



Newsletter 9 2018-19

Friday 26th October 2018

Dear Parents and JIS community

The weather is getting cooler in the mornings so the uniform shop has stocked up on jackets, woollen vest sweaters and the new JIS hoody. We listened to the students and parents for some of the new changes to the uniform – colours and styles - a hoody was requested by many of the students to make the uniform more fashionable and student friendly. We have made it 'zip up' for ease of access for all ages. An up to date order form is now on the website for ease of downloading. Please remember that the weather at this time of year does warm up during the day – so please layer your children's clothes, so they can peel off and cool down, when they need to.



Around school:

Swimming team success! October half term gala at Lai Chi Kok pool.



Ms Stephanie and the swimming coaches at JIS were delighted by the recent success of some of swimming team who joined in a gala event at Lai Chi Kok pool during the October mid-term holiday. The team came home with a staggering 70 medals between them – a fantastic achievement. Well done and thanks to all the SIS swimming coaches and also the parents and students who came along to represent the school.

Football friendly in Tai Po 25th October– an update from Mr Jason

We played 3 matches yesterday against 3 local schools. They were 9-a-side games hence most students had a lot of opportunities to play. We were able to defeat 2 schools and scored 5 goals. The following students were involved.

P.4: Sean; P.5: Kensei, Zach, Denys, Tanish, Nico, Justin; P.6: Lucas, George, Bernard, Max, Lucian



Sports Day t- shirts

Stephanie Tsui (SIS) has sent out an application form for JIS sports day t-shirts this week. Our sports day is scheduled for the afternoon of Friday 30th November at the HKEDU sports ground, close to JIS. All students will be a member of their house team (red – Dragons, yellow - Phoenix and blue – Pegasus) on the day. If students have a t-shirt from last year, they are of course ok to use them but if you need to replace it – the cost is a very reasonable \$45 students - \$48 adults, to be ordered by **Tuesday 30th October** (no orders after this date please). An order form is attached to this newsletter email.

Halloween Parade, Popcorn and Haunted House – Wednesday 31st October

At JIS we traditionally arrange a Halloween parade for those students who would like to dress up on 31st October. This is totally voluntary and we shall share the costumes with a short walking parade at 8:20a.m., on arrival at school.

ESSPA volunteers this year have got inspired and creative and are building a 'Haunted House' experience for those students who would like to visit. The 'Haunted House' will be in the school conference room and students will visit in small groups to have some fun. The house will be adapted for younger students, to make sure it is an enjoyable experience and not too scary! As with all aspects of Halloween – this is entirely your own choice, so please discuss with your child to see if they would like to go in the house or not. It has been suggested that some of our older students will buddy up with the younger ones.



October has been positive listening month with JIS – we have been trying to raise the students' awareness of positive listening skills!

We will continue to remind the students of good listening habits and also monitor the success of our campaign. Please continue to stress the importance of polite, respectful and meaningful listening with your children at home.

Parent Teacher Consultations – Oct 30th / Nov 1st 2018 – next week

We hope everyone has managed to make an appointment for the consultation meetings next week. This is an important meeting as classes have been together for 10 weeks now and teachers can discuss progress and developmental targets to be set in the coming months.

If you are delayed in traffic or suddenly unavailable to come to your appointment, please call the school office so that staff can adjust their schedules for other parents. Office: 2834 3531



Learning at JIS – from Cath Wan PYP Coordinator

This week we will address the next most popular question from our parent survey: how do we develop critical thinking?

According to the Foundation for Critical Thinking, a critical thinker does the following:

- Raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely
- Gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively
- Comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards
- Thinks openmindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as needs be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences
- Communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems

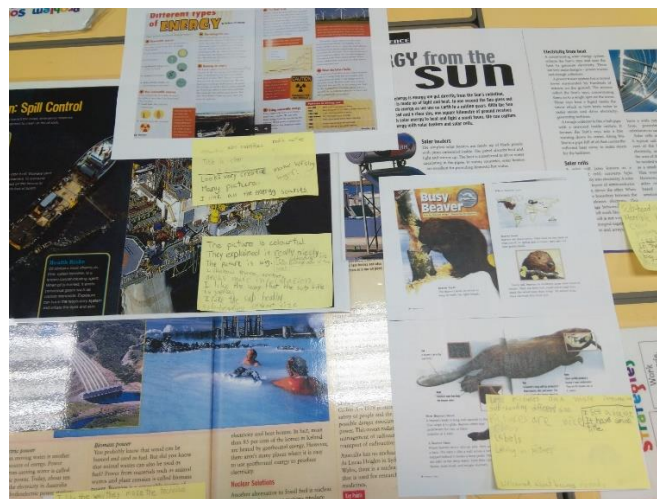
(2017, *Foundation for Critical Thinking*)

Here are a few ways we develop these essential habits:

1. The planned curriculum
2. Supporting the students in 'digging deeper'.
3. Our interactions with the children: what we choose to say and not say.
4. Experiences outside the classroom

The planned curriculum

The PYP curriculum provides a conceptual structure, within which students are expected to initiate and follow their own inquiries: asking questions, gathering and interpreting their research. In a transdisciplinary programme (see newsletter of October 5th), students are expected to solve complex problems which require them to make connections across disciplines. The emphasis away from passive learning (regurgitating facts which the teacher has 'spoon-fed' them) and towards active learning (being supported to find out for themselves) continuously encourages critical thinking. An example of this type of learning comes this week from P5. Students are learning how to write a report. Passive learning might involve students being given a list of criteria and then producing their own. Instead, Mr. Cheung had his students read, analyze and annotate a variety of reports. From this they will produce a list of criteria for effective report writing. The depth of thinking is completely different.



Supporting the students in digging deeper



At the moment, 7 of our teachers are learning through taking a Harvard Graduate School (USA) online course called 'Making Thinking Visible'.

Mr. Walton and I also took the course previously and it was very helpful in providing practical ways of drawing out students thinking. Once a student's thinking has been made explicit, it becomes easier for both teacher, student and peers to examine the thinking and challenge it in different ways. The course uses a variety of 'thinking routines' to support and build thinking. For example, the '**see think wonder**' routine that you will often see around school is a routine which has students observe in detail, notice their own thinking about their observations and then provoke questions to take them further in their learning. The 'circle of viewpoints' routine supports students in examining issues from different perspectives and is also used in different classes at JIS.

Our interactions with children

Students often want to know if they are right or wrong; for example, after solving a mathematical problem they will often ask, "am I right?" A simple "yes" or "no" finishes that question, but "mmm, I notice xxx has got a different result, please go and compare", can set off a whole new layer of thinking with students trying to convince each other that their thinking is accurate. They naturally refine and adapt their thinking during this process. Another phrase that you will hear teachers saying is, "what makes you say that?" Again, this gives the expectation that students should be able to explain and justify their reasoning.

Questioning is a skill that all teachers develop throughout their career, but as parents, questions in everyday conversation can really add to a child's thinking skills. Here are a few question stems to get you started:

- What do you think about....can you explain why you think that?
- Can you think about that from the viewpoint of....how does it differ to your own viewpoint?
- Can you prove....to me/ convince me (great for mathematics!)

Moving away from "right and wrong" to "I have a different result/ opinion/ let's compare/ convince me!/ can you prove it?" is not ignoring mistakes, it is using them as a deep and meaningful learning experience.

Often halfway through convincing you of their reasoning, a child will realise where the error lays and self-correct it. It is an exciting ‘lightbulb’ moment to observe when a child does this. This is active thinking. Just hearing a “wrong or right” stops this wonderful process dead in its tracks.

Experiences outside the classroom

Taking students out of the classroom really develops their critical thinking skills. A few weeks ago, P6 visited a shopping mall to critically analyse how advertising works. It was fascinating to realise how clever the advertising is and how susceptible to it we are! Students in P2 class are currently planning a trip to Hong Kong Island. Each group will use a different combination of public transport which they have planned themselves using maps and transport timetables.



Our trips to the forest and our school camps are proving to be a wonderful way to develop critical thinking skills. Children tend to be naturally fascinated and curious about nature and how to interact with it.

- How do I get over the stream/ over the big muddy puddle without falling in it?
- How do I balance these stones in a tower so that they don't fall down?
- How can I make a twig boat that will flow down the stream quickly?
- How do I arrange my possessions in my back pack?
- How do we work together to build a xxx?

These may seem like simple questions, but for a young child, these are foundational thinking skills; they are playing with and analyzing different options!



Yesterday, it was an absolute joy to accompany Reception class to Tai Po Kau country park. Thinking I observed included 2 children making a boat out of stones and discussing whether it would float or not. This was followed by a



student initiated exploration of sinking and floating in the stream.

One child found an interesting seed pod, found a way to open it and examine its contents. The whole trip was full of observations, questions and playing with ideas – the very core of critical thinking!

Further reading:

If you are interested in the development of critical thinking, these websites have some great information. Enjoy!

<http://www.criticalthinking.org>

<https://philosophy.hku.hk/think/critical/ct.php>

[As always, feel free to email me with any questions or comments regarding learning at JIS: cwan@es.jis.edu.hk](mailto:cwan@es.jis.edu.hk)

Updates:

This week Reception class enjoyed a trip into Tai Po Kau forest and also the P2 class went on a journey from JIS building to Central and back using as many types of transport as possible!

**Events for the week ahead at JIS –
Week 11– 29th Oct – 2nd November 2018**

Monday 29th October –

Tuesday 30th – P6 have an ‘Open House’ to share some of their learning about media and advertising – 2pm

-Parent consultations and book fair 3pm – 6pm

Wednesday 31st – Halloween, popcorn and ‘Haunted House’ activities at JIS. Halloween parade at 8:20a.m., popcorn at recess time and then haunted house, break until lunch in small groups

Thursday 1st –Parent consultations and book fair 3pm – 6pm

-Tag rugby team trials at lunchtime

Friday 2nd – P6 and P1 vaccinations – a.m.

-Tag rugby team trials at lunchtime

ICHK Newsletter from this week from Toby Newton: click [here](#)

Simon Walton
Principal