, stereotyped understandings of particular cultures. Global Citizenship Education can support our mix of multiple mobile cultural identities.

The model of Global Citizenship Education proposed here is pragmatic and critical. It is argued that despite global citizenship being out of fashion, we must still push for inclusion beyond national borders. The book probes key theories of the policy including social justice, democracy, and diversity, drawing on the work of Paulo Freire to connect these with education. Furthermore, Tarozzi and Torres challenge the traditional expressions of citizenship founded on western white male political philosophy. In their description of global citizenship is a useful framework for active participation outside of our nations. Cosmopolitan democracy allows us

to have a political voice irrespective of where we are located.

Global Citizenship Education and the Crises of Multiculturalism is a welcome contribution to the discussion about how we can live together and get along in diversity. With more comparative inquiry and commitment to a global perspective, we can move through the current deadlock of multicultural education policy. Respecting the universal principles of human rights, embracing diversity and difference with a clear aim of equity is a positive direction for social unity.

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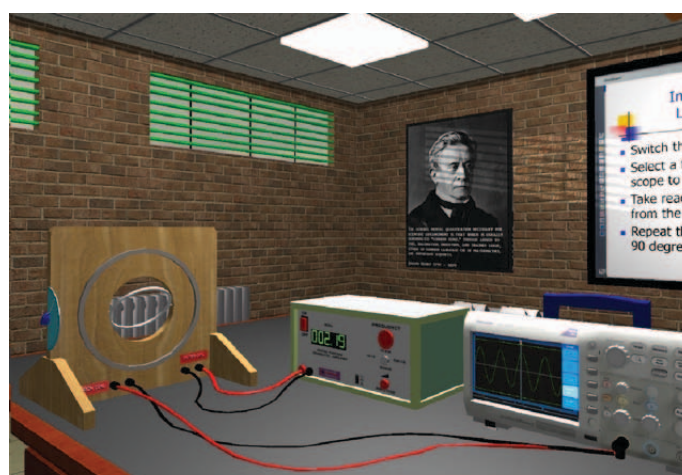


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Governance in International Schools

by Adele Hodgson and Matthew Chuck
(eds) (2nd edition)
SRA Books, Bristol (2015)
Reviewed by Michael Fertig

Debates about the nature of international schools abound (Bunnell et al, 2016) but, however they are defined, their enormous growth over recent years is undeniable. This, together with the likelihood of there being around 11,000 such schools by 2022 with a total student population of about 6 million, makes this new edition of the 2005 publication *Governance in International Schools* extremely timely. The book is part of the *Effective International Schools* series commissioned by ECIS, and is made up of eleven chapters, each written by an author with a hinterland of significant experience in the field of international school governance.

The introductory chapter by Adele Hodgson carefully adumbrates the key issues surrounding the concept of 'governance', making the point early on that 'We do not advocate in this book one point of view or another, but try to present strategies for board members and heads to consider' (pp 19-20). Given this caveat, the authors do offer a general definition of governance as 'the way in which organisations are directed, controlled and led' (p 20). Readers will find this all-embracing approach encouraging, given the increasingly varied nature of international schools and the significant impact that local contexts have upon the nature of international school organisation and practice.

The remaining chapters focus upon the relationships between the board and various stakeholders, and the implications these have for the governance of international schools. An early chapter on 'The board and school ownership' by Matthew Chuck identifies the major changes that have taken place in this area, making use of data from ISC Research which, in 2013, identified a total of 264 school groups (defined as operating two or more schools), and the implications that this mode of operation has, for example, in the area of institutional leadership and for the activities of board members. Central to the arguments in this chapter is an idea permeating this book, that 'at all times boards should think strategically and not operationally' (p 31), with day-to-day operational activities being left to those 'on the ground'.

This notion merges effectively into the succeeding chapter on 'The board and the head of school', written by Don Vinge on the basis of 40 years working with boards or serving as a board member. The author identifies an issue with board members that goes beyond international schools and that aligns with recent thinking related to governing bodies in state-funded systems (see, eg, Connolly et al, 2017; James, 2014): 'that most board members have not been systematically prepared for their roles' (p 35). The imperative of training for board members is strongly signalled and



the chapter also provides some valuable signposting as to the issues involved in building an effective working partnership between board and head of school. Readers will find especially helpful the checklists provided (on, eg, pp 38-39).

Valuable insights into the importance of strategic thinking at board level are provided in the chapter on 'The board and strategic planning', also by Chuck. Here the nature of strategic planning is first identified as 'a systematic method that assesses how the world will change and how the school will be affected' (p 47) and is then itemised in terms of the critical points in this planning process and the roles of key stakeholders as the process unfolds. The argument for the keystone nature of strategic planning within the edifice of international school governance is well made, though school leaders and board members might be permitted a wry smile at the notion that they can, with any degree of certainty, assess 'how the world will change' – following the recent Brexit vote in the UK and the election of President Trump in the USA!

Further chapters cover areas including the board and communications, issues related to crisis management and conflict, and a focused exploration of the evaluation of the performance and progress of the board (Adele Hodgson). The importance of data and evidence is picked up by Hodgson in this chapter, with an emphasis upon how important it is that 'a strategic board constantly reflects on whether their strategic plan and their actions are in line with the vision, mission and values of the school' (p 103). The author stresses that 'this reflection can only be articulated into positive and meaningful data if there are ongoing evaluations of progress and behaviour' (p 103). International school board members

The various chapters offer a detailed checklist of items that should form the basis of board agenda and actions.

and school leaders will also be aware of the significance placed upon this issue within the accreditation process, as seen, for example, in the recent Council of International Schools Framework for the Evaluation and International Accreditation of Schools (2016), where one of the Guided Development Questions for the Governance, Leadership and Ownership Domain asks: 'Does the school have a formal process by which the quality of governance and leadership is evaluated?' (CIS, 2016, p 7).

This example illustrates the value of this book for international school practitioners. Governing board members, in particular, will find its extensive coverage of the key issues and demands facing those who seek governance positions in international schools extremely useful. The various chapters offer a detailed checklist of items that should form the basis of board agenda and actions wherever the international

school is located. Postgraduate students will also find the book's coverage valuable, although the growing number of international school teachers and leaders following Masters and Doctoral level programmes might have some slight disappointment in that five of the eleven chapters contain no references or links to professional and/or research studies. Given the burgeoning interest in these issues emanating both from the increase in international school numbers and from the growth in new types of international school organisation, it is to be hoped that the next edition of the book will embrace this growing body of research.

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