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International Teacher Education



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International Teacher Education

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MAGAZINE TEAM

Magazines are not easy to make. It takes a real team of hard-working individuals to come together and produce something with purpose and quality, especially in a cross-program environment. Below are the student teachers who made this second-edition possible!



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How to 'do' Inclusive Education: A Socially-Just Perspective

CARLA BRIFFETT AKTAŞ

Inclusive education has been a topic of discussion in the education community amongst practitioners and policymakers since the late 20th century. Considering increasing globalisation trends in the 21st century, inclusion in all levels of education has become even more relevant. As with other educational policies, the discourse around inclusive education has components of theory as well as practical implications for professionals in the field and is entangled with other aspects and theories of education. A case in point is its similarity with aspects of socially just education. Here, the relationship between these two concepts will be discussed and the argument made that inclusive education is in agreement with socially just education. Furthermore, how the objectives of these concepts can be achieved through active participation and student voice will be explored.

Definitions of educational terms are not necessarily agreed upon or understood in the same way by all members of the international educational community. This is true of inclusive education and socially just education as well. The definition that will be adopted here for inclusive education comes from UNESCO, an international body that works with educators in a multitude of settings and contexts. They define inclusive education as 'a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning' (UNESCO, 2005, p. 12). In a similar vein, scholars of socially just education have developed many definitions of this term that often include aspects of participation and equality (Gewirtz, 1998, 2006; Gewirtz & Cribb, 2002; Keddie, 2012; Power, 2012; Power & Frandji, 2010, Bell, 2016). For example, Bell (2016) describes socially just education as 'democratic and participatory, respectful of human diversity and group differences, and inclusive and affirming of human agency and capacity for working collaboratively with others to create change' (p. 3). The crossover between definitions can be seen when considering that both terms include aspects of diversity, recognition, and using diversity as a means to promote a desirable education.

In other words, inclusive education, we can deduce, requires some awareness of social justice aspects, such as participation and diversity recognition as positive attributes.

Student participation can be understood as 'the extent to which students participate or involve themselves in a class, course, etc' (Collins, n.d.). However, the level of engagement in a class does not necessarily mean that students are participating and influencing their education in a broader sense as is needed in an inclusive educational environment. Instead, active participation needs to be incorporated to meet the needs of inclusive education as 'a dynamic approach' (UNESCO, 2005, p. 12). Unlike the previous definition of participation, active participation involves more than engagement with the class, and involves 'students being active and engaged in the classroom; students impacting on curriculum design; and students' feeling of belonging to a community' (Bergmark & Westman, 2018, p. 1352). This multidimensional engagement being referred to here cannot exist authentically without the concept of student voice being introduced.

Although there is no one definition of student voice, a comprehensive definition has been offered by Seale (2010) who states that it includes, [listening to and valuing the views that students express regarding their learning experiences; communicating student views to people who are in a position to influence change; and treating students as equal partners in the evaluation of teaching and learning, thus empowering](#)

[them to take a more active role in shaping or changing their education](#) (p. 995).

Employing this understanding of student voice incorporates aspects of both inclusive education and socially just education, as outlined above. By nurturing student voice, student diversity and identity can become known to the educator, allowing for an open space in which students can actively participate in their education and expand their influence therein (for example, in the development and implementation of the curriculum). One could argue that without student voice inclusive education would not be possible because it would mean that some of the 'pupil diversity and ... individual differences' (UNESCO, 2005, p. 12) would be unknown to the educator, thereby limiting the 'opportunities for enriching learning' (UNESCO, 2005, p. 12). Thus, creating space for student voice can be an effective tool to meet the objectives of inclusive education as outlined by UNESCO. Similarly, socially just education relies on the ability of students to democratically participate in their education while being 'respectful of human diversity and group differences' (Bell, 2016, p. 3). Here, we see that students and educators should work in tandem to create educational experiences while recognising and respecting differences among actors in the classroom. The process of democratic education, as with other types of democratic processes in society, requires students to have the space for their voices to be heard and represented. Students expressing their voices, though, is not enough.

Educators need to actively listen to the voices and work with students in partnership to reflect the differences present in the education being offered. Within the discourse of student voice, the role of the educator as a listening agent is specified, whereas in other aspects of education it is implied but may not be stated outright.

Both inclusive education and socially just education recognise and value differences and diversity, but these terms are often used vaguely in the definitions. One important reason for this is that diversity can mean many things. It can include linguistic diversity, ethnic, religious, cultural, social, cognitive, etc. In contemporary, societal discourse, diversity is often referred to in terms of ethnicity (because it may be easily identifiable), but that is not to say that other differences are not equally as important, and sometimes, play a role in identity and group diversity to a greater degree than ethnicity. The 'we look alike, therefore we are alike' assumption is wrong and may result in important differences and types of diversity in the classroom being overlooked. Student voice can help to avoid this issue. Through student voices being expressed and encouraged in the classroom, key differences may be identified that are not known at the outset by the educator. contribute to the development of 'best practice' for educators. Through the incorporation of active participation and student voice, educators can meet the requirements of inclusive education as well as socially just education. This may do much to further these ideas in education and meet the needs of ever-increasing diverse student populations at

all levels of education. Through active participation and student voice, students can have space to meaningfully influence their education in ways that replace rote, standardised learning with a dynamic education that is ever-changing based on the student population in any given class.

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As a 1st year student, myself, the chance to come together with brilliant minds who share the same passion and goal of becoming an international teacher, is a unique and new opportunity through which I'm able to progress rapidly in my knowledge of both teaching and learning. All of us have a great foundation to work with and know where we want to go with our learning. However, each one of us has a different approach, different experiences, and different views when it comes to education. Through this collaboration, I am learning a lot, expanding my knowledge of both subject and methodology for one, and I truly believe that it is the biggest change that has set in for me since I began my studies. Coming together with everyone like this makes for an exciting learning environment, positively and largely influencing how I progress in my learning and teaching.

However, collaboration is an even more significant large-scale catalyst for tackling major issues in the educational system. Collaboration is connected to many ways of improving education, especially from a socio-political viewpoint. In the following, I will overview some approaches and ideas of where collaboration goes hand in hand in tackling such.

What was it like for me?

I invite you to reflect on your own education and classroom.

- Which Eurocentric, hierarchical, or racist notions were implemented, intentionally or not?
- In what way were you taught, was it considering the socioeconomic, ethnic, or neurodiverse backgrounds of all students?
- Most importantly, which of these, alongside more factors like intersectionality or the patriarchal system, did the teacher consider, and how exactly did they succeed in leveraging out their negative effects?
- Most of us have at least some experiences with these questions, and we have asked ourselves, how can I be better? Answering this is challenging, but collaboration is one big concept aiding in doing so.



MATZE GUTE

Collaboration

Why It Contributes to
More Than Solely Better
Learning in the Educational
World

The Single Story in our Classrooms

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED talk "The danger of a single story" has long influenced and inspired me among many more people worldwide. In it, Adichie speaks about the single story we build in our minds, how we "show a people as one thing as only one thing over and over again, and that is what they become" (Adichie, 2009). Influences like media are one of the biggest culprits in creating this single story, this set idea of what certain groups of people are like that we take over. To quote Adichie's words once more, it demonstrates "how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children" (Adichie, 2009). This can be related to class materials and what kind of information, characters or stories we present about various communities, among many more examples. Of course, it can be widely applied to any stereotypes in all kinds of areas and what kind of set idea or vivid picture will be created in students' heads. Through collaboration, working with students on the selection of materials and how we present them, we will consider their backgrounds to a greater extent and probably include more accurate and true representations as well as the ones students show interest in. Representing and acknowledging varying viewpoints like that avoids adding to the power of and focusing on western media which

currently dominates the majority population's views and gives student autonomy as well as agency.

Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"

This idea corresponds with the findings and views of Paulo Freire, who initiated 'critical pedagogy' in his book "pedagogy of the oppressed" (Freire, 2017). Freire (2017) critically analyses the dynamic of viewing students as empty vessels to be filled with input by the teacher who is in power and seen as knowledgeable above all else. Instead, teaching should be a democratic and collaborative relationship between equals who are open to learning from and with one another. We should also help students realize social, political, racial, class, gender, and economic issues, creating awareness so they can secondly take action against the oppressive elements of reality, a concept Freire explains and refers to as conscientização or critical consciousness. This is only possible if there is a balance between students and teachers, which coincides with collaboration. For example, Freire's approach emphasizes critical thinking through problem-posing education, in which students engage in dialogue to collaborate in the learning process. Students pose solutions based on their embodied experiences and work together to implement change. It's another excellent example of what collaboration can look like. All these help in reducing hierarchy and sharing power in the classroom.

Decolonizing the Classroom

The reallocation of power in this way closely relates to the concept of decolonizing the classroom. Creating an equitable space that supports not only those traditionally in power due to colonization, including first and foremost students, among many more, should be a priority. It links to all points we thought about looking back on our educational backgrounds earlier. This goes deeper than simple 'inclusion' and 'more diversity,' which can easily be achieved while maintaining western bias and adding to the harm of students - it is far more complex. Acknowledgment is one of the main elements requiring more focus that will aid in decolonizing the classroom. Acknowledgment of the deeply rooted issues in education can be found in a large variety of examples. Education being refused to be seen as political as a whole by educators as well as using English as the language medium, which both in themselves should both be seen as problematic and critical, are two aspects to keep in mind for this. The list of fitting examples goes on, including methodologies, details, or even big topics in used curricula, to name a few more. Here as well, collaboration can make a difference. We can decolonize our educational space by having students actively participate and co-create in what and how they learn, participate, and produce in class. There are various further options to pick from in order to achieve this, including ideas like actively utilizing translanguaging, incorporating diverse languages, language varieties other than the standard school variety

overall, as well as topics relating to power and social injustice in the classroom.

Conclusion

Collaboration truly ties into various broad issues relating to education, both international and domestic. It is an emerging topic among educators spanning a variety of contexts and concepts I could only outline roughly rather than showcasing them in depth. Collaborative education has immense potential to revolutionize the educational system, which is why I clarified some of the variety and ways it is applicable in this paper. Keeping students involved and learning collaboratively is a priority for me as it actively tackles and dismantles substantial issues we face in international education and, even more so, our global world. Keeping my international teacher career ahead of me in mind, I hope that we continue this process and shape future youth to the best of our abilities.

CHILDREN ARE THE PRIORITY.
CHANGE IS THE REALITY.
COLLABORATION IS THE
STRATEGY. -JUDITH BILLINGS

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On A Path To More Inclusive Education

MELANIE KÖHLER

Inclusion is a top priority in the international education community, yet many of us struggle to define it. Does it mean to include every student's cultural background in your content? Is it about establishing a secure environment for people to express themselves? Is it necessary to differentiate for each and every child? That begs the question, how far do we need to go to ensure that everyone feels included in the classroom?

In my effort to discover my own definition of inclusion, I joined "Team Inclusion," a newly formed group of ITEps students who gathered together to make our course more inclusive. Many of my classmates joined for the same reason: to learn more about inclusive education. It started with us sending out a survey in order to get a general sense of how inclusive students think ITEps is. With a participation rate of 30% we could tell that there was a general consensus that ITEps is mostly inclusive. Nonetheless, a few students came forward sharing incidents where they had felt left out or discriminated against, by peers and lecturers. Even though the incidences don't occur often, they did raise our concerns and were the basis of many fruitful discussions. Having three experienced and knowledgeable lecturers join in for some of the

discussions has allowed us to not only gain different insights but also to build a bridge between all stakeholders of our community in the hope to take action on all levels. Our motto is "if you are not intentionally including people, then you might be unintentionally excluding them." (Compoint, 2020).

After we established a structure and agenda for our team, I volunteered to create a presentation on our definition of inclusion and what "Team Inclusion" is. Thereby, I first want to refer to a definition by UNESCO that has already been mentioned in Carla's article of this magazine: Inclusion is "a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 12). Going back to my questions from the beginning, inclusion is not just about responding to cultural differences, but it is about catering to all ways of being diverse and actually seeing that as an asset to learning. Therefore, our team does not only look at how we can cater to more cultures than the Dutch, American and German culture but also how to make our community more gender and disability inclusive. Of course, curricular components will be difficult for us to change but that does not stop us from ideating and voicing our suggestions.

One step towards more inclusion is to call people in. Often it can be an uncomfortable conversation to point out when someone is being discriminating. Not only that but often it won't be pointed out and instead negative rumours will spread across the community. As a group we want to actively prevent this by starting to offer "calling in" workshops. Calling in is about educating people on how they might have made others feel excluded or discriminated against. By calling someone in, you give suggestions on how something could be phrased differently. It is thereby the opposite of calling someone out. The difference here is that one doesn't judge but instead sees it as an opportunity to teach someone about the discrimination at hand. We hope to establish workshops on this topic and create a safe environment for people to call others in. In addition, we are currently ideating how to establish a system where our

students and lecturers can anonymously report incidents. As a group, we provide certain guidelines for how to report to guarantee that we get a realistic viewpoint on the situation and can discuss ways on how to take action. Each time we meet, one or two people of our team have created a presentation (example below) based on broad research, regarding topics of discussion that we would like to address. Once we had established our values and visions, we created an agenda for different points of action. We are currently working on a checklist to guarantee inclusion at events, and we are also aiming to create a holiday calendar and ways to educate each other on different holidays in order to broaden our cultural horizon.

As a German student I first did not fully recognize, that so far, we have mainly celebrated holidays from cultures that I am used to myself. Once I took a step

Questions I asked myself towards our goals...

As this course is in the Netherlands and the teacher body is mainly from Western cultures - is it our goal to represent more differing perspectives? (example: include more spiritual or religious approaches) and would it even be possible as this is a curricular aspect?

What about inclusion in terms of disabilities, nutrition, gender, etc. - are there any aspects that we notice that could be improved?

It is one thing to address more cultures on the surface level, but is there anything we could do about deep cultures?

back, I realized people that come from Japan or Mauritius will most likely not be able to relate and it could thus be difficult to feel represented or somewhat "at home". Therefore, we strive to celebrate other holidays more in the future or at least create a resource that educates people so they could take the initiative to organize something if they wanted to. In this regard, we would like to work closely with our event organizing team. The most recent topic we have discussed is faith and beliefs. Both topics are mainly addressed in one of our electives, which is a minor that students can CHOOSE to do. Yet, they are not covered in any other part of our curriculum. It addresses cultural inclusion, focusing on the three layers of culture (holidays, norms and values and basic assumptions) yet religion or belief are rarely mentioned as parts of culture. Furthermore, a big body of our community tends to be secular and unfortunately that has led to the fact that many religious people do not feel

comfortable sharing their religious beliefs. As team inclusion, we therefore strive to create an environment where people from all religious and spiritual backgrounds feel welcomed and respected. If in any way possible, we also hope to educate others on religions as it is almost guaranteed that we will teach religious students and should thus be mindful of their traditions and belief systems. Below one can see what Team Inclusion defines as faith/belief inclusion. I hope I inspired some of you, to integrate Team Inclusion in YOUR school. We are very proud of what we have established so far and hope that the team will be part of ITEps in the long run.

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WHAT IS FAITH/BELIEF INCLUSION?
Some key principles

- 1 Have mutual respect despite of different religious beliefs.
- 2 Avoid stereotyping and bias. Faith based stereotyping can lead to inaccurate assumptions about people.
- 3 Be aware of your language – part of building inclusion is also using faith inclusive language.
- 4 Balance belief and identity – avoid pushing beliefs onto others, but rather respect each other's differences.

Religious inclusion: Why it's important and how to get it. [n.d.]. Retrieved November 22, 2022, from <https://www.dca.org.au/blog/religious-inclusion-why-it-is-important-and-how-get-it>

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The effort teachers make to establish a deeper connection with their students

How close of a community it is (and how small), how many resources and opportunities it has for the students and everyone.



What Do You Like About Your School?

Responses are from 9th-grade students at the Carlucci American International School of Lisbon in Portugal



The welcoming environment and that everyone is respectful. CAISL makes sure that all students feel safe and comfortable in the school.

CAISL is special because of all the different cultures, languages and experiences of the teachers and students.



CAISL is an open and friendly community that accepts everyone

POLITICS-EMBEDDED EDUCATION: A PEEK INTO CHINA'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS LANDSCAPE

KONGLA KONGSAWAT

Disclaimer: This article is the interpretation of the author, and does not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the whole ITE community.

Dear aspiring international teachers, openminded learning environments, intercultural understanding, respect, and commitment towards a peaceful world - these are definitely more or less the visions we have as student teachers of where we see ourselves working and how we are going create the ideal educational framework. The term international-mindedness might seem to be overused, yet it is indeed the core value we cherish as it encapsulates all the reasons why international schools exist.

As light is shed on the current landscape of international education, the ideal vision of international schools does not appear to be without struggles. The increasing number of international schools worldwide indicates the ongoing "localization" of international education. These schools are established for the purpose of educating that country's children (Larsson, 2021), and therefore, alongside their international open-mindedness branding, local culture is integrated into the curriculum, and in some cases, national politics as well. Especially now, in times of heightening political tensions between global powers

which drive the world apart, education plays an increasingly important role as an instrument of nation-building, and, thus, used to fulfill the country's political agenda.

Politics-embedded international education is emerging in the context of cultural diplomacy. China, holding the world's second most international schools - 480 recognized by the ISC and many more with Chinese curriculum (Keeling, 2015), is an interesting and worthwhile case study for student teachers to form their visions of their international profession. The article, therefore, aims to present a different perspective on the international school landscape.

Nationalism

As China's growing wave of nationalism and geopolitics influences its public education system in a way that is set to comply with the national agenda, various international schools are prone to follow the movement as well. The current Communist Party's continued perception of foreign countries as hostile has been translated into a policy, for example, to prevent international schools from enrolling Chinese nationals unless they have previously lived outside of China (Kong, Woods, & Zhu, 2020). So, private (foreign-owned) international schools whose ideology is not in line with the state are no longer allowed to enroll local children. Likewise, the government's tightening grip has enforced the schools to change their names, in which certain words, such as "world" and "international" are forbidden (Mao, 2022).

These are a few examples of a politics-driven educational movement. As a result, some schools are experiencing a drop in demand for international programs of up to 50% (McKay, 2019), and more international schools begin to provide national curricula within their program. On the contrary, the total number of "international schools", including the non-English medium, has risen to 900 currently (Huifeng & Cai, 2021).

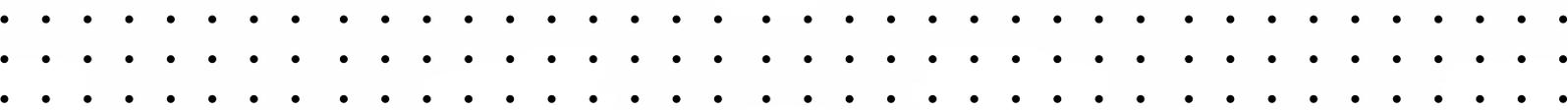
Cultural Diplomacy

By interweaving language and culture with the existing international program, the values of the country are promoted to the younger generation of foreign nations. Winning the trust of these young people is a governmental strategy to ensure supportive public opinion in the future and the recognition of the country by other nations (Çelik, 2022). Some examples of (controlled) cultural diplomacy that are visible in China are an encouragement to teach the Chinese language, and instill patriotism in the social studies discipline by limiting the international curricula to only official versions of history, politics, and geography (Huifeng & Cai, 2021). Additionally, the phenomenon of using international education as a political instrument is spread beyond the mainland. Several international schools in Hongkong must align themselves with

the "one China" policy and incorporate Chinese philosophy studies into their program as the Hong Kong government imposes sweeping pro-China curriculum on schools, stressing the statement that Hong Kong is part of China (Lindberg, 2021), (Hong Kong International School, n.d.)

Censorship

According to an article from the international education journal by Wai-Chung Ho (2020), a significant influence of Chinese politics, after the handover of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom in 1997, determines the "official knowledge" that schools in Hong Kong are allowed to provide to the citizens. The mode of censorship has been discerned in the requirements that (international) school curriculum is confined to not confronting Chinese sensitive issues or criticizing the authority. Terms adopted in the textbooks were altered from "Hong Kong" to "Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" and "Taiwan" to "Taiwan Province". Moreover, the censorship mechanism does not stop at approving and banning textbooks but tweaking subject (especially history) content has also been done. As Ho further describes that China tries to ingrain the credence of its sovereignty over Hong Kong, and so proposed to remove any mention of the historical "handover of sovereignty" from the UK, instead, schools are deemed to teach students that China has always had sovereignty over Hong Kong.



Conclusion

The integration of national politics into international education can be a sensitive and controversial topic. As the definition of international schools is changing, it is important for international (student) teachers to be aware of their ever-complicated institutions. China and how its government impacts international schools is just one example of the localization of international schools with its own historical context and complexity. Whether or not the student teachers hold opposing opinions about the ongoing trend in their promising sector, it is vital to be aware of the political climate in the country they are in.

In addition to political awareness, personal commitment should never be neglected. As mentioned, student international teachers do share common values. Teachers work toward a better education and strive for their own vision. Therefore, school organizations that share similar values as student teachers do, appear to be the place where they will find themselves growing, flourishing and being satisfied with their journey. Different places pose different rights and opportunities. If international mindedness is what students aspire to, there will always be room for possibilities.

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Bullying Destroys Lives

THE FLEUR BLOEMEN STICHTING

In January 2010, Fleur Bloemen was voted 'Poet of the Year' for this poem she wrote at the AOC Terra secondary school and won the 1st prize.

Fleur, a young girl of 15, grew up in a family with two older brothers, a girl with dreams for the future. Her dream was to become a teacher, working with children. She loved to sing and dance.

The bullying started at primary school when she was around 8-9 years old. The bullying was far-reaching: her bicycle tires were let down, it got hung on a fence; during gymnastics her clothes were thrown under the shower so that she couldn't change, cursing, harassment, not invited to parties and laughed at and much more.

The bullying was known about at school. Fleur's parents had visited the school regularly trying to find a solution, together with her teachers. Fleur had even told the class how much upset she was and how she wanted the bullying to stop.

Finally, when she was 12, the main bully went to another school, but Fleur didn't feel happy in her class anymore and remained a misfit; the girl that in the eyes of the others, was different from the rest. As a foundation, we give presentations at schools and do certain activities with students. We then give children a paper heart and ask them to crumble it up. Afterwards we ask them to smooth it out again, which can't be done.

The following article is about the Fleur Bloemen Foundation that strives to combat bullying among young people by creating awareness. Productively handling bullying at school is a complex but very important competence to have as teachers. The story about Fleur contains triggering content such as suicide, so please be aware of that before reading this article.

At my previous school, I was bullied, a lot. I was different from the others, different from the rest. I don't know why; it started as a game. It got out of hand and ended in a hell. It went on for 3 years, and not just name-calling, what I hear every day. I had had enough, I'd had it up to here. Now I'm out of there, gladly, but deep down I'm afraid, because soon it will repeat itself again. Then I will feel that pain,, and I never want that again"

- Fleur Bloemen

That's how Fleur felt too: damaged, broken, her heart so scarred they couldn't be wiped away.

When Fleur went to secondary school, the AOC Terra was deliberately chosen because all her classmates were going to a different school, the idea being to start with a clean slate at her new school.

Fleur blossomed at first, felt fine at this school and dared to express herself in her winning poem. Things were going well for Fleur at the AOC Terra until her exam year when an 'old acquaintance' from primary school returned to her class and the bullying began again.

Fleur didn't let her family know; her home was her safe place. She lived in two worlds: at home she was a cheerful young girl, always singing and appeared happy, but at school she was desperately unhappy. Unfortunately, via social media, the bullying continued even at home causing her to put on a mask, she withdrew to her room, listened to her favorite music and wrote poems. Social media can help connect, but it has a dark side; a group can intrude into the safe home of the bullied child.

Bullying by socials is not punishable; insults, slander and libel are, such as posting inappropriate films. However, bullying is punishable in some countries. We are striving for this to happen in The Netherlands too. Naturally, we won't determine the punishment, but think in terms of an appropriately guided punishment as an alternative to a criminal record. In 2012, Fleur's grandmother, who she loved very much, became seriously ill and died after a short illness.

Fleur had to handle several blows: her

grandmother had died and the years of bullying and victimisation at the AOC Terra had changed Fleur into a desperately unhappy girl. A girl that despite everything that had happened in her young life still succeeded to switch off this unhappiness when at home. She made plans for the future, including those once she had gained her diploma. She appeared cheerful and spontaneous, while all the while a huge conflict played out at school where talks were being held between Fleur's mentor and herself. The school failed to enlighten Fleur's parents about these talks. If a child has a history of being bullied at a previous school, then the school transfers this knowledge to the new school. It is then of paramount importance that there is good communication with the parents. It is so important to be watchful of the child, to pick up signals and to anticipate; Fleur's parents condemn the school in failing them and Fleur. Early in the morning, just after 8 am on December 11th in 2012 Fleur's parents received the terrible news that Fleur, in front of the eyes of her peers, had thrown herself in front of a train.

That very day an important talk was about to take place regarding the conflict between Fleur and her classmates. That morning, Fleur had eaten breakfast with her mother, had kissed her goodbye and called "see you this afternoon". She mounted her bike and cycled to the railroad crossing. Here she sent a few text messages to a few friendsto then never have to feel the pain that she could no longer bare; the scars on her heart had become too much for her to handle. She had carefully planned her death. When the police brought her bag, her parent's found a notebook with notes and a script for her own funeral. In this notebook she named the bullies, wrote poems about how she felt, named music that she wanted played at her own funeral. It wasn't an impulsive deed, but a carefully thought out plan to end the life of a girl that was so irreparably damaged inside. After Fleur's death, the Fleur Bloemen Foundation was established. The goal of the Foundation is to try to prevent bullying by youngsters/children. We do this by bringing awareness over the possible consequences of bullying, by telling Fleur's story and giving presentations in primary and secondary schools. This is Fleur's story. Unfortunately there are still many children suffering at the hands of bullies. There is a beautiful text board designed by a young woman also with a history of being bullied.

It is a clear message to youngsters about the harm bullying can wreak. It keeps the communication open between teachers and students and offers room for conversation and is easily accessible. We think that current and future teachers should be prepared for the serious consequences of bullying. It is important to open this conversation and not look away. Every school, at the beginning of the school year, should make it quite clear that bullying will not be tolerated and this message should be repeated regularly within the school year. At this moment a bullied child is often punished twice: in the first place it is bullied and secondly it has to attend resilience training after school to learn to become more assertive. The bully and the bullying behaviour aren't tackled. Bullying appears to be acceptable, but why can't someone be different from the standard, not everyone is the same, that is what makes every person unique! ITEps and ITess students play a large role as future teachers to signal bullying, to react and to open a conversation.

We started with Fleur's winning poem during a poem competition and I would like to end with her farewell poem to her parents and brothers.

"I am your guardian angel, a star that shines for you. I will miss you, but one day we will meet again, all of us together. I wait for that beautiful time. When it snows, I am the snow flake that falls into your hands. When it rains, I am the rain drop after the storm. When the sun shines, I am she who brings you warmth"



REAL Questions Answers & Views

4 Years



Science

9 Years



History
(Humanities and
Individual & Societies)

10 Years



Secondary
English

11 Years



Secondary
Music

How long have you been a teacher and for what subject?

Responses are from teachers with diverse backgrounds in International Education

13 Years



Humanities

15 Years



Science

17 Years



English
& German

20 Years



ESL, MFL
(German & Spanish)
and Business Studies

20+ Years



Secondary
Science

From
Teachers
Across the
GLOBE

What international schools have you worked at?

(and what was the best part?)



7 years in public schools in Canada. 1 year at International School of Stuttgart, 1 year at Bonn International School, 2 years at Leipzig International School, 4 years at BBIS. All these schools are in Germany and have similar contract guidelines. I really enjoy the limitations of work due to German laws. However, the composition of the students varied. I love the mix of long term and highly mobile teachers. It helps keep things fresh, while still having a stable mentor.



Yorktown Middle School (Best: I had an incredible mentor and the school had clear policies, worst: a lot of regulations and state-mandated testing, big class sizes, inauthentic curriculum and assessment) Sturgis Charter Public School (Best: caring and open environment, collaboration, colleagues. Pechersk School International (Best: vertical and horizontal alignment of MYP curriculum, concept driven curriculum.).



Inner-city public school in the US - Lots of diversity, education was viewed as a way out, as a teacher you could make a true difference in kid's lives (help them see their potential, inspire), lots of kids slipped through the cracks. El Salvador - Education in the US was a goal so students were extremely motivated, culture was very respectful, rigid thinking (conformity was the way people survived the civil wars), very traditional style instruction with low creativity and problem-solving, punitive.



KCIS (Taipei): Hardworking students. Unrealistic expectations regarding student grades. SISD (Dubai): Beautiful facilities. Too much micro managing and bending to suit parents. BBIS (Germany): Nice campus, good colleagues.

What was your favorite country to teach in and why?

- 1. Ukraine. There was the most freedom, while also receiving support from local staff.
- 2. Japan. the students were the most respectful and the cultural experience was unique.
- 5. The Netherlands and Germany. (both have pros and cons)
- 6. Malawi. Travel and relaxed pace of life.
- 7. Germany for workers rights. Taiwan for the culture and landscapes.
- 8. Scotland because of the freedom to create units of work the way you wanted them. Skills based approach.

How did you find your teaching job?

- 1. I applied directly to all schools. Only once I used Search Associates.
- 2. Through local websites, Search Associates and by word of mouth.
- 3. Newspaper in London, TES or international school websites.
- 5. Iowa hiring fair, contacts from previous schools and Search Associates.
- 6. University, job advertisements on website and internet research.
- 7. UK: TES - Malawi: TES - Berlin: Teacher Horizons.
- 8. I found most of my jobs through Search Associates which is popular.

What is most important for you during a job search?

- 1. Core values of the school and a job description that fits my experience.
- 2. The subject and level, then salary and stability of the country.
- 3. Quality of employer, salary, potential for growth, colleagues & location.
- 4. The country itself (location) is the single biggest deciding factor.
- 5. IB experience so I could work in an international school
- 6. Does the school have environmental, emotional, and DEIJ programs in place? Do I have a place where I could grow and/or shine?

Making the IB Happen at OBS Het Startpunt International School

WRITTEN BY PRINCIPAL MARLEEN DE KLEIJN
(EDITED BY HANNAH RASMUSSEN)

As the principal of Startpunt International in The Hague I can look back at the last 10-15 years I have worked here and say I am proud and happy with how far we have come to reach this point.

Startpunt International is a public primary school in the Schilderswijk of The Hague. This neighbourhood is a disadvantaged area with high rates of unemployment and crime. Most of the families living in the area have a low social economic status and when you hear something about Schilderswijk in the news it's mostly because of crime rates or riots. We have really made an effort to change that image of this neighbourhood and especially our school. When I started working at Startpunt International, the school and neighbourhood were both unsafe. Back in those days, we needed the police to attend our report nights because it was not safe to leave the school by ourselves at night.

Additionally, we had behavioural problems amongst the students and there was a lack of motivation to learn across the grades. There was one instance of a teacher punishing a student for their behaviour and at the end of their workday the teacher found their car with flat tires. We also have had fathers fighting family feuds in the hallway or conducting long distance calls to relatives abroad.

Due to the language barrier amongst the student body our attention was on languages and mathematics. Of course, school is not only about languages and mathematics, but at that time we as a school did not know how to help the students reach the level they needed. There was not enough time to close the gap. Luckily a project set up by the local government allowed us to lengthen the school days by six hours a week, which allowed us to broaden the list of lessons we could offer. Suddenly, we had the time to teach additional sports, drama, dancing, arts and cooking lessons in an inquiry-based manner. It became clear that inquiry-based learning started to motivate our students, even the toughest cookies in the classroom had their tongue out of their mouth while working on their projects. We tried to involve the parents as much as possible and slowly but surely, our school became a safer and nicer place to be.

Six years ago, the school reached a turning point. We were still teaching in an old-fashioned way, where the teacher would talk all day and the students had to listen and raise their hand if they knew the answer. Apart from using digital whiteboards not much had changed from the way our grandparents were taught. My team was very adamant on the fact that something really needed to change. We were not preparing the students for their futures, but only tormenting them. It was this sense of urgency in my team that we needed to begin looking for a change. The school board was asked if we would like to try out IB education. Before this question, we had never heard of the IB programme. One of the headquarters of the IB is located in The Hague, but there are no public IB schools in the area. IB itself was curious as well to see how the IB education would work in a school like ours, in other words, not a typical international school, but rather a public primary school in a disadvantaged area.

Diving into it, the team visited international schools, read an abundance of literature and followed the "Making the PYP happen in the classroom" training. Everyone was in awe while admiring this beautiful and well thought out way of teaching.

In the Netherlands, there are always attempts to invent new ways to educate children and if something doesn't seem to work, it won't be continued and something new will get invented. However, this messing around is the last thing our students need.

Most students at Startpunt are from Schilderswijk and because they were born in this neighbourhood and have foreign names, they must fight harder to reach the same positions in life as their Dutch peers. It is truly inequality of opportunity for these children.

Initially the IB programme worked with a lot of expat communities, for instance, families moving internationally that didn't want their children to have a dip in their education due to the moves. This framework of education and teaching we know as the IB today was invented, only the content would be different, but the way of teaching remains the same amongst all schools using the IB concept. At Startpunt we work with the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and the Dutch curriculum. However, the IB consists of four programmes in total and the result of following all four programmes is that universities worldwide open their doors for students, which Startpunt really wants for its students – a good start into their lives with excellent education.

The decision to completely change Startpunt was unanimous and my whole team said yes with a capital Y. Startpunt became an IB candidate school, and we have since then fallen in love with the concept. A concept that has been researched thoroughly and thinks about everything that needs to be taught to children and the best way to teach it. For the past three years we as a team have completely changed our way of teaching, our way of thinking and our way of looking at children and the way they learn.

We have gotten into this positive flow as a team because of the joint effort to improve Startpunt and what really kept us motivated were the small successes we witnessed along the way. Another motivator was the Erasmus+ grant we received, which could be used on professionalization. IB was not very known in the Netherlands at the time, so to receive the correct training, the team had to travel to Vienna in 2019.

Student ownership is crucial in the PYP, meaning the students can choose what they want to learn, how they want to learn and where and with whom they want to learn. This increases the student motivation, which we also witnessed at Startpunt. Nonetheless, the most important outcome has been that we are teaching our students various skills, such as, thinking skills, social skills, communication skills, self-management skills and research skills.

Through explicitly teaching these skills we have seen students become more equipped to understand content, but also how the world works and their role in it, including open-mindedness and caring towards others. The behavioural problems we were facing 10 years ago have vanished. Last year the school celebrated Purple Friday, which would have been unthinkable of back then.

By becoming an IB school and offering this education for free, other students have joined Startpunt as well. Children from all of The Hague have started studying here, including expats and other 18 nationalities.

Our big, scary neighbourhood isn't so scary anymore and the school has become as safe haven. This mix of culture reflects the city's population much better than before and has made us all richer – the more the merrier.

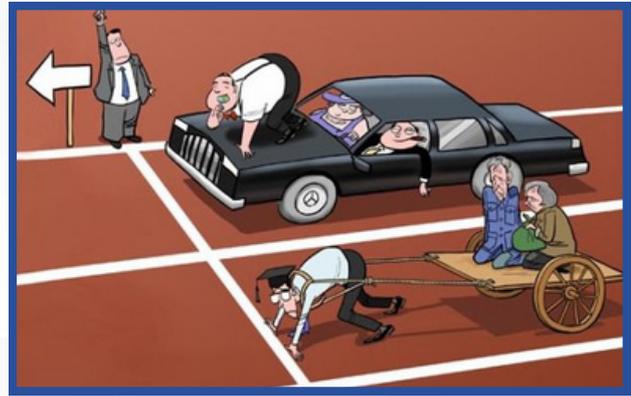
After three years (and 1.5 years of Covid) we were officially authorised by the IB programme in July 2020 and have become the first Dutch language IB World-school in the world. As a team we are so impressed by the change it has brought to our school and our students and we hope that our story can inspire other schools to become IB schools as well.

Stichting Move:

Equality of Opportunity in the Dutch Education System

SASKIA KAMMINGA

Unfortunately, there are still a lot of inequalities in the Dutch education system. In our presentations we often refer to the image you see here. Children are basically all running a running competition in life. On one hand you have a child with a backpack with a drink and some food in it, and his parents and family all cheering him up from the side line. And on the other hand, you have a child with a backpack filled with heavy stones and no one to support him, so they have to run the competition all alone. Although most children in the Netherlands have a promising start and grow up healthy and safe, there are major differences between municipalities and also between neighborhoods within municipalities. Rotterdam for example belongs to one of the cities in the Netherlands where there is a lot of poverty, followed by Groningen and Amsterdam.



The circumstances in which children grow up and develop play a crucial role in this. Poverty and debts, especially if they play a role for a long time, increase the chance of a less good start.

The difference between poor and rich, young and old, white and coloured, practical and theoretical educated is becoming bigger and bigger. In the Dutch education system it is not naturally so that children with different social backgrounds have similar chances in life.



MOVE

Stichting Move strives for more equality among youth in the Netherlands. We do so by matching children from a school located in a vulnerable neighborhood with students. Together they are going to do something good for the area of their school. For example, by helping the elderly, or by organizing a party for neighbors or by making an artwork to make the neighborhood more colorful. During the project, children and students find out their talents, develop a project together and get to know people in the area. Furthermore, children get a glimpse of student life and students step outside their student bubble by learning about disadvantaged neighborhoods in their student city.

History of Stichting Move

Move started in 2009 as a student initiative in Utrecht to help primary school children from vulnerable neighborhoods discover their worth. In 2007 students from rowing club Orca in Utrecht set up a committee to connect students, children and a housing corporation. The goal of this very first 'Move committee' was to get students and children to take action together for their neighborhood. Finally, they provided a new playground equipment, called Aeroplay, to improve their neighborhood, and the children started rowing with the students.

After the success of Aeroplay, the student committee wanted to enthuse other associations, and this is how the idea came up to set up Move in several cities. In 2009 the committee received support from the Oranje Fonds. They challenged the students to think bigger and that's how the Move foundation was created. Since then Move has grown a lot and is now active in 14 cities in the Netherlands.

Our Projects

At the moment there are five different type of projects you can do with Stichting Move.

Move je buurt: In our primary school project called Move je buurt, a student committee of five to six students will do a project with children from schools in neighborhoods with socio-economic disadvantage. These children are in class seven or eight, so they are about 10 to 14 years old. During the project the students and children have the full responsibility of thinking and organizing the project. Together the students and children will think of something good they can do for the neighborhood of the school. Through this project the children and students discover and develop their talents. This is a very interesting project for the schools which will take four to six months in total. During this period the students and children will come together seven times for think and so sessions, a student excursion and a festive ending to celebrate the outcome of the project.

Move your world: Move your world is a high school project for pre-vocational education. This project is for children in year one and two, so they are around 12 to 15 years old. This project is lead by two students from a university. This project is shorter than the primary school project because it will take seven class hours in total divided into four sessions. In these sessions they will take action for the neighborhood as well, so the project is similar to Move je buurt project but then shorter.

Move in 1 dag: During this project children and students will take action for other people and the neighborhood in just one day. So it is similar to Move je buurt, but in this case it will be a small project then can be done in only one day. Two students will do this project with a group of children from nine to twelve years old. This project mostly takes place in holidays and because of that we work together with community centers, sports associations, playgrounds and after-school care.

Move maatje: With Move maatje we connect a student to a child that will go from primary school to high school. The idea of this project is that students will help the children by making this transition, for example by looking at different high schools together, but also what is involved in the step to secondary school. Think of lockers, friendships and school times. But also on themes such as: who am I, what do I like and where does my talent lie?

Whats Next: What's Next is our newest program which is a high school project for students in class three and four of pre-vocational education. In this project the students will focus on career orientation and talent development, so they will look at what they would like to do after they finish high school.

Do you want children and young people to discover their talents and their impact on their surroundings? Join Move!

www.stichtingmove.nl

In a vast dark landscape with the lights of Steenwijk on the horizon, lies the large farmhouse belonging to Ellen Boerma and her husband. They live in the house at the front and the rear part of the farmhouse provides shelter to 26 Ukrainian refugees. On this dark December evening, they are being taught English by students from the International Teacher Education programme.

"The people living here really want to work but there's a language barrier," says Ellen Boerma. "So I contacted NHL Stenden and we now have some fantastic young trainee teachers who have volunteered to teach English every week. I'm impressed by how thorough their teaching is. I myself regularly join the advanced group and I see the enormous progress being made and how that makes them increasingly motivated. They notice that in the Netherlands you can start a conversation with just a few English words!"

In two large cosy rooms decorated for Christmas, the Ukrainian course participants and the four students meet. It's cosy and they chat for a while first but soon the groups are divided and things get serious. "It's hard work," says Sonya a young girl who studies at home during the day. Her fellow students are at the secondary school in Meppel during the day, but they come together in the advanced group being taught by Hannah and Josephine, two students from Germany and Switzerland, who are studying International Teacher education for Primary Schools in Meppel. The two students see volunteer work as only natural. "During an internship at a school, I took care of a student from China who couldn't yet understand our language at all," says Hannah. Josephine taught previously in Germany: "A friend of mine is from Syria and I taught him German, I think it makes sense to do this here. It's fun to do and I learn from it myself too. We brainstorm the lessons together and it's nice to see how it's picked up."

Obligingly, she quickly turns back to her students to explain the differences between theirs and they. The other group is larger. Gracie from Germany and Francesca from Italy are teaching the class and start with a game. The students form two rows and Gracie shows different pictures. The student at the front has to give the right answer in English and then gets to join the back of the row again. Then there are chocolates brought by the girls and they work



MARJANNE TEUNISSEN

'With just a few English words you can start a conversation in the Netherlands!'

ITEPS Students Giving English Lessons to Ukrainian Students

quietly on a writing task. Gracie gently explains that she lived near a refugee shelter in Germany. She thought it was only natural to teach there. "But I was still very young and didn't have much experience in front of the classroom. When I heard they were looking for people here again, I was eager to do it. I also notice that I have more experience now and my actual teaching is better." Francesca had also previously done volunteer work in Italy. "I like to do my bit. If I can help people then I will," she whispers so as not to disturb her students, and if one has a question she walks straight over.

"After the Christmas holidays, the lessons will end for a while," says Ellen Boerma. "It's very unfortunate because these girls are worth their weight in gold. They do this in their own time and prepare well, but they'll be doing internships. The idea is that they pick the lessons up again in the spring."



Reflections From ITE Students On Teaching Practice

Brussels, Belgium

ITEPS Student: Teaching Practice 1

What was/is a key moment for you?

My very first day of teaching practice was my birthday, and the children sang the birthday song in three different languages for me. I also got to go on a class trip to Austria with them a few months later.

In what areas or ways did you grow as a teacher?

I learned to be more strict with the boundaries and rules I set, because even though I felt like I was being "strict", I recognized that children need this kind of guidance and structure.

Any other great stories or adventures?

On my last day, the students all gave me a "compliment shower" where they said one nice thing about me. Each of them made a card for me as well. It warmed my heart.

Cologne, Germany

ITESS Student: Teaching Practice 1

What was/is a key moment for you?

Receiving feedback from students.

In what areas or ways did you grow as a teacher?

I have become more confident, resilient and creative with planning.

Any other great stories or adventures?

The staff was great, ready to help, and provided you with personal space in the teachers' room.

Utrecht, The Netherlands

ITEPS Student: Teaching Practice 2

In what areas or ways did you grow as a teacher?

Pedagogical: Learning to give compliments and be able to work as a specialist (switching between classes and atmospheres, adapting and learning from feedback).

Any other great stories or adventures?

The Kings Day event: I practiced the dance of that year with KG to grade 2, and it was fun when I took the lead as main dancing coach.

Tampico, Mexico

ITESS Student: Teaching Practice 4

What was/is a key moment for you?

The moment I got to co-design the mindfulness activities that were to be implemented during advisory hours.

In what areas or ways did you grow as a teacher?

Classroom management, assessment, creating units, differentiation, SEN students and their needs, interacting and collaborating with colleagues, interdisciplinary teaching, communication with parents/caretakers, giving students agency in their learning, creative products.



What Is Home?

An Interview With a Global Nomad

GABRIELLE WILSON



The countries of Northern Europe were highlighted in blue, just as my late grandfather said they would have been. We laughed at the knowing of my unintentional migration back to the very roots of my family tree.

The earth is wide, teeming with exciting prospects of escapades. All the same, I believe it would be fair to infer that most humans look to have a steadfast, assuring element of their life as they venture forward. The longer I study to become an international teacher, the deeper I wonder where the sense of homecoming stems from, especially for those who may have many "homes". I am certain that my worldly students will enter my classroom hoping to experience something of this nature, that is, a homecoming of sorts. I can imagine their desperation for something consistent and reliable; or perhaps not, I have yet to meet them. Nevertheless it is my intention to create that essence of home for my class as they undertake the virtuous affairs of education.

Over the holidays, I sat next to my older brother at his kitchen table in The United States as he scrolled through his "23 and Me" ancestry breakdown. He turned his phone screen to me and showed me where our family history began, according to the DNA test results.

Despite having been raised on the central coast of California, I felt that I had returned home when I moved to Europe. What is it about this continent that ignites my passions and shares an affinity with me? Could it be simply ancestry? Love and need for aesthetics? A supernatural trust in the pull that I have towards the lands and languages?

Some days I look across the endless emerald plains of Drenthe wondering how, in all the world, I came to settle in The Netherlands. More deeply, I wonder how, in all the world, I came to find a sense of home in this idyllic northern paradise, where the air is chill and the sun is an introvert. I found myself asking the question of "what is home?" here, where as before I pondered it in France in November of 2019.



Vin rouge swirled in my glass as I stood in an art exhibition in the 7th arrondissement of Paris. My dear friend, and host of the event, stood on a chair in majesty, addressing the crowd;

"What is home?" she asked.

She broke into a poetic chorus, painting the essence of "home" to life with her words and utopian daydreams. I stood back in wonder, lacing my glances across gallery walls littered in editorial photographs of loaded dishwashers and European street life. "What is home?" I pondered.

My poet friend later shared that five-hundred individuals, to whom she posed this same question, left her with the consensus of "home is not a place, it's about community and belonging, comfort and culture; and most importantly it transcends borders." ¹ She concurs that home is both here and there.

As a future international teacher, where should I begin with implementing it in my practice? Is there a core feature to "home" that most can relate to?

It has been three years since that Parisian art show. This year, with curiosity as my fuel, I went on to survey my friends who have lived or have been raised beyond borders, or have simply left "home" to find their own.

"Home is where my family is, and the friends who become family" says one.

"Home is where my favourite chocolate bars are sold in the grocery stores" says another.

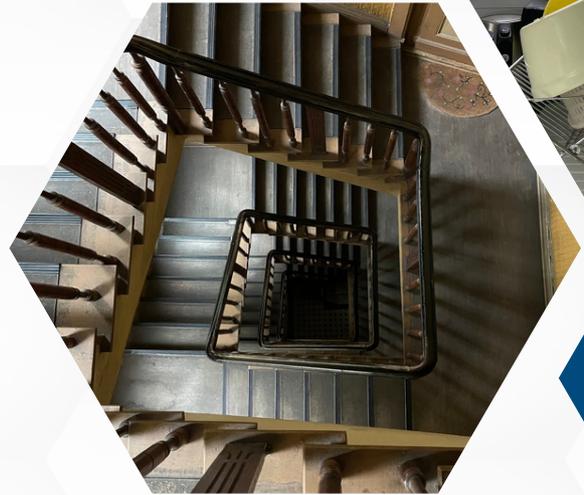
"When I am able to honour my culture with decor and familiar foods, I can find home wherever I go."

I laugh as a friend tells me that "home is where you can walk around with no pants on."

I come away from these comments, agreeing that home is indeed, here and there; defying borders and space under roofs. Yet I wanted to hear more on this notional phenomenon; so I phoned one of the most nomadic individuals I have known. I couldn't have thought of a better person to call and ask: What is home?

"Hi!" Melodee's bright American voice beamed through my phone speaker.

Melodee was born into an American family, and raised on the West Coast of Africa as a child of expats. She is a woman who has known many homes, having her life's memories spread across a sum of three continents, four countries, and five American states. She estimates that in the thirty-eight years of her life, she has lived in thirty different houses,



not including the months she spent living for adventure in the back of her pickup truck or volunteering on voyaging hospital ships. I happened to meet her when we were both living in Berlin, Germany; just one of the many places she has familiarised herself with.

"Home is never a place or house," she says almost immediately.

I ask in return, "Then, what is home to you? What is something you look for when establishing a sense of home?"

Melodee goes on to explain to me how important community is to her as a "third culture kid" (TCK), a person who leans deeply and lovingly into friendships that emulate a sense of belonging. She tends to wear her heart on her sleeve, sharing her life openly with those who are introduced to her.

"You don't want to feel like you need to let go of parts of yourself, so you throw pieces of yourself out there to see if something sticks, and to see if someone can meet you where you're at."

What tends to stick for Melodee is the commonalities between her and other third culture people. She has forged ardent relationships with other global nomads, keeping up with them continually throughout the years of her wayfaring and the seasonal dances of her life.

"We have that similar desire for home - we understand each other," she mentions.

She built friendships such as these at the age of six when she began attending an international boarding school on the Ivory Coast of Africa.

It was at this school that Melodee blossomed with a core friend group of TCKs that shared an understanding of each other's bohemian inheritance of imported living, scavenging for a place to share with those they relate to.

Melodee and her friends' lives were closely intertwined for nine months out of the year for twelve consecutive years. The rapport² they had built was in the likeness of a family, making the boarding school a sort of home for the students; an ideal environment for children of travellers to reap and sow the seeds of wanderlust together, before graduating and dispersing across hemispheres. Melodee and her friends, of course, still stay in touch.

"It was just an amazing school," Melodee says, "It was my home."

"What were the teachers like?" I asked.

I was charmed to hear that the teachers, international themselves, volunteered their time and resources to come to the Ivory Coast and teach the students with great pleasure. Melodee remarks that her education was so wonderful because of the joy and passion her educators devoted to their little, multicultural classrooms. The aforementioned rapport seemed to have translated between staff and students as well, as teachers dedicated their craft to the upbringing of the learners.





"We always felt safe and included, because that was the nature of our boarding school. The teachers were fabulous. We got an amazing education because the teachers were fun and wanted to teach us."

I am learning that the essence of home can be found in trust itself; home is the notion and offspring of trust and esteem—it is refuge and safety.

That may come off as rather ethereal, but I cannot foresee any place or person deemable as "home" without a cause to trust it. Perhaps Melodee is right; home cannot be a place, as location is subject to the devastating attributes of this world, and thus cannot be trusted.

Today, ICA does not exist. Shortly after Melodee's graduation, the campus was caught in the seam of heavy battle at the outbreak of first Ivorian Civil War in 2002, and permanently closed in 2005. Though its site is still a place of community and education, serving medical students and other trainees as they fashion their future professional lives ⁵. I can think of many similar stories, where dwelling places become as the trenches, sending ex-inhabitants to invent a new refuge to build a trust in. In this case, rapport could never be any more important.

"I can never go back to my boarding school, because what it was for me no longer exists in that place," Melodee remarks with sorrow. All of those who have been at the school are elsewhere now, expanding Melodee's network of "home" that much further.

Melodee's constant, however, is her family.

"My parents and my siblings have been my constant, and they could be anywhere. I can't have all of me in one place; I leave and take a little bit of me everywhere I go."

I find it interesting that Melodee hints she has many "homes", seeming to find something trustworthy wherever she looks for it, and wherever she is invited. Perhaps this is true for most nomadic individuals, especially those of a third culture. Third culture kids are a mosaic of sorts; friends and family are the ever-trustworthy glue that cements their pioneering world.

I probe her with a final question, wondering what she is doing right now to feel at home in Berlin, where she has been living for the past several years.

"My job right now, as a mom, is to create home for my kids; a safe place where they can be who they really are."

I imagine that, for her own third culture children, Melodee and her American husband are the glue that keeps their lives steady and sure, as they grow into the unique individuals they were meant to be. Melodee now watches her children grow in the glimmering expansion of their own international mosaic, as they travel the world, speak a new language, and step into their own personal sense of home, wherever they may be.

I come away from this research with the hypothesis that home is verily a faithful fulfiller of human needs, but home leaves enough room for the human mind to self-actualise and exercise the use of personal gifts. Teachers, may our classrooms be a beautiful, culturally sensitive refuge that is worthy of our student's trust, not because of where it is at, but who is within it. May our students be inspired and find belonging as they sprout into the unique individuals they were always meant to be. Let us partner ² with students and citizens of the world, advocating for refuge and peace in a building outside of their dwelling place. Let us set the goal to welcome them and provide a sense of consistency in their ever changing world. Let us go deep with them, and bring home to them in the process.

As for myself, home is certainly where I find beauty, for I know where there is beauty, surely there are better things to follow.



So now, as I look across these plains, I am no longer puzzled by my series of fortunate events that lead me to this whimsical world of wild fruit and abandoned kingdoms. I know, full well, that my needs are fulfilled here, nestled in the Dutch countryside where I have a tiny apartment and a neighbourhood cat to share it with. I say to myself: Home is here and there. Home is where my loved ones are, and where I am welcomed. Home is where there are bits of myself waiting for me to discover them, and add them to my mosaic. I have surely found reflections of my own heart scattered in every stranger's smile and distant pang of a mediaeval church bell.

Perhaps I am romanticising too much; or perhaps I am settling in. Either way, it's beautiful.

May we all find home, and know it. May we share it.

Resources

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Extra Links:

<https://www.tuscaloosaneews.com/story/news/2002/09/27/tuscaloosa-native-family-remain-in-ivory-coast/27827984007/>

A DREAM IN ACTION

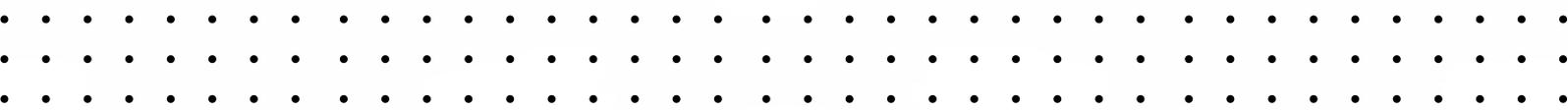
CECILIA DOMINGUEZ
ALTAMIRANO

Every challenge that arises opens up a world of possibilities. For the first time in history, the whole world faced the same challenge at the same time: school closures due to the pandemic. A small group of parents in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, who refused to keep their children in remote learning, decided to face this challenge by getting their kids together to do homeschooling under the teachings of Fanny Altamirano, a life-long teacher, and a mother of two bright young daughters. She turned her living room and kitchen into learning areas, and hosted 8 children in the newly founded "Escuelita" (little school). Against the traditional schooling trend that overran all through the city, Fanny went out of the box to foster Project-Based Learning and students' agency and independence. Even with the imminent return to in-person learning, the parents were so impressed with their kids' newly found joy for going to school that they asked Fanny to keep going with this innovative Escuelita. Sometimes you find yourself in the right place at the right time, and all you have to do is take a leap. You see, Fanny is my aunt. The pandemic sent me back to Mexico during my last year as an ITEPS student. I was about to hand in my Bachelor Thesis with an enormous question mark about my future, in times when it was difficult to leave the country, and national schools were still closed by official mandate.

As a side job, I was giving short workshops to various teachers, sharing some of the most important lessons I learned in ITEPS. Fanny asked me to give her and her Spanish teacher a math workshop: teaching through problem solving (yeah math!). By the end of the second session, she told me about her decision to continue with La Escuelita, to expand it, and turn it into a Learning Community. In uncertain times, she was certain that the learning community was not going to be incorporated to the national ministry of education who would then dictate the curricula. She wanted to break ground.

In two seconds, my head was overflowing with ideas about the best programs and where to get the best teachers (a.k.a. ITEPS). In two days, I had spoken with her about becoming partners. In two weeks, we had picked the name for the school. It took two phone calls to get our first international ITEPS graduate on board: Lena Lange. This is how Liberty Educational Community (LEC) was founded.

With three heads full of ideas and three passionate teacher hearts, we picked the best problem-based, student-centered programs that Lena and I had found in our TPs (teaching practices). After a summer of painting walls and turning a house into a school, we began the school year with 12 PreK-5 students enrolled. A few Inquiry Units, Writer's Workshops and Big Problems later, we are about to end the school year with 35 students who can barely fit in the classrooms, and are seeking to build new classrooms for next year.



Lena and I were not only able to implement all the crazy ideas accumulated during four crazy ITEPS years right after graduating; we were also able to connect a network of international teachers with local students.

It was a beautiful surprise to discover that parents and students in Puerto Vallarta were ready to take a leap out of a traditional schooling system and embark in an educational experience where students can explore the world through problems, projects and reading, and express their thoughts in writing, acting, and laughing. A community where learning can be fun, where students can learn a foreign language in multi grade groups, where six graders play in the yard with kindergartners and help them feed the school animals and take care of the plants.

This year was a beautiful surprise. Our hope is that as LEC grows, so does its connection with the wonderful ITEPS community of teachers.



Learning to Live Together and Educational Segregation: A Paradox For International Schools?

Guido Walraven

Last Fall ITEPS organized the conference 'Towards Education Without Barriers'. Inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities are urgent issues and especially educational inequality and segregation are also complex and difficult to tackle. For instance in the Netherlands educational segregation is growing and the Inspectorate of Education is worried about an increasing number of students growing up in "bubbles of like-minded". The impact is not only on individuals but also on the society at large. If students do not meet and study with youngsters of diverse backgrounds (socio-economic, cultural, etcetera), how can they learn to live together? That question is also highly important for international schools.

Learning to live together is one of the key pillars of education in the 21st century, as a UNESCO Commission chaired by Jacques Delors identified in 1996. It involves the development of social and inter-personal skills, values such as respect and concern for others, and an appreciation of the diversity among people. All those qualities are crucial for a democratic diverse society.

Migration in an age of globalization has made the population in many countries more diverse, if you look at socio-economic status, education, culture, gender, belief, ethnicity/race, and more. In those societies diversity is a fact. Some say 'Diversity is the mix, inclusion is making the mix work', so if you care about social cohesion in society you have no choice but to be committed and active in inclusion. That also means connecting (groups of) people through encounter and dialogue. Schools are a perfect place to practice that all – if and when the student population is diverse, that is. Especially for international schools that condition poses a problem.

International Schools: Lopsidedly Diverse?

On the one hand international schools welcome students from all over the world. For instance the United World College 'makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future'. The student composition is diverse in terms of nationalities and cultural heritage.

On the other hand most students and their parents at international schools share much of the same background: they have mostly the same social, cultural and economic capital. In those respects the student composition is rather homogeneous and international schools are "bubbles of like-minded".

(Scholarships for students whose parents cannot afford the school fees do not change that substantially.) Some might add that international schools therefor enhance school segregation and educational inequality.

This paradox can be explained using the concept of bonding and bridging, two types of social capital (Putnam, 2000). Bonding is about feeling belonging and connectedness with people who are similar to you in many ways, e.g. because they are family or belong to the same social group or class. Bridging is connecting with people who are different to you in many ways. Both types are valuable, for instance bonding for identity formation and bridging differences for social cohesion; both are about trust and sharing networks. International schools are mainly strengthening bonding.

Twinning and More

If international schools want to do more for bridging and for learning to live together in diversity, they need to organize activities around encounter and dialogue with local groups and communities outside school. It is nice that the International Primary Curriculum 'helps learners move toward national, international, global, and intercultural perspectives', and I know from observation in several countries they do, but nothing beats experiencing sustainable and meaningful contact with learners that are different in many respects. The international school needs to organize that type of contact as part of the learning process – preparing, doing, reflecting and evaluating. Using the motivational ABC of learners -- autonomy, belonging and competence. Keeping in mind that relationships need to be tantamount and reciprocal – both for the students and for their organizations, for instance a local school, sports club or cultural institution. Twinning might be a way of securing sustainable relations over a long period of time.

In short, the three conditions for effective activities regarding encounter and dialogue need to be taken into account: equal status between groups, cooperation between groups, and support from institutional authorities. Apart from that, longer duration and higher intensity of the contact enhances results such as diminishing prejudice and enlarging empathy. The three conditions are corroborated by decades of consistent research on the contact hypotheses (originally formulated by Gordon Allport).

As far as international schools are concerned, the first condition might be the most difficult to realize. Since more contact also enlarges the chance of conflict, as the conflict hypothesis predicts, part of the activities might be focused on learning to deal with conflict nonviolently and in a democratic manner. That is just another skill in the process of learning to live together.

Citizenship Education

Learning to live together in a democratic diverse society is part of citizenship education. National schools still tend to focus on national citizenship, whereas international schools have more opportunities to use perspectives on people as citizens of the world who have responsibilities towards urgent issues like global warming, inequalities between the North and the South, and global justice. The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (SDG's) offer an adequate and inspiring framework for that type of citizenship education.

At the same time, international schools have a responsibility to reflect on their own role towards SDG's, and especially to act on the ones on high quality of education and reducing inequalities. We know schools can make a difference on those subjects. Bernstein (1970) is often quoted incompletely in that respect; the full quote is: "School cannot compensate for society, but schools that aspire to be 'incubators of democracy' have a moral duty to try". There is an undeniable link between aspiring to be 'incubators of democracy' and learning to live together and adequate citizenship education, so that is one thing international schools have a moral duty to try.

As far as their own students and curriculum are concerned, that is a feasible task. But as soon as schools and other institutions in the local setting of an international school are involved, the task becomes more delicate and complex. Sometimes also less feasible, depending for instance on the possibilities to develop a common vision of the local school and the international school on citizenship education. Working towards education without barriers in some of those cases might be a long road with small steps, but we still have a moral duty to try.

By Way of Conclusion

Educational inequality and segregation are complex issues and they are also barriers to educational equality. There are no easy ways to break down those barriers, but we cannot afford to do nothing, we have to try.

Diversity is a fact, we have no choice but to work for inclusion, and for bridging between groups with diverse backgrounds is a necessity. That is a social task for all schools, be they national or international.

For further reading

<https://www.gemengdescholen.nl/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Towards-perspectives-for-research-policy-and-practice-rethinking-educational-inequality-and-segregation-in-Dutch-primary-education.pdf>

(Article in Educational Review by Boterman & Walraven)

www.gemengdescholen.nl (website, in Dutch)

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