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in-house



Participants at Education SuMMit 1

Number 2 ■ March 2016



**INVESTIGATE
INNOVATE
INSPIRE**

Developing a shared philosophy

and a related set of expected school-wide learning results has been the focus of a year-long Heads of School Committee initiative. The Centre for Inspiring Minds has been privileged to design and manage a four-campus process, based on participatory action research methods.

Participatory action research (PAR) is a method of inquiry. PAR Proponents, Reason and Bradbury (Handbook of Action Research, 2001), describe it as “a participatory, democratic process . . . bringing together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and communities.”

From this brief definition, you can see that we selected this approach because it generates evidence-informed practical change by building new understandings based on participants’ collective experience, insights, efforts and actions.

Of course participatory action research is only possible with the active participation of our school community. At a time when our school and our campuses are working harder than ever to develop professional practices that drive effective teaching and learning, we have been inspired by the generosity of our community and its commitment to continuous improvement.

The development of a shared philosophy and a set of expected school-wide learning results reaffirms the school’s commitment to addressing the needs of the whole child – and to providing evidence demonstrating the extent to which it is doing this successfully.

In the lead up to the spring break – a busy time dominated by report writing and exam preparation with our soon to be graduating seniors – we encourage everyone to set aside a half hour to participate in the ‘Towards shared learner outcomes’ consultation (7 – 21 March). It is through our collective wisdom that we will continue to develop a school culture where learning truly inspires everyone to make a difference.

Ben and Latifa



Explore your passion for teaching and learning

through a CIM-supported Practitioner-Led Action Research (PLAR) project.

All PLAR projects begin with a question, based on your professional practice. For example:

- If you are a teacher, you will begin by looking at student data and asking, "What do my students need me to do to improve teaching and learning?"
- If you are an administrator or education leader, you will begin by considering strategic objectives and asking, "What do I need to do to better serve the needs of students, staff members, or prospective or current parents?"

A good research question:

- Gets at explanations, reasons, or relationships
- Is manageable and can be completed in one year
- Is authentically embedded in your own practice
- Provides an opportunity to stretch and learn

The closing date for 2016/2017 PLAR proposals is Wednesday, 13 April 2016.

All proposals will be reviewed and scored by the Heads of School from each of our campuses. There are nine criteria against which the PLAR project proposal will be assessed, among these are the:

- Quality of the research question
- Measurable affect on teacher performance and student learning
- Importance of new knowledge and skills project team members will learn
- Project leader's commitment to professional inquiry and learning

CIM staff members are available to help you develop your proposal. Please contact them well in advance of the deadline so that they can effectively support your submission.

Successful projects will be announced on Thursday, 19 May, at the annual Celebration of Learning.

Soft copies of the project proposal form and scoring rubric are available on the CIM website at <http://cim.acs-schools.com/index.php/submitted-a-project-proposal/>

To watch a five-minute video about "How to submit a project proposal, go to <http://cim.acs-schools.com/index.php/how-to-submit-a-project-proposal/>

Visible thinking for professional collaboration

is a two-hour workshop, essential for both new and experienced teachers and leaders who would like to learn about ways they can use Visible Thinking routines in professional collaboration.

Visible Thinking has been developed by staff members at Harvard Graduate School of Education, working in partnership with schools around the world, as part of their globally recognized Project Zero work. Designed originally for use with students, this workshop will introduce 12 core routines that are well-suited to making collaborative professional thinking 'visible'.

The workshop will enable you to:

- Plan and lead participatory collaborative planning meetings
- Develop an understanding of a methodology that can be used with students and colleagues
- Enrich your skills as a meeting facilitator with practical ideas

Visible Thinking for Professional Collaboration



10 March | ACS Hillingdon | 14:00 – 16:00

To register for this or any other CIM Explorations, please contact Latifa Hassanali at lhassanali@acs-schools.com.

To find out more about CIM Explorations and other professional development opportunities visit the CIM website at <http://cim.acs-schools.com/>.

Education SuMMit I

was held on Tuesday, 26 January. It produced 11 brief narratives that provide the draft elements for our new, shared, four-campus philosophy statement, as well as the foundation for our new, shared, four-campus Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLR), which were further developed at Education SuMMit II.

The Education SuMMit process builds upon the discussions and activities undertaken during the BIG Thinks, and summarized in the Practitioner Insight Report (December 2015). While the BIG Thinks considered the external forces shaping international schools and international school education, the Education SuMMits focused on re-affirming the internal 'frames' that shape the teaching and learning that happens across our campuses every day.

The 'frames' metaphor is based on the work of cognitive linguist George Lakoff, from the University of California Berkeley. Lakoff describes frames as the "mental structures that shape the way we see the world, [and consequently] the goals we seek, the plans we make, and the way we act."

If we think about our core vision and values as the 'main frame,' we can imagine a series of nested frames that further define our approaches to teaching and learning and ultimately our school culture. A critical frame needed to bridge the gap between our vision and values and our teaching practice is one that includes our philosophy and expected school-wide learning results. These frames are essential for understanding what we value and what will count as a good or bad outcome of our actions.

On behalf of the Heads of School Committee, the Centre for Inspiring Minds would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the BIG Think and Education SuMMit activities and events.

We are especially grateful to the following people who attended all four of the face-to-face events:

Maryann Amenhar	Brianna Gray	Blake Sharp
Laura Davies	Jack Kurty	Jen Sudano
Michelle Eriksen	Linda LaPine	Dawn Summerfield
Jane Fox	Jeremy Lewis	David Thomas
David Furlow	Jed Petsinger	Sue Wakefield

Please watch for information about opportunities to participate in the ongoing process of developing our shared philosophy and ESLRs.

We need you

to participate in the final consultation of the Education SuMMit process. You will be notified by email when the consultation opens on Tuesday, 7 March and just before it closes on Tuesday, 21 March.

This consultation gives everyone in our school community an opportunity to comment on the draft Expected School-wide Learning Results, developed by representatives from across our four campuses at Education SuMMit II on 1 March.

Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLRs) are

A set of expectations that articulate what each student should know, understand and be able to do upon leaving ACS International Schools, and that define effective teaching and learning.

ESLRs have three important purposes – to:

- Define the with the knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies we strive to develop in students to enable them to become successful learners and inspire them to make a difference
- Guide teachers toward collecting and using rich student data that leads them to establish the conditions and employ the teaching strategies that optimize learning success for all students
- Guide school leaders toward using rich student data to identify and act on strategic learning priorities

The process we have used to develop our shared ESLRs has involved:

- Reviewing our vision and values
- Reviewing current educational research and literature on learning and education
- Reviewing the school community's beliefs about learners, learning and education – its philosophy; and
- Developing an initial draft of common expectations for student learning

As we continue to refine and operationalize the ESLRs, we will also be:

- Reviewing curriculum standards, benchmarks for student learning and student performance data
- Defining the desired results for student learning, developmental benchmarks and data sources
- Using rich student data to assess the extent to which ACS International Schools is developing successful learners and fulfilling its vision.

Culture and identity

define us as individuals and shape the interactions we have with others. They lie at the heart of teaching and learning associated with intercultural competencies.

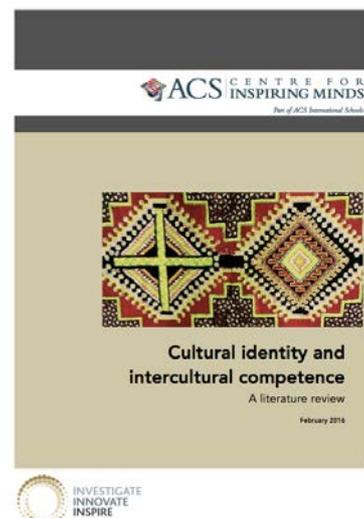
In May 2015, ACS Doha College counselor, Georgette Small, began work on a CIM project investigating, "How the use of a cultural inventory can enhance 16-year-olds' understanding of cultural identity and provide opportunities for personal growth.

A wide range of factors – racial identity, religious identity, linguistic identity, cultural identity, national identity, gender identity, etc. – are recognised as complex contributors to individual identity, a sense of belonging and other characteristics that influence learning and life outcomes. During adolescence, young people are actively engaged in exploring their own values, ethics, spirituality, racial and ethnic identity, sexuality and gender. With pressures arising from peer influence and expectations, they are challenged to balance the need to fit in and engage socially with others with the need to shape their individual identities.

As teachers and counsellors of teens at this exciting and challenging stage of development, supporting individual development while cultivating social cohesion is at the heart of pastoral care and compassionate teaching. Pursuing these important tasks, while maintaining sensitivity to individual differences and the norms and values of the host country and community presents unique challenges - especially in the Middle East.

A literature review, framing the evidence for approaches to exploring identity and culture in secondary schools has recently been published by the Centre for Inspiring Minds. It has been written by Vanessa Christoph, a German Educational Sociologist and an Associate Researcher with CIM-partner Research Schools International, a project of the Harvard Graduate School of Education faculty members.

The literature review is available on the CIM website at: <http://cim.acs-schools.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Literature-Review-Cultural-Identity.pdf>

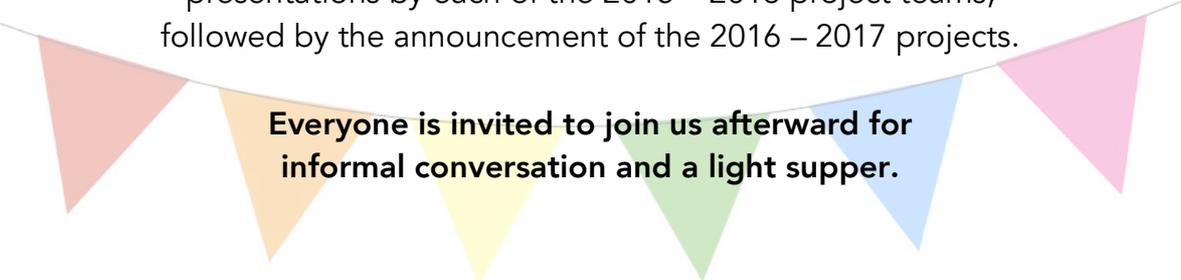


Save the date!

CIM Celebration of Learning

19 May 2016 | ACS Cobham | 16:30 – 18:30 followed by light supper

The event will be held in the Interactive Learning Centre on the ACS Cobham International School campus. It will feature brief presentations by each of the 2015 – 2016 project teams, followed by the announcement of the 2016 – 2017 projects.



Everyone is invited to join us afterward for informal conversation and a light supper.

Upcoming events at the UCL Institute of Education:

Leadership for equity and social justice in a volatile world

Led by: Karen Seashore Louis and Robert K. Beck from the University of Minnesota, and Kathryn Riley from the UCL Institute of Education

Date: Thursday, 21 April, from 5 – 7 p.m.

Cost: Free for LCLL and IOE R&D Network members

Middle leaders as evidence-informed catalysts for change

Led by: Louise Stoll, Karen Taylor and Karen Spence Thomas from the UCL Institute of Education

Date: Thursday, 19 May, from 5 – 7 p.m.

Cost: Free for LCLL and IOE R&D Network members

To book your free place, contact Latifa Hassanali.

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