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Collaboration: A NESA Cornerstone

NESA is an organization serving regional international schools from Cairo to Kathmandu. Approximately 3500 kilometers long and 5500 kilometers wide, the NESA region stretches across a very diverse, very challenging swath of lands, and is made up of 41 member schools, 48 affiliate schools and 53 affiliate organizations all who are beautifully connected.

At NESA we’re devoted to sustained, systemic professional development and we state: “collaboration is the cornerstone of our success.” Indeed, the entire NESA organization is one big collaborative. We are a confederation of like-minded educators who take our professional practice seriously, and who seek to make a difference in the lives of the students we serve.

At NESA we focus on continuous adult learning because we know it has an impact on continuous student learning. The time we spend together at NESA professional learning events trickles into every aspect of the schools we serve, reaching thousands of students every day.

NESA’s adult learning program addresses every domain of a school, from trustees and school heads to principals, learning directors and teachers, to business managers, HR directors, teacher leaders, coaches, mentors, tech coordinators and administrative assistants. Each of us devotes precious time and resources to professional development in order to learn and grow and make an IMPACT.

We are excited about sharing news from our schools in this issue of NESA NEWS, as well as highlights of NESA’s winter and spring events.

Here’s to the transformational learning and growth ahead.

Madeleine Hewitt
NESA Executive Director

“Collaboration is the cornerstone of our success.”
— Maddy Hewitt, NESA Exec. Director

NESA’s Mission
To maximize student learning, NESA serves member schools by facilitating sustainable and systemic school improvement based on the best practices of American and international education.

We believe:
• individuals and organizations thrive only through continuous, transformative learning;
• diversity strengthens us, enriches us, and prepares us for an increasingly complex world;
• respect, integrity, and trust are essential to create and sustain learning communities.

Collaboration is the cornerstone of our success.

Our Vision
NESA will create dynamic, collaborative professional relationships that transcend current barriers and boundaries in order to maximize student learning in member schools.
What If...?
Building Cultures of Wholeness & Flourishing in Schools

Fall Leadership Conference – Abu Dhabi
October 19-22, 2017

NESA’s 2017 Fall Leadership Conference was a celebration of community, collaboration and professional learning. The overarching theme of “human flourishing” and “cultures of wholeness” -- for educators and students -- infused the entire event, starting with NESA Board President Rose Puffer inviting into the opening plenary a group who could not be present -- the children in our schools -- via a video of NESA students at school. Ten NESA member schools took part in this inspiring visual project.

The video set the tone for Carolyn McKanders’ extended keynote, where she explored flourishing, growth, and the balance between ‘head’ and ‘heart’. She challenged NESA leaders to think about how to foster ‘cultures of wholeness’ at their schools by asking “What if...?” School teams posed provocative questions, such as:

- What if we develop dispositions instead of focusing on content?
- What if we no longer assigned grades?
- What if we redefine success?
- What if all assessments were formative?
- What if collaborative replaced competitive?
- What if every student had a passion project?
- What if the kids lead the learning?

On Friday, keynote Ron Berger continued the theme of human flourishing by inspiring school leaders to pursue an “ethic of excellence” where scholarship and character unite to create “beautiful work”. And Steve Barkley in his Saturday keynote explored how to build a culture of coaching in schools to generate teacher learning that impacts student success.

In the NESA spirit of collaboration, school leaders teamed with specialist presenters to share how innovations at their schools have impacted student learning in the areas of advancement/development, becoming a culture of thinking and technology, in partnership with the NESA EdTech Leaders Collaborative (see page 24).

The program also included preconferences for principals and advancement/professional development professionals, 17 three-hour specialist workshops, and 24 General Interest Workshops presented by NESA administrators and affiliate organizations. The NESA Business Managers and Human Resources Directors Collaboratives each met in facilitated, multi-day workshops, as did Board Trustees.

NESA’s adult learning program addresses every domain of a school, offering transformational learning to all who work to make an impact on students and take the time to ask, “What if...?”

Next year’s FLC: October 18-21, InterContinental Hotel, Athens, Greece. We’ll see you there!

At NESA we focus on continuous adult learning because we know it has an impact on continuous student learning. The time we spend together trickles into every aspect of the schools we serve, reaching thousands of students every day.

– Maddy Hewitt, NESA Executive Director

The time we spend together trickles into every aspect of the schools we serve, reaching thousands of students every day.

– Maddy Hewitt, NESA Executive Director
Professional Collaboration
at 2017 Fall Training Institute – Bahrain

NESA Collaboratives took center stage at the sixteenth annual FTI, which took place at Riffa Views International School in Bahrain November 3-4. Six of the nine two-day institutes were planned in coordination with a NESA Collaborative:

- Education for a Better World (with Service Learning Collaborative, see page 13)
- Proficiency-based Assessments in the World Languages Classroom (with World Languages Collaborative, see page 9)
- Using a Mentor Text in the Classroom (with Literacy Collaborative, see page 10)
- The Librarian and the Technology Integrationist: Creating a Dynamic Duo (with Librarians & Ed Tech Leaders Collaboratives, see page 11)
- Early Childhood: Growing Instructional Practice through Collaboration (with Early Childhood Collaborative)
- Designing Exciting & Challenging Learning to Meet the K-12 Physical Education Standards (with Physical Education Collaborative, see page 12)
- Getting Started on Effective Grading and Reporting of Student Learning
- Assessment 2.0: Grading from the Inside Out
- Developing a Maker Mindset

About 250 educators from around the region participated in this in-depth training event. NESA thanks RVIS Director Kurt Nordness and his incredible faculty and staff for their support, planning, and on-the-ground organization that made the FTI such a valuable professional learning experience for all.

Mark your calendars for next year’s FTI: November 2-3, 2018.
Growing a Coaching Culture and Measuring Its Success

By Matthew Bornstein-Grove, Teaching and Learning Coach, American School of Dubai, UAE

Members of the NESA Coaching Collaborative met in Abu Dhabi following the Fall Leadership Conference in October to reflect on Steve Barkley’s coaching-focused sessions and look ahead to future professional development priorities.

The group’s take-away from Dr Barkley was his focus on fostering a coaching culture, rather than leaving coaching solely in the realm of those with “coach” in their job title. Dr Barkley’s continuum from evaluation to peer coaching invited administrators to think about how they might also coach their teachers and navigate the potentially tricky ground of wearing both an evaluator and coaching hat. In addition, Dr Barkley’s definition of peer coaching, as well as the concept of closed and open-ended questions invited us all to take a coaching stance toward our interactions with peers.

So, if a coaching culture has the potential to deepen and enrich both adult and student learning, how do we measure our success, as both “coaches” and as institutions who seek to build a coaching culture? In responding to this question, the collaborative pulled from the work of Ron Berger, another keynote speaker at this year’s FLC.

Energized by this possibility, the NESA Coaching Collaborative returned to work with the goal of partnering with teachers to engage students in the creation of “beautiful work.” It is our hope to showcase both the student work created and the teacher coach partnerships behind it at a future conference.

Mr. Bornstein-Grove is a member of the NESA Coaching Collaborative Core.
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Keynote Steve Barkley (right) conducts a ‘coaching conversation’ with Coaching Collaborative member Matt Bornstein-Grove at the FLC-Abu Dhabi.

Aligning Our Understanding of Proficiency-Based Assessments in the World Language Classroom

By Margaret McCarron, Spanish Teacher, & Samantha Petree, EAL Teacher, American School of Bombay, Mumbai, India

Before this year’s NESA Fall Training Institute in Bahrain, the members of the NESA World Languages Collaborative Core met for the first time to finalize the FTI World Languages institute and continue development of the two-year plan. The Core worked with Dr Carol Commodore, expert in language teaching and assessment, to facilitate the two-day FTI workshop on proficiency-based language assessment.

At last year’s 2016 Fall Training Institute in Abu Dhabi, world language teachers attended a workshop on best practices in language teaching led by Lori Langer de Ramirez. During the institute, the WL Core completed a needs assessment with interested teachers. They identified differentiation as a target area for professional development. However, it became clear that in order to effectively offer PD on differentiation, we needed to first develop and align teachers’ understanding of proficiency levels and proficiency-based assessments. With this in mind, we planned this year’s FTI with Dr Commodore.

At this year’s FTI in Bahrain (November 3-4, 2017), Dr Commodore gave an overview of what proficiency means for language teaching and learning. The institute focused on a couple of big questions about assessment: “What is the purpose of this assessment?” and “How can we unpack our learning targets for ourselves and our students?”

Working in language-specific groups facilitated by members of the WL Collaborative Core, participants learned how to examine and unpack can-do statements that inform assessment and help to clarify the types of experiences students need during each proficiency level. Participants then developed and refined authentic assessments that focused on student proficiency. Dr Commodore challenged WL Collaborative members to think about the many ways students can demonstrate their ability to meet a specific learning target.

The World Languages Collaborative will continue the topic of proficiency-based assessment at the January 2018 Winter Training Institute in Muscat, where a two-day training on the Proficiency Guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages will be offered. At the WTI, NESA educators will work with Dr Karl Otto to gain a deeper understanding of “the implications and applications of proficiency in the language classroom.”

Mission of NESA’s World Languages Collaborative:
“To provide World Language teachers with opportunities for collaboration and learning to support the development of sustainable proficiency-based language programs that meet the diverse needs of our learners.”

The World Languages Collaborative Core (l-r): Hanadi Dayyeh (ACS-Beirut), Samantha Petree (ASS-Mumbai), Diala Kamal (ACS-Amman), Carol Commodore (facilitator), Frederique Myers (AIS-Riyadh), Cheryl Hordenchuk (ACS-Abu Dhabi), Margaret McCarron (ASB-Mumbai). Petrees@asbindia.org, McCarronM@asbindia.org

The World Languages Collaborative Core member Matt Bornstein-Grove visits with a participant during the NESA Fall Training Institute in Abu Dhabi.
We talked about assessments, balanced literacy, reading and writing both within the workshop model and beyond. We took what was successful in the past and talked about how we might build on our strengths while also practicing in new waters of learning.

Finally, we took some time to dream big and ask the question “What if...?” We were able to expand on our thinking and open up possibilities. We brainstormed what NESA literacy learning might hold in the future, imagining ongoing learning opportunities through lab sites, coaching cohorts, and virtual book clubs.

Other members of the NESA Literacy Collaborative Core are: Penny Aimes (CAC-Cairo), Crystal Jacobs (SAES-Saudi Arabia), Faiza Martin (ASD-Mumbai), Sarah Toa (ASD-Dubai), Katrina Thellmann (ASD-Doha). With five collective minds, we were able to reflect, celebrate, plan, and dream big for NESA literacy.

See below to learn about Matt Glover’s FTI sessions on “Mining Mentor Texts as Teaching Tools”.

November 3-4, literacy consultant Matt Glover presented at the FTI in Bahrain is a timely event to re-energize teaching and learning. In the second year of the NESA Fall Training Institute in Bahrain, we have heard Matt present many times in many countries, yet every time I am with him, I learn something new.

“Fixing is not teaching” and “Assigning writing is not teaching writing”, are just a couple of my favorite Matt Glover quotes. I have heard Matt present many times in many countries, yet every time I am with him, I learn something new.

Matt taught us that, in order to talk about writing, we need to study writing, and we start by looking at writing! When confronted with a new project we study good (and sometimes bad) exemplars first. For example, when remodeling a kitchen, we begin by looking at other kitchens. We observe what works and what doesn’t, and notice what makes a good kitchen.

The same goes for studying writing. Looking at texts, we can see what is an effective lead, how transitions glue a piece together, how spelling and grammar affect the writing, and how the conclusion wraps up the writing. Once we know what works, we can then show it to students.

Upon reflecting on our learning, a teacher wrote, “I had an in-depth study of mentor texts in such a short time and it certainly helped broaden my understanding and hence impact student learning. Top ic was relevant and I hope to attend more meaningful sessions like this one.” As participants from the workshop, we felt re-energized, ready to infuse November with new ideas.

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NESA’s PE Collaborative Update

By Jason Levitt, Middle/High School PE Teacher, American Community School, Amman, Jordan

Returning strong for another year, NESA’s PE Collaborative welcomed Deborah Tannehill, Emeritus Senior Lecturer in Physical Education and Sport Sciences at the University of Limerick in Ireland.

At the Fall Training Institute Dr Tannehill took an enthusiastic group of PE educators through a process that challenged them to consider their approach to designing curriculums. Twenty physical educators practiced building a unit from scratch, beginning with the BIG IDEA and filtering down to learning intentions and activities.

Plans formed at the 2017 Fall Training Institute included designing quality assessments, with the following guiding questions and principles:

• Formative - What is formative? How does it help the learning process for both teachers and students?
• Summative Assessment - What is summative assessment? How to create accurate and meaningful assessments? How to use them?
• How can formative and summative assessments work together to show a complete picture of student learning?
• Critique assessments using assessment method guidelines.

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Service Learning:

NESA’s Newest Collaborative

By Richard Bampfylde, Sustainability Coordinator, International College, Beirut, Lebanon

How is a better world for present and future generations attainable? Are the ‘Global Goals for Sustainable Development’ within reach?

Service learning has been seen as a largely stand-alone program, where students are typically taken off to complete their necessary service requirements. However, it is NESA’s new Service Learning Collaborative’s aim to ensure this no longer remains the case, particularly in NESA member schools.

Making use of a systems thinking lens, as well as an understanding of change theory and mental models, all stakeholders in a school community have the ability, and indeed responsibility, to create a better world. Indeed, perhaps those Global Goals are within reach if we pursue this transformative education!

The Service Learning Collaborative Core members joined NESA FTI delegates at Riffa Views International School in Bahrain for a two-day workshop on education for a sustainable future. Facilitator Mike Johnston, Director of Colegio Maya School, Guatemala, guided the group through enriching information and purposeful, interactive activities.

Key knowledge and opportunities are too numerous to mention but include Rockström’s Planetary Boundaries, Project Everyone’s World’s Largest Lesson, the Ellen Macarthur Foundation and the Circular Economy as well as Geert Hofstede’s rich data on national values. Ideas and activities to facilitate change theory included the AMEBOA, the Iceberg, DUMB Goals and Parachuting Cats (literally, although not in our classroom!).

At its first meeting following the FTI, the Service Learning Collaborative Core reached a major milestone by drafting a guiding statement:

As interdependent members of a global community, we recognize our systemic impacts. We act in partnership to deepen student learning and inspire ethical student action. We do so by equipping educators with mindsets, methods, and strategies that facilitate transdisciplinary opportunities that allow students to flourish.

Incorporated within a 24-month professional development plan for the NESA community, Cathy Berger Kaye, a leading service learning consultant globally, will present a keynote at the 2018 NESA Spring Educators Conference in Athens (see pg. 27). Following this, it is envisaged a keynote speaker will present at the 2018 Fall Leadership Conference, also in Athens, with learning opportunities to take place right through to NESA’s Winter Training Institute, in January 2019, hosted by the American International School of Chennai.

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NESA’s Service Learning Collaborative Core members at their inaugural meeting in Bahrain (l-r): Callie BushMiller (RVIS-Bahrain), Tom McLean (ISG-Jubail), Laurence Myers (ASD-Dubai), Richard Bampfylde (Int’l College-Beirut) and Dan Love (AIS Chennai). Not pictured: Chi-Yan Shang (ASD-Doha).
How to Recruit Teachers Who Align With Your School Values and Culture

By David Macfarlane, Commercial Director at Teach Away

When it comes to recruiting teachers internationally, values and culture fit should be a significant factor in the decision-making process. Assessing a candidate’s potential cultural fit isn’t quite the same as measuring skills and experiences from a resume, though. Below are three ways to recruit for culture and values fit:

Articulate your culture.
It may sound simple, but before you can hire effectively for cultural fit, you first need to define and articulate your school’s culture and values. What are your school’s values? How would you describe the culture in a few sentences?

If you are interviewing as a panel, make sure everyone involved in the hiring process is on the same page in how they understand and communicate your school’s culture, mission and values.

Share your culture.
Once your school’s vision is defined, you should consistently project your mission, values and culture across crucial hiring touch points.

Articulate your culture in a few sentences?

• Does it provide key information?
• Does it build systems?
• Does it build relationships?

By incorporating culture and values fit to your recruiting process, you will be able to hire teachers who can flourish in their new roles, are invested in the success of your school and are more likely to remain with your school for the long term.

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When Principals Should Delegate and When They Should Get Involved

In this Principal Center article, Justin Baeder suggests four questions for principals deciding whether to roll up their sleeves and engage in the myriad possible activities each day – greeting students when they enter school; hallway, cafeteria, and recess supervision; teacher team meetings; data analysis; sports events; chatting with parents at dismissal; and many more:

• Does it build relationships? “This is the redeeming value in any work that’s below your pay grade,” says Baeder.
• Does it develop skills in others? “For example, when principals teach model lessons, it’s not because the principal is necessarily the best teacher,” says Baeder. “It’s because when leaders go first, it’s hard not to follow.”
• Does it build systems? Sometimes the best way to learn the kind of system that’s needed is to do the work yourself for a spell.
• Does it provide key information? Classroom observations, for example, provide front-line insights into the day-to-day work of the school that inform any number of decisions.

“4 Ways to Decide WHAT NOT to Delegate” by Justin Baeder in Principal Center, May 23, 2017. https://www.principalcenter.com/coll-ways-to-decide-what-not-to-delegate, justin@principalcenter.com

Remembering Ernest Mannino

NESA was saddened to learn in August of the passing of Dr. Ernest Mannino, the founder of the Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE), and the first Director of the State Department’s Office of Overseas Schools (A/O/S). Appointed by President John F. Kennedy, he led A/O/S for 34 years and served under eight U.S. presidents.

A graduate of Harvard University and a World War II U.S. Air Force veteran, Dr. Mannino, as A/O/S Director, oversaw 187 schools in 103 countries. He nurtured the development of the regional associations, including NESA, to provide training for administrators and teachers in American overseas schools.

Dr. Mannino was 95-years-old.

Arabic Magazine Project: A Real Life Arabic Learning Experience

By Bassima Hamasni, Middle School Arabic Teacher, American International School-Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

The class was like a bee hive, buzzing with activity, excitement and learning. Students translated their research into Arabic, learning the positives and negatives of Google Translate, online Arabic dictionaries and the Arabic keyboard. Then they composed sentences and questions in modern classical Arabic. They struggled with their first articles, but by the second pieces, most of their struggles disappeared, and they became “experts” in most of the learning areas above.

By the end of the year, students started research in English, but then switched mostly to Arabic. They were asked to read at least one or two articles related to their topic written in Arabic by professionals, in order to improve their writing.

On May 11, we invited parents to share in the learning and celebrate the great experience we had. To view a student online magazine, go to: https://madmagz.com/magazine/863747.

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Ernie was truly a giant in the world of international education who lived an exceptionally accomplished and long life of service as an educator and leader. He was a true visionary and a fearless crusader for ensuring high quality international education was available around the world. Ernie leaves a historic legacy that lives on in the many organizations he helped found. His efforts to ensure proliferation of excellence and sharing among American and international educational leaders... are testaments to his exceptional drive and leadership.
Service Learning at ASD-Doha

By Agnes Cecilia Byberg and Tatjana Vogel, Students at the American School of Doha, Qatar

The American School of Doha highlights community service through its many service trips for students to explore beyond their comfort zone while giving back to the community. As opposed to traditional community service, these service trips have adopted a service learning model. ASD focuses on advancing students’ awareness of the current state of affairs in the world, with the hope of influencing them to pursue similar endeavors in the future.

Over this most recent Eid al Adha Break, twenty students accompanied by four teachers, Steve Shantz, Marcia Jones, Meghan Burns, and Youssef Lahyaoui, traveled to the Dhigurah, Maldives, where they worked with the Maldives Whale Shark Research Programme (MWSRP), a charity that focuses on marine life conservation and gaining a deeper understanding of whale sharks.

To help the MWSRP observe shark movement and behavior, students recorded data about whale sharks seen in the Marine Protected Area in South Ari, including gathering data on how many people and boats were present in the Marine Protected Area during the search for whale sharks. Students were also exposed to the realities of the current environmental situation, including climate change, through documentaries and beach clean ups.

Another group of nine students and two teachers, John Venditti and Marcia Carlson, traveled to Yangon and Mandalay in Myanmar to create a documentary about its peoples’ thoughts on recent developments in their country over the last generation. The students partnered with the Rustic Pathway organization, which works with students around the world on community service, adventure programs, and education through travel.

The next service trips will be headed to Tanzania, Nepal, Cambodia, and Bali.

Contact: Yahaira Pineda, Development & External Relations Manager, ypineda@asd.edu.qa, www.asd.edu.qa

Girls Get Strong

For the last two years, Cairo American College has hosted an incredible program that is making a difference for girls. "Girls Get Strong" was created in 2015 by Becky Riddle, CAC PE Teacher. She and CAC Superintendent Wayne Rutherford presented the program to other NESA educators at the recent NESA Fall Leadership Conference in Abu Dhabi. This initiative is quickly spreading to other NESA schools.

Girls Get Strong strives to increase educational collaboration between community members and coaches, support a multi-sport athletic community, and empower young women in and out of athletics.

Mission Statement:
Girls Get Strong is a collaborative, educational, and hands-on organization that unites students, coaches, and community members. It is designed to support the development of young women’s physical, emotional, and social skills within athletics. Through this organization, Girls Get Strong strives to increase educational collaboration between community members and coaches, support a multi-sport athletic community, and empower young women in and out of athletics.

Objectives:
• Empowerment through health and fitness.
• Collaboration between community resources and coaches.
• Injury awareness and prevention of female-specific injuries.
• Nutritional awareness to support healthy eating habits.
• Psychological self-awareness and empowerment.
• Encourage the development of a multi-sport athletic community.

Girls Get Strong hosted its second Health and Fitness Conference last March with the theme “Breaking Boundaries”. A wide variety of health and fitness experts helped girls in Grades 5-12 break the boundaries preventing them from living a healthy lifestyle. Topics included: gender profiling in athletics, communication, goal setting, injury prevention and rehabilitation, leadership, make up, nutrition, self-image, and time management. Students also participated in fitness activities including body attack, bollywood, crossfit, kickboxing, step aerobics, TRX, yoga, and zumba.

For more information, contact: girlsgetstrong.ggs@gmail.com, or: rriddle@cacegypt.org

Girls Get Strong

In order to gain a stronger understanding of the Myanmar culture and record it via a documentary, the students interviewed university professors, students, village families, monks, and local journalists to gain diverse perspectives.

The Myanmar trip also left a significant impact, as Rayan El Amine commented, “It amazes me that it is possible for these people not to have running water or electricity and for them to acknowledge those problems, and still be at peace with the world. That is special when you have nothing but still behave like you have everything. This is powerful.”

The next service trips will be headed to Tanzania, Nepal, Cambodia, and Bali.

Contact: Yahaira Pineda, Development & External Relations Manager, ypineda@asd.edu.qa, www.asd.edu.qa
Breathe Life into Learning with Engaging Academics

By Kristen Vincent, Consulting Teacher, & Lynn Bechtel, Managing Editor, Responsive Classroom

The more students can approach learning in a spirit of play and exploration, the more committed they’ll be—even during challenging work. With a small investment of time for planning, you can draw upon your knowledge and understanding of your students to connect essential learning to their lives and interests while challenging them to stretch and grow.

Engaged learning is comprised of six characteristics:

- Learning is active.
- Learning is interactive.
- Learning is appropriately challenging.
- Learning is purposeful.
- Learning is connected to students’ interests and strengths.
- Learning is designed to give students some autonomy and control.

Incorporate Activities Kids Love

Building the characteristics of engaging academics into lessons helps students do rigorous learning in a dynamic way. Students not only engage with and enjoy their learning, but are more willing to tackle challenging tasks and more likely to remember what they’ve learned. One of the best things about engaging academics? You needn’t adopt a new curriculum or find room for additional lessons.

Observe, Research, and Collect

Children are naturally curious, always investigating and interacting with the world around them. They love to ask questions, find out how things work, and spend time outside in nature. You can nurture this innate curiosity by giving students time to observe objects, animals, or insects closely (such as with naked eyes or with a microscope, telescope, or magnifying lens) and record observations.

For example:

- K-2: Germinate seeds, observe and note changes over time (drawings and words) in a class journal.
- 3-6: Observe, chart, and illustrate the phases of the moon and then describe (via visual or oral presentations) the orbital motion of the moon as it revolves around Earth.

Sculpt, Build, and Create

Children love to construct, sculpt, draw, color, move, dance, and get their hands dirty; to use their imaginations. By encouraging their explorations, you can help them develop resilience and persistence and learn to love the process as well as the finished product. One way is to have students build a model or create a museum display.

For example:

- K-6: Build a model of a molecule, Native American home, insect, setting for a story, or the solar system.
- K-6: Sort, label, and display a range of items—such as fossils, ancient Egyptian artifacts they’ve recreated, or rock and mineral collections.

www.responsiveclassroom.org

NESA Virtual School Project

Fall 2017

Being Intentional About Readiness

By Ken Paynter, NVS Project Manager & World Virtual School Project Facilitator

Using a coordinated approach developed at the World Virtual School Project meetings at JOSTI this past summer, our NVS Project meetings at the NESA Fall Leadership Conference in Abu Dhabi focused intensively on readiness for online academic continuity of operations.

We began with a surprise “tabletop exercise” which simulated a real-time crisis situation requiring each of the participants to call upon his/her school’s existing policies, practices, and resources to deal with the “emergency” at their respective schools. This stimulated a broader discussion about the many elements of preparedness and about ways we can collaborate to optimize each participating school’s situation.

Further towards these ends, we familiarized ourselves with various resources developed by the World Virtual School Project for continuous improvement with readiness. Additionally, we detailed the wide variety of online resources available to the NVS Project Schools by virtue of our continued and broadened contract with Marleo.

Since learning management systems are at the heart of online academic continuity, we also spent considerable time sharing our various LMS environments with each other to examine these tools and to learn how they meet institutional needs.

These were indeed very productive and informative meetings, and the spirited engagement of the participants was greatly appreciated.

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NVS system administrators in Abu Dhabi, October, 2017. Standing at center are Bea Cameron from the State Dept’s Office of Overseas Schools and NESA Executive Director Maddy Hewitt.
Standards in Action: Collaboration & Learning with the National Core Arts Standards

By Matthew McGrady, Middle School Art + Design Teacher, American Community School of Abu Dhabi, UAE

October 20-21 a group of visual art educators from around the NESA region welcomed the National Art Education Association’s Chief Learning Officer, Dennis Inhulsen, to the American Community School of Abu Dhabi. Mr Inhulsen was invited to speak and lead the group through a weekend of introductory learning devoted to the National Core Arts Standards, which he co-authored.

Events included a deep dive into the creation of the standards and how these are structured with enduring understandings, essential questions, and grade-by-grade level descriptors. Participants also affirmed their practice through a fantastic experience where we shared our stories of becoming art educators.

On the second day, the 20 educators split into job-alike groups where each constructed collaboratively built units, directly calling on the National Core Arts Standards and using a planning template to explore the synergy of the four artistic processes which make up the standards. Developing a unit with colleagues where creating, connecting, presenting, and responding were all articulated, greatly impacted the group and illustrated the thoughtful connections between these processes.

Feedback from participants illustrated a wide variety of touch points, including increased confidence when planning with the standards, an affirmation of success with use of the standards, and appreciation of direct feedback from the author of the standards.

The group was incredibly fortunate to have Mr Inhulsen to guide us, and we are delighted to welcome him back to the region at NESA’s Winter Training Institute in Muscat, Oman, January 26-27 (see page 26). This visit is in conjunction with the creation of the NESA Performing & Visual Arts Collaborative, which will have its inaugu-ral meeting at the WTI to examine ways to support Arts teachers in the region with opportunities and learning just like this.

This professional learning event was a collaboration of the following NESA schools: American Community School of Abu Dhabi, American Community School Amman, Dubai American Academy, and International Schools Group-Saudi Arabia.

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Join Our Compassion Summit

Compassion is a common core value in our schools, but how do we shift from empathy to action? What do compassionate students look like? How do we explicitly attend to building kind communities that promote cooperation and understanding?

In March 2017, the American Community School-Amman and the International Schools Group-Saudi Arabia, in partnership with the Charter for Compassion, hosted a highly successful, inaugural Compassion Summit. The purpose of the Summit was to bring like-minded schools together to create, enhance, and promote greater levels of compassion in our schools.

Eleven schools from Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, and Jordan came together to learn about compassion from world renowned speakers and activists such as Kathy Kelly and Marilyn Turkovich and to build a Compassionate Action Plan for their schools.

Read more about the inaugural Compassion Summit in the spring (online) edition of NESA News and on the Compassion Summit website at http://bit.ly/compassionsummit where you can view a video of our students sharing their insights.

Our team consists of Anne Russell (ACS Abu Dhabi), Jennifer Suleiman & Mo Hourani (ACS Amman), Rohit Kumar (ASB-Mumbai), and Tara Waudby (ISG-KSA).


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Creative Gatherings, Shared Space at ISG-Dhahran

By Katrina Lehman, Secondary Teacher-Librarian, International Schools Group-Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

Four years ago, the library on the Dhahran campus, serving over 2000 students and staff from three distinct schools, was primarily used to house books. Each school had its own section, and if students were talking above a whisper, they were shushed. The chairs were generally empty and after school hours, the library was silent.

With input from principals, students, and teachers, we formed a new statement of purpose that “celebrates creativity through flexible physical and virtual space.” With district support, we converted the copier space into a Tech Hub that offers mobile devices such as laptops and tablets for checkout. The reference section that used to house sets of outdated encyclopedias has been replaced with a new lounge area, with comfortable sofas, swivel chairs and shelves of board games and puzzles. A multimedia conference room with video conferencing capabilities replaced the old PC computer lab.

As a library staff, we decided there would be “no more shushing”, and thus began a new era of the Learning Commons, a shared learning space that allows for collaboration, creativity, and yes, talking.

The Dhahran Learning Commons gives students from all three campus schools a chance to relax, socialize, and take a break from the academic rigor of school. Our space is often raucous, energetic, and full of laughter. We’ve come a long way since the days of the traditional library. Together, as stated in our Learning Commons Statement of Purpose, “We value communication and collaboration to connect with each other and with the world.”

These days, students of all ages gather before and after school, during breaks, or during lunchtime to participate in creative game-playing, coloring in giant coloring books, or perhaps adding the final piece to a blue jay puzzle. Our Learning Commons, once silent and a bit dusty, is now the hub and go-to meeting place of our campus, often noisy and rarely empty.

The whole Compassion Summit 2017 group.

“Where you stand determines what you see.”
— Kathy Kelly

1 > Dhahran HS students contribute to a puzzle started by the Dhahran ES/MS students.
2 > Dhahran British Grammar School students work on a collaborative table-top coloring sheet.
3 > Dhahran Learning Commons will continue to add interactive games to our collection and offer shared activities that allow students to connect and collaborate in our open-access space.

katrina.lehman@isg.edu.sa

During the Fall Leadership Conference in Abu Dhabi, the Ed Tech Leaders Collaborative partnered with speaker Bonnie Latham, Director of Professional Learning and Strategic Partnerships at Global Online Academy (GOA), in a session that explored how technology was supporting learning in NESA schools.

In this informative and interactive session, edtech leaders gave Pe-chu Kucha presentations, to share stories of initiatives and innovations that matter to their communities. Each presentation illuminated purpose, described the journey, highlighted pitfalls, forecast the future, and offered advice. The workshop allowed participants to explore commonalities and reflect on collective insights.

The Five Characteristics of Highly Effective Teams

In this article in re:Work, Julia Rozovsky reports on what Google learned from its two-year study of what makes some of its teams more effective than others. After conducting more than 200 interviews, they gleaned 250+ attributes and thought they could crunch the perfect mix of individual traits and skills – perhaps one Rho – to predict which teams would work best.

Rozovsky says that any team can do a quick analysis of its internal workings by taking a close look at how it’s doing on each of these dynamics.

Go to page 11 to learn about the Librarians Collaborative and Doug Johnson’s sessions at NESA’s Fall Training Institute on the overlapping roles of the technology integrationist and the librarian.

Adding the E to the NVSF

This year’s annual NESA Virtual Science Fair (NVSF) training workshop took place October 26-27 at the Carlucci American International School in Lisbon, Portugal. Special thanks to Blamie Curtis, CAISL Director, and Annie Lopes, K-8 Science Director, for hosting our cadre of middle school and Grade 5 coordinators.

So, what does the “E” have to do with NVSF? The NESA Virtual Science Fair is now adding the letter “E” for “engineering.” The natural exposure and alignment of the NVSF with the Next Generation Science Standards represent a commitment to integrate engineering design into the structure of science education. This raises engineering design to the same level as scientific inquiry when teaching science disciplines at all levels.

The initiative to add the “E” came from Brian Wright (ASD-Doha) and Brett Thomsen (AIS Zagreb), both long-time NVSF Coordinators. This will be our test year with existing schools having the opportunity to provide more direct access to engineering research and design as well as our strong scientific research side.

Many schools that have been running engineering design classes, maker spaces, invention conventions and more can now opt to enter their teams into the new NVSF in the Fall of 2018. Since 2004, more than 40 international schools and more than 12,000 students (mostly from NESA) have participated in this U.S. State Department Office of Overseas Schools-funded project.

Brian Wright (ASD-Doha) and Valya Leaton (AISR-Riyadh), will present a workshop about NVSF and the Big E at the 2018 NESA Spring Educators Conference in Athens (March 30-April 1).

Interested in becoming an NVSF school? Contact Dr. Stuart Fleischer, NVSEF Project Director: sfleischer@wbais.net. See you in Athens for the Spring Educators Conference!

By Dr Stuart Fleischer, NVSEF Project Manager, WBAIS-Israel.

By Dr Stuart Fleischer, NVSEF Project Manager, WBAIS-Israel.
**Winter Training Institute**
**Venue:** The American International School of Muscat, Oman

NESA’s Winter Training Institute is a specialty conference for educators. The program is based on an “extended institute design” so that delegates are together with the same presenter for both days. This format allows time for skill development, in-depth exploration and the establishment of partnerships/networks.

> **REGISTER:**
www.nesacenter.org/events

*“NESA Collaboratives have worked with the Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) to plan this year’s institutes/workshops. They have identified learning priorities, suggested speakers, and are coordinating with these speakers to tailor their focus to educators’ needs. See pages 8-13, 20, 24 for more on NESA Collaboratives.”*

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**Spring Educators Conference**

**The SEC is a three-day conference for educators of all grade levels, subjects and disciplines, featuring keynotes, 4-hour workshops and multi-day offerings presented by specialist speakers, general interest sessions, and teacher-presented workshops.**

> **REGISTER ONLINE:**
www.nesacenter.org

**Early bird deadline:** February 15

**Hotel room reservations:** Book directly with the InterContinental Hotel via the NESA website: www.nesacenter.org

**Earn graduate credit** with SUNY-Buffalo State. Details on the NESA website.
AERO Preconferences
MARCH 29, 2018

AERO English/Language Arts: Practical Strategies for Authentic Assessment
CINDY CUMMINGS, Assistant Professor, Lamar University, & KATRINA THEIL-MANN, Elementary Literacy Coordinator, American School of Doha, Qatar
An aligned standards-based curriculum includes a strong match between standards, assessment tools, and instructional strategies. Using the backward design process, learn the steps to create authentic assessments that inform instruction and effect student learning, and allow students to demonstrate achievement of clearly communicated learning outcomes.

AERO Math: Reimagining Mathematics Instruction - Cultivating a Classroom Culture of Problem-solving (Grades 3-12)
ERMA ANDERSON, Science/Mathematics Consultant at the US State Department’s Office of Overseas Schools
This two-day preconference workshop will focus on the use of problem solving as an important teaching and learning strategy for mathematics. Teaching Through Problem-Solving is a teaching approach that helps students develop mathematical practices and habits of mind as an integral part of mathematics learning.

AERO Math: Reimagining Mathematics Instruction - Cultivating a Classroom Culture of Problem-solving (Grades 3-12)
CINDY CUMMINGS, Assistant Professor, Lamar University, & KATRINA THEIL-MANN, Elementary Literacy Coordinator, American School of Doha, Qatar
An aligned standards-based curriculum includes a strong match between standards, assessment tools, and instructional strategies. Using the backward design process, learn the steps to create authentic assessments that inform instruction and effect student learning, and allow students to demonstrate achievement of clearly communicated learning outcomes.

AERO Introduction to the Next Generation Science Standards
CAREY JOHNSON, MS Science Teacher, The American International School of Muscat, Oman, & CHRIS CHARNITSKI, Co-facilitator of the NGSS Introduction for Educators at the AERO Summer Institute in Virginia.
With a focus on the practice of science and engineering, the NGSS will fundamentally change the way science is taught, learned and assessed. Gain a deeper understanding of the NGSS and the resources available to assist in implementation of an NGSS based program. This is an introduction to the NGSS and not a curriculum writing workshop.

Multi-Day Workshops

3-Day Foundation Course in Reading Workshop, Grades K-2
March 30-April 1
EMILY DeLIDDIO, Educational consultant; former staff developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. www.languageisliving.com
Explore structures, routines and strategies to successfully implement a Primary Reading Workshop through unit planning, mini-lessons, conferences, partnership talk and data analysis. Learn how to quickly harness and effectively use the energy K-2 readers bring to engage and grow in reading books they choose and can read independently, across units of study in different genres.

3-Day Foundation Course in Reading Workshop, Grades 3-8: Building Strong, Resourceful & Skilled Readers
March 30-April 1
VICKI VINTON, Literacy Consultant and co-author of What Readers Really Do: Teaching the Process of Meaning Making, and The Power of Grammar. tomakeaprairie.wordpress.com
Examine the structures, components, and theoretical underpinnings of Reading Workshop. Explore how to use those components to help students become thoughtful and skillful meaning makers of both fiction and nonfiction texts. We’ll also dig into how to provide responsive feedback, use formative assessment to inform instruction, and help students develop the habits of mind of critical thinkers and readers.

4-Day Advanced Adaptive Schools Certificate Course
March 29-April 1
CAROL BROOKS SIMONEAU, Co-Director of Thinking Collaborative; Consultant for The Danielson Group & JIM ROUSSEY, Adaptive Schools Training Associate; Executive Director, Generative Learning. www.thinkingcollaborative.com
In this practical leadership institute, explore the latest findings in developing strong professional learning communities that share collective responsibility for student learning. Acquire new conceptual maps and expanded strategies for strengthening adult working groups. If you work with teams, this is your workshop! Prerequisite: Four-day Adaptive Schools Foundation Seminar.

3-Day Positive Discipline in the Classroom Certificate Course
March 30-April 1
JOY MARCHESSE, Educational Consultant and Positive Discipline Trainer; Secondary Teacher, The American School in London. www.positivediscipline.co.uk
Hundreds of schools use these amazingly effective strategies for restoring order and civility to today’s turbulent classrooms. Use the philosophy of Positive Discipline as a foundation for fostering cooperation, problem-solving skills, and mutual respect in children. Instead of controlling behavior, you can be teaching; instead of confronting apathy, you will enjoy motivated, eager students! Limited enrollment.

2-Day Institute: Managing Up - The Essentials for International School PAs, EAs and Admins
ANGELA GARRY, Trainer, Author of Brave PAs, and Editor of EDPA magazine. www.picuarum.com
Two days for International School PAs, EAs and Administrative Staff to grow, share, network and develop by ‘managing up’ - preparing for future progression in your role; creating better relations with parents, pupils and staff, and providing a higher level of support for your school’s leadership team.

Full descriptions at www.nesacenter.org/events

REGISTER ONLINE BY FEBRUARY 20: www.nesacenter.org
SPECIALIST SPEAKERS
(4-hour workshops):

EXTENDED KEYNOTE: What Makes for Human Flourishing? Creating a Culture of Wholeness in Schools
CAROLYN MCKANDERS, Director Emeritus, Thinking Collaborative and Consulting, Liberation, LLC

We will revisit our commitment to wholeness supported by research; examine the forces behind the enculturation of poor practices; and commit to reconciling the incongruence between espoused and lived values. You will engage in a guided experience, exploring holistically the tensions and possibilities of rigorous and rewarding outcomes through nurturing wholeness.

WORKSHOP: Polarity of Wholeness - Balancing and Leading Head-Heart Tensions in Schools
Wholeness is achieved through attending to and reconciling seemingly opposing dualities called polarities - intellect and intuition, relationship and rigor, head and heart. We will engage in identifying significant polarities and ways to lead and manage these tensions to strengthen and sustain holistic learning communities for both students and adults.

Which One Doesn’t Belong? and Other Ambiguous Math Questions
CHRISTOPHER DANIELSON, Instructional Designer, Blogger & author of Common Core Math For Parents For Dummies, talkingmathwithkids.com

Ambiguity is a launching point for rich mathematical activity. We’ll work through several different prompts such as “Which One Doesn’t Belong?” and “How Many?” which each have multiple right answers. Explore the mathematics that results, and practice designing and implementing prompts for our own classrooms.

What Math Can We Learn from Play?
CHRISTOPHER DANIELSON
Prepare to unleash your inner child, as we will play with materials, develop our own questions, and pursue challenges that have arisen in children’s play with these materials. A hands-on, minds-open workshop intended to elicit the kinds of joy and wonder we wish to see in classrooms where children pursue their own mathematical agendas.

3-Dimensional Instruction and the NGSS
PAUL ANDERSEN, Science Consultant and YouTube Science Tutorial producer, www.bezmaniscience.com

In this workshop Paul Andersen will share NGSS implementation strategies that have been tested in schools around the world. Participants will create anchor models, design assessments, and identify phenomena to guide unit design. Let’s bring back the wonder in the K-12 science classroom.

NGSS Assessment and Unit Design
PAUL ANDERSEN
Paul Andersen will share implementation strategies that have been tested in schools around the world. Participants will create anchor models, design assessments, and identify phenomena to guide unit design.

Sparking Contemporary Learning

Innovative schooling models and programs are sparking everywhere, and the lines between home, school, community and industry are blurring. This workshop will assist educators in developing a holistic approach to scaling and sustaining contemporary learning practices at their school. More importantly, it will highlight how schools can sustain and grow innovative practices vertically across PK-12 settings.

Collaborative Inquiry into Data: Learning from Student Work
LAURA LIPTON, Co-director, and LYNN SAWYER, Professional Development Associate, MiraVia, LLC. www.miravia.com

Data can distract or direct. Skillful data use keeps interactions learning-focused and student-centered. Explore the Collaborative Learning Cycle, a three-phase framework that helps groups discover assumptions, motivates data-focused inquiry, and develops shared understandings of both problems and possible solutions to increase confidence and success in working with data and one another.

Putting Data at the Center: Structures and Strategies for High-Performing Teams
LAURA LIPTON & LYNN SAWYER
This session addresses the importance of using data to focus collective action. Frame data-based inquiries that help teams: activate prior knowledge by surfacing predictions and underlying assumptions, motivates data-focused inquiry, and develops shared understandings of both problems and possible solutions to increase confidence and success in working with data and one another.

The Power of Formative Assessment
KIM ZEIDLER-WATTERS, Director of the Partnership Institute for Math and Science Education Reform at Eastern Kentucky University. pismer.edu

Formative Assessment makes a difference in student learning and attainment of standards. We will explore high-yield strategies proven to result in student learning gains with an emphasis on clear learning targets. Participants will leave with strategies and tools that can be immediately shared and applied in their school and classroom to support learning.

Building Your Instructional Leadership: It’s All About Relationships
FRAN PROLMAN & GAIL SEAY
Dig deep into the structures and strategies to build psychological safety in your school and team. Expand your repertoire of skills to specifically teach empathy. Analyze the five categories of intentional trust building. We will also highlight the six categories of skill building for collaboration for transformation.

Building Your Instructional Leadership: Navigating Situational Complexities
FRAN PROLMAN & GAIL SEAY
This workshop will unpack all the categories of potential derailment so that all stakeholders work toward the common goal of high quality instruction for all students. Expand your repertoire of strategies to assist people as they navigate through a process of change which may be challenging. We will also highlight the strategies necessary for interacting with difficult people.

Improving Professional Practice

Full descriptions at www.nesacenter.org/events

REGISTER ONLINE BY FEBRUARY 20: www.nesacenter.org
**Welcome to NESA!**

**New Affiliate School:**
**Danah Universal School of Kuwait**  
www.dusk-kw.net, info@aldanahbsk.net  
Principal: Heinrich Adolph

**New Affiliate Organizations:**  
**Pacific Prime International, Hong Kong**  
Mirka Strano, Business Development Manager  
mirka@pacificprime.com  
www.pacificprime.com

**GL Education, UK**  
Andrew Sleath, Int’l Marketing Manager  
andrew.sleath@gl-education.com  
international@gl-education.com  
www.gl-education.com

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**CONTRIBUTE TO NESA NEWS**

NESA members and affiliates are invited to submit articles, news items, announcements and events. Specifications: 500 words maximum, photos as high resolution (300dpi) jpg or pdf files with captions. Deadlines: March 15 (spring - online only), May 20 (fall), October 25 (winter). Email to Laura Canellopoulou: laura@nesacenter.org. See specs and past issues at: www.nesacenter.org/whats-happening/nesa-news-magazine.

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