

NEWS

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Rick Formeli

Tom Schimmer

Naomi Woolsey

Bernaje

WTI

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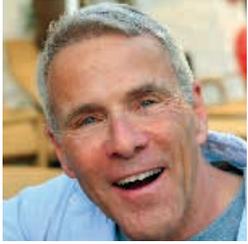
Cheza Al Kudmani

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WELCOME TO THE 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR...

Dear Friends and Colleagues Across the NESABO Region,

"From Cairo to Kathmandu": that's a phrase we use when writing to speakers about NESABO. And although our boundaries are actually Libya and Greece in the west to Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India in the east, the phrase does illustrate the richness and the challenges of our region. It's a wonderful part of the world. . .and we welcome you to it (or back to it!) for another year of teaching and learning.

And speaking of learning, we have some outstanding professional development opportunities ahead of us this year. With the help of our Professional Development Advisory Committee, we have organized our conferences and institutes with you and your schools in mind. Check inside this issue of "NESABO News" to learn more. We hope to see all of you at least once during the course of the year.

Finally, as the year begins, I want to share a poem with you. It speaks to the dedication you bring to working together in schools across the region, and it expresses our admiration for you:

To Be of Use

*The people I love the best
jump into work head first
without dallying in the shallows
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.
They seem to become natives of that element,
The black sleek heads of seals
bouncing like half-submerged balls....*

*I want to be with people who submerge
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest
and work in a row and pass the bags along,
who are not parlor generals and field deserters
but move in a common rhythm
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.*

- Marge Piercy

Here's to a great 2015-2016, working and learning collaboratively, "in a common rhythm"!

With best wishes from your friends in the NESABO Center,

David Chojnacki
NESABO Executive Director

From the NESABO Board President:

On behalf of the NESABO Board of Trustees, I welcome you to a new school year of collaborative learning opportunities with NESABO. We look forward to meeting you at one of our conferences or institutes scheduled this year in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Muscat, and Bangkok. Under the exceptional leadership of Executive Director David Chojnacki and his staff at the NESABO Center, we are providing unique opportunities for professional development in support of sustainable and systemic school improvement. We encourage board members, administrators, teachers, and support staff to join us.

This year, the NESABO Board is focusing its efforts on an important leadership transition. After 18 years of serving NESABO, David Chojnacki will be resigning as Executive Director effective July 2017. We in NESABO realize how fortunate we have been to collaborate with such a dynamic, intelligent, and visionary leader. David's contribution to education in our schools continues to have a remarkable impact on the way we lead, learn, teach, and care for others. We look forward to his continued leadership over these next two years.



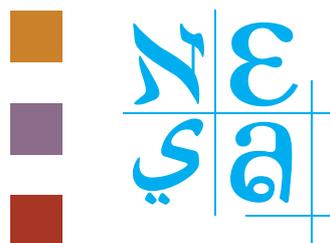
▲ Kevin Schafer with the NESABO staff, (l-r) Laura, Maria, Jill and Aristeia, at the NESABO Center in Athens last January. (Not pictured: Bridget Doogan)

The Board plans to make an announcement regarding the Executive Director search process prior to September 2015, and will finalize a selection early in 2016. Our commitment is to select a leader that will continue to lead the schools in our region and beyond in creating dynamic and collaborative professional relationships that transcend current barriers and boundaries as we serve our students and communities.

Kevin Schafer

President, NESABO Board of Trustees

Director, The American International School of Muscat, Sultanate of Oman





Planning Sustained Professional Learning in NESAs

By Bridget Doogan, NESAs Director of Professional Learning

As an organization dedicated to the professional learning of educators, NESAs planning process is guided by seven core principles. Based on Learning Forward's *Standards for Professional Learning* and adapted by NESAs Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) they serve both as a guide to planning NESAs conferences and institutes as well as a lens for periodic self-assessment.

Professional Learning

1. occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
2. supports and sustains long-term change.
3. promotes alignment between educator practice and student learning.
4. requires skillful leaders who develop professional capacity.
5. uses a variety of data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional performance.
6. prioritizes and monitors resources aligned to school-wide goals.
7. integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve intended outcomes.

“Standards for Professional Learning,” 2015

Principles 1 and 2 have at their core the imperative to sustain specific program strands over time, so that they may both impact educator practice and, therefore, student learning. For the PDAC, supporting and sustaining long-term change has thus become a key driver in planning NESAs professional development events. However, the intention to sustain initiatives over time raises a number of key questions. What should we focus on? What learning designs should we use? How will we know we are being effective?

What should we focus on? Comprised of learning leaders from member schools, the PDAC itself serves as a primary source for the identification of needs and impact data to inform planning. To gather similar data from the wider NESAs community, PDAC developed a comprehensive needs assessment. Member schools were asked to identify their professional learning needs and place them on our Continuum of Implementation. (Figure 1) Administered in the spring of 2014, the priorities that emerged form the basis of the 2015-2016 NESAs conference and institute program.

What learning designs should we use? A second consequence of the intent to sustain initiatives over multiple years is the need to offer differentiated professional learning. NESAs plans must support schools' progressions across the continuum, via the professional learning pathway of individual teachers. Accordingly, conference and institute presenters are advised of a target level, or range of levels, on the continuum.

In recent years NESAs conference design reflects a steady decrease in short, stand-alone workshops and an increase in longer sessions that promote deeper understanding. These include three-hour workshops, extended multi-day workshops, pre-conferences, and two-day institutes. The prototype of last January's Winter Training Institute in Bahrain, in which large school teams came together to collaborate with colleagues from around the region on assessment, promoted depth, transfer, inter-school collaboration, and networking. It also included the use of 'in-house' expertise from NESAs schools.

The highest level on the continuum, Refining Practice, has challenged the PDAC to seek new learning designs to learn from the work of those further along the continuum. One approach has been to invite schools to serve as models or mentors to other schools through extended conference presentations. In support of expanding professional learning networks, our Twitter #nesachat was launched in February.

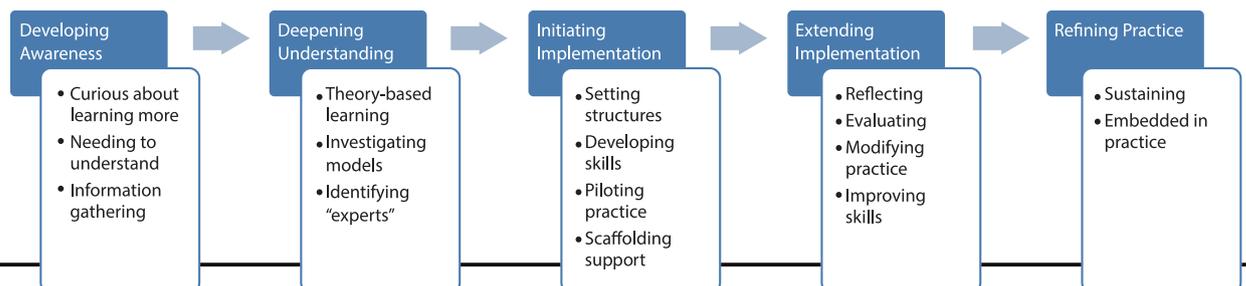
How will we know we are being effective? Our mentor, Tom Guskey, from the University of Kentucky, suggests the following be included in the evaluation of professional learning: (1) participants' reactions to the activities, (2) participants' learning of new knowledge and skills, (3) organizational support and change, (4) participants' use of new knowledge and skills, and (5) student learning outcomes (Guskey, 2000, 2002). With his guidance, the PDAC will be working to refine its approach to evaluation in the coming year.

NESAs is committed to continuous improvement, as we strive to support and sustain the learning needs of our schools and the educators we serve.

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- Guskey, T. R. (2000a). *Evaluating professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- "Standards for Professional Learning." *Learning Forward*. 2012. Web.

Figure 1: NESAs PDAC Continuum of Implementation



LINCOLN SCHOOL & THE NEPAL EARTHQUAKES

Lincoln School Kathmandu Earthquake Relief Fund

In response to the catastrophic earthquakes that struck Nepal on April 25 and May 12, many NESA schools launched fundraisers to assist Lincoln School-Kathmandu in its relief efforts. Schools held walk-a-thons, food sales, art auctions, benefit concerts, fundraising barbecues, and more. Lincoln has established the "Lincoln School Kathmandu Earthquake Relief Fund".

To donate go to: goo.gl/vZKe0E

Donations will go through a process of thorough vetting of needs to rebuild homes, provide medical supplies and support communities. No administrative costs will be incurred. To see how funds are distributed, go to the school website, lsnepal.com, and Facebook page: www.facebook.com/lsnepal.

The dedicated Earthquake Relief Fund Facebook page is located at:

www.facebook.com/LincolnSchoolKathmanduEarthquakeReliefFund

Here you can read about the many trips with supplies to local villages and about donations made by schools worldwide. Dozens of photos bring to life the aftermath of this disaster — and the outpouring of aid and compassion it has inspired.

Earthquake Plan: During and After

A well-organized and well-rehearsed earthquake-preparedness plan was instantly activated when both earthquakes struck. (Read about it in IT Director Bill Willis' account on the next page.) The school was inspected by several specialist teams following the earthquakes and found to be safe, which allowed regular school operations to resume within a week. Lincoln's online learning program, via Google Classroom (and Weebly for PS/PK-Grade 3), ran parallel to regular onsite classes until the end of the school year to support students who were unable to be on campus.

Lincoln Relief Efforts

School outreach to hard-hit areas surrounding Kathmandu began almost immediately, with several trips to mountain villages with supplies including plastic sheeting, ropes, blankets, cooking oil, salt and rice. All relief donations and how they were distributed were documented by village leaders.

The school has long-standing partnerships with several village schools, and provided assistance to begin repairs before the monsoon season. Upon learning that 5,000 schools in just one district of Nepal (Sindhupalchok) were leveled, Lincoln spearheaded an effort to connect other international schools with local schools destroyed in the earthquakes to help in the rebuilding process. Interested schools should send a message to Lincoln via the Relief Fund Facebook page at the link above. (See the May 18 post.)

Colored tarps are a tool to judge damage and if aid has reached a village.



A makeshift meal at school.



Command Center after the second quake.

Green means everyone is safe.

TAISM Mobilizes Earthquake Relief

The American International School of Muscat organized several events to raise funds for Lincoln School's earthquake relief efforts. Middle and high school students made soup bowls in art class and sold them along with a soup lunch for the Empty Bowl Project. They also contributed to the relief effort via the Buy a Brick fundraiser. Overall, more than USD \$4500, was sent to Lincoln School!

To extend their messages of hope and support for the Nepali people, TAISM students created flags (similar to prayer flags) for the 'Flags of Hope' banners on display in the cafeteria.



Check out these relief efforts on the video created by TAISM Counselor Dan Everett: <https://youtu.be/f3cfJ47fy8s>





< Far left: Linda Willis in front of destroyed houses.

< A family in front of a ruined house.



< Camp Lincoln.

Years of Preparation Put Into Practice: A Personal Reflection on the Kathmandu Earthquakes

By Bill Willis, Director of Technology, Lincoln School, Kathmandu, Nepal

Each year at Lincoln School we have earthquake drills. We take head counts; senior students and faculty set up triage tents and search and rescue teams. The school stocks blankets, water, medical supplies, and energy bars. We have plans for how parents and students will be reunited. We discuss our plans' pros and cons and revise as needed. This is a level of preparation I had never seen in my education career.

It happened so quickly. My wife Linda and I were at home. It was like a giant beast had grabbed the house and was shaking the contents out. Once it stopped, Linda got her shoes and jacket. I grabbed my boots, jacket, and our "go bags" by the door with essentials in case of a big earthquake. At Lincoln School, we found about 50 students, parents, teachers and staff in the middle of the field. We sat under leaden skies as wave after wave of aftershocks shook the ground.

Internet worked that first day. We passed out iPads, and many charged phones on school laptops. Between aftershocks, we pulled out emergency supplies, thick wool blankets and water. As the afternoon waned, we put up large, metal framed tents. With food from our home and the school canteen, Emily, a young, resourceful teacher, made a great meal on a gas stove. It was a cold, wet night. The only bright spot was connecting with our loved ones in the US. The cold and the rolling earth kept us all awake.

The next day, parents and students were reunited. There was no power, and batteries were running out. By evening we had set up a tent in our driveway. Then the heavens let loose, flooding our tent with water. So we slept indoors close to the door with clothes on. We learned at school the tents flooded, so everyone slept in school vans.

By the time we gathered as a staff four days later, we had gone through severe aftershocks, water shortages, and a rising sense of uncertainty. We bonded as if we had survived a battle. We set in motion our online learning for the families out of the country. Lincoln is a Google Apps campus and has been using Google Classroom since the school year began. We added calendar alerts for parents to monitor student assignments.

We set up a relief site to channel offers of financial help. After reaching out to several remote communities affected by the earthquake and learning their needs, we purchased sup-

plies locally with donated funds and delivered them, traveling along remote mountain roads. Linda and I accompanied a delivery of rice, oil, salt, blankets and tarps to the village of Balthali. A village leader took us on a tour. Over 90 percent of the homes were destroyed or severely damaged. He showed us how the tarps delivered on the previous trip were being used.

We mourn the loss of so much life. The devastation of world heritage sites saddens us, especially Bhaktapur. Nepal is not just mountains, temples, and ancient sites. It is the people. They are rich in spirit, generous and wise. When the roads are repaired and services are returned, visit Nepal and meet these wonderful people. We are glad we did.

Postscript, May 16:

By May 12, the country was finally getting back to normal. Then, during lunch at school, it started shaking. Everyone went under the cafeteria tables. It was a 7.3 earthquake. Again.

Years of training kicked in. Students and faculty gathered on the field. As the Ninth Grade leaders, Linda and I had our emergency bags, and took attendance: green card if all were accounted for, red if someone was missing. Every leader held up a green card. Everyone was safe.

We set up the command table. Internet still worked, but cell service was problematic. Via email, our webpage, and Facebook we reached out to our community. We set up the tents (again) and passed out water and food. Eventually roads were cleared, and students went home on school buses accompanied by staff members.

People are nervous. It is a city on edge. Nepal will have to move on, and we'll be back in August to help out.

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This article was excerpted from two blog posts: kathmandugurus.blogspot.com/2015/04/caught-in-kathmandu-earthquake.html, and kathmandugurus.blogspot.com/2015/05/earthquake-fatigue.html

To read about Lincoln's relief efforts in International Teacher magazine, visit: <http://consiliumeducation.com/itm/2015/05/27/nepal-earthquakes-tbs-and-lincoln-school-respond/>



< The Circle of Nations - a celebration of diversity and internationalism



Moving boldly into the future ^

AIS-Riyadh's New Campus: Built to Learn

By Shannon Haggard, Director of Development, and Mike Laird, Director of Human Resources and Communications, American International School-Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

At AIS-Riyadh, we believe a 21st Century education requires a 21st Century campus. We believe we must adapt the look and feel of our learning environment to meet the needs of our students and community. Therefore, as AIS-R's programs and instructional methods have evolved throughout its 51-year history, our needs for learning spaces and technologies have changed. This was the central idea behind the decision to construct a purpose-built, student-centered, K-12 campus.

After five years of planning and three years of construction, this dream became a reality in August, 2014. We happily moved in, on time, to our purpose-built campus about 45-minutes away from our former location. The AIS-R campus is "Built to Learn."

To create the campus for our future required that every area — be it three STEM/STEAM Labs, the 750-seat Theater, or the 2,100 square-meter Athletic Center — was conceptualized and constructed with student learning as the essential objective and so that the spaces would feel modern, bright, warm and welcoming.

From the Circle of Nations, which recognizes the 58 nationalities of students who call AIS-R home, to the multiple outdoor play areas and manicured landscaping, our new state-of-the-art campus was built for academic learning with cultural and aesthetic appreciation in mind.

Ultimately, what makes AIS-R such a special place is its community of creative thinkers. Our beautiful campus is an exceptional place to learn and grow because of the people who make it so extraordinary. It's the students who recently showcased their EAGLE spirit and artistic talents with the K-12 "Lip Dub" (View it at: <http://tinyurl.com/os4xovf>); it's the parents who support and engage with us in learning and change; it's the Board of Trustees and Leadership Team who relentlessly pursue excellence; and it's the faculty and staff who work tirelessly to educate and inspire our students to think creatively, reason critically, communicate effectively, and learn continuously.

It is this community of learners and teachers that will inevitably transform this newly constructed campus into a truly 21st Century home and allow AIS-R to continue its commitment to excellence and producing ethical world citizens for the next 50 years and beyond.

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take creativity. It is our choice to either walk through the process, doing what is required, or figure out how to make it a meaningful process in our schools and districts."

Open Heart - The capacity to redirect my perspective from my viewpoint to someone else's

Listening with empathy instead of cynicism is key to finding "common ground" and "local solutions" to problems of implementation of the new evaluation system: "The answers most often exist in the words of our teachers and colleagues." They cite the familiar example of "no time!" -- but what does that mean? Schedules can be reworked, committees reconfigured, our time better organized. There is always a way.

How ironic that policymakers search for creative and innovative teaching and learning by demanding compliance

Open Will - The capacity to let go and let come

The authors bluntly state, "We will be unable to lead our schools beyond this chaotic year if we cannot overcome the power of fear." Many educators have become paralyzed with "fear of a bad evaluation", blocking collaboration and improvement of everyone's performance. Leaders need new tools, beginning with "a personal journey inward" to be able to "let the future emerge".

Resource:
Scharmer, Otto C., (2009). *Theory U: Leading From the Future as It Emerges*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

From Education Week's blog, "Leadership 360", August 13, 2013, www.edweek.org, Leadership360@hotmail.com. Link to the post: tinyurl.com/q9z3udr. A link to a previous post about "blind spots", referencing Scharmer, is at: tinyurl.com/p9rrsax

NESA Virtual Science Fair 2014 - 2015

By Stuart Fleischer, NVSF Project Manager, WBAIS-Israel



▲ The winning NVSF5th team from ISOI-Islamabad: (l-r) Isabela Blanco, Ms. Noreen R. Jilani, Ji Yun Kim. Congratulations!

"The Champion's League" results of the 2015 NESA Virtual Science Fair for Middle School and Fifth Grade have been tabulated, and the winners are:

NVSF 2014-15 Middle School Winners:

1st Place: AIS Zagreb, Team 12

2nd Place: WBAIS Israel, Team 18

3rd Place: AIS Kuwait, Team 37, and ACS Athens, Team 20

Nine judges (all scientists) ranked the final teams based on their online site, research report, responses to second round questions and finally the advanced question in the final round. Congratulations to David Bahrenburg and his middle school team at AIS Zagreb (CEESA), for taking the top award in the eleventh annual NVSF. This is Zagreb's second year in the NVSF. (Rumor has it that David will be teaching in a NESA-NVSF school in the Fall. . .!)

Take a look at the complex question Team #12 had to answer:

"Congratulations for reaching Round III! You have learned much about vermiculture as a means to reduce organic waste. The earthworm gut is a simple tubular bioreactor or mesophilic digester that functions in a narrow range of temperatures; the enzymes secreted by the gizzard of *Eisenia fetida* include cellulose, amylase, and phosphatase. The predominant microorganisms found in the annelid foregut, midgut and hindgut are bacteria, actinomycetes and fungi that also secrete these enzymes in micro-quantities. How can you determine how much digestive "work" the earthworms perform compared to the microorganisms' decomposition of organic matter?

Obviously, this is a matter of scale; however, presume that you have an adequate supply of *Eisenia* sp with no microflora or microfauna, and a supply of organic matter inoculated with the predominant microorganisms mentioned above.

Design another investigation with a unique hypothesis, controlled variables, procedure, and strategy for data collection, and analysis - include any newfound citations. You will not conduct this investigation, of course."

NVSF 2014-15 Grade 5 Winners:

1st Place: International School of Islamabad, Team 3

2nd Place: International Schools Riau-Rumbai, Team 1

3rd Place: International Schools Riau-Duri, Team 3

The International School of Islamabad has regained the title for the second time in seven years. As ISOI Superintendent (and NESA Board Vice President) Rose Puffer once said, "We may be small, but we are powerful!" Congratulations to Noreen Jilani and her amazing ISOI Team #3. Thank you for helping NESA keep one of the trophies in our region for yet another year.

Certificates will be presented at the NESA Fall Leadership Conference in Abu Dhabi this coming October from the U.S. State Department's Office of Overseas Schools.

To get your school involved in the 2015-2016 NVSF Projects please contact Dr. Stuart Fleischer at sfleischer@wbais.net.



NESA Virtual School Project - Fall 2015

By Kenny Paynter, NVS Project Manager

The NESA Virtual School Project continues to serve 23 NESA schools, providing a Moodle platform for online blended learning and collaboration, while emphasizing emergency readiness and academic continuity of operations.

Thanks to the generosity of the Office of Overseas Schools, Moodle administrators from many of our schools participated in a special training that was offered from February to May called Moodle Course Creator Certification.

These eight-week courses provided an in-depth look at the many educational features and tools of the Moodle environment, and focused the trainees on when, why, and how these features and tools could improve students' learning experiences. Our hope is that participants can now "teach the teachers" in their respective schools to use Moodle in even more effective ways.

We look forward to our upcoming annual NVS meetings in Abu Dhabi as part of the 2015 NESA Fall Leadership Conference.

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Successful Communications for Schools in Crisis

By Jane Maxwell Hulbert and Jim Hulbert, The Jane Group

There is no easy way to successfully navigate a crisis. But there are three strategies that offer the best chance for a school to come out on the other side with its reputation intact and its school community stronger and more united than before.

What are they? Preplanning. The crisis team. Good communications.

Preplanning is critical. Drafting, in advance, both an overall crisis plan and a crisis communications section of the plan will allow a school's leadership team to hit the ground running in the event that a crisis strikes. Some items to include are: crisis team members, contact information, media policy, sample communications and a list of outside resources that may be needed.

Having the right players on the crisis team will ensure the right decisions are made in a timely manner and are well executed. The team should be familiar with the plan and be prepared to implement it. **The core crisis team should include:**

- head of school
- board chair
- host country advisor and/or RSO (if appropriate)
- school attorney
- director of communications
- IT director
- security director
- outside consultants as needed
- Others (division principals, school counselor) should be added as the crisis warrants.

Good communications are key to retaining the support and trust of the school community both during and after a crisis. What does that entail? Just about everything. The spokesperson. The message itself. The timing of the message dissemination. The methods of distribution. The tone of the message. And the follow-up.

The ideal spokesperson will:

- Have a good grasp of all relevant facts
- Communicate clearly and empathetically to all constituents
- Stay on message
- Respond in a timely manner to parents or others who express concerns

The message itself, including timing and tone must be:

- Clear and concise
- Delivered as quickly as possible after the crisis hits
- Be transparent – hiding the facts rarely instills trust
- Provide relevant information regarding both the facts of the crisis and a way forward for the school.

The method(s) of message dissemination will depend on the specifics of the situation and the school community. Often, an email blast is the easiest way to reach the largest audience the most quickly. Other options include using the parent portal of the school's website. In some cases, social media may be used. Subsequent communications may also be delivered in a variety of ways, depending on the school.

Good communication means not only delivering the initial message well; it also means the spokesperson must provide regular updates as additional information becomes available. This ongoing follow-up will help to keep everyone informed and confident in the school's handling of the situation.

The Jane Group is a global crisis communications firm that has worked with hundreds of independent schools nationally and internationally. Jane and Jim Hulbert will present workshops on crisis communications at the NESAs Fall Leadership Conference in Abu Dhabi, October 22-25 (see page 18). jane@thejanegroup.biz, jim@thejanegroup.biz, www.thejanegroup.biz

C4K @ ACS Amman

How can a box of crayons add a bit of color to a refugees life? Jordan is facing an ongoing and significant refugee challenge that becomes more challenging every day. ACS Amman had been looking for a simple way to help refugee children.

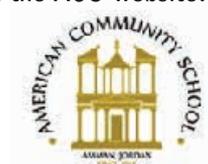
“ Fifty percent of refugees coming into Jordan are children. ”

ACS, in partnership with UNHCR, will launch the “Crayons for Kids” (C4K) initiative September 1. The goal of C4K is to provide each refugee child who comes through the UNHCR processing center in Jordan — the largest in the world — a box of crayons and a coloring book.

As your school seeks to promote and encourage your community to give back to those in need, please consider contributing to the **Crayons for Kids (C4K)** campaign. C4K needs \$65,000 to purchase 50,000 coloring books and crayons.

Detailed information about how to get involved and make a refugee child's life a bit more colorful is at: <http://pub.lucidpress.com/c4k/>, and also linked from the ACS website: www.acsamman.edu.jo.

Contact: C4K@acsamman.edu.jo



Strong Website Information Architecture: Your Blueprint for Success

By Mia Major, Content Marketing Manager, Finalsite

Setting design elements aside, strong information architecture (IA) is possibly the single most important component of an effective website. IA focuses on the effective organization and structure of website content to provide a simple and enjoyable user experience.

The less clicks, the better.

Today, users are a group of smartphone-using scrollers, not scavenger-hunters. They're extremely impatient and expect to easily find what they're looking for with minimal effort. They should be able to find exactly what they're looking for from any page on your site in three clicks or less.

I wanted to give it a go, so I searched for "baylor school online application" in Google. The first result was for Baylor School Admissions. Click on the admissions page, scroll down to the Apply Now button. Click. Two clicks? That was easy. Simple navigation, call to action buttons and basic page titles that answered three important questions: Where am I? Where can I go next? How do I get there?



Segmented and organized content wins more clicks.

Imagine if someone came to your website, and instead of segmenting information into buckets — like admissions and athletics — it was all lumped together under an "About Us" page. Information architects are faced with the challenge of determining where content is going to live, what makes sense, which pages are "top-level" and which pages fall beneath. Site navigation is commonly structured based on buckets or based on the needs of different audiences.

A good place to start is a complete content audit. Assess the quality of your content, look for gaps, and determine where pages can be consolidated to shorten the path from your homepage to where your visitor wants to go.

Your headline shouldn't be a punch line.

Be straightforward when naming pages, writing meta-descriptions, titles, and navigation elements. It will make it easier for search engines and visitors to determine if where they are on your site is relevant to what they're searching for. Save your creative language for paragraph text and design elements, which aren't key structural components of your information architecture — or as important to your SEO.

Content should be structured for scanners.

Maintain a consistent content hierarchy with H1 and paragraph text to make content scannable, especially when consolidating pages. (See image at right.)

Take a moment to step in the shoes of a prospective or current family visiting your site. How easy is it to find information? Is it clear where to go next? How many clicks does it take to find your online application? Tuition? An information architecture site audit is the perfect project for those looking for simple site improvements!

Cut the Red Tape Project

"Cut the Red Tape" is a collaboration between Global Issues Network, NoplanetaB and Amazon Aid Foundation. Together, we will join a worldwide effort to lower our carbon footprint as a global community.

This December, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will take place in Paris. The goal of this historic "Conference of Parties" (COP21) is, for the first time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, to achieve a universal and legally binding climate agreement that will keep the inevitable warming of our planet below 2°C.

Students and educators will be heard at COP21 to show the world that we are doing something about our shared issues. We ask international schools to join us in raising awareness and taking action.

How:

We are collecting signatures and pledges to commit to ongoing action (creating a collaborative culture that does not over-consume or waste and understands the issues) to measure, manage and lower our carbon footprint.

What does taking action on climate change look like?

- The School Declaration: www.cuttheredtapeproject.org/#!/schools-declaration/c1tcn
- Parents and Children Working Together Declaration: www.cuttheredtapeproject.org/#!/parents-declaration/c1j3i
- Download the School Climate Action Kit: <http://tinyurl.com/o7sua5m>
- Watch this 3-minute video: <http://tinyurl.com/nhntkdy>

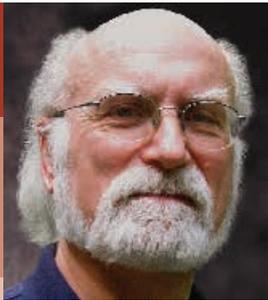
Contact: Linda Sills, Global Issues Network Director,
linda.sills@gmail.com, globalissuesnetwork.org

THIS IS THE YEAR OF CLIMATE ACTION!





Finalsite works with 180 international schools as well as 1500 independent schools in the US, and regional organizations including NESAs. If you are looking for best practices for your website and admissions, sign up for the Finalsite Blog at www.finalsite.com.



Grant Wiggins: In Memoriam

Grant Wiggins, a giant in our field, former NESAs presenter and father of Alexis Wiggins, a teacher at AIS-Riyadh, died of a heart attack May 26. He was 65. Perhaps best known for co-authoring, with

Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design*® and *Schooling by Design*, he was the president of Authentic Education, that posted this epitaph on its website (www.authenticeducation.org): "Professional educational troublemaker of longstanding — brilliant mind, dearest heart, brave soul."

Kim Marshall, in his June 15 *Marshall Memo*, which all heads of NESAs 'member' schools receive, remembered Dr Wiggins via a series of his most memorable quotations. Mr Marshall wrote:

We lost a great educator and thinker in May. Grant Wiggins' work with Jay McTighe on backwards curriculum unit design, assessment, and school improvement has made a huge difference in countless schools and elevated the entire profession. Here is a collection of his thoughts from recent years on three major topics:

Assessment and Feedback

"Students should be presumed innocent of understanding until proven guilty by the preponderance of the evidence."

"Teachers over-plan and under-assess."

"The more you teach without finding out who understands the information and who doesn't, the greater the likelihood that only already-proficient students will succeed."

"Decades of education research support the idea that by teaching less and providing more feedback, we can produce greater learning. Basically, feedback is information about how we are doing in our efforts to reach a goal."

"What makes any assessment in education formative is not merely that it precedes summative assessments, but that the performer has opportunities, if results are less than optimal, to reshape the performance to better achieve the goal. This is how all highly successful computer games work."

Improving Teaching and Learning

"The point of school is not to get good at school."

"No one masters something they are not passionate about."

"For the majority of learners, school is a place where the teacher has the answers and classroom questions are intended to find out who knows them." (with Jay McTighe)

"Expert coaches uniformly avoid overloading performers with too much or too technical information. They tell the performers one important thing they noticed that, if changed, will likely yield immediate and noticeable improvement."

"Without regular opportunities to consider, observe, and analyze best practice and receive helpful, non-evaluative feedback, how likely are teachers to engage in continual professional improvement?" (with Jay McTighe)

Backwards Planning

"What we need to see more clearly is that the common learner failure to transfer is not a student weakness or a teaching deficit but a mistake in planning. You have to design backward from the goal of transfer if you want to achieve it... Too often, though, teachers merely teach, then ask in their tests: Did you learn my lesson?"

"We contend that teachers can best raise test scores over the long haul by teaching the key ideas and processes contained in content standards in rich and engaging ways; by collecting evidence of student understanding of that content through robust local assessments rather than one-shot standardized testing; and by using engaging and effective instructional strategies that help students explore core concepts through inquiry and problem solving."

From, Marshall Memo 591: A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education, June 15, 2015. www.marshallmemo.com



Why Glorify Failure to Enhance Success?

By Thomas R. Guskey, Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Kentucky. Dr Guskey will speak at the 2015 NESA Fall Leadership Conference in Abu Dhabi. See his workshops on page 19.

Recent social media posts by standards-based advocates extol the virtues of failure: "Failure is success in progress." "Failure is an initial attempt at learning." "Failure is the best way to learn." But is that really true?

Learning is never a smooth, uninterrupted process. Acquiring new knowledge or skills always involves errors, mistakes, and occasional setbacks. But to see these setbacks as failures invokes unnecessary negativity and pessimism. In addition, there is an important qualitative difference between "I made a mistake" and "I failed." The first suggests, "There's a problem, but it can be fixed." The second intimates, "I bombed. I crashed and burned. I flunked!"

Studies have shown that students who take personal ownership for their failure are much more likely to learn from it. In other words, it's better to take personal responsibility for learning disasters than to blame others or the assessment itself. But here's where things get tricky.

Research by Carol Dweck shows that personal attributions can be attached to stable, fixed factors or to alterable, growth factors. Students who attribute failure to personal fixed factors believe they simply lack the intelligence, talent, or ability to do better. In other words, they take personal responsibility for the failure but feel helpless to do much about it. Students who attribute failure to personal growth factors, however, think that talents and abilities are alterable and can be developed through hard work. Therefore, they believe they have the power to get better and improve their performance.

So it's not just taking personal responsibility that matters; it's taking the right kind of personal responsibility. Students with growth orientations are likely to learn from their failures and continue to work on the learning goal following an unsuccessful experience.

Preventing Minor Mistakes from Becoming Major Failures
What does all this mean for us as teachers? There are three important actions we can take to help students avoid failure.

First, when planning instruction and designing curriculum, we need to anticipate the learning difficulties students are likely to have so that they can be addressed directly. The key is not to wait for these problems to be verified through an assessment but to build lessons around them.

Second, we need to use regular formative assessments to identify unanticipated misunderstandings and difficulties as early as possible in the learning process. Then, we must take specific steps to remedy these difficulties by carefully design-

ing corrective activities that present concepts and engage students in new ways. . . [that] can prevent minor errors from becoming major learning problems and failures.

Finally, we must help our students understand that the conditions for success are within their control and that we will help them remedy their learning errors when they occur. In other words, we, as teachers, must have a growth orientation to learning, and we must help our students develop the same orientation. As Dweck reminds us, a growth orientation creates motivation and enhances productivity. When shared by both teachers and students, it also builds positive relationships.

Excerpted from Education Update, June 2015, Volume 57, Number 6. www.ascd.org. Link to entire article: <http://tinyurl.com/pqztsez>.

On Heisa Island with our local community partners.



Putting Compassion into Action: Schutz Week Without Walls in Aswan, Egypt

By Adam Carter, Middle School Social Studies Teacher, Schutz American School, Alexandria, Egypt

In an effort to sync our Middle School's year-end trip with the ideals of our global citizenship class called CONNECT (see article in the Winter 2015 NESA News), Schutz American School launched our first-ever "Week Without Walls" trip to Aswan, Egypt. Beforehand, students studied the history and culture of Aswan and the Nubian people and sold special "Compassion It" bracelets to raise money for our service projects.

On our first day, we learned about the rich cultural heritage of the region with visits to the famous temples of Kom Ombo and Philae where our guides explained the history and hieroglyphics. We enjoyed a special Nubian dinner at a family-run restaurant, visited the resident crocodiles, and danced with our Nubian hosts under the moonlight on the banks of the Nile. It was a magical moment for sure!

On our first service day, we partnered with Egyptians Without Borders (EWB), a non-profit that provides teenage stu-

US Nobel Laureate Jody Williams talks to students about what inspires her. >



End of an inspiring PeaceJam Youth Conference in the UK. (Ellen Froustis is fourth from left.) >



Nobel Laureates of Peace to Work with Schools in Greece

By Ellen Froustis, Co-Founder & Executive Director, EIMAI Center for Emerging Young Leaders

Bringing together the foundations of international education with the opportunity to learn from inspiring mentors and leaders who build community despite war, economic crises and social injustice is one of the most effective ways to prepare youth to shape their world with 21st century skills, intellect, principles and optimism. The EIMAI Center for Emerging Young Leaders is a non-profit organization aimed at providing opportunities for youth in Greece to become compassionate, informed and engaged citizen leaders.



EIMAI is the Greek word for “I am.” How we define ourselves shapes who we become and influences the state of the world. Civic engagement is a powerful antidote to political, economic and social unrest, environmental apathy and intercultural misunderstanding. By providing youth in Greece with opportunities to impact community challenges in response to the current crisis, they can clarify their own values and develop an ethic of servant leadership to shape their future world with integrity and purpose.

The second goal of EIMAI is to identify the most committed Citizen Leaders to inspire youth and facilitate collaboration, build capacity and courage to transform social apathy to civic initiative. This fall, EIMAI brings to Greece the award-winning PeaceJam Program for schools—a civic literacy program for youth 5-25, nominated eight times for a Nobel Prize, that addresses global issues and promotes personal development, empathy and intercultural literacy through the wisdom and experience of 13 Nobel Laureates of Peace such as the Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, Jody Williams, Miread McGuire, Aung San Suu Kyi, Oscar Arias and others. Member schools come together during video conferencing and face-to-face workshops with Nobel Laureates to create dialog, celebrate the impact of youth service projects and become part of the “One Billion Acts of Peace Campaign”. (See www.peacejam.org)

The first group of students from Greece attended the UK Peace Jam Conference with Jody Williams in February, and the World Summit of Nobel Laureates in Rome in December. In June, EIMAI youth were recognized in a ceremony in New York by the Loukoumi Make a Difference Foundation for raising awareness for civic responsibility in Greece.

The vision of EIMAI is to work with the most passionate and committed global leaders to raise the intellectual social consciousness of every youth.

For information about Peace Jam Greece, please contact: info@eimai.org.

dents with educational opportunities. The students did some ‘icebreaker’ activities, learned about EWB projects and then discussed the sorry state of the Egyptian public school system with their Egyptian counterparts. We then brainstormed on how to portray our ideas in a giant mural we painted on the walls of the community center.

Our second service activity was a hands-on opportunity for students to “put their words into action.” We traveled to a small island in the middle of Lake Nasser where a few hundred proud Nubian residents have remained, despite the construction of the giant dam. Each student made a relief bag with supplies such as rice, pasta, oil, salt, sugar, cheese, spices, coffee, jelly and tomato sauce, and included a personal greeting card. Students trekked through 106°F (41°C) heat to hand-deliver the relief bags to the impoverished families.

Though it was an exhausting day, students really loved the experience. Each chatted with the family that received his/her relief bag, learning that the similarities we share far outweigh the differences that divide us. Many students donated some money for needed medicine or food.

It was an amazing culmination of the CONNECT class for students to create positive change, and it left a lasting impact! As one student said, “Instead of just hearing about compassion, we were able to go out there and personally make a difference in people’s lives.”

acarter@schutzschool.org

< Schutz students and local art students busy at work.



NESA Middle School Network (NMSN): Advocating for Those in the Middle

By Susan Lacy, Middle School Principal, American International School Dhaka, Bangladesh

Middle school is an awkward time between the innocence of childhood and the years 'that count' in high school. No one ever yearns to be back in middle school, and it is a unique sort of teacher that loves to teach in the middle. To assure that our NESA middle school educators are not lost in the middle, the NESA Middle School Network (NMSN) was formed.

Developed through the collaborative efforts of seven NESA member schools, the NMSN's mission is to advocate for, develop, support and sustain collaborative middle school teaching and learning initiatives across the NESA region. An exciting outcome of this collaborative partnership with NESA is that Rick Wormelli, world-renowned middle level educator, will be a keynote speaker and presenter at the 2016 NESA Spring Educator's Conference in Bangkok.

The NMSN Steering Committee consists of the following administrators from NESA member schools: American School of Doha (Rob Gohr & Nick Mitchell); American School of Dubai (Ron Lalonde & Jake Dibbert); American International School-Chennai (Alan Phan & Jason Hicks); The American International School of Muscat (Peter Lee); American Community School of Amman (Lynn Gaylord); American International School of Dhaka (Susan Lacy); American Community School of Abu Dhabi (Michael Emborsky).

NESA Middle School Network
Promoting Exemplary Practice



▲ Members of the NMSN Steering Committee in Doha, April 2015: Jake Dibbert (ASD-Dubai), Susan Lacy (AIS-Dhaka), Nick Mitchell and Rob Gohr (ASD-Doha). (Photo by Lynn Gaylord, ACS-Amman).

During the 2014 NESA Winter Training Institute in Muscat, NESA brought out a facilitator, Frances Gipson, from the Center for Adaptive Schools, to work with the NMSN Steering Committee to craft the network's foundational documents. In April 2015, the Steering Committee met in Doha to share ideas around middle level assessment, growth mindedness, and student-centered learning initiatives.

NMSN plans to continue to promote a yearly spring NMSN collaborative conference. AIS-Chennai is making plans to host next spring's NMSN collaborative endeavor. NMSN is developing an online Google Site for communication and resource sharing and examining other avenues for NESA middle school educators to collaborate and learn from each other as well as experts in the field.

Interested middle school educators should join NMSN for Thursday lunch at the Fall Leadership Conference in Abu Dhabi to learn more about how you can get involved in this collaborative effort to meet the needs of all who teach and learn in the middle.

slacy@aisdhaka.org

World Language Websites

The editors of *The Language Educator* recommend these free online resources:

- **Dictionary and search engine for translations** – www.linguee.es
- **Mobile language lab** – www.247tutor.com
- **Test Generator** – <https://testmoz.com>
- **Sign language videos** – www.signingsavvy.com
- **"Let it Go" from Frozen in 25 languages** – <http://frozen.disney.com/video>
- **Duolingo language-instruction app** – <https://www.duolingo.com>

"WebWatch" in *The Language Educator*, January/February 2015 (Vol. 10, #1, p. 60-61). From the Marshall Memo 573, A Weekly Round-up of Important Ideas and Research in K-12 Education, February 9, 2015, www.marshallmemo.com.

Faster, Higher, Friendlier: TAISM-Muscat Hosts SAISA Athletic Tournament

By T.A. Ameerudheen, *Hi Oman Weekly*

Ulrik Karlsson couldn't hide his excitement while emerging from the jumping pit. Though he relished every bit of the new-found hero status, the 15-year-old turned his head and looked at the height he'd scaled in sheer disbelief! "I could not believe that I scaled 1.70 metres!" he exclaimed.

This athlete from the American International School-Chennai (AISC) competed at the South Asia Inter-School Association (SAISA) athletic championship held for the first time at The American International School of Muscat (TAISM) April 23-25, clinching the high jump gold medal in the senior boys' category with a superlative show. TAISM too found a new hero in Esho D, who won four gold medals to help the hosts earn a respectable position in the three-day competition: in the 100-meter sprint, 200-meter race, discus, and the 4X100 meter relay.

The American International School Dhaka (Bangladesh) emerged over-all champions, logging 514.50 points. Karachi American School (Pakistan) finished runners-up with 418 points while The Overseas School of Colombo (Sri Lanka) took third place with 401.50 points.



Friendship Blooms

SAISA events are not just about competition. They are great opportunities for the students to interact with their counterparts from other countries and foster friendships. Colin Price, Head TAISM Track Coach, said: "The beauty of the competition is that it gets people together and children make friends from different parts of the world." A parent who traveled from Bombay observed: "Students learn about responsibility and sportsmanship. The event helps them learn about the local culture," he opined.

SAISA

The South Asia Inter-School Association is a conference of 10 schools from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Oman whose purpose is to promote and coordinate regional professional development activities, academic and cultural festivals, athletic tournaments, and other events deemed appropriate by the member schools.

Athletic Meet Participant Schools

- > Lincoln School - Kathmandu
- > American School of Bombay
- > American International School - Chennai
- > Overseas School of Colombo
- > Karachi American School
- > American International School Dhaka
- > The American International School of Muscat



Excerpted from Hi Oman Weekly, Volume 9, Issue 5, May 1, 2015, pp. 16-17. Published by the Times of Oman. timesofoman.com

EVENTS



Volume 18 / Number 1 >>>> FALL 2015

2015-2016 Events:

- > **Fall Leadership Conference**
October 22-25, Abu Dhabi
- > **Fall Training Institute**
November 6-7, Dubai
- > **Winter Training Institute**
February 5-6, Muscat
- > **Spring Educators Conference**
April 1-4, Bangkok

Promoting Exemplary Professional Practice

NESA's mission is to support sustained, systemic school improvement by offering high-quality professional learning opportunities. Each year, NESA organizes two conferences and two intensive training institutes. Education experts at the top of their profession lead in-depth, interactive workshops. Take a sneak peak at our offerings for 2015-2016 in this issue of NESA NEWS, and on our website, www.nesacenter.org.

Fall Leadership Conference



Near East South Asia
COUNCIL OF OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

FALL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE OCTOBER 22-25, 2015
Abu Dhabi



After 19 years, NESA school leaders will return to the InterContinental Hotel in Abu Dhabi for the FLC. Heads of school, principals, curriculum coordinators, trustees, business managers and others in leadership roles will attend keynotes, three-hour specialist workshops and general interest sessions.

Conference Registration
InterContinental Reservations www.nesacenter.org

PRECONFERENCES — October 21:

- **Rick Detwiler:** Fundamentals of Trusteeship (for new trustees)
- **NWEA:** MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) Preconference
- **MSA:** Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools Accreditation Workshop
- **Finalsite:** Web Strategy Workshop



FLC Early Bird Registration deadline: September 15, 2015



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

SPECIAL OFFERING: 3-day Business Managers Institute Sessions:

- > Introductions and Trends in the Business Office 2015
- > Campus tours of ACS Abu Dhabi and ASD-Dubai
- > Special Topics determined by Business Managers

Keynoters will also each present two 3-hour workshops.



• **ELLE ALLISON-NAPOLITANO** (Resilience in Leadership): Founder of Wisdom Out, a professional development company specializing in leadership and organizational learning. www.wisdomout.com



• **SHARNELL JACKSON** (Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision-Making): President/CEO of Data-Driven Innovations Consulting, Inc., and former Chief eLearning Officer and Educator of Chicago Public Schools. sharnelljackson.com



• **JAY McTIGHE & GISELLE MARTIN-KNIEP** (Schooling by Design & the ARCS Framework for School Improvement): Jay McTighe is co-author of the best-selling *Understanding By Design* series with Grant Wiggins. jaymctighe.com; Giselle Martin-Kniep is President of Learner-Centered Initiatives and the Founder of Communities for Learning. www.lciltld.org



• **DOUGLAS REEVES** (Inspiring Creativity and Innovation: A Leader's Guide): Founder of The Center for Successful Leadership; co-author of *The Seven Virtues of Creativity*. www.leadandlearn.com



WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS AND SPEAKER BIOS at:

www.nesacenter.org

SPECIALIST SPEAKERS (3-hour workshops):

Toward Meaningful Learning Support and Inclusion in International Education

LEE ANN JUNG, Professor and Director of International School Partnerships, University of Kentucky. lajung.com

The curricular rigor in international schools poses real challenges to meaningfully including students with disabilities and developmental delays. There is little time to "pause" the hectic schedule and high-level assignments and use evidence-based practices to teach the critical skills these students need for long-term success. Learn and discuss three necessary components of learning support for meaningful inclusion.



Planning Intervention and Measuring Progress for Meaningful Learning Support

Teachers face unprecedented challenges in providing students with disabilities access to the general curriculum and pressure to mesh individualized student goals with standards. Learn about an intervention planning and progress-monitoring tool to use with students with disabilities, English learners, and those receiving tiered intervention in an RtI model. The tool streamlines intervention and data collection into everyday classroom routines.



KEYNOTE: Super Strong – The Extraordinary Nature of Leadership Resilience

ELLE ALLISON-NAPOLITANO, Founder of Wisdom Out, www.wisdomout.com

Leadership resilience has a quality of transformation to it—it is not about staying the same; it is about becoming better as a result of adversity. This keynote introduces the extraordinary resilience of leadership and illuminates a few key resilience practices that strengthen resilience as a “go to” leadership response.

WORKSHOP: Super Strong In Action – What Resilient Leaders Do When Things Don’t Go As Planned

Leadership Resilience is a heightened capacity to bounce forward in response to adversity. Resilience, not resistance, really is the ONLY sane response. Via a case study and peer-to-peer coaching, explore the six phases that highly resilient leaders embrace in order to actually grow from adversity—not just to contain crisis and restore the previous status quo.

WORKSHOP: Inviting Disruption – A Crazy, Wonderful Strategy for Building Cultures of Resilience

Ironically, the most powerful way organizations get ahead of disruptive change is to initiate conversations that actually invite disorder. Resilient organizations sustain their resilience only by being willing to change. Engage in a process that reveals vulnerabilities in school and education cultures that make them fragile and vulnerable and that undermine the success of initiatives and innovation.



Branding: Capturing What is Unique About Your School and Communicating It

JANE HULBERT & JIM HULBERT, Crisis and Legal Communication Consultants, TheJaneGroup.biz

Learn to construct the right conversation that reinforces your school’s identity. Through branding exercises, develop an elevator speech that cuts through the clutter and sells the school. Define your needs, prioritize the audiences and create messages that stick. Also learn the “bridging technique”: take control of a conversation and make it a positive and productive one.



Board of Trustees Workshop Series

RICK DETWILER, Former head of three NESA schools; international consultant for Mason Associates. Mr Detwiler is collaborating with NESA on its Board Development Project.

Offerings for trustees have been designed in response to suggestions from Board members throughout the region and designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of trustees, heads of schools, and others interested in effective governance. These workshops have been developed in conjunction with the NESA Board Development Project, a NESA initiative focused on the NESA mission to facilitate sustainable and systemic school improvement at all levels of school operations.

Preconference, October 21: Fundamentals of Trusteeship

The pre-conference is a survey of the basics undergirding any high-performing international school board of trustees. It is designed to bring relatively new trustees and heads of school up to speed on basic board principles and practices as well as provide veteran trustees and heads a refresher on what the literature cites as proven practices.

Advanced Topics for Trustees: 3-Hour Workshops

1. Sustaining a High-performing Board / The Right Board Structure
2. Governing Through Policy / Relationships
3. “Unconference” - Sharing Proven Board Practices: A ‘semi-structured’ session with focus on topics of particular interest to participants, giving everyone an opportunity to explore two topics as well as learn from summary reports of other groups.

Note: Please bring a laptop, tablet or smartphone to access handouts during the sessions.

For detailed workshop descriptions, visit: www.nesacenter.org

Crisis 101: Hope is Not a Strategy - Preparing for the Crisis That Is Coming Your Way

In advance of a crisis, schools should have their trainings (sex abuse, bullying, harassment), policies (child protection, discipline, termination of employment) and protocols in place along with an up-to-date, user-friendly crisis communications plan. Via case studies, we will discuss the critical steps in the first 60 minutes of a crisis; the “pain points”; and the challenge of communicating under pressure.



Does It Make a Difference? Planning and Evaluating Effective Professional Learning

THOMAS GUSKEY, Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Kentucky

Explore factors that contribute to the effectiveness of professional learning and the various levels of professional learning evaluation. Learn how to apply research findings to design and implement more effective professional learning activities, how to gather quantitative and qualitative evidence on effects, and how to present that evidence in meaningful ways.

Beyond Tradition: Effective Grading Policies and Practices

Learn what we know about effective grading and reporting policies and practices that ensure meaningful communication between school and home. Procedures for implementing new reporting structures, including standards-based grading, will be highlighted, together with policies and practices that should be avoided due to their negative consequences for students, teachers, and schools.



Measuring What Matters Most: The SSATB's Character Skills Assessment (CSA)

HEATHER HOERLE, Executive Director of SSATB (Secondary School Admission Test Board); Former Vice President at The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)

The SSATB's CSA identifies nine traits critical to success: resilience, grit, curiosity, growth mindset, empathy, integrity, motivation, self-efficacy, and self-control. This session is an overview of industry research related to character skills, discussion of the role of character attributes in schools, and exercises engaging in defining how a CSA can aid in admission decisions.

Mission Critical

Learn the results of the first-ever State of the International School Admission Industry report completed earlier this year. The survey results defined the roles of admission officers in international schools, as well as many other factors. Explore key issues affecting global enrollment management, including macro/micro trends, non-cognitive assessment, a changing consumer, and the need for professionalization.



KEYNOTE: Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision-Making

SHARNELL JACKSON, President/CEO Data-Driven Innovations Consulting, Inc. sharnelljackson.com

Instructional decision-making includes how to adapt lessons or assignments in response to students' needs, alter classroom goals or objectives, and modify student-grouping arrangements. This presentation will provide recommendations for creating the organizational and technological conditions that foster effective data use, including steps for implementation, as well as addressing obstacles that may impede progress.

WORKSHOP: Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making

Examine a framework for effectively using data that includes five recommendations focusing on data systems that incorporate data from various sources, a data team to encourage the use and interpretation of data, collaborative discussion among teachers about data use and student achievement, and instruction for students on how to use their own achievement data to set and monitor educational goals.



Disciplinary Literacy

TIM SHANAHAN, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois at Chicago; Founding Director of the UIC Center for Literacy. www.shanahanonliteracy.com

Literacy is not as generalizable as was once believed. Different disciplines and specializations require one to read different kinds of texts and to use those texts in different ways. We will explore exemplary texts from various fields of study to demonstrate reading challenges students confront, as well as the key heuristics and strategies specialists in those fields use to read such texts successfully.

Close Reading

The Common Core State Standards has disrupted previous approaches to guiding reading (e.g., DRA, DRTA, ReQuest, SQ3R) by encouraging teachers to place students in more complex text and requiring they be taught to read such texts closely. Explore what close reading is, its history, how close reading conceptions vary across disciplines, research about text complexity and student learning and motivation.



KEYNOTE: 1+1=> Schooling by Design and the ARCS Framework for School Improvement

GISELLE MARTIN-KNIEP & JAY McTIGHE: Ms Kniep is President of Learner-Centered Initiatives, Ltd, www.lciltld.org; Mr McTighe is co-author of the best-selling *Understanding By Design* series, jaymctighe.com.

This keynote will introduce the major assumptions and components of Schooling by Design and the ARCS Framework for School Improvement. Schooling by Design applies the "backward design" process to any school initiative based on a systems model. The ARCS framework is comprised of four discrete but inter-related elements, namely Alignment, Representation, Culture and Sustainability.

WORKSHOP: Are You Ready for Curriculum Mapping 3.0?

This workshop will blend presentation, interactive discourse and modeling to demonstrate how two different frameworks (i.e., ARCS and Schooling by Design) can support schools in making the switch from mapping curriculum based on "inputs" to mapping valued performances through recurring tasks. School teams are encouraged.

WORKSHOP: How Can We Assess What Matters Most?

This workshop will blend presentation, interactive discourse and modeling to demonstrate how two different frameworks (i.e., ARCS and Schooling by Design) can support schools in identifying outcomes that matter, assessing the gaps between these outcomes and what is measured, and take actions to close these gaps. School teams are encouraged.



Accurate and Effective Formative Assessment

TOM SCHIMMER, consultant and author of *Ten Things that Matter from Assessment to Grading*, and *Grading from the Inside Out*. www.tomschimmer.com

Formative assessments must yield accurate information from which to base sound instructional decisions. Being specific on learning intentions, clear on achievement indicators, and making thoughtful choices about assessment methods are vital to producing accurate results. We will also discuss keys to effective feedback, how to ensure students respond productively to feedback, student self-assessment and the self-regulation of learning.

Instructional Agility: Blurring the Lines Between Assessment, Feedback, and Differentiation.

Instead of assessment events that interrupt teaching to conduct formative assessment, we focus on the more organic process of infusing assessment experiences into any activity or strategy. Learn the three non-negotiable characteristics that make an activity a formative assessment, as well as some practical assessment strategies. The essential relationship between assessment and differentiation will also be highlighted.

Fall Training Institute

VENUE: American School of Dubai, UAE



FALL TRAINING INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 6-7, 2015

Dubai

A two-day conference focused on topics of interest to teachers. The "extended institute design" allows delegates and presenters to work together for the entire FTI. This format allows:

- > Time for skill development
- > In-depth exploration of focused strands
- > Establishment of partnerships/networks



CHOOSE FROM AMONG 9 TWO-DAY INSTITUTES...



Effective Feedback in Elementary Literacy: **Feedback for Writing, Grades 3-8**

CHEZA ALKUDMANI, Training Specialist Consultant, Tatweer Company for Educational Services (T4EDU); Former Literacy Specialist/Literacy Coach at the American International School of Riyadh

Learn effective and practical ways to give students powerful feedback for their writing. Discover how to use feedback to inform your future instruction both in small and whole group teaching. Prerequisites: You must be familiar with teaching writing as a process. Teachers of the Writers Workshop Model will find this institute especially helpful.



Redefining Fair: **How to Plan, Assess, and Grade for Excellence in Mixed-Ability Classrooms, Grades 1-12**

DAMIAN COOPER, Consultant and President of Plan~Teach~Assess. www.damiancooperassessment.com

Teachers must plan, assess, and grade in ways that demand excellence from all students. They must be highly skilled in adapting curriculum assessment and instruction to students' differing strengths, needs and interests. Examine current assessment research and experience demonstrations of highly effective classroom strategies. Prerequisites: Familiarity with basic principles of standards-based assessment and grading, and of differentiated instruction.



REAL Social Studies: **Relevant, Engaging, Authentic, Lively, K-12**

FAY GORE, Social Studies Consultant; Section Chief for K-12 Social Studies at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)

If we provide students with relevant, engaging, authentic, and lively (REAL) experiences in the classroom, they will be more prepared to take on the role of active and informed citizens. During the FTI, engage in REAL learning experiences. How does a REAL social studies classroom look and feel? What are the indicators of a civic-ready student? How do we teach and assess for deep understanding?



FTI Early Bird Registration deadline:
October 2.



Hotel information, detailed institute descriptions & speaker bios are at: www.nesacenter.org



REGISTER ONLINE: www.nesacenter.org





Transforming the Mathematics Classroom through Active Learning, Problem Solving, and Student-Involved Assessment, Grades 5-12

RYAN GRADY, Dean of Instruction, Pilgrim School in Los Angeles

Student-involved assessment for learning should be the cornerstone of any mathematics program. Engage in high-quality math tasks at varying levels and work collaboratively to design lessons and structures that promote active learning, strategic and persistent problem solving, and a growth mindset. Please bring planning materials for your courses/programs, and a laptop.



WIDA Symposium for EAL/ELL Teachers

JON NORDMEYER, Director of International Programs at the WIDA Consortium, Wisconsin Center for Educational Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison. www.wida.us

A two-day forum for innovation, dialog and reciprocal professional learning about the WIDA standards framework (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment). The Symposium is an opportunity for WIDA practitioners to share their knowledge and experience with other international school EAL teachers. Prerequisite: Attending a previous WIDA training, or using WIDA MODEL and/or the WIDA ELD framework.



Brains-on-Stories: The Power and Impact of Narrative Storytelling in a Digital Age, K-12

BERNAJEANE PORTER, Digital Educator, Bernajeane Porter Consulting; author of *DigiTales: The Art of Telling Digital Stories*. www.DigiTales.us

Science backs up the long held belief that storytelling is the most enduring, powerful means for learning and communicating in our fast-learning, fast-changing world. Discover a science-based understanding of the power in narrative intelligence achieving practical outcomes that accelerates learning, thinking, decision-making, the influencing of others as well as igniting action and "sticki" communication.



Join the Revolution! The Next Generation System of Stakeholders: "Today's Standards for Today's Students & Tomorrow's Workforce", K-12

BEVERLY VANCE, Science Consultant and Program Director (Section Chief) for the K-12 Science Section at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)

Explore the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the NGSS Network, available to assist you as you work to enact the NGSS and transform your classroom into a 21st Century critical thinking environment that inspires the next generation of "Globally Competitive-Grand Challenge Ready" students. Please preview the NGSS website and standards and bring a current lesson or unit to revise. www.nextgenscience.org



Understanding and Using Your Data Power

JENNIFER MORRISON, Director, Office of School Transformation for the South Carolina Department of Education. artofeducating.com

Data literacy gives teachers a daily, classroom-based lens through which to view data, ask questions, design assessments, and improve their practice. Consider current data use and the unique needs of your students and contexts, understand the principles of data literacy, and build on current data and assessment practices to improve instruction in your individual classrooms and across schools.

Developmentally Appropriate Mathematics Through Play in Early Childhood Programs

ANNE SODERMAN is Professor Emeritus at Michigan State University and an adjunct faculty member at the University of South Florida, teaching about curriculum development in early childhood education. She is co-author of the book *Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum in Action*.



CALENDAR 2015-2016

> SEPTEMBER 15, 2015

DEADLINE: Fall Leadership Conference
'Early Bird' online registration

> OCTOBER 2, 2015

DEADLINE: Fall Training Institute
'Early Bird' online registration

> OCTOBER 22-25, 2015

Fall Leadership Conference
InterContinental, Abu Dhabi, UAE

> NOVEMBER 1, 2015

DEADLINE
NESA NEWS submissions winter issue

> NOVEMBER 6-7, 2015

Fall Training Institute
American School of Dubai, UAE

> DECEMBER 1, 2015

APPLICATION DEADLINE for:

- Haas/Hansen Student Award
- Margaret Sanders Int'l Schools Scholarships

> FEBRUARY 5-6, 2016

Winter Training Institute
The American Int'l School of Muscat,
Oman

> MARCH 1, 2016

DEADLINE
NESA NEWS submissions spring issue
(online only)

> APRIL 1-4, 2016

Spring Educators Conference
Royal Orchid Sheraton, Bangkok

> JUNE 1, 2016

DEADLINE
NESA NEWS submissions fall issue

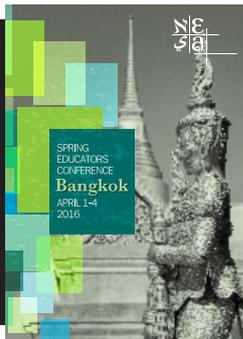


Winter Training Institute

February 5-6, 2016
VENUE: The American International
School of Muscat, Oman

SPEAKERS & TOPICS:

- **Vicky Vinton:** Teaching Grammar in the Writing Workshop, 3-8
- **Marilyn Turkovich:** Charter for Compassion
- **Laurie Henry:** Disciplinary Literacy in the Secondary School
- **Shannon McClintock-Martin:** Librarians Institute
- **Krysten Fort-Catanese:** Mindfulness
- **Carol Commodore:** Assessment Literacy for Specialist Subjects — Art, Drama/Dance, Physical Education, World Languages, Music, Media Arts



Spring Educators Conference

April 1-4, 2016
VENUE: Royal Orchid Sheraton,
Bangkok, Thailand

Preconferences, March 30-31:

- **Naomi Woolsey & Cindy Cummings:** AERO Preconference (2 days) - Reading and Writing Assessment in Science and Social Studies (based on the AERO Common Core literacy standards)
- **Erma Anderson:** AERO Mathematics Preconference - High School (2 days)

Specialist Speakers:

- **Paul Anderson:** Unpacking NGSS
- **Steve Barkley:** Instructional Coaching
- **Susan Brookhart:** Rubric Design
- **Mark Church:** Inquiry
- **Mary Ehrenworth:** Writing Instruction and the Common Core
- **Rick Wormeli:** Formative Assessment

Extended (Multi-Day Workshops):

- **Bob Garmston & Carolyn McKanders:** Adaptive Schools 5-Day Certificate Course (March 31-April 4)
- **Christy Curran:** Literacy Workshop - Foundation Course in Reading, Grades K-2 (3 days)
- **Emily DeLiddo:** Literacy Workshop - Foundation Course in Reading, Grades 3-5 (3 days)
- **Vicki Vinton:** Literacy Workshop - Foundation Course in Reading, Grades 6-8 (3 days)
- **Rick Detwiler:** Administrative Assistants Institute (2 days)

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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of Muscat, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

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Welcome New Members & Affiliates!

**Dostyk American International
School (member)**

Atyrau, Kazakhstan
www.daiskz.org

**The Academy High School - Toul
(affiliate)**

Nabatieh, Lebanon
www.academylb.net

CrisisGo (affiliate)

Texas, USA
www.crisisgo.com

EdTech Team, Inc (affiliate)

California, USA
www.edtechteam.com

EduTect Inc. (affiliate)

Singapore
www.eductectinc.com

Explore Learning (affiliate)

Virginia, USA
www.explorelearning.com

**Jeddah Private School
(affiliate)**

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
Head of School: David Harris
www.jps.edu.sa

MasteryConnect (affiliate)

Utah, USA
masteryconnect.com

**Vision International School
(affiliate)**

Al Wakrah (Doha), Qatar
www.visqatar.org

**Whizz Education FZ LLC
(affiliate)**

Dubai, UAE
www.whizz.com



On May 1-2, 2015, 25 NESA heads of school gathered for the annual Heads Retreat on the island of Hydra, Greece. It was a wonderful time of warm collegiality and collaborative learning facilitated by Teresa Arpin. Participants built relationships of professional and personal support and shared real concerns of school leadership.

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