



Newsletter 7 2018-19

Friday 5th October 2018

Dear Parents and JIS community

School photos day today seemed to go smoothly. All individuals, groups and class pictures were taken. Thanks to Ms Miyajima for her patience and organisation of the day.

Around school:

Stomach bug – going around

During the last few days we have had a few students being ill at school – headaches and feeling nauseous. It seems to last for only a few days – please check your own children and keep them off school if they are feeling unwell, so we can contain the spread of the bug.

October is positive listening month with JIS.



This week we launched a new promotion scheme to help us develop and improve the student's listening skills. The world around us regularly comments on young people and their distracted or short term attention spans, their inability to focus and their poor listening skills. So at JIS we want to prove them wrong and show how we can be a 'positive listener'!

We are focusing on the benefits of being a good listener and during assembly Mr Walton asked the students to share what they thought the benefits that positive, good quality listening can bring. The students also outlined how they can be a good listener, so that we can all model these strategies – a few of the agreed comments include:

- A good listener gives someone their attention through positive body language
- A good listener looks at the person speaking
- A good listener listens to all the conversation or question
- A good listener shows respect and focus
- A good listener responds appropriately to the speaker or music, television etc.

The campaign is also linked to our secondSTEP Personal and Social skills programme in which the students are aware of the routine; 'eyes watching, ears listening, voices quiet, body calm/still' which is used around the school. Many classes are also used to using their 'attentascopes' to maintain their listening focus.

Please talk to your children at home to reinforce the message of what can be gained by being a 'positive listener'. During the month of October we shall be highlighting the positive role models and examples of good listening that we see, to share the message of how this can really help us develop good social skills and open up new possibilities for learning and exploration.

We look forward to seeing how things develop as we go through the month!

Updates:

School Photos Day: Friday 5th October

Photos of classes, sibling groups and individuals were taken today. Any parent needing to arrange a separate appointment is welcome to contact Techni photo for an appointment at their studio.

Reception class trip to Tai Po Waterfront Park:



Reception class had their first outing of the school term down in Tai Po at the waterfront park. The park has lost many of its trees but there was plenty to explore and time to enjoy being outside with friends and family as a big group.



Art Literacy Project



Last year Annette De Thier with a group of JIS Parents ran the Art Literacy workshops for the JIS students. These workshops were a great addition to our arts programme and allowed for some excellent community liaison opportunities, as well as some sharing of hidden parental talents!

This year Ms. De Thier is keen to get a group together again. The idea of the group is that they research an aspect of the visual arts – could be a specific artist or a genre of art, and then they develop some activities and a short introductory presentation for the different classes at JIS.

Anyone interested please contact Annette De Thier on adethier@es.jis.edu.hk for more details.

Typhoon Mangkhut and the trees: update

We are currently collecting ideas from everyone as to what to make or do with our tree logs and branches. Any good ideas – Pass them on! Anyone who has contacts with a chainsaw may be really useful to us soon!



P4 and P5 camp – 10th – 12th October



Next week from Wednesday to Friday the P4 and P5 students will be off to school camp. The P4 students will be kayaking, snorkeling and beach exploring in Sai Kung Country Park and the P5's will be camping in tents on Pui O beach and will be surfing, raft building, cycling, beach combing and exploring the wetlands environment of Lantau. We wish them all the best of fun and great weather for their camps.

Dress Casual Day – Thursday 11th October

Next Thursday is the HK Community Chest 'dress casual day' – for a donation (\$10-20) students can wear clothes of their own choice for the day. This event is a Hong Kong wide event and raises much needed funds for some excellent local charities. The JIS donation will be collected and sent off to the Community chest.



Learning at JIS – from Cath Wan PYP Coordinator

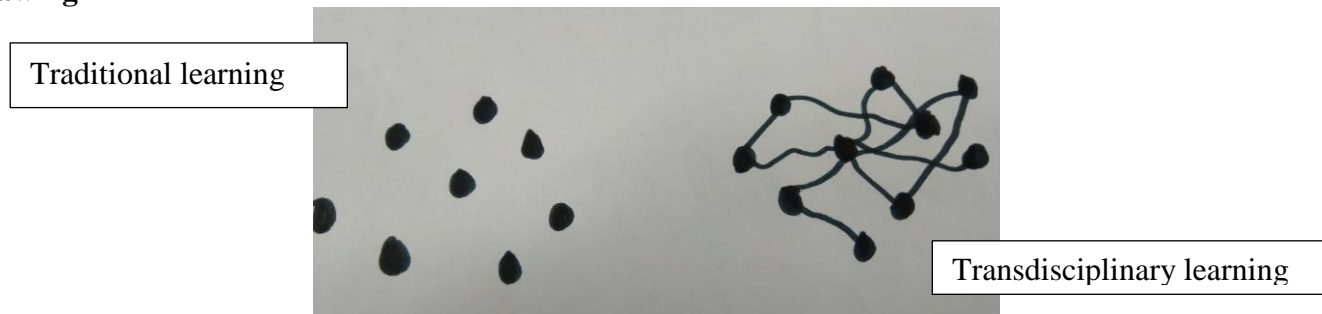
This week, I will address a question from a parent via our 'Learning at JIS' questionnaire:

“Does the transdisciplinary method of teaching lead to slower learning in ‘traditional’ subjects while enabling broader critical thinking?”

This depends on how you define learning. If learning is 'coverage of facts' then possibly yes. If you define learning as understanding and being able to apply skills in different contexts, then no. 'Enabling broader critical thinking:' the answer is a definite yes.

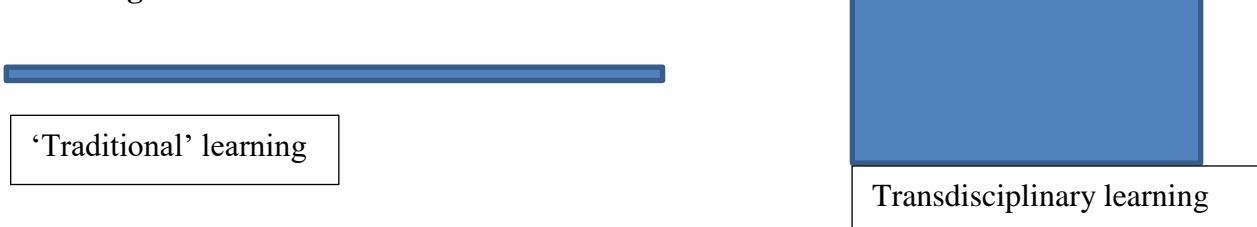
Here are a few ways to visualise the differences between 'traditional learning' and transdisciplinary learning. Please excuse the amateur drawings!

Drawing 1



Brain research from multiple sources informs us that learning happens more effectively when the brain can make connections. I like to think of the connections as being a 'web' which hold the 'dots' of information together in something that makes sense.

Drawing 2



There is a saying in educational circles that traditional curriculums are often “an inch thick, but a mile wide.” That means that while coverage is large, there is little depth of thinking. Transdisciplinary learning tries to address this balance.

Another saying, stemming from the physicist Basarab Nicolescu is that: “Transdisciplinarity needs disciplinarity”. This means that transdisciplinary teaching (like PYP) does not ignore the skills and understanding needed within the different disciplines of Mathematics, Science, Languages and so forth; it is not a ‘dumbing down’. In contrast it is, according to the IB a ‘step up’. Students have to make connections between the different disciplines and apply their understanding to real word problems. With this approach, ‘coverage’ of facts may indeed take more time, but at the end of the day what do we want of our students? To be able to regurgitate random facts or to be able to operate effectively in a complex world which is not separated into convenient disciplines, but is interconnected and requires critical thinking above and beyond.

If you are interested in further reading in this area, below is a list of references. Not exactly light reading, but do let me know if you’d like access! cwan@es.jis.edu.hk

- Drake, S.M. *Creating standards-based integrated curriculum* (3rd Ed.) California: Corwin
- Jensen, E. (2005). *Teaching with the brain in mind*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Nicolescu, B. (2008). *Transdisciplinarity theory and practice*. New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc.
- Nicolescu, B. (2014). Methodology of Transdisciplinarity. *World Futures*, 70(3-4), 186-199.
- Popescu, G. (2014). From psychological- disciplinary knowledge to a transdisciplinary one. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 128, 438-441.

Events for the week ahead at JIS – Week 8, October 8th -12th

Student standardized assessments (MAPS) testing – P3 – P6 week 2.

Monday 8th October – P6 trip to Shatin – media research – a.m.

Tuesday 9th –

Wednesday 10th – School camp – P4 and P5

Thursday 11th – School camp – P4 and P5

Friday 12th – School camp – P4 and P5

Wishing everyone a really enjoyable weekend .

Simon Walton
Principal