



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Two Important Meetings

Thank you to the 70+ parents and staff who have registered for the meeting tomorrow morning. Registration has now closed.

Another important meeting (on another Saturday) will take place on **16th November**.

Regular readers of The Oryx will be familiar with the **A C E** protocol of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). It is through this protocol that we will submit ourselves for re-accreditation in 2020 (which, let me remind you, is just nine weeks away!). But it is much more than that.

Taking a long, hard look at ourselves through the lens of **A C E** is one of a number of current initiatives that are transforming the way we teach at WIS. One concrete outcome will be the inclusion in the next Strategic Plan (2020-2025) of a number of school-wide 'Learning Plans' to further align and embed best practice across all Grades and subjects.

We would like to invite parents to hear more about the journey so far and where **A C E** will be taking us in the future. More details will follow but for now, please mark the date – **Saturday 16th November**.

Peter MacKenzie

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Commitment and Learner Agency

During the Primary assemblies, we recognise children's involvement in various activities, be they school-related or outside of school. Some of the recent recognitions have been participation in chess, go-kart racing, karate, ballet recitals, perfect attendance, inter-school athletics, soccer tournaments and swimming galas. Participation in each of these activities takes commitment, which is part of developing learner agency (voice, choice and ownership). These recognitions offer the opportunity to talk about the importance of commitment.

Students have the opportunity to practice commitment in a variety of ways including school work; after school activities; music, ballet, gymnastics, swimming, etc. lessons; being on a sports team; or keeping playdates just to name a few. More specifically during the school day students are encouraged to practice commitment through completing



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Dates to Remember

October 2019

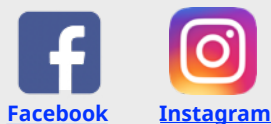
- **26:** Consultative Meeting
- **31:** WIS Info Parent Session

November 2019

- **01:** Sec School Dance
- **09:** International Day
- **21 - 23:** Staff Work Days
- **27:** Election Day
- **29:** AA End for all Students



VISIT US ON:



WEEKLY PUZZLER

Eden and Tiancheng solved last week's puzzler. Well done!

Let's talk about money. I had a wad of money in my pocket. I gave half away and of what remained, I spent half. Then, I lost five dollars. That left me with just five bucks. How much money did I start with? As we so often see algebra is your friend. Use it to simplify your life!

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



activities or assignments that have been given; completing homework on time; arriving to class on time; improving on a chosen goal such as the presentation of work, listening, following directions, being nicer to friends.

Parents can support their children in further developing commitment by ensuring attendance at After School Activities, or any lessons, activities and events for which the child has signed up, and talking about what it means to be committed to this activity. Continue to encourage responsibility - have your child pack his/her bag the night before so that it's ready to go in the morning; let your child carry his/her own bag into school. Encourage your child to meet deadlines (schoolwork, field trip permission slips, sign-up forms). Discuss with your child the strengths and goals that they have set for this school year and what they can do to persevere, take responsibility and ownership in achieving these goals.

Student-Led Conferences

These conferences will be held after school Tuesday, 12 November ; Wednesday, 13 November ; Thursday, 14 November. This is another example of learner agency as your child takes ownership in sharing their progress with you and some of the learning that has taken place this term. You will receive two links to sign up for the conferences - one link will be for the conference with the homeroom teacher (scheduled for 25 - 30 minutes), the other is for conferences with the specialist teachers (scheduled for 15 minutes each). More information about the conferences will follow closer to the time.

Primary Principal's Absence

Today through next Thursday, I am in Dubai participating in a NEASC-ACE accreditation visit. I will return to school on Friday, 1st November.

Regards,
Beth Smith

French at WIS

Dear Parents and Caregivers of students who are learning French at WIS.

This is a message from the FNCC, we highly encourage our students to attend these workshops in order to have extra exposure to the French Language:

Dear Parents,

*The next creative workshop in French will take place this coming **Saturday, 26 October 2019** with "**The magic of science: funny experiences!**".*

*It will take place at the **Franco Namibian Cultural Centre (FNCC)**, from **10:00 till 12:00** under the supervision of **Ms Isabelle De Joannis De Verclos**, French teacher.*

Cost: N\$ 75/ child per workshop, payment on arrival.

In order to adapt the workshop to the age and number of participating children, thank you for letting us know in advance if your child will be participating.

It is still possible to enroll last minute as well! Please, feel free to contact me directly should you have any questions, requests or suggestions:

Madame Laetitia : lborryni@wis.edu.na Tel: 081 834 76 55

The WHY and The WHAT?

I believe the 'why' and 'what' relate to each other. When the '**why**' is answered, then the '**what**' is covered as well.

As we all know, those words are created for a reason: *provocations, finding out, sharing, making, conclusions, reflection, action*. All of those keywords are part of our Inquiry Cycle. Inviting and involving students in the process is the best way of learning. We created questions and also set up the learning environment that stimulated students' curiosity.

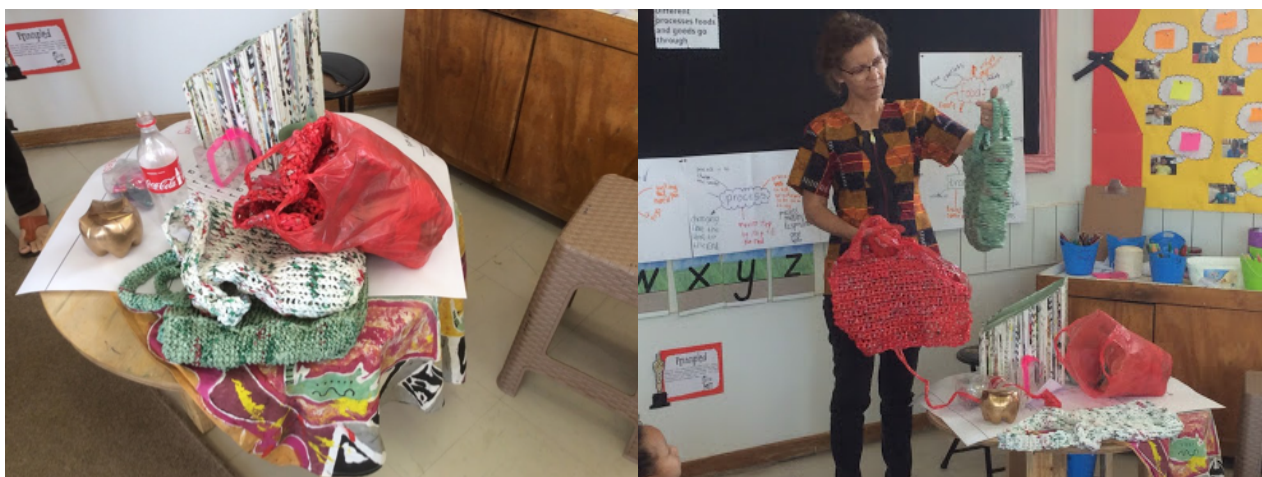
Grade 2 students had a great opportunity to learn from other members of our community. We began the unit with interesting **provocations** by one of our parents, Bill Walker. Our students' inquiry is into foods and goods that people need and their process of transformation. Mr. Walker came with great ideas and started the curiosity conversations with our students.



- What are the needs?
- Where do food and goods come from?
- What processes are required to provide those goods?
- How were they made?
- What can they be used for?



After that, students were eager to **find out** more about the unit. Therefore we used another great opportunity to invite two other members of our community; Ms. Tanya-May and Ms. Yolanda Visser. They shared knowledge of how foods and goods are processed in different ways. Students found out how to make bread from the raw (unprocessed wheat) until the final product when they ate the bread. They learned how to transform recycled materials into new products.



We are very thankful for those opportunities. **Great learning HERE at WIS!** If you would like to find out more about it, you are welcome to contact our community members: Yolanda yvisser@wis.edu.na, Tanya-May tknouwds@wis.edu.na, Bill walkerwg@gmail.com

How We Organise Ourselves - Grade 2, Beata Stephanus

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

What do teachers do to make sure that kids learn?

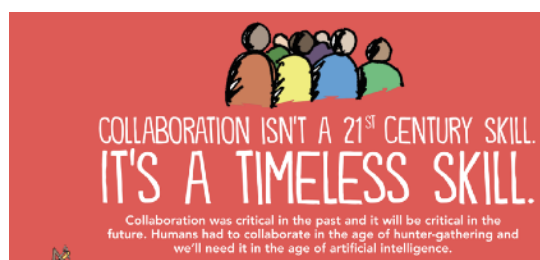
It is often not clear how teachers get to the point that their students learn and how much preparation and thought needs to go into preparing for lessons that are engaging, challenging and also current.

This week, Dr. Mary Montgomery visited WIS to work with teachers on planning and the way we are currently approaching our teaching and learning in school. In the past year, a lot of changes happened across the school; in the way we teach and ultimately in the way students learn. Many of us (older generation) learned by working through textbooks, by studying for exams - as we might call it - by rote learning. With the change in focus across the school, learning is more about becoming confident with different concepts. When we understand a concept, we can transfer this to situations that are not necessarily familiar to us.



In History, for example, the concept that students investigate or learn about might be **conflict**. This concept can be applied to different events and situations, a war, social conflict and many more. Learning about World War I then involves more than only learning about facts like dates and events. Students understand that there is more to World War I than just dates and facts, but that social, economic, international relations and many other aspects are involved.

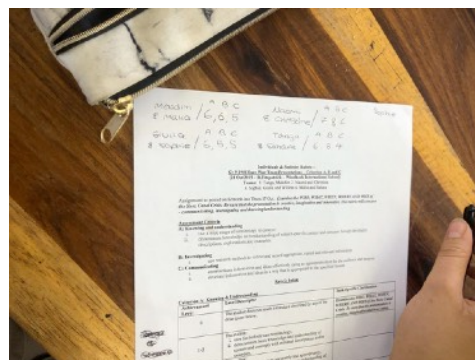
The goal is that young people become more confident in their learning and open to learning. It also makes learning more relevant and ultimately, learning becomes a tool that is used to grow and to acquire dispositions that are applicable in different life situations. Learning in school becomes a means to an end and is more enduring. We don't just learn to pass a test or an exam.



The conversations in the English and Social Studies departments during this week were positive and certainly contributed to teachers purposefully talking and planning for deeper understanding. With the discussions, we are now able to align our teaching across the different grades and even across disciplines.

It was a pleasure to sit in the different sessions and observe how planning evolves and moves towards facilitating deeper learning. The way in which teachers embrace these changes to stir our school into the new direction is commendable and a sign of their commitment to progress in educational practices. This is not something that should be accepted as a given fact. The changes in approach will ultimately enable our students to confidently find their way in their further learning journey.

As part of the Social Studies session on Thursday morning, the department - teachers across the different grades and from History as well as Geography went into the Grade 9 History class and listened to students presenting a team investigation about the 1956 Suez War. Teachers assessed the presentations with the rubric Mr. Fitzpatrick has designed and then compared their assessments amongst each other. Students did a peer-assessment as well to deepen understanding and reflection about what they had learnt.



Thank you to all the teachers and Dr. Montgomery for the energy and time and thought invested in this past week.

Regards,

Maggie Reiff

University news



A representative from the [EU Business School](#), **Ms. Regina Mangue** will be visiting WIS on **28 October 2019**. She will host an information session for students and parents from **18:00 - 19:00**. You can see [here](#) what the EU Business School is all about.

On **30 October @ 12:00** a representative of the [Southern Utah University](#) from the US will be visiting WIS to speak to students about studying at that university.

Assessments and Criterion

Hello WIS Nation,

During the past week I have had the privilege of participating in the planning sessions led by Dr. Mary Montgomery. During these sessions the Social Studies, English and Science teams discussed content alignment, unit planning and assessments. Lots of discussions focussed on the idea of Enduring Understandings and what concepts we want the students to understand/take-away from the subject



versus what content we want them to be able to recall.

As the alignment of content was worked through, concepts established, inquiry incorporated and connections made to Namibia and Southern Africa, the conversation then moved to how students communicate their understanding of all this.

That is where the criteria come in.

What is a criterion? Why use criteria? How do criteria work? How will we communicate this?

These are frequent questions associated with the use of criteria.

Assessment criteria make it clear to learners what they are expected to do to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes and factors teachers will take into account when making judgments about student performance. Sharing assessment criteria with students at the beginning of the course is an effective way to help students build confidence in their learning and improve their performance. Making assessment criteria explicit helps them recognise what is important and valued in the curriculum, focus their efforts on key learning outcomes and evaluate their own performance through self-assessment and reflection. Assessment criteria are a way to provide formative feedback throughout a course to support ongoing learning, as well as to provide an end-of-semester summative evaluation. This ties in nicely with the SDL programme happening now at WIS.

Assessment criteria take the 'guess-work' out of grading, for teachers and students. Well-defined assessment criteria allow teachers to evaluate learners' work more transparently, consistently and objectively. This increases a sense of fairness from the students' perspective and makes it easy for the teacher to explain/justify how achievement levels have been awarded.

At WIS we are adopting four criteria (assessed up to a level 8) for each subject from Grades 6 to 9 (Grade 10 next year) based on the IBMYP. The MYP is the IB programme that bridges the PYP to the DP.

Why four criteria levelled up to 8? Alignment and transparency.

MYP has weaknesses. But the main strength of the MYP is its criteria and how they develop students and get them ready for the IBDP. In 2015, the MYP reinvented itself by aligning its criteria. Before, subjects had different numbers of criteria with different achievement levels. This caused confusion amongst teachers, students and parents. Now all subjects have 4 criteria (subject focused) all levelled up to 8. Within each criterion, there are 4 bands of achievement. Levels 7-8, 5-6, 3-4, 1-2. Research has shown that 4 or 5 bands of achievement are far more effective for providing feedback and determining understanding than a 101 scale when using percentages. These levels are differentiated by command terms. Command terms are based on Bloom's Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge (DOK). Questions that ask students to recall facts or state an answer are low on Bloom's/DOK and questions that ask students to compare and contrast, explain, discuss, create or innovate are much higher on Bloom's/DOK and require much greater depth of understanding. Criterion rubrics use command terms to inform students and parents to what level they understand the curriculum content and their ability to transfer knowledge and skills. In summative assessment rubrics, command terms differentiate levels of achievement, For example: Explain - Discuss - Define - State or Thoroughly - Adequately - Partially - Limited. This helps to guide students in their ability to reflect, teach themselves and move forward.

This is known as Assessment OF Learning (Summative Assessments). In Grades 9 and 10 the criteria have been matched or designed to align with the IGCSE Assessment Objectives and teachers are able to provide specific feedback on the different elements that will be included in the exams at the end of Grade 10.

Student Agency is now a big focus in education. Student voice and choice is being incorporated into the teacher planning and students are given opportunities to choose topics to research and/or communicate understanding in a way they chose. Using criteria with clear expectations, presented to students before the task, allows the students choice in the assessment but still gives structure for the teacher to grade fairly and provide feedback. Feedback is an essential part of this process, because a well developed criterion rubric will help inform future teaching and will also provide information for the students to self-direct their own learning. This ties in nicely with the SDL programme at WIS.

All criteria will be accessible via the school website under the Teaching and Learning tab. This is currently being developed.

If you would like more information or to ask questions about this process of assessing learning, we invite you to join us at the Parent Information Evening next Thursday October 31 at 18:00 in the WIS Staff Room.

Michael Parsons
Director of Teaching and Learning

7LC Presentation Skills

Class 7LC have recently been discussing what makes a good presentation. They had discussions based around questions such as

- What kind of body language can be used?
- Why is it important to avoid reading directly from notes or slides?
- How will you know if the audience is engaged and interested?

Then, to demonstrate their learning, each student was given one word by picking a piece of paper randomly out of a hat and had a short amount of time to prepare a one-minute presentation on their selected topic.

After each presentation, the students gave constructive feedback to each other and their presentation skills improved as we worked through the group and they learned from each other.



Earth Day Celebration Donation

What happened to the clothing the WIS community donated towards the Earth Day Celebration?

Terry Farrell and two German students had a great time at the Likwaterera Combined School in Kavango East. The Director of the Ministry of Education in Rundu pointed out that this school would benefit most from this assistance. We had reusable sanitary pads (donated by the two students) for the girls and clothing for both young and old.



The school is situated 25 km outside Rundu, off the B8 road in the bush. 75% of students are from the San Community. The village is very rural with no development whatsoever. The school has two blocks (6 classrooms) with ±600 learners.

The principal was very happy with the donation, especially with the fact that it was donated to the San



Community.

Thank you once again for making a big difference in someone else's life!

Angie Janse van Rensburg

Gr. 7 Autobiographies

The Gr. 7s would like to share some of their autobiographies they did in English. The learners did amazing work, they shared their lives in a creative way. I hope you enjoy some of their stories.

[Zuleika Hiwilepo - Gr. 7JM](#)

[Ivy Andersen - Gr. 7JM](#)

[Salome Rey - Gr. 7LC](#)

[Ruizhe Zhou - Gr. 7LC](#): *Ruizhe is from China and is an EAL student who came to WIS without speaking a word of English.*

World Diabetes Day Fundraiser

14 November 2019

What is Diabetes? Diabetes is a **chronic disease** that occurs when the body is no longer able to make **insulin**, or **cannot make good use** of the insulin it produces. **Insulin** is a **hormone** made by the pancreas, that acts like a **key** to let glucose from the food we eat pass from the blood into the cells in the body to produce energy. Diabetes can lead to **raised glucose levels** in the blood (known as **hyperglycaemia**). Over the long-term, this can lead to damage and even failure of various organs and tissues.



Congrats to the Grade 6s for being in 100% correct PE uniform for the first time this year!

W.O.R.D.

Guess who is also reading during our scheduled reading lessons: Mr. Antonious



WIS SECONDARY PARENT INFORMATION SESSION

Thursday October 31
WIS Staffroom
18:00 - 19:00

- Information about Assessments
 - Reports vs Reporting
 - Reporting Schedule

SNACKS WILL BE PROVIDED

WIS
WINDHOEK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

PTA NEWS

The newly formatted International Day is just over two weeks away. We will have a main stage outside (shaded) where there will be activities such as Zumba, Drumming and live bands. The bar tent will be outside and have a Foods of the World section. Most of the games and activities will be set up in the Games of the World section in the PE hall. Please continue to offer :-

- a) a traditional dish to share.
- b) a homemade cake for the cake raffle.
- c) volunteer for an hour at the bar or food hall.
- d) gazebos for loan.

Your support is appreciated

Let's celebrate us!

Top 5 ways you can help
with International Day
happening on Nov 9th

WE NEED YOU! YES, YOU!

1. Send us your top 3 favorite songs that represent your country (old or new)
2. Bake a yummy cake for our inaugural cake raffle
3. Prepare a sweet or savory cultural dish for our first ever Food of the World Tent
4. Loan us your gazebo or large event tent (we need more shade!)
5. Sign up for a shift at our popular PTA BAR (pick a 1 hour shift between 10am-2pm)

Email us at pta@wis.edu.na



A celebration of the diversity of
cultures from around the world

**ANNUAL
INTERNATIONAL
DAY
FESTIVAL**

@ Windhoek International School

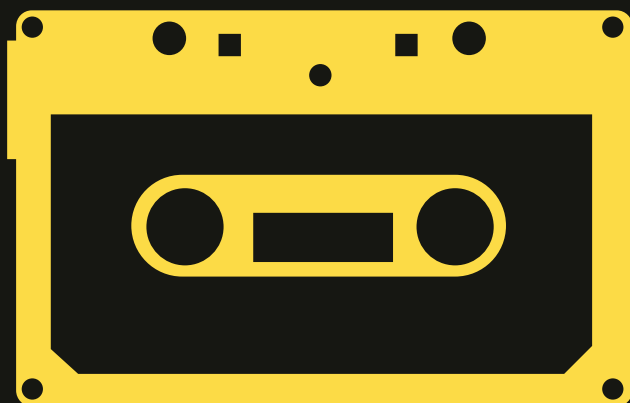
10:00 - 14:00 | **NOV 9TH, 2019**

yummy food - great music -
fun games

WIS SCHOOL DANCE!

Back to the

80s



WIS SECONDARY SCHOOL

1 November | 18:30 - 22:00 | N\$40 per ticket

AUDITORIUM FOYER AND OUTSIDE AREA

DRESS CODE: 80s WEAR OR 80s CHARACTER

Open to all of Secondary students.
There will be a welcome drink and the PTA
kitchen will be open to sell drinks and pizza!

2019 Namibia Down Syndrome Day

Saturday 26 October 2019, 11h00 to 16h00
St. George's Diocesan School Sports Field, Windhoek

Let's celebrate a day of fun and activities!



Please bring your own picnic basket. For the kids we will cater something to eat and drink.



Entrance is free. Family and friends are welcome.



Tel: +264-81-2422302 info@downsyndromenamibia.org www.downsyndromenamibia.org