

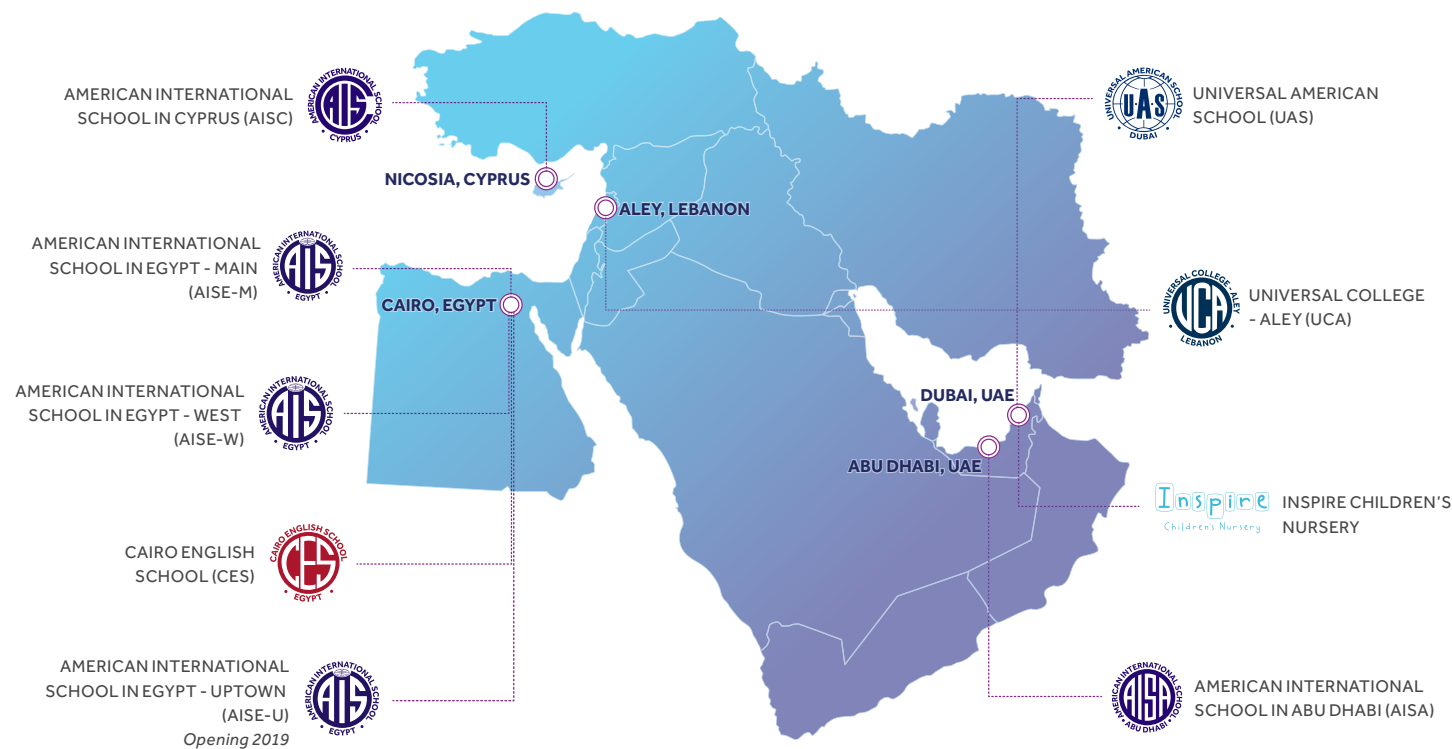
STRIDES

The official newsletter of  **Esol Education**

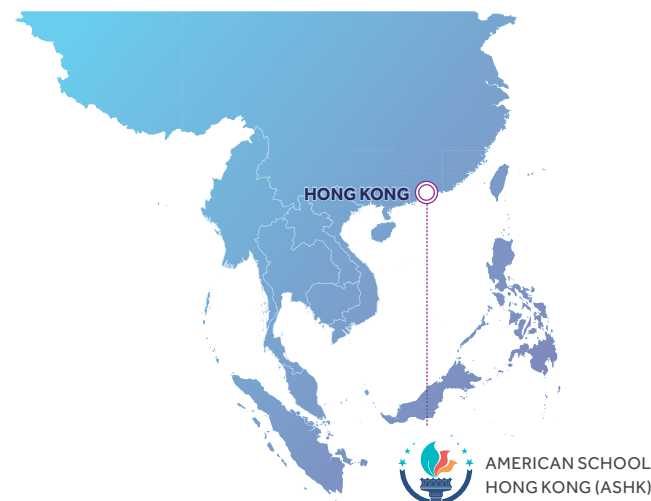
A VIBRANT FUTURE

Esol Education eyes GCC growth with
two new schools in Dubai and Bahrain

MIDDLE EAST & MEDITERRANEAN



EAST ASIA



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STRIDES

The official newsletter of Esol Education – ISSUE 6 | Spring 2017

STRIDES is published twice a year by Esol Education for a wide internal and external readership, including our students, parents and teachers. This publication covers news and developments across the organization and its schools in the Middle East and Mediterranean. Since 1976, Esol Education has specialized in providing exceptional international K-12 education. With a strong focus on educational excellence, Esol schools enjoy the benefits of experienced leadership and management, superlative facilities, and caring and dedicated teachers.

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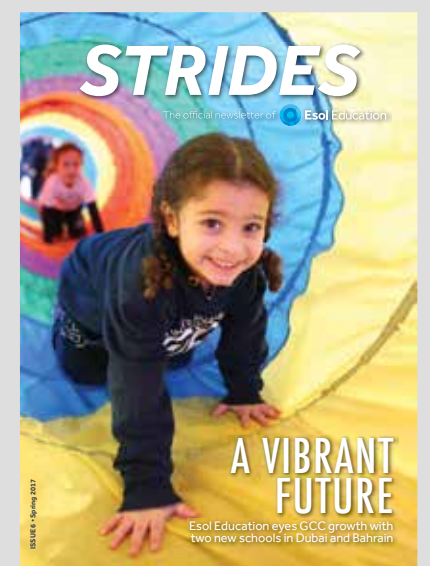
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SOARING AHEAD

It is with immense pride that we present our Spring 2017 issue of *Strides*, bringing you exciting news of Esol Education's growth in Dubai and Bahrain, with the launch of two new schools, each bearing the hallmark of Esol's outstanding educational standards. 40 years ago, when Mr. Walid Abushakra established our first school, little would he have known that his path would see the formation of a family of international schools across the world from Cyprus to Hong Kong. Turn to our cover story to learn more about the plans for our new schools!

This issue also unveils a brand new layout for *Strides*, designed to bring our readers not just the latest happenings from our schools, but also in-depth coverage of teaching and learning at Esol schools, both inside classrooms and beyond. Each edition will also feature interviews, opinions and commentary on the latest issues in education from our panel of school leaders and administrators.

Our "In-Class" section focuses on two innovative teaching techniques at American International School in Egypt – West Campus (AISE-W) and American International School in Cyprus (AISC). Learn about how teachers at AISE-W are collaboratively using a "wax museum" concept as an immersive approach to teaching complex subject matter. At AISC, reading becomes fun, and creative, through the "Snap It" initiative.

"Learning Unlimited" takes us on a journey to Kenya with Universal American School's (UAS) Million Solar Stars team, where we hear about their amazing initiative to raise awareness about solar energy, as well as provide solar lights to students in developing nations, all while teaching participating students all about the principles of solar power. We hear there may be a solar panel in the works at UAS!

We're "Meeting Minds" with Bill Delbrugge, Director at American International School in Egypt – Main Campus (AISE-M), as he talks about his journey to Egypt and his aspirations for his students. A new feature, "Wired with Dr. Joseph," tackles the latest in Edtech, and this issue examines the educational potential of augmented reality and virtual reality in classrooms. In our "Unexplored" section, we travel through our host countries looking for hidden gems, and here we present you Luxor in her full magnificence. Our "Last Word" op-ed contributor is Dr. Michelle Kleiss, Director at American International School in Cyprus, who airs her views on global-mindedness being one of the highest missions of international schools.

We do hope you enjoy reading this issue, and wish you all a pleasant and restful summer ahead!

Sincerely,
Esol Education Team

DESTINATION STANFORD

After a successful pilot program at the American International School in Cyprus in 2016, Esol Education is set to send its first inter-school cohort, comprising 25 students from Cyprus, UAE and Egypt, to attend the Stanford Pre-collegiate International Institutes, a prestigious two-week residential program at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. After a round of applications and careful screening by leadership and counselors across Esol schools, successful candidates were invited to attend the program, which includes the opportunity to experience university life at Stanford, with advanced content, skills development courses, and field trips. The courses range from sciences and engineering to writing and humanities, and focus on concepts such as creativity, leadership, design-thinking, problem-solving, and communication. Held from August 8 to 20, the trip will be chaperoned by experienced educators from Esol schools, and is much anticipated by all the students attending the program.



NWEA MAP TRAINING EVENTS

The 2016-2017 academic year brought with it the successful commencement of Esol Education's partnership with the North West Evaluation Association (NWEA), which offers Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) workshops and training events for teachers at regional schools in Cairo, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The training sessions enable teachers to apply the data generated from MAP tests, to help understand where students are in their learning journeys, and differentiate teaching to help each student improve. After the training, teachers are able to use the information on the "Class Reports" to analyze the strengths and areas for improvement for their classes and to compare it with other classes in their school's grade level to see if there are areas for collaborative planning. They are also able to use the "Class Breakdown Report" and

the "Learning Continuum" to differentiate for the readiness levels in the topics within each subject tested. Additionally, teachers can use the "Student Progress Report" and the "Student Goal Setting Worksheet" to share attainment and progress data with students and parents. Led by Esol Education trainers who are NWEA-certified, training events are already being scheduled for Fall 2017. For more information, or to attend a training event, email info@esoleducation.com.

DR. GILBERT BROWN HONORED WITH WALID ABUSHAKRA AWARD 2017

This February, we had the pleasure of recognizing Dr. Gilbert Brown with the 2017 Walid Abushakra Award for Impact on International Education at the annual conference of the Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE). The fifth recipient of the award, Dr. Brown is a stalwart of international education, having served as the Headmaster of the American School of Rio de Janeiro from 1963 to 1987, the vice president and president of the AAIE and the president of the Association of American Schools in South America (AASSA), a consultant to over 90 international school boards across the world - just a few of the positions he has held over his prolific career. An influential thinker, Dr. Brown has authored several books and publications on development, management and leadership in American international education, as well as four novels, all published between 2014 and 2016. In his acceptance speech, Dr. Brown discussed the merits of public education, attributing his success to the wide-ranging opportunities he was given as the recipient of a free college education in the State of New York in the 1950s and '60s. Dr. Brown chose to dedicate the US\$5000 award grant to his alma mater, the SUNY Cortland.



AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN ABU DHABI (AISA)

MISSION: SPACE

Seventeen high school students from Grades 9-11 from AISA attended a weeklong Space Camp at the US Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Students participated in simulation experiences, rocket building, and lab experiments and visited the space museum. Much of their time was spent in astronaut training for a simulated Space Mission to Mars. The busy week ended with a graduation ceremony where the AISA cohort was awarded the Commander's Cup for the most overall points of any team at Space Camp that week.



PASSION FOR TRASHION

The Grade 1 unit on resources at AISA came to an exciting conclusion with a "trashion show" where each student was required to create an outfit using trash. During Art, students learned techniques for combining materials such as weaving, rope making and paper bead making. Teachers scaffolded the project by teaching mini-lessons on how to make newspaper hats and ponchos. Students were given time over the course of a week, so they could reflect and collect specific trash items. Brittney Hansen, Grade 1 Teacher shared, "The students showed enthusiasm and independence due to the artistic freedom and open-ended work periods during the project. Some of our favorite creations included a dress made from a gift bag, trash bag superhero capes, a newspaper pleated skirt, and gloves from old socks!" The students showed off their creations by walking the "trashion ramp" during assembly.

A TALE AS OLD AS TIME

In March, Grade 4 and 5 AISA students staged the seventh annual Elementary Musical, a lavish performance of Disney's Beauty and the Beast Jr., with amazing sets, detailed props, and stunning costumes. A cast of dedicated teachers and students spent three, four and, sometimes, five days a week in preparation for the big show. For the first time ever, the cast performed three shows – two matinees and an evening showing – for a total of almost 1,000 audience members! Another first was that the lead female role of Belle was played by an Emirati student. It was an exhilarating experience for all involved, and for several students, it was their first time on stage.



UNIVERSAL AMERICAN SCHOOL (UAS)

TASTY TREATS

Understanding the importance of helping children make responsible, healthy food choices from a young age, UAS Physician, Dr. Amna Butt and KG2 Teacher, Tolu Daramola, put into action "Tasty Treats," an initiative aimed at introducing UAS early childhood students to delicious, healthy snacks. With the invaluable help of Chef Nasser and Hatem in the school cafeteria, snacks were prepared across the academic year and were served to Pre-K to Grade 1 students during their morning breaks. Dr. Butt created a demo video, which was shown to students prior to serving them the treats. Students were introduced to four delicious, freshly prepared snacks, which were free of any additives, processed sugars and saturated fats, with alternative recipes for children with food allergies or special dietary requirements. On the menu were banana and date milkshakes, cucumber and labneh sandwiches on whole wheat bread, mango strawberry smoothies, and on the eve of Ramadan, students will be served Rainbow Fruity Rockets (fruit kebabs). The snacks are simple to prepare, delicious to eat and best of all, healthy. Judging by the children's response, the treats went down a treat!

POWERFUL POETRY

Poetry has been a topic of amusement, enjoyment, and to some students, a subject of some dislike and disdain. It seems that poetry is something about which every student has an opinion, and often, it can be negative. Tom Zart, a poet who is self-proclaimed as the "most published on the web" writes,

*"Poetry is the lighthouse of life
Guiding the lost from a stormy sea.
Without it's presence darkness prevails
Keeping us from all we can be."*

With this in mind, UAS librarians, Leslie Baker and Rhonda Lesperance, energized the entire school with a massive push for poetry appreciation. Along with a team of dedicated poetry enthusiasts, they compiled a list of poems that were shared throughout the school during the month of April.

The poems, which ranged from serious and reflective topics to fun and amusing themes, were read aloud in the libraries, during announcements and at open mic opportunities. Each day there was a poem for both older and younger student audiences. Through this process, our students at UAS have come to appreciate the power of the spoken word in poetry form, and enjoy the unique nature of poetry as a form of art and communications. As Mr. Zart puts in in the final stanza of his poem,

*"Always remember the power of poetry
Is used by both heaven and hell.
It's up to us to choose our pleasure
As poetry remains alive and well."*



ROBOTS RULE

On Saturday 29 April, the UAS Scorpions Robotics Team, composed of Mahdi Abdul-Jalil, Abdel-Rahman Al-Khawas, Zhengyi Gen, Zhishang Zhang and Amir Heidary, traveled to Horizon International School to compete in the annual national rounds of the World Education Robotics Competition (WER). "The competition was composed of many different tasks, which tested students in different areas, such as creativity, presentation skills and teamwork," shared Mahdi. "We dedicated our lunch hours for weeks, practicing building robots that completed the six predetermined tasks, as well as on a presentation about the Industrial Revolution," he added. Finally, the students' outstanding performance saw their hard work and commitment to this project pay off as they secured 390 points, claiming a second place victory for the team!

INSPIRE CHILDREN'S NURSERY

MINI MASTERS

This Spring, Inspire Children's Nursery welcomed the Mini Master's Art Camp, influenced by master artists from around the world. Little budding artists had immense fun exploring, learning and investigating during daily multi-arts and design workshops, covering expressive visual art, 3D design and wearable art. Apart from interactive hands-on workshops, children enjoyed investigative art-based story telling and puppetry sessions as well as music, movement and dance classes all themed around the chosen artist of the day. From Warhol's pop-art themed screen prints, Murakami's bright colorful flowers to Van Gogh's iconic sunflowers art, children drew inspiration from modern masters, and the camp culminated in a colorful expressive arts gallery and exhibition.

GAME, SET, MATCH

Inspire Children's Nursery places huge value on the integration of daily physical activity to help children develop positive attitudes to exercise in early childhood, with a view to carrying these on to adulthood. In addition to their extensive sports enrichment program that includes Monkeynastix, Soccer Starz, Ballet and Yoga, they have added a 'Sport of the Month' program, where they focus on individual sports skills. And what better sport to start with, than tennis! The fun interactive group sessions have been helping the children build on their motor skills, developing muscles, bones and joints, increasing their strength, self-confidence and concentration skills, all whilst having lots of fun together!



STEM IN THE EARLY YEARS

A question frequently asked by parents is: what is STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.) and what age can children start? The Early Years team at Inspire believes that they just can't start soon enough! Over the past term the nursery has integrated interactive, hands-on STEM-based learning sessions into their daily timetables from toddler classes, right up to the four-year-olds. For example, set around the core topic of "all about energy," little scientists enjoyed investigative trips into the nursery's nature garden this spring, which was in full growth with vegetables and flowers. They experimented with seeds being planted indoors without light or water, and outside with fresh air and sunshine, learning that all plants, flowers and trees require energy from the sun to grow and flourish. After a week of charting growth patterns in both scenarios, we had some very surprised little faces when they discovered that plants cannot grow without the amazing energy from the sun!

AMERICAN SCHOOL HONG KONG (ASHK)

A BOOK WITH A PURPOSE

Tom the Turtle sees a plastic bag floating in the ocean, and promptly eats it, mistaking it for a yummy jellyfish. The next day, James, who threw the bag into the ocean, returns to the beach to find little Tom in need of help. James saves the turtle by pulling the plastic bag gently from his mouth. Realization dawns on the boy, and he pledges to raise awareness about marine conservation. This children's book, The Tale of Tom The Turtle, is beautifully written and illustrated by ASHK third grader, Brian King Lun Kan, who hopes to spread ecological awareness and teach everyone about caring for our environment. "I felt sad when I learned about how people nowadays keep damaging the environment; I wish to remind everyone that we should do something to protect the environment for our future!" says Brian, who painstakingly illustrated the entire book with his drawings. "First I needed to picture all the parts of my story in my mind, and then I started to sketch the story board. After deciding how many pictures I needed to draw, I started to draft the main character. When all the drafts had been done, I had to re-sketch and enlarge them all on the big pieces of art paper one by one with my pencil. Next, I had to paint them and the final step was to outline the illustrations." Brian has dedicated all the proceeds from the Hong Kong sales of his book to Greenpeace, to assist them with their conservation efforts. Well done, Brian, we're proud of you!



MOVING ON UP

Following an extensive design and retrofit project, ASHK opened in August 2016 with 108 students, achieving many milestones in its first year of operation. The school offers a holistic program, where excellence in the academic, creative, physical and personal development domains is celebrated. Through its STEAM program, ASHK is building a culture of creativity and innovation, and is regarded by informed observers as having a strong foundation and a bright future within Hong Kong's crowded international school landscape. This April, the gymnasium was opened, following a conversion from a cavernous multi-purpose facility into a bright state-of-the-art PE and Sports Center. As the school grows, ASHK will enter teams in the 33-member strong International School Sports Federation of Hong Kong (ISSFHK).

The research is quite clear with respect to the characteristics of successful schools: high standards and expectations; effective leadership; frequent monitoring of teaching and learning; focused professional development; high levels of collaboration; and high levels of community and parent involvement. In addition, there is a body of evidence, which indicates that school climate is a critical factor for school success, associated with higher academic achievement and healthy behavioral outcomes for students. ASHK embraces the challenge and is committed to building a pre-eminent school. With an exciting new campus and staff who are committed to linking their programs to research-based success factors, we are forming a school climate that is shaped around a strong sense of community.

BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

The Hong Kong Battle of the Books is in its 17th year, created to encourage students to read through a fun competitive trivia quiz format. Book lists are released every year with practice questions for schools to share with students. One would think there could be nothing new with the long-running program. However ASHK is leveraging every aspect to meet the learning needs and diverse interests of its student body. How? By creating teams within the school and incorporating one of the four book lists on offer to match reading levels. ASHK's very first friendly battle versus neighboring Law Ting Pong Secondary School took place on May 5th. Who knows? Perhaps ASHK will battle another Esol Education school over Skype in the near future! Google "Hong Kong Battle of the Books," have a look, and get in touch so we can plan for academic year 2017-2018!



AMERICAN SCHOOL IN EGYPT-MAIN (AISE-M)

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

The AIS Panther Paper is an electronic monthly newspaper initiated by one of AISE-M's middle school students in January 2017. This paper has provided an opportunity for students to exercise their love of research and writing while opening a new channel of communication for them with the rest of the middle school body, including parents. Through their articles, students are given voice to express themselves freely, yet professionally. They choose the topics according to their interests, and report on all the activities that take place on campus, as well as interview visitors and teachers who have made significant contributions to our learning and growth as a school. Students also write about the latest technological updates, our country's current events and sports updates, in addition to some health and studying tips. Being completely lead and maintained by students, it is really hard to hide that panther pride! Visit us: <https://aispantherpaper.wordpress.com>

AQUAPONICS AT AIS

Mr. Stephen Ritz, from the famed Green Bronx Machine, recently made his second trip to AISE-M from New York City. The students showed him the progress of their rooftop garden and shared plans for the school's aquaponics system, which will also include the construction of some plant towers. He was impressed by the team's ambition and the overall progress and shared some tips



on how they can proceed. AISE-M's aquaponics system will use fish waste as a food supply to grow vegetables and the finished unit will be able to grow several hundred plants without the use of soil or artificial fertilizers. The students are working towards having an operational system by the summer break so that it can be put to full use during the coming school year.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

Ms. Amira Hussein, Education Program Director at CARE International Foundation, recently visited AISE - M as the school's keynote speaker for its Model UN conference, AISMUN. Ms. Hussein has more than 18 years of experience working with NGOs and Civil Society organizations in Egypt, 12 of which were spent with international organizations such as CARE and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation on both local and regional levels. With a focus on poverty eradication, human rights and women's rights, Ms. Hussein was inspired by a summer course on human rights in her third year at university, which included an internship at an NGO. "This summer was a life changing experience, it gave me insight into what I see myself doing in the future," she shared during an interview with AISE student, Hana Zoheir. Hana

wrote further about the inspiring encounter: "Starting her career at the bottom, Ms. Hussein knew she would encounter many challenges, and would need to be prepared. She got her Masters Degree in International Human Rights Law, and another one in Development Studies. When asked what she thought about our current theme, 'Freedom from Fear,' alongside the debate issues chosen by our presidents, she expressed that we can never be fully free from fear, but we can prepare to the best of our abilities. With Ms. Hussein's words as inspiration, the AISMUN delegates had a productive, thought-provoking, and educational conference. While we did not exit the conference and enter a world free from fear, we did walk away with a better understanding of what we, as the future leaders of Egypt and the world, can do to help create a world of equality, justice, opportunity, and hope."

AMERICAN SCHOOL IN EGYPT-WEST (AISE-W)

A BITE OF THE BIG APPLE

Eleven students from Grades 10 and 11, accompanied by two teachers, left Cairo on March 8 to attend the National High School Model United Nations (NHSMUN) conference. The delegation was the only one from Egypt, and one of three Middle Eastern schools this year. This was the first time AISWMUN had attended NHSMUN, and the team was thrilled to be representing the delegations of Senegal at the Security Council, India in the General Assembly committees and Egypt in the League of Arab States. The opening

ceremony took place in the General Assembly hall of the United Nations building, allowing students a peek inside the venue of some of the most intense international discussions ever held. Preparation for the conference was intense, but the students' effort paid off, performing strongly and representing AISE-W and their respective countries well, with an Honorable Mention in the League of Arab States committee, a Best Speech award in Human Right Commission and presenting to the plenary session of over 800 students from around the world. This was the third international conference for AISWMUN this year, with great performances in Athens, Greece and Dubai prior to New York. Dorra Group generously supported the school's MUN GROUP this year, and AISE-W would like to thank them for their continued support. The team is looking forward to continuing to build on its visit to the heart of the United Nations in the next school year!



LIVING ON THE NILE

What could be more fulfilling—or more life altering—than an adventure halfway around the world? Seeking to live on the edge of one's comfort zone in an unfamiliar culture, searching for likeminded colleagues, growing one's own professional knowledge and experience; these are goals for many who work internationally. But for Sarah Thompson, IB Spanish teacher at AISE - West, the daydream turned into reality, and "profound experiences shape our day-to-day living and change our lives," she writes. "A year ago, after we learned we would be moving to Cairo, my husband Bruce, newly retired from a successful career in construction and facilities management, spent hours studying satellite images of Africa, Cairo and the River Nile. Frequently, he pondered aloud, 'Wouldn't it be amazing to live on a houseboat, ON the Nile?' I could hardly imagine such a scenario."

Decades ago, Bruce and his friend cruised the Caribbean for more than four years, while Sarah lived confined to the shore all her life. As he analyzed Google Maps, he even narrowed down the ideal location of his fantasy, somewhere just off of Gazira Island, fondly referred to around here as Zamalek. Well-known as infinitely interesting, where lovely little neighborhoods, tree-lined streets and multinational flavors make it a frequent destination for Cairenes and expats alike. "Our initial apartment search in August landed us in a new, safe flat with zero view of the sky and zero view of the river," said Sarah. Hearing a random comment in an otherwise typical department meeting, one day, she discovered that her colleague knew a friend with a houseboat apartment for rent. On the Nile. Just off of Zamalek. Ready that week! "A month later, we are watching the sun set and the moon rise. We see the fishermen in the morning mist and the afternoon river taxi with its precious cargo, regular as the ancient waves it sends under our new home."



CAMP OUT

Cynthia Thibault, Pre-K teacher at AISE - West campus, has been the Girl Scouts troop leader at AISE-W for several years. The students conduct a lot of charitable activities (collecting money through bake sales for instance to help people and animals) as well as fun days. On March 31st, Ms. Thibault and chaperones sponsored a fun filled camp out, with tents and sleeping bags, for the girls on our play area. They met during the day and had games, crafts, sports and then it was lights out! A good time was had by all! The Girl Scouts enjoy several campouts every year. AISE-W has dozens of young ladies involved in this wonderful program that promotes skill building and teamwork.

CAIRO ENGLISH SCHOOL (CES) FLIPPED LEARNING

Ally Rector, Year 3 Classroom Teacher at CES has been trialing the use of the "flipped learning" technique in her classroom this year. "I was introduced to this tool, aimed at building learning confidence, after attending a recent professional development course on Effective Differentiation," she said. Ms. Rector uses an app called Explain Everything, which enables her to create and record lessons for students to watch at home. Students are then given the responsibility for their own learning, and are able to watch the whole or parts of the video as many times as they like in their own time. In the classroom they spend time at the beginning of the lesson addressing any questions students have, and reviewing the short activity that they need to complete. "I have found that once students have completed the 'flipped learning', they come to class more eager to learn and participate in lessons. They know what to expect and how to complete activities. I plan to build on this in the coming term through exploring the use of other apps."



TOO EARLY FOR TECH?

There has been much debate, particularly within Early Years settings, that introducing technology at an early age squeezes out the time for traditional play, books, language development etc. Research has shown that a child's earliest social interactions (family, friends, preschool, etc.) determines the quality and speed of their development. According to Ms. Val Awad, head of Early Years at CES, "Tablets and computers are a cultural tool, one of many, which supplement the nurturing expressed through language and human interactions. Just give a class of 4 year olds iPads and listen. You will hear discussion, negotiation, and peer learning that springs to life in abundance. The debate continues but digital technology is most effective when used as a joint experience, with an interested adult using appropriate intervention and support. For Vygotsky (1978), the environment in which children grow up will influence how they think and what they think about, and for John Dewey (1915) 'If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow.'"

CES ANIMATES

When Michael Dixon, Geography Teacher at CES saw the "RSA Animates" version of the famous Dr. Ken Livingston video about changing education paradigms, he thought, "Wouldn't it be great if my students could summarize a topic and animate it in one take?" Inspired by the idea, he turned to his Year 9 Geography IGCSE students, giving them three lessons and the associated independent study time to produce a two-minute hand drawn animation and then a voiceover to explain the process they had drawn. The topic? An Egyptian Geography classic: "The River Nile, from Source to Mouth." He reports that the students took to the task like ducks to water. "They were able to use slow-motion animation, develop video editing skills and do things with iPads that I did not think were possible! On top of that, they really did engage with the process. Have you heard of 'flow'? Well my students were there. They came to my classroom at lunch times, created drafts, re-edited and finalized their work." He found that each group created a video that summarized the topic better than he could possibly imagine. "What happened to that kid who lacks effort and scrapes C-grades? If this was an exam, he would have had an A", and I think this is testament enough to the power of diversification in the classroom."

AMERICAN SCHOOL IN CYPRUS (AISC)

EVERY DROP COUNTS

The Middle School Advisory Program and Student Council at AISC recently kick-started an initiative to address the overuse of water and the importance of drinking clean water every day. In advisory, students learnt about the scarcity of water around the world. They read articles and watched videos about women in developing countries, who spend hours of their day carrying water for their families. This prevents these women and girls from attending school or working to earn money. Many times, the water they carry is contaminated and may make their families sick. All Middle School students surveyed their own water usage by recording their habits over a 48-hour time period and then averaging their daily water usage. In order to better understand how precious water resources are, student engaged in an elementary and Middle School "Water Walk." Groups of students were given garbage pails to fill with water, representing only a fraction of the AISC daily water usage. Students had to carry two, three and four liter bottles around the perimeter of the school before pouring the water into the garbage pails. The water was taken from the AISC pool and returned to the pool after the exercise. Students described the experience as "difficult," and "tiring." In addition to the "Water Walk," the Middle School Student Council is working with the Grohe Company, who heard about our water project, and as a result, wanted to recognize the Middle School project by installing a high-quality water filtration systems that will allow student to quickly fill reusable water-bottles rather than purchase water in disposable bottles.





THE WORLD COMES TO AISC!

With its partnership with 100 Mentors, the students at the American International School of Cyprus have welcomed international experts in a variety of fields right into their classrooms. 100 Mentors is an organization that matches schools with mentors who provide students with opportunities for career and university exploration. AISC students have met with a film producer, a web applications engineer, a molecular biology PhD student, an economist, a World Bank consultant, and many more. They have explored topics such as free trade agreements, IB course selection, university majors, learning from failure, website design, and funding for film projects, just to name a few. AISC also hosted a virtual university fair through 100 Mentors and we are in the process of inviting AISC alumni to join our pool of mentors so that our current students can benefit from the vast experiences of our very own graduates. 100 Mentors has opened up an exciting world to AISC students!

UNIVERSAL COLLEGE-ALEY (UCA) A HABIT OF EXCELLENCE

For the past twelve years UCA's delegates to the Model United Nations have continued a tradition of excellence, achievement and a collection of numerous awards. The UCA MUN program has been under the leadership of Social Studies coordinator Mr. Bassem Akl since its conception. He states, "In addition to holding the title of Secretary General six different times, and representing Lebanon at the United Nations in New York, this year's participating group of delegates has proven to be no exception to our tradition of excellence." The 2016-2017 UCA HS and MS MUN delegates made their teams proud, receiving three Diplomacy Awards and seven Position Paper Awards. Well done team!



UCA WINS MT. LEBANON FUTSAL CHAMPIONSHIP

This year's 2017 UCA Futsal Team (ages 13 and 14) has been crowned the 2017 Mount Lebanon Champions. In his first year at the helm of the UCA Futsal program, Coach Hussein El Lahib, working with Assistant Coach Randa Hamzeh, has developed this year's team into a force to be reckoned with. "This year's team possesses a high degree of talent but they are also well-trained and focused. I believe they are going to be even better in the future." Grade 8ADP student, Amer Ghazal, also shared the same sentiment. "We really understand each other. We don't fight about who gets to play, we're like a family. If we stay together for the next four years we have a really good chance of being the best team in Lebanon!"



TWO NEW SCHOOLS FOR ESOL EDUCATION

Esol Education sets sights on GCC growth with a new school in Dubai and another in Bahrain, opening in the academic years of 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 respectively

Our schools will set new standards in American and international education in Dubai and Bahrain, delivering value for parents who are looking to provide their children with a world-class education and a pathway to leading global universities



TWO NEW SCHOOLS FOR ESOL EDUCATION

Esol Education is pleased to announce the launch of two new schools, one in Dubai and another in Bahrain, opening in the academic years of 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 respectively.


After nearly two years of planning operations and work with local partners, developers and regulatory bodies Esol Education recently received authorization from the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) to establish a new American curriculum school in Dubai. Located near the Al Barari and the Living Legends developments in Dubailand, the new school will be a K-12 American curriculum school, offering an IB diploma option in Grades 11 and 12.

Esol's new school in Bahrain will offer a comprehensive and challenging American educational program modeled on Esol Education's highly successful American schools in Egypt, Cyprus, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Hong Kong.

"Our schools will benefit from Esol Education's 40 years of expertise in K-12 education, and will set new standards in American and international education in Dubai and Bahrain, delivering value for

parents who are looking to provide their children with a world-class education and a pathway to leading global universities," shared Mr. Walid Abushakra, Esol Education's Chairman.

This exciting announcement coincides with the successful completion of the first academic year of American School Hong Kong, launched by Esol Education in 2016, and firmly consolidates the organization's position as the largest operator of international American schools in the world. By 2019, Esol's portfolio will include 11 schools, with further projects under development, including one more new school in Dubai.

"We are proud of our story of long term growth and development, which underscores our commitment and shared passion for educational excellence," added Mr. Abushakra. "We salute our entire team of educational leaders, teacher and support staff members for their dedication to our students' success, not just in academia and industry, but also as mindful, contributing citizens of the world." 

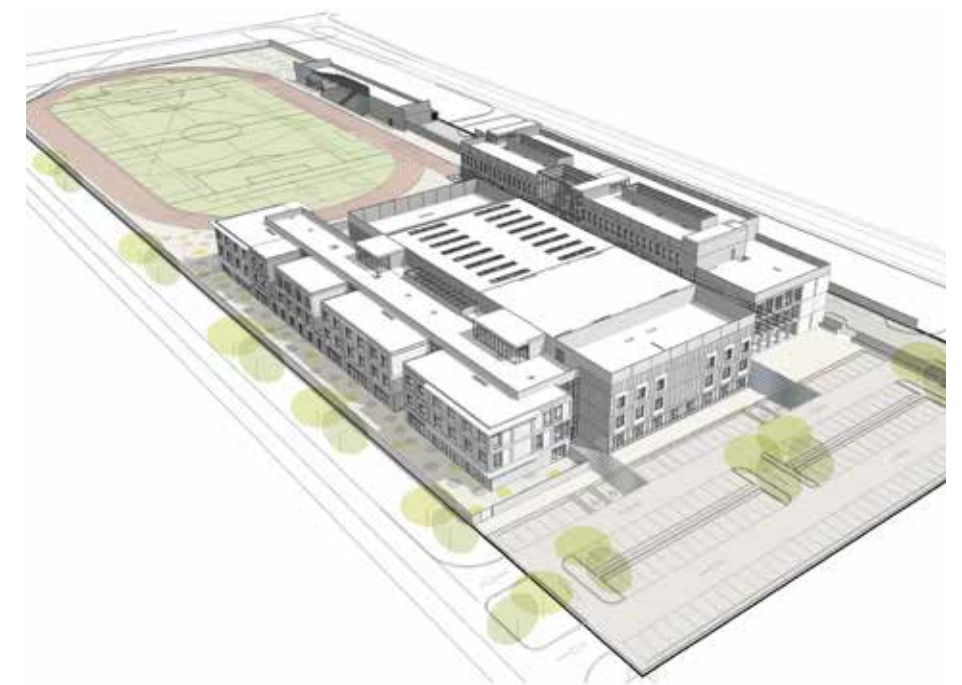




Photo credit: Ms. Kristin Nugent

ACHIEVING A SOLAR FUTURE

A small group of middle school students at the Universal American School demonstrates how a solar future is within reach, and how we all need to pay attention and get involved



Photo credit: Ms. Kristin Nugent

One quiet morning our email inboxes were electrified by a heartwarming message coming to us all the way from Mkamenyi Primary School, located well off the beaten path in Kenya, about one hundred miles away from Mombasa, the nearest city. Shared by our "Week Without Walls" partners, the letter read, "On behalf of our pupils of Mkamenyi Primary School, teachers and parents I wish to express our appreciation to [you] for visiting our school... the visit made a huge impact..."

It was a note from Nicholas Mutui, Head Teacher at the school, sharing the impact of a recent volunteer service visit to his school by Grade 8 students from the Universal American School (UAS). The students had helped renovate the classroom floor, which provided a clean and safe environment for the primary school children. In addition, the group was joined by students from the UAS Million Solar Stars (MSS) initiative, who had worked to raise awareness and funds to power the distribution of 200 solar lights to the students and families there. The goal was to utilize solar lights for science and math lessons and enable kids to read and do homework at night.

"UAS' provision of the 200 solar lights to all our upper grade pupils had a major impact on their academic performance this term... It has made learning very efficient as children now can study and can do homework while at their homes," shared Nicholas, adding, "Within the one month after the distribution of the solar lights, the performance of the pupils at the school has already shown improvement... the solar lights have also lit up their homes!"

The UAS MSS initiative, led by Adam Hall, Grade 8 Science Teacher, is also working to install solar power at Mkamenyi Primary School. "UAS students are helping lead a Million Solar Stars (MSS) initiative to raise awareness and expand solar power to schools in Dubai, Kenya, and around the world. The solar array at Mkamenyi will provide clean energy for the school and power to charge the 50 computers they are expecting soon through a Kenyan government program," shared Adam. "Ultimately, MSS students are interested in helping facilitate additional schools in developed countries to partner with schools in developing countries to support and expand solar light learning."

The MSS project encourages a real hands-on approach by the students involved, providing a platform for them to engage with solar power lessons inside classrooms and on campuses. Learners build solar light models, participate in solar challenges, and design, build and race solar model cars. MSS students practice leadership skills through raising awareness and support for solar power and engage school administrators

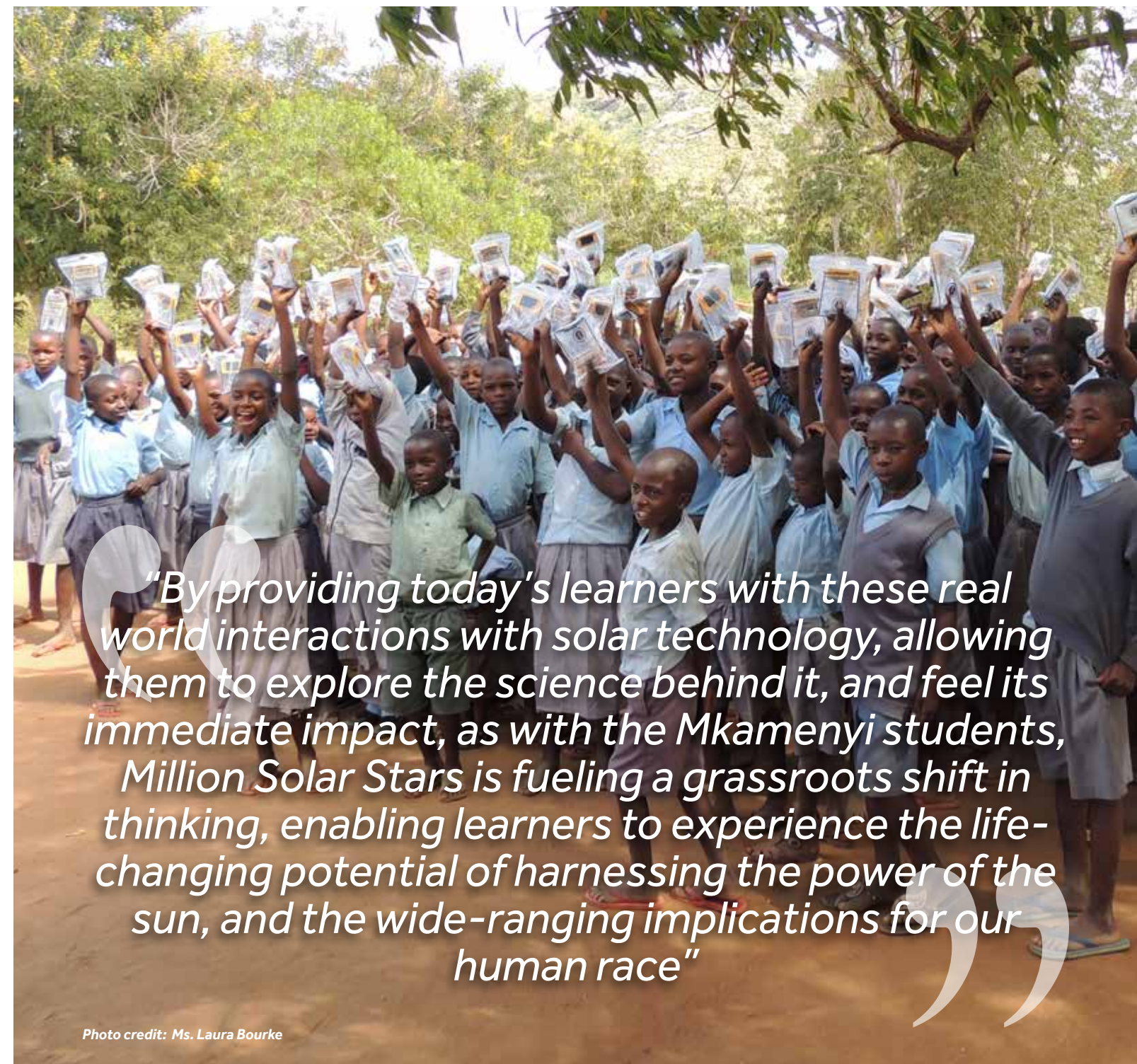
and community members with presentations and multi-media productions. Additionally, students help analyze potential rooftop and ground mounted sites for solar power. MSS students have observed pilot solar array installations at schools in Denver, Colorado, Shanghai, China, and will soon observe a pilot solar array installation at UAS in Dubai. Once the pilot system is up and running, learners study and analyze solar monitoring data with science, math, and business lessons. Students then work with school administrators and community businesses to determine whether large scale solar arrays on their school make educational, environmental, and economic sense. Adam explains, "Million Solar Stars has

had success expanding solar power to schools in Dubai, UAE, Shanghai, China, Denver, Colorado, USA, and Kenya. MSS has gained endorsement from renowned conservationist, Dr. Jane Goodall, Top 10 Finalist for the Global Teacher Prize, Mr. Stephen Ritz, and professional racecar driver Stefan Wilson. We are raising awareness and support to expand solar power at additional schools in the United States, UAE, Africa, China, Central America, and beyond."

With the current energy challenges our world is facing due to the depletion of traditional fuel sources and the negative environmental consequences of their continued use, solar energy is a leading-

edge clean energy solution to powering our world for future generations. By providing today's learners with these real world interactions with solar technology, allowing them to explore the science behind it, and feel its immediate impact, as with the Mkamenyi students, Million Solar Stars is fueling a grassroots shift in thinking, enabling learners to experience the life-changing potential of harnessing the power of the sun, and the wide-ranging implications for our human race. Now, that's how you effect true change.

To learn more, and get involved with your school, visit millionsolarstars.com.



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Photo credit: Ms. Laura Bourke

LIVING MUSEUMS

Project based learning brings history to life at the American International School in Egypt – West Campus

If you have ever tried to engage nine-year-olds with a history lesson from over 200 years ago, you will know from experience that you are going to have to get a little creative, especially if you're nearing the end of the year! Grade 4 teachers at AISE-West had a challenge on their hands with their third term history material: a focus on immigration from Europe to North America. The students were to spend a whole quarter with this theme, learning about New World explorers and the reasons for immigration with push and pull factors.

The teachers worked together to build a cohesive cross-curricular study plan, with activities and projects to encourage deep and active learning. Research tells us that project-based learning experiences can bring subject material alive for students, as it allows them to investigate important ideas, uses inquiry-based methods, is differentiated based on their interests, encourages creativity and critical thinking, and, most importantly, allows students to take ownership of their presentations. Jessica Muonio and Jonathan Menke, both Grade 4 teachers at AISE-West who are stepping into Vice-Principal roles in 2017-2018, told *Strides* more about the unit.

"For our literacy modules, we read books about the topic, such as the historical fiction novel 'Fever 1793.' We also watched videos and conducted virtual field trips to Ellis Island in the computer lab," shared Jessica. "Students researched about the life of a famous immigrant from Europe, learning to differentiate between primary and secondary source material as they conducted research on Ellis Island and immigration."

Two projects helped students literally get up close and personal with the immigrants to learn more about the migration. The first was the Wax Museum project where each student each researched a famous European immigrant from Europe to US or Canada. They learned about his or her origins, reasons for migrating, when they migrated and what the migrant's family is doing presently. The fourth graders then set up a living "wax museum" where they dressed up as their immigrant, stood ready with a button in front of them and presented a short speech to visitors when the button was pressed.

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After the student presentations, Jessica concluded that the results were wonderful: "Several grade levels were able to visit the wax museum and they all enjoyed learning about the chosen immigrants. Our fourth graders really stepped up and handled the information and presentations very well." Jonathan, who has previously used the Wax Museum device, added, "The Wax Museum is a versatile learning tool that can be applied for many topics and across genres. I originally used it for a biography study with great results, and the students really enjoyed the experience."

The second project was an ongoing historical fiction writing project where the "student immigrants" had to write a fictional

journal about their journey from their home country to America through Ellis Island, documenting historical facts in their journal entries, putting all their research into action. "The whole unit, from the research to the Wax Museum to the historical fiction journals, really allowed our students to embrace and understand the immigration experience," said Jessica, summing up the study unit which exemplified a successful project-based learning plan, demonstrating how classroom teachers, librarians and technology specialists can work together to help students make authentic connections with their subject material for a truly immersive inter-disciplinary learning experience. 📖



JUST SNAP IT!

Students at the American International School in Cyprus are learning to love reading, one photo at a time

Children who read are more likely to succeed. Innumerable studies have documented the positive impact of recreational reading on academic achievement. Yet, with the rise of irresistible technological distractions, parents and educators are struggling to impart a lifelong love of reading among today's students.

Reading logs are one popular tool used by schools to encourage children to read more. Teachers require their students to keep a journal of their daily reading, and parents to remind their child to read. Parents sign their children's logs before submission the next day. But do reading logs really work in the long run?

As Pantelis Charalambous, Grade 5 teacher at American International School in Cyprus (AISC), discovered, possibly not: "I was noticing that students were returning their reading logs incomplete and not signed. I carried out some research and saw that reading logs are not that effective." He wanted to be able to track his students' progress, he explained. "I was developing the love of reading at school and that's all I really wanted, to be honest. At home I just want students to respond to their daily reading, as well as report their progress within their chosen book."

What Pantelis had stumbled upon was actually a case of external vs. intrinsic motivation at play. While we want children to love reading intrinsically, introducing systems such as reading logs that monitor, control and measure, may actually undermine these efforts, leading to a decline in students' motivation to read. In a study measuring the impact of reading logs, researchers reported that they are actually ineffective ways of fostering a love of reading. They even lead to a decrease in children's motivation to read, in some cases, leading to a recommendation that educators explore the possibility of crafting assignments that enable students to be more autonomous readers.

And that is exactly what Pantelis did, with delightful and surprising results! This year, he developed a new program at AISC called "Snap-It," where students have to send weekly emails with a photo of themselves with their book, documenting the title and page that they are on, as well as responding to a weekly prompt that aligns with the class reading objectives. Every Monday, students send in an email with their photo, title of their book and number of their current page. And every Sunday, they send the same information, adding their response to the prompt of the week. By employing a communications tool that appealed to the students more effectively, Pantelis motivated them to engage more readily in the activity, ultimately inspiring them to develop an affinity towards reading.

The response to these assignments has been so positive, that Pantelis has expanded his in-class program with an accompanying website to document the whimsical photos he is receiving. "Families and students have been getting very creative! Pets, Snapchat filters, on-location photos, special effects - students are really having a lot of fun with this! And this is what we ultimately want, for them to engage with their books in a positive way that encourages them to build a reading habit for life."

Visit the class gallery at <https://grade5peanuts.wordpress.com/video-and-photo-gallery/snap-it/>. 📷

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THE AR-VR EXPLOSION

Collecting samples on a Mars mission, working with students who are miles away, or jumping inside the human body: augmented reality and virtual reality are bending the realm of tomorrow's educational possibilities in unimaginable ways

By: Dr. Joseph Nettikaden, Chief Information Officer, Esol Education

Remember last summer's launch of "Pokémon Go," the augmented reality (AR) app, which had both kids and families in a frenzy, cleverly meshing the real and virtual worlds. Users drew intrigued looks all over the world as they tried to hunt and collect as many characters as they could by walking around and waving their mobile devices in thin air. Similarly, virtual reality (VR) devices like the Oculus Rift are fast gaining ground in the gaming world, and in a variety of applications from business to entertainment. These virtual headsets are seen at practically every consumer show and education event, as AR and VR have become more prevalent in the daily lexicon of consumers everywhere.

So, what exactly is the difference between AR and VR, and what potential do these emerging technologies hold for education, particularly in the K-12 segment?

"Virtual Reality" (VR) is an artificially created reality with a mixture of interactive hardware and software, which allows an immersive experience for the user to interact with objects created in a virtual environment.

"Augmented Reality" (AR) is an enhanced version of reality where live direct or indirect views of physical real-world environments are augmented with superimposed computer-generated images over a user's view of the real-world, thus enhancing one's current perception of reality. In AR, graphics, sounds, and touch feedback are added into the real world via a hand held device.

While VR requires the user to inhabit an entirely virtual environment, AR captures the user's natural environment and overlays it with virtual information. As the virtual and real worlds harmoniously combine, users of augmented reality experience a new and improved world where virtual information is used as a tool to provide assistance in everyday activities.

Both VR and AR have great potential for use in classrooms. Student engagement can be greatly enhanced at all levels in K-12 and teachers can apply the technology in many interesting ways and improve the student learning experience. Based on the various



Source: Touchstone Research | Innovation & Excellence

They could be walking on the moon, exploring deep seas, visiting cities, natural wonders and other areas with limited accessibility, all without the conceivable risks and practical hurdles of the real world

lessons and topics of study, students can be taken on virtual field trips and be given a complete immersive experience. They could be walking on the moon, exploring deep seas or visiting cities, natural wonders and other areas with limited accessibility, all without the conceivable risks and practical hurdles of the real world. With new kinds of sensors being developed as add-on peripherals, these technologies can also give students the feeling of touch and smell, along with experiences of other senses being developed.

Both students and teachers can travel virtually to places like Stonehenge or the International Space Station, or inside the human body! Along with the ability to explore these environments, apps can provide educational content in the form of narration, pop-up text and images. When all three features are well written and developed, they provide a fascinating and very effective new way to learn about various disciplines.

One of the most exciting aspects of virtual reality is its ability to bring people together, regardless of geographical distances. All of the experiences, tutorial videos, and learning apps that are appearing every day would work just as well whether the teacher and student are in the same room, or across the world from each other.

In subjects that require design and creation of 3D models, or require a working understanding of real-life models such as that of aircraft engines, hydro turbines or the solar system, learning can go beyond the existing 2-D examples in books, animations and video. Students can actually visualize how they work in the real world (AR) and how they work and operate in a virtual world (VR). This provides tremendous opportunity for students to be creative in designing models, building, testing and improving prototypes in a relatively quick way to get to their desired outcome.

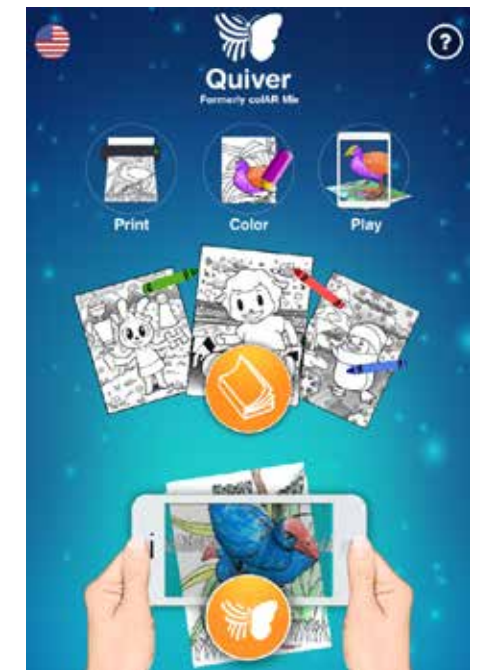
The applications of AR and VR in education are innumerable. The potential is enormous,

and companies are still experimenting and pushing the boundaries of development with both technologies. As with any new technology, there are challenges that need to be overcome with AR and VR. One of the key challenges is that of the ready availability of fully developed content that is integrated with the entire spectrum of the curriculum. Another is the relatively high cost of virtual headsets that are available in the market today. Additionally, there have been concerns based on user experience related to visually-induced motion sickness due to the nature of the immersive experience provided by the VR headsets.

Teething problems aside, both AR and VR has attracted the attention of education industry thought leaders, and an enormous amount of creative energy is being directed at bringing both AR and VR to the classroom, where the possibilities are endless, and the future is exciting. ➡



Dr. Joseph Nettikaden is responsible for setting the technology vision and strategy for Esol Education. He oversees the integration of technology into school curricula as well as the operations of the technology departments at all nine schools. As part of his mandate, Dr. Nettikaden also explores new, innovative technologies to enhance teaching and learning.



Quiver (AR app for Grades Pre-K - 3)

Quiver is an augmented reality app, where children can color objects on pages and see them come to life on screen! The pages are available by downloading the app via www.quivervision.com. Once the app has been downloaded, you can print the free pages, give them to your kids for coloring and then use the app to view the colored pages and see the objects being animated. Using Quiver enables children and adults to unleash their inner artist and interact with their personally customized creations.



Discovery VR (VR app suitable for all ages but based on the content being viewed)

For over 30 years, the Discovery Channel has been known and loved for its exceptional storytelling. Discovery has created a virtual reality app called Discovery VR: www.discoveryvr.com. Some regular content is also available on the Discovery VR app, so you can experience some of your favorite Discovery shows in a whole new way. Discovery has been creating educational content for years, and now, by releasing their popular shows in Virtual Reality, they are demonstrating the tremendous potential of VR platforms for education.

SUNSHINE STATE OF MIND

At the helm of one of Cairo's leading schools, charting a steady course through the choppy years of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution or inspiring students to follow their passions - it's all in a day's work for Bill Delbrugge

Bill Delbrugge, Director at American International School in Egypt – Main Campus (AIS), and newly appointed President of the Mediterranean Association of International Schools, is a vibrant force of nature, known for his infectious spirit, inspiring leadership and larger than life personality. *Strides* catches up with Bill to hear more about his journey and talk about teaching, innovation and his aspirations for his students.

1. Tell us a little about your background and the roles you had prior to joining us at AIS.

Before coming to AIS Egypt, I was the Superintendent of Schools in Flagler County, Florida, where my team and I were responsible for all facets of education for 26,000 students. During the seven years I was in Flagler County the District grew from 6,800 students to 26,000 with an annual budget of 426 million dollars. In addition to the PreK-12 program the school district also operated the Adult and Community Education Junior College for the community. Prior

to this, I was the Director for Research & Reporting at the Office of Education Accountability in Atlanta, Georgia. I was also the Principal at the Cass Comprehensive High School in Cartersville Georgia, having started my career as the Director of Bands at the Hixson Middle/High School in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

2. From Florida to Cairo - how did the move happen?

I had always dreamed about living and working overseas and one day I saw an advertisement for the School Director position at AIS Egypt. I sent my materials in and in less than 30 minutes my phone rang and it was Mr. Walid Abushakra, Chairman of Esol Education. We had a fantastic

conversation and spoke about many of the same experiences we have had over our careers. Then he said, "Bill, you are going to come and work for me." We then set up a flight for me to visit the school in Egypt and I fell in love with the place. I was offered the job and all looked great. Unfortunately, after I returned home my mother was diagnosed with cancer and I had to call Mr. Walid and let him know I would not be able to come to Egypt. Since this was just a few months before school was to start I knew this was going to be a hardship on him and I figured he would not be very happy with me. However, the exact opposite happened. For the entire next eighteen months while my mother fought and ultimately lost her battle with cancer, Mr. Walid would call me weekly to check on us and to make sure we did not need anything. I was absolutely amazed at how much he cared for us especially since he did not know me that well and we had never worked together. After my mother passed away Mr. Walid was one of the first phone calls I made. I told him my mother had passed and I was ready to follow him and Esol Education anywhere on earth. For a person to be as caring as Mr. Walid I knew Esol Education had to be a special place to work and I wanted to be a part of an organization that valued people and their families. I agreed to a 30-year contract with Mr. Walid and I still have 23 years to go!

3. In your past seven years of living and working in Cairo and Dubai, what has been the most unforgettable experience?

The amazing opportunities I have seen our teachers create for our students encompass the most unforgettable experiences I have had. I love being with my

staff and students and to experience the magical work my teachers achieve with our students every day is inspiring. I appreciate the fact that we do not only teach subject matter but we also help students learn how to be better humans with high moral character and integrity. Our staff in Egypt has been through difficult situations with two revolutions and unstable conditions and when life got difficult we did not give up, knowing that our mission was bigger than any one of us. My best experience with

We hire great teachers and then stay out of their way, except to offer assistance and guidance to reach our school goals. I believe giving teachers some autonomy allows them to grow and challenge themselves and the status quo at the school. Our teachers are extremely intrinsically motivated. They work together in grade teams and subject teams to develop lesson plans and unit plans. At AIS we also encourage the students to tell their story through written communication. Every teacher at our school understands the importance of writing skills both for themselves and their students. Our teachers constantly work to be content experts and expert presenters. They stay focused and expect their students to stay focused and engaged. We also have a culture at school where we are always visiting each other during classes through education walks. We take ideas from each other and "feedforward" ideas on how to improve.

6. What are the three achievements that you are most proud of at AIS?

1. Keeping our teaching team together after the Egyptian revolution is something I will always remember and be thankful for. When the tanks rolled into Cairo I thought for sure we would never finish the year much less keep the school open. However, Esol Education evacuated us all safely to a 5 star hotel on the Red Sea. We posted lessons online for students to complete and we kept everyone focused and engaged. After

AIS graduates should have the ability to develop their life goals and the confidence in their skills to know they can achieve their goals.

They should know how to break down a problem into manageable steps and how to create solutions to fix it. Our students, in their lifetime, are going to deal with a host of challenges from environmental issues to air and food quality. They must have the ability to take on these challenges and create solutions that will help build a better community and world.

I want our graduates to leave school understanding who they are as people and what makes them happy. Rather than academic or financial success, young people need to understand that success is about knowing who you are and what drives you as a person. I hope our students leave school knowing what their passion is in life and I hope they live every second of their lives living that passion.

5. How are AIS teachers at the top of their game?

First, I would have to say, "When you've got the best you don't need the rest!" Go AIS!!!

eighteen days when we were scheduled to re-open school, and all my teachers returned, I remember standing in the main hall overcome with joy. We were back in action!

2. Our IB scores are very impressive and I

am excited that our students enter college prepared to do well. Our students are always returning to tell us college is easy compared to what they had to do in High School at AIS.

3. Continuing our growth as a school is an exciting achievement to me especially with the challenges we have faced in the past. When I came to AIS we had 1400 students. We now have over 3000 students located on two beautiful campuses. It excites me that we are able to teach more kids every year. I have faith in my teachers' talents and I know if a student is at our school we will make them better. 📌

AMBITIOUS ASPIRATIONS

Mr. Delbrugge shares with us the top three aspirations he has for our AIS graduates:

1

2

3

Graphics designed by Freepik

Where Thebes tempts visitors with her treasures, she mesmerizes with her untold stories of ancient royals and plebeians alike, and one can finally understand the fascination that drives archeologists to uncover the secrets of cities past

TIMELESS TREASURES

The Pyramids of Giza may be the one of the seven ancient wonders of the world, an essential fixture on a traveler's bucket list, while the Sphinx may conjure up mysteries untold, however they pale in comparison to the riches of Luxor

Of all ruins, or groups of ruins, in the land of Egypt, the temples and tombs of 'hundred-gated Thebes' stand foremost in majesty, variety and number. Here six great temples mark the site of a city, which for many centuries was the capital of the known world...By far the most accessible, and consequently the most familiar, of these half-dozen Theban temples, is the great Temple of Luxor, which has just been excavated by Professor Maspero."

Illustrated London News, October 33, 1885 (condensed)

Buried under centuries of rubble, covered by fragments of generations, painstakingly excavated and restored by persevering archeologists, the temples of Luxor and Karnak unhurriedly revealed their treasures in the late 1800s. Professor Gaston Maspero, then newly appointed Director General of Excavations and Antiquities, who lead the excavations, could not have, in his wildest imaginations, anticipated that he was setting

off a chain of events that would lead to the most stunning archeological discoveries of our time. Breathtaking temples, towering columns, cavernous halls, colossal statues, hundreds of tombs, beautiful carvings and thousands of artifacts were uncovered, giving us valuable insights into the civilization of powerful pharaohs that had once ruled Egypt, and their faith in their impressive Gods who had blessed them with such prosperity.

Luxor, originally known as Thebes, was home to the courts of the Pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty. A flourishing center of power, Thebes' population reached over one million at its zenith between 1570 and 1090 BC. The town is feted as host to the world's largest temple complex, and an open-air museum that stands testament to the prowess of the dynasties, architects and artists of ancient Egypt. It is here that Howard Carter, mentored by Prof. Maspero, discovered the famed tomb of the young pharaoh, Tutankhamun, in the Valley of Kings. Fully preserved with the king's riches, despite a few ancient break-ins, this spectacular find yielded a wealth of antiquities, most of which can be seen in the Cairo museum today.

Where Thebes tempts visitors with her treasures, she mesmerizes with her untold stories of ancient royals and plebeians alike, and one can finally understand the fascination that drives archeologists to uncover the secrets of cities past. Daniel Cruz, teacher at American International School in Egypt, is drawn to Luxor time and time again for its history, scenery, and escape from the hustle and bustle of Cairo.


He shared his experiences with *Strides*: "Every time I go to the sites I am amazed! The Luxor Temple and especially the Karnak Temple on the East Bank are wonderful. Karnak is one of the largest temple sites in the world and has the Great Hypostyle Hall (pylons) completed by Ramses II. Karnak also offers a beautiful sound and light show at night. On the West Bank you have countless sites such as the Valley of the Kings, which is astonishing for the preservation and colors of the tombs.

Other sites on the West Bank include Hatshepsut Temple (Deir el Bahri), Valley of Queens, Ramesseum, the workers village (Deir el-Medina) with its very colorful tombs, Madient Habu, and the Colossi of Memnon."

Lisa Gibson, Curriculum Coordinator at Universal American School echoes Daniel's sentiments about Luxor: "It has a very different vibe to Cairo. You must just go! The Valley of the Kings and Queens was amazing to me. It truly is something that you are not going to find in many places in the world. What struck me the most was the size of the statues, there were so many in Luxor, not just in the main tourist sites."

The best time to visit is between November and March, and Daniel recommends a minimum of three days in Luxor, so as to include enough time to explore beyond the main town, and wander off the beaten path. "There are two sites outside of Luxor that are my absolute favorite, Dandara and Abydos! You will need a full day to see these. I highly recommend these two sites, they are the best-preserved temples in all of Egypt and are less visited by tourists," said Daniel, sharing a few more insider tips: "I recommend the hot air balloon ride at sunrise, you fly right over the monuments of the West Bank and it is truly a unique experience. If you have more days, you can include a sailing trip in the Nile River, whether in the basic Felucca sail boat or the regular Nile Cruise, to the Dahabiya sail boat, which is the best way to sail between Luxor and Aswan."

If you're inspired to make a visit, and thinking about buying souvenirs, both Lisa and Daniel share a last piece of advice. "Bargain!" said Lisa. "If you don't bargain with sellers you will end up spending a lot of money!" Daniel agrees. "If you do plan on buying anything, make sure that you know how to negotiate, a good rule of thumb is to drop down to a third of the starting price!"

Good advice, we think, for traveling anywhere in Egypt! 



SITES TO VISIT

- The Valley of the Kings & Valley of the Queens
- Hypostyle Hall and the Temple of Karnak
- Temple of Luxor
- Queen Hatshepsut's Temple
- Avenue of the Sphinxes
- Luxor Museum



HOW TO GET THERE

Daily non-stop flights from Cairo to Luxor

Or, if you can brave the 10-hour journey, drive! This will allow you to visit other sites in middle Egypt, such as Beni Hassan and Amarna. Abydos and Dandara.



TOURS

Daniel recommends using the services of a professional tour company so you can get in depth knowledge about the sites you are visiting. His go-to tour guide is Real Egypt. www.realegypt.com



WHERE TO STAY

- Hilton, Luxor
- Winter Palace
- Or get local and stay at the many guesthouses on the West Bank, situated in the villages with closer access to the sites.

DEVELOPING GLOBAL COMPETENCIES: AN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION'S HIGHEST MISSION

Nurturing an intercultural mindset in students is an international school's defining purpose, and never has it been more relevant than right now

By: Dr. Michelle Kleiss, Director, American International School in Cyprus

As we enter the last quarter of the school year, I have been reflecting on the annual journey of an international school, particularly in developing students' global competencies. I believe the journey is defined by the cultivation of attitudes toward learning experiences, responsibilities and interactions we promote in our international communities. Much of what an international school does is related to nurturing "intercultural

competencies" by understanding cultural communication styles and appreciating different value systems in order to promote collaboration within a diverse student population. This includes building mind-sets around inquiry and, in curricular and lesson design, it encompasses seeking global connections, understanding multiple perspective and providing opportunities

for students improving the lives of others though meaningful acts. I cannot imagine more important skills children need in order to navigate the co-dependent world in which they live today.

Fernando Reimers, Ford Foundation's Professor of International Education, Director of Global Education, and Director of the International Education Policy Program at Harvard University, defines "global competencies" as:

...the knowledge and skills people need to understand today's flat world and to integrate across disciplines so that they can comprehend global events and create possibilities to address them. Global competencies are also the attitudinal and ethical dispositions that make it possible to interact peacefully, respectfully, and productively with fellow human beings from diverse geographies. (Reimers, 2009.)

As Esol Education is fully committed to providing a high quality international education, it is essential that our schools reflect on the attitudes and dispositions we aim to cultivate through the experiences, responsibilities and interactions we design during the academic year.

Each international school provides unique and purposeful experiences while on its annual journey. Throughout the year, students are provided with project-based learning opportunities that include multi-layered problems connected to large-scale concepts and issues. These concepts and issues will be different from one school to the next given the school's





I believe [an international school's] journey is defined by the cultivation of attitudes toward learning experiences, responsibilities and interactions we promote in our international communities

culture that has a deep commitment to growth. Our schools hold a profound respect for certain values including tolerance, open-mindedness, acceptance of alternative viewpoints and collaboration through respectful dialogue. As a result, the hallmarks of an international education include a growth-minded, as well as "open-minded" approach to learning. International schools are "schools that want to learn" and with every interaction we have with one another, we find an opportunity to understand our own thinking, generate new ideas and grow mind-sets. As Carol Dweck says in her book, "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success,"

Mindset change is not about picking up a few pointers here and there. It's about seeing things in a new way. When people change to a growth mindset, they change from a judge-and-be-judged framework to a learn-and-help-learn framework. Their commitment is to growth, and growth takes plenty of time, effort, and mutual support.

environment. Learning experiences often integrate local and global contexts and complementary travel opportunities, as well as partnerships that include exchanges with other schools, universities and organizations.

For students to develop deeper insights and feel a heightened motivation to learn more about themselves and others, our international schools offer complex cognitive thinking experiences so that students may cultivate the creative, critical and conceptual mind. Our schools understand that complex thinking is shaped by emotions, senses, interests, setting, social and creative environments, and thus, we strive to develop synergy between these responsive influences. Complex thinking develops global competencies and each new school year provides a unique experience making the international educational programs we offer highly distinctive.

International school communities share a responsibility to build an organizational

opportunities for students to learn more about themselves through their interactions with others. While they are interacting, there are practicing flexible thinking and reframing situations.

It is a privilege to lead an international school. It is an invigorating and a rewarding journey because it is inherently growth-minded. Along the way, we experience bumps and bruises, feats and successes, and ebbs and flows. Like an orchestra, everybody in an international school community has a unique part to play. Along the journey, we build students' global competencies through rich experiences, opportunities to shift paradigms and generate new understandings, and demonstrate interdependence through constructive and respectful dialogue. 🌐



Dr. Michelle Kleiss has been a part of the Esol Education team for 16 years. Prior to her position as Head of School in Cyprus, she has held school leadership & teaching positions in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Brazil and the Dominican Republic. Originally from Toronto Canada, she earned her undergraduate, graduate and doctorate degrees in educational leadership from the United States.

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