



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

History

History is the most under-valued subject on the curriculum. It is often perceived as being without utility beyond school. If, for example, you study Physics, you may go on to be an engineer. If you study all the sciences, you may go on to be a doctor. But History? What can you “do” with History?

It is an argument that rather misses the point. If you believe that studying a subject at school amounts to memorising facts and learning “stuff”, then – maybe, just maybe – you have a point. Yes, who cares when the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was or what the Meiji Restoration was? (Though I would argue that knowledge of historical events greatly helps us to better understand modern problems such as various conflicts in the Middle East, the rise of China, race relations in the USA and elsewhere, BREXIT, religious and ethnic tensions in South Asia, many of Africa’s problems, and much more.)

In fact, memorising dates and names and events is a very minor part of studying History. It almost amounts to an added bonus while you get on with the real work.

And what is the real work? Studying History teaches and trains you to gather and assemble as much evidence as you can. To evaluate and interrogate that evidence as objectively and dispassionately as possible. To analyse and synthesise. To draw provisional conclusions based on a rational examination of the facts. And to understand that there is seldom a definitive and final answer to any problem.

You want to be a lawyer? Study History. A journalist? Study History. A politician? Study History. Work in HR? Study History. Understand how to filter real news from fake news? Study History. Learn how to write with precision and nuance? Study History.

Alas, I’m fighting a losing battle. People don’t much study History these days. At school, their parents often tell them not to. “Study something useful,” they are told.

And so we end up more and more with people making decisions based on misinformation, emotion, ignorance, and prejudice. And the damage is hard to undo.

In 1721 Jonathan Swift wrote, *“Reasoning will never make a Man correct an ill Opinion, which by Reasoning he never acquired”*.

Quite.

Peter MacKenzie

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Dates to Remember

May 2019

- **27 - 29:** Week B
- **29:** Secondary AA End
- **30:** Ascension Day - No school
- **31:** School Closed

June 2019

- **07:** Primary AA End
- **10:** Internal Exams Start
- **19:** End of term 4



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WEEKLY PUZZLER

Once again Eden and Tiancheng solve last week's puzzler. These two are a couple of true puzzler hall of famers!

This week let's dust off an old puzzler from the archives. Achilles (known to be very fast) and a tortoise (not known to be very fast) decided to have a race. The tortoise was given a 100m head start. Achilles ran exactly ten times faster than the tortoise.

Here are some points in the race: When Achilles had run 100m, the tortoise had run 10m and so was ahead by 10m.

After Achilles ran the next 10m the tortoise was 1m ahead.

After Achilles ran the next 1m the tortoise was 0.1m ahead.

And on, and on, and on.....

Did Achilles ever catch the tortoise? If so, at which point on the course. In other words, how far did Achilles have to run to catch the tortoise.

Please send solutions, or any fun and interesting puzzlers to pfarrell@wis.edu.na



PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Africa Day

Those of you who attended the PTA coffee morning celebrating Africa Day will have witnessed a lovely event. Handmade baskets, crafted by women from a village north of Rundu, were on display and a sampling of food was offered. It was wonderful to see the various African attire worn by many of those in attendance. The Primary choir serenaded us with the African Union anthem followed by the Namibian national anthem. An impromptu song, *Shosholoz*, was sung by several Primary staff members. Secondary student, Sahara Kamwanyah, read a moving story that she wrote in celebration of Africa Day. Thank you to the members of the PTA for offering another opportunity for us to join together as a community.

Continuing with the Africa Day theme, at today's assembly, the children were treated to a small "flash mob" by several Primary staff. When it was time for "Ms. Beth's song" at the end of the assembly, several staff members started singing *Shosholoz* and moving to the front of the stage. This song was followed by a song called, *Namibia*. Between yesterday's celebration and today's assembly, one couldn't help but feel uplifted and energised by the beautiful music and the coming together as one.

Primary School Parent Meeting

If you haven't done so already, please diarise the **Primary School Parent Meeting** on **Wednesday, 5 June 2019 at 18:00 in the Auditorium**. The purpose of this meeting is to share with you some new developments that will be taking place in the Primary School effective in August for the new school year. We are excited about these developments and the impact they will have on teaching and learning.

Regards,
Beth Smith

PYP Coordinator's message

Our ICT Vision: To empower digital citizens to evaluate, select and use technology tools as and when needed to communicate, think and innovate, in order to construct meaning or solve problems collaboratively with peers, teachers and experts in the local and global community.

We recently did a review of how we implement technology here at our school. We referred to the IB PYP document, that has just been released: "Purposeful technology integration and implementation."

Our teachers and educational assistants reflected on the following questions:

- What is the role of technology in the PYP?
- To know some examples of technology integration and implementation: What do we do well? What do we need to work on?
- What do we know about how technology supports inquiry?

It was an exercise that evoked thoughts, discussions, and an opportunity to share what we do in the learning environment at our school. We also focussed a lot on our vision and philosophy towards technology and learning.

One awareness discussed is that it is important to keep abreast with and up to date with a rapidly changing world. The reality is our students will need to use technology in their everyday lives. A question then raised is what is our responsibility to support this? One such thought is we are all responsible as educational guides and facilitators. Technology is something that should be considered a tool to support learning,

amongst the other mediums and materials we provide students in the classroom. For example, you will see by the photos below that our technology workshop included the use of many tools including pens, paper, and face to face interaction and discussion.

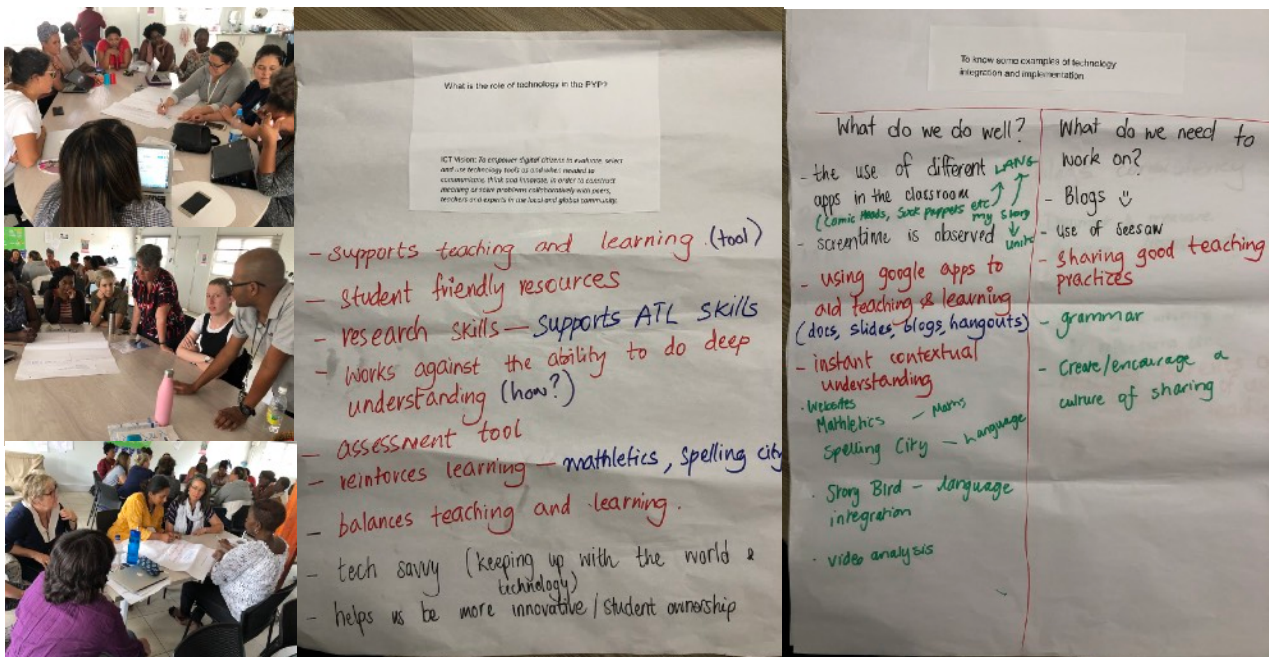
Technology is a useful tool to enhance how we teach and how we facilitate learning for our students, but that doing so effectively requires a holistic, meaningful and thoughtful approach. The focus is on the learning, not the technology. Technology helps us to connect with learners and experts worldwide. Technology implementation involves thoughtful planning on the part of teachers to ensure the tools match the learning goals identified. A combination of digital (iPads, Sphero, Blue-Bot, and Apple TV), and non-digital tools (paper, scissors, pens), can help support and extend learning. Through the use of technology, teachers support and foster the responsible use and encourage independence of students to make informed decisions and choices. Our e-portfolio platform, Seesaw, supports teachers' monitoring, documenting, measuring and reporting of learning. Students use various platforms to make their thinking visible, to reflect and share learning, to connect with the real world and to become informed learners making safe choices when researching and gathering information. Some examples of using technology to support learning include: students using Google Slides to share their connections through inquiry, teachers use class blogs to keep parents informed and celebrate student learning, students are involved in generating blog posts that summarise their learning using Google Slides. These tools are introduced to teachers and students by the ICT integrationist coach, Mr. Danai Maramba as a way for the students to learn and practise tech skills, whilst showcasing their own learning.

In previous years at WIS, students used to go to the computer lab to learn how to use Microsoft Powerpoint. Now they stay in the classroom and learn the very same skills, amongst others. This is more authentic as they have an audience of student, parents and teachers, they receive feedback and use this to reflect on further learning. What was once a standalone ICT lesson with independent work, has become a more purposeful example of how learning can be enhanced in the classroom. Students can take turns to create a blog post each week in groups of two to four.. It is engaging, and is an opportunity to empower students in sharing their thoughts and giving voice in their learning environment.

Students use "Sphero" to plan, decode, problem solve and use critical thinking skills. They use Seesaw to reflect and measure on their own personal growth and receive feedback from various stakeholders throughout their learning journey. They use apps and tools creatively to show their newly gained perspectives and understandings.

Our journey with technology has evolved over the last five years starting with the introduction of the use of iPads as a tool for learning. We are always reflecting and responding to ways in which technology can be incorporated to best support a student's learning journey in the PYP. Our teachers and students here at WIS are innovative and motivated to embrace best practice for continuing to improve and transform learning and teaching.

Here are photographs of WIS staff in action during our Technology Workshop review and some of their thoughts and reflections.



Avril van Zyl

Inter-schools athletics sign-up

In a bid to improve the quality of our after school interactions we are exploring an option of moving from the traditional Small Schools athletics competition in February to a competition hosted in the cooler part of the year in September. This competition will have among its participants St. Georges, DHPS, Holy Cross Convent and Delta Primary School.

As we make plans for that competition please could you access [this Google form](#), discuss with your child if they would be interested in taking part and which events they would like to take part in and fill in their responses. This event is for students born 2006 (U13) to 2009/2010 (U9). Athletics is a great foundation for competitive sport and we encourage as many students as possible to take part.

Edwin Chinyemba



Mathematical Mindsets Part 1

(The need to engage numbers flexibly and not through rote memorisation - a balance between conceptual understanding and developing mathematical skills.)

This school year Primary teachers from Grade 1-5 partook in a course offered by Stanford University, facilitated by Jo Boaler. They learnt about the current trends and shifts in the teaching of Mathematics. This article serves to share some of the 'big ideas' our teachers walked away with upon completing the course.

Learning math is similar to learning any subject. For example, for students to learn good English they have to read and understand texts. They need to have encountered many words and understand their usage. One cannot say or think that learning English is about giving the students hundreds of words to memorise and then test them under timed conditions where they will demonstrate fast memorisation and recall of words. It is not the only way in fostering this deeper understanding of English concepts explored. This is because we learn words by using them in many different situations—talking, reading and writing. We consolidate and construct our understanding and then in many forms, transfer this understanding in authentic, relevant ways when applying it.

So why do we treat mathematics differently?

Students' enthusiasm and excitement to learning mathematics can be quickly replaced with dread and dislike when they start school if they are introduced to a dry set of methods that have them think they just have to accept and remember. The inquisitiveness of these children's early years fades away and is replaced by anxiety, fear and a strong belief that math is about instructions and rules. But this is not what we aim for in the PYP.

The best and most important start we can give our students is to encourage them to play with numbers and shapes, thinking about what patterns and ideas they can see to encourage a positive mindset about mathematics. Students need to see math as conceptual and make sense of them rather than a series of short questions or problems that either they get or they don't. Math should be seen as a broad landscape of unexplored puzzles in which they can wander.

So how do we develop mathematical mindsets in students so that they are willing to approach math with sense making and intuition?**Number sense**

In an important research study cited by Jo Boaler, two British researchers worked with students, ages 7 to 13. All of the students were given number problems such as adding or subtracting two numbers. The researchers found an important difference between the low and high-achieving students. The high-achieving students solved the questions by using what is known as number sense—they interacted with the numbers flexibly and conceptually. The low-achieving students used no number sense and seemed to believe that their role was to recall and use a standard method, even when this was difficult to do.

After extensive study of the different strategies that the students used, the researchers concluded that the difference between the high and low-achieving students was not that the low-achieving students knew less mathematics, but that they were interacting with mathematics differently. Instead of approaching numbers with flexibility and number sense, they seemed to cling to formal procedures they had learned, using them very precisely, not abandoning them even when it made sense to do so.

Number sense reflects a deep understanding of mathematics. It comes about through a mathematical mindset that is focused on making sense of numbers and quantities. It is useful to think about the ways number sense is developed in students, not only because number sense is the foundation for all higher-level mathematics but also because number sense and mathematical mindsets develop together.

Mathematics is a conceptual domain. It is not, as many people think, a list of facts and methods to be remembered. When students learn to count, they remember order and names for numbers, but they also develop the *concept* of number; that is, the idea of a number. In the early stages of learning to add numbers, students learn a method called "counting on". Counting on is used when you have two sets of numbers—for example, $15 + 4$ —and you learn to count the first set (counting to 15), then continue counting (16, 17, 18, 19). When students learn the method of counting on, they develop the concept of "sum". This is not a method of addition; it is a conceptual idea.

In the next stage of their mathematics work, students may learn to add groups of numbers, such as three groups of 4, and as they learn to add groups, they develop the concept of a product. Again, this is not a method (of multiplication); it is a conceptual idea. The ideas of a number, a sum and a product are concepts in mathematics that students need to think deeply about. Students should learn methods, such as adding and multiplying, not as an ends in themselves, but as part of a conceptual understanding of numbers, sums, and products and how they relate to each other.

(Some extracts in the article have been taken from Jo Boaler's Books and the Mathematical Mindset course).

Jo Boaler. *Fluency without Fear: Research Evidence on the Best Ways to Learn Math Facts*. (Youcubed) Stanford University. 2014

Jo Boaler. *What's Math Got to Do with It?: How Teachers and Parents Can Transform Mathematics Learning and Inspire Success*. Penguin Books. 2015

Watch out for Part 2 in the next Oryx.

PYP Math Subject Leader -Pamela Mungate

RE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE

The deadline for Re-Registration forms to be handed in is Wednesday, 29 May 2019.

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

How do you prepare for your future after school?

One of the biggest challenges at the end of one's school career is to decide what to do after you finish with school. This is a big decision and with so many opportunities available, it is a long and sometimes challenging process.

That is why we try to make opportunities available to our learners as much as possible to assist them in making this choice. There is so much to take into consideration:

- What do I want to become?
- Where do I want to go?
- What does it cost and who will/can finance my studies?

and so many more questions that need answers while planning your future.

At WIS, we start our career guidance in Grade 9 by making learners aware of opportunities. In Grade 10 we meet with learners and expose them to some presentations and talks from experts. The real work, however, starts in Grade 11. This is the time, when learners need to start making decisions.

Key factors in the decision making process are probably finances and the location where to study. The USA and UK, recently, Canada and the Netherlands are the preferred destinations for study at the moment. All these countries highly appreciate the IB Diploma that our learners are doing and value the rigour, the depth and the holistic nature of the diploma.

On Tuesday we had a visitor from the [International University Alliance](#). Selma spoke about the universities they represent and their collaboration with the IB. This was a very interesting talk and our learners went away inspired and with a lot of useful information.

It is important that we assist our young adults in making these decisions for their future. Conversations need to happen at home and in school to ensure that the right decisions are made and that students are guided in the process that is certainly something that paves the way for their future.

**Regards,
Maggie Reiff**

ALL PARENTS ARE INVITED TO OUR FINAL INFO SESSION:

PARENT INFORMATION SESSION



- * Tuesday, 28 May 2019 @ 18:00
- * WIS Staff Room
- * Service Learning - ACT

This will be a required activity for all Grade 9 students as of August 2019

Instructional Coaching

How we make sure we keep up with latest development in teaching and learning

Grade 8 German Class

This Tuesday the German Grade 8 class visited Cramer's Eiscafe and the Goethe Institute. Due to last year's experience, we felt more confident speaking German, while we were there. The Goethe librarian gave us a mini tour around the Goethe library. As a class we managed to get a brief idea of how people in the Goethe Institute study and learn. We also got to watch an interesting short film named "Annie & Boo". After Goethe we walked to Cramer's Ice-cream shop. Mr. Cramer welcomed us with open arms and we had to order in German. He said that he was really impressed with our German progress and our language skills.

It was a great experience, we were not as nervous anymore about speaking German.

And we could use our German vocabularies, what we learned in class. Overall we had a fun time and delicious food.



Visit at Cramer's & Goethe. Grade 8

Important vocabularies:

Hallo, guten Morgen! Danke! Vielen Dank! Bitte! Kann ich bitte ein Eis haben? Ich hätte gern eine Kugel Eis bitte. Im Becher oder in der Waffel?

Hello, good morning! Thank you! Thank you very much! Please! Can I have some ice cream, please? I would like a scoop of ice please. In a cup or in a waffle?

Grade 8 German students

United World College

United World College (UWC) brings students of different nationalities, beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds into one classroom to encourage peace and understanding. UWCs are passionate about community development. They recognise students who donate some of their time to help better their community. There are eighteen existing UWCs located in four different continents. A few months ago, I was pleased to receive an acceptance letter from UWC Maastricht, the Netherlands.

Having lived in Namibia all my life, I was anxious to experience school in a foreign country. I decided to apply to a UWC because the thought of doing the IB Diploma in an entirely new country was enticing. UWCs are recognised by some of the world's most prestigious universities who offer scholarships to students who perform well at a UWC.

UWCs' deliberately diverse student bodies attracted me initially. Being immersed in an international community here at WIS since third grade, I've grown to appreciate the privilege of communicating and collaborating with students from all over the world. WIS has cultivated me to become a more confident student. There are a number of things I'll miss about WIS. The lively debates during MUN, the rewarding challenge of the drama productions and the endless support from my classmates, teachers and moreover the WIS community.

Fiona Farrell - Grade 10



We wish Fiona all the best in this new endeavour and hope to see her back for a visit in the next two years. Maggie Reiff - Secondary Principal

From the PTA

Africa Day is a special and important day on the African calendar. Africans and friends of Africa across the world celebrate on May 25th to commemorate the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (now known as the African Union) on 25 May, 1963. Primary roles of the AU include promoting unity and solidarity within and amongst African states; and to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; whilst accelerating the political and socio-economic integration of the continent.

Africa Day allows us to pay tribute to the countless people on this continent and around the world who defeated colonialism and apartheid in the protection of sovereignty and human dignity.

Africa Day also presents us with an opportunity to reflect on the state of the continent and the individual as well as collective roles each of us can play to respond to the challenges of our current times.

This year, the PTA decided to honour this significant day at our signature Coffee Morning. We celebrated the diversity and beauty of Africa by showcasing crafts, sharing a sampling of foods, music and dance and dressing in various African print, traditional dress and accessories. It was a vibrant and joyful event as members of the school community gathered to share in the moment. Anthems are visible representations of sovereignty,

territorial integrity and independence for Africa states. Ms. Michelle Du Preez and Mr. Kastoor led the primary choir in delivering a prideful and moving rendition of both the African Union and Namibian Anthems. It was a celebration of legacy and achievements in both Namibia and Africa at large.

Sahara Kamwanyah, a Grade 8 learner graced the event with a moving story that she created herself, in appreciation of the unique beauty of her African heritage. Her story captivated and inspired us all! And just as we thought we were done, Mr. Kastoor and Ms. Michelle D, leading a charismatic flash mob of teachers, surprised us all with a WIS version of 'Shosholoza'! This is the essence and nature of celebrations across the beautiful African continent. [Read her story here.](#)

Members of the community continued to share their feelings of joy and gratitude with the PTA throughout the day. Many people are inspired by the shared feeling of unity that reverberated in the school afterwards. We hope to create an even bigger event next year.

The PTA wishes to thank everyone in our WIS family for supporting us to commemorate Africa Day and for making it a memorable occasion.



PTA Africa Day Coffee Morning:
For more photos click [HERE!](#)

Michelle Jackson-Read



Dear Angie,

Sahara read out her story this morning at the Africa Day themed PTA coffee morning. She did such a wonderful job! Her story was beautiful and everyone was captivated by the images she helped us create in our minds. She read eloquently and with confidence. Please thank her - it truly was a wonderful addition to the coffee morning.

Thanks on behalf of the PTA,
Lian



Michelle Du Preez 08:41
to me

Dear PTA,
Thank you (Kalei po nawa), for the initiative of celebrating Africa day. To stop and just be thankful for what we have freedom of expression and to live in this country, that is what I felt this morning, Unity.
Thank you from myself and the choir, for having us,
Hope you enjoyed the Flashmob "Shosolozza".

Best Wishes



ANIMALS BY NIGHT

SPCA FUNDRAISER

FEATURING AN
ART SLAM & SILENT AUCTION

TICKETS
Early Bird: N\$200*
Standard: N\$250

Welcome drink included!
Food stalls and cash bar available!

Special guest DJ
MC: Whilzahn

FRIDAY | 14 JUNE | 19:00 till late
FNGC | Dresscode: Casual to Fancy

Tickets available on Webtickets.com.na,
Pick n Pay, and at the **SPCA!**

**For early bird pricing buy your ticket before end of day Sunday June 2, 2019.*

For more information, please email events@spcawindhoek.org.na







BUY YOUR TICKET AT:
www.webtickets.com.na

BOOK ONLINE PAY IN STORE 

NOTICE: If you are human and old enough to vote, come join us this evening.