



AJA

Tel: 4693777

Fax: 4682555

Email: info@aja.edu.qaWeb: www.aja.edu.qa

NEWSLETTER

AJA NEWSLETTER – TERM 2, WEEK 12 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Term 2 Vacation

The Term 2 vacation commences on Friday, 6 April.
Term 3 commences on Sunday, 15 April.

PYP [Primary Years Programme]

The Primary School will be a candidate IBO Primary Years Programme school from September 2007. The Primary Years Programme (PYP) is designed for students between the ages of 3 and 12 years. It is an international, transdisciplinary programme designed to foster the development of the whole child, not just in the classroom, but also through other means of learning.

The following extract is taken from the IBO document, *Making the PYP Happen (2007)*.

What Do We Believe About How Children Learn?

The PYP curriculum model is dependent on our commitment to a particular belief about how children learn, encapsulated most clearly in the constructivist approach. It is acknowledged that learners have beliefs about how the world works based on their experiences and prior learning. Those beliefs, models or constructs are revisited and revised in the light of new experiences and further learning. As we strive to make meaning of our lives and the world around us we travel continually on the cyclic path of constructing, testing, and confirming or revising our personal models of how the world works.

Vygotsky defined learning as “the creation of meaning that occurs when an individual links new knowledge with...existing knowledge” (Williams and Woods 1997). Consequently, when planning to teach it is important to ascertain students' prior knowledge, and provide experiences through the curriculum and through the environment that give them opportunities: to test and revise their models, to allow them to make connections between their previous and current perceptions, to allow them the freedom to construct their own meaning. Other theorists, including Bruner (1990) and Gardner (1993), have also argued that the focus of teaching curriculum content needs to change to enable teachers to make connections between learners' existing knowledge and their individual learning styles in the context of new experiences.

This challenge is addressed in the PYP by providing opportunities for students to build meaning and refine understanding, principally through structured inquiry. As students' learning and their attempts to understand the world around them are essentially social acts of communication and collaboration, this inquiry may take many forms, with students working sometimes on their own, with partners, or in larger groups.

What are the beliefs and values that drive the PYP?

In PYP schools, the teachers' structuring of new experiences, and the support they give to students' ideas about new experiences, are fundamental to students'

PYP [Primary Years Programme] continued...

knowledge, understanding, and conceptual development—the ability to have an understanding of abstract concepts, to make links between them, and to think conceptually. In the PYP it is recognized that development and learning are interrelated, and the PYP curriculum framework allows for concept development that applies across and beyond subject-specific areas.

The programme supports the student's struggle to gain understanding of the world and to learn to function comfortably within it, to move from not knowing to knowing, to identify what is real and what is not real, to acknowledge what is appropriate and what is not appropriate. To do this, the student must integrate a great deal of information, and apply this accumulation of knowledge in a cohesive and effective way. In the PYP, it is believed that learning takes place best when it is connected to what is genuinely a component of the world around the student, not merely what is all too often contrived and then imposed upon the student in school; that the acquisition of knowledge and skills and the search for meaning and understanding are best done in the context of the exploration of relevant content. PYP schools should provide students with learning experiences that are engaging, relevant, challenging and significant, in learning environments that are stimulating and provocative, where:

- adults are sensitive facilitators of the process of empowering students to value their learning and to take responsibility for it*
- students are seen as competent and are listened to*
- students are encouraged to be curious, be inquisitive, ask questions, explore and interact with the environment physically, socially and intellectually*
- explicit learning outcomes and the learning process are made transparent to the students*
- students are supported in their struggle for mastery and control on their journey to become independent, autonomous learners*
- the learning experiences are differentiated to accommodate the range of abilities and learning styles in the group*
- the collaboration on the part of all the PYP teachers is high, and there is a commitment to the transdisciplinary model at the core of this programme of international education.*

In the PYP, it is acknowledged that experiences during the early years lay the foundations for all future learning. Research indicates that the rapid rate of development that occurs in the physical, social, emotional, intellectual and aesthetic domains is particularly significant. It is our responsibility as educators to recognize and maximize this crucial stage of learning. Although development usually occurs in recognizable and predictable directions, it is unique in each child, occurring at varying rates from child to child, and inconsistently for each child. For many children, these early years also mark the first transition from home to group experiences outside of the family and to new physical environments. The school must strive to make this adjustment as successful as possible by encouraging the development of secure and trusting relationships with new adults and peers. Early childhood teachers are encouraged to support students' interests, build up their self-esteem and confidence, and respond to spontaneous events, as well as support the development of skills in all cognitive areas in relevant ways. Children, from birth, are full of curiosity, and the PYP provides a framework that gives crucial support for them to be active inquirers and lifelong learners.

Security and ID Cards

Unfortunately, some drivers entering AJA behave in unacceptable ways, for example, speeding and driving in wrong areas. Due to these increased problems we are having with some drivers entering AJA, gate security will be required to collect ID or Qatar licences from all drivers when they enter AJA after 7.30am.

When collecting the ID, security will make sure it matches the driver and note the car registration. Security will hold onto the ID until the person leaves AJA. If a driver refuses to hand over the ID, then they can not enter AJA.

Security and ID Cards continued...

Obviously, this will not apply during collection of students for ELC, Primary or Secondary students in the afternoon during peak times. Parents/drivers collecting students after 2.30pm will be required to present their ID card.

I apologise for any inconvenience this may cause, however, the safety and security of our children, staff, parents and visitors are paramount.

Newsletter

Do you receive a direct web link to each AJA Newsletter that is released? If not, then it is because we do not have your current email address. This information should be left with your school secretary. AJA Newsletters are published every fortnight during school terms and can be found on our website: www.aja.edu.qa.

Dr Ken Darvall

THANK YOU!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the students, parents and staff who have supported me during my time with AJA. I would especially like to wish all the students well. Today, 29 March, is my last work day with AJA before I relocate to Dubai, where I commence in the position of Principal (High School) of Emirates International School – Jumeirah.

I look forward to EIS Jumeirah and AJA developing a good relationship with many opportunities for student involvement in joint activities.

Jason Kirwin (Head of Academy Studies)

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

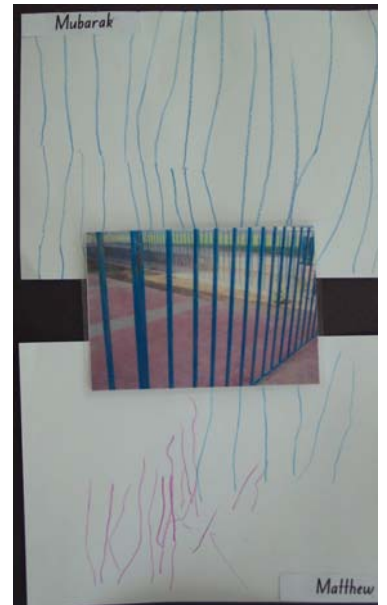
ELC 10 News- Mrs Tiziana

In ELC 10, we are exploring Patterns, a unit of the International Primary Curriculum. We've looked at patterns on animals, clothes and in art. Recently, we have been investigating patterns in nature and man-made environments. Through this unit, the children's vocabulary has increased, with words such as wavy, zigzag, checkered, lines, stripes and spots being used on a daily basis. Their observational and cognitive skills have enhanced as they create and repeat sequence patterns.

We visited Khalifa Sport's City where we observed and sketched patterns we saw in the buildings and gardens.



ELC 10 News continued...



We took a walk around AJA and photographed the many patterns we found. In class we reproduced some of these patterns.

Working in pairs the children used a variety of objects to create sequence patterns. They decided on a common attribute, such as colour, to make a repetitive pattern.



PRIMARY SCHOOL

Year 4 News

The Year 4 students have had an “Earth Shattering” few months as they have worked their way through a unit of study about *Earthquakes and Volcanoes*. They have done everything from preparing the classrooms as emergency centres, to making models of erupting volcanoes.

They have also learnt a lot of very big words and phrases such as *seismograph, tectonic plates, lava flow* and *dormant*.

Much of the work has been practical and sometimes very messy! Red food colouring, baking powder and vinegar create a wonderful bubbling mixture that looked very much like lava!

Another recent event that we all enjoyed was our sunny *Family Fun Day*. There were some amazing creations on our Cake Decorating stall!!

Year 4 had great an exciting *Book Week*. The children spent a whole week developing their reading skills and being introduced to a world of books. They listened attentively while visiting author, Peter J Murray from the UK, introduced them to the character of *Mokee Joe*. They designed book covers, wrote stories and dressed up as book characters. A wonderful time was had by everyone and hopefully the Year 4 children have now all turned into *Book Worms*!!

Janette M Johnson (Year 4/24 Class teacher)

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Middle Years Programme: Assessment

One of the things that students will notice especially when they are introduced to MYP in September this year is the change in assessment procedures. Students are going to be personally involved in the assessment procedure from beginning to end.

Before any assessment takes place, students will be part of the process to determine what in particular is being assessed, the nature of the questions involved and how marks are going to be allocated in the finished assessment task. There will be no surprises!

Each subject has its own particular criteria on which a student’s progress is evaluated. Students must be aware of the criteria against which they are assessed, be provided with clear markers of expected achievement and be given the chance to reflect regularly on their own work.

Subject criteria make it easier for teachers to report to parents. English, for example, has three different criteria – content, organization and style, and language usage. Using the different criteria as a basis for reporting a student’s strengths and weaknesses can be clearly identified and remedial action planned.

Mr Michael Johnson – MYP Coordinator

Year 11 IGCSE Geography Fieldwork Trip To Villaggio

This group of girls conducted an investigation into the impact of the new shopping centre Villaggio on the traffic around the Khalifa stadium, as well as the trends of shoppers in Qatar. We started out with a traffic count at the main intersection of Sports and Al Waab Streets, counting only vehicles on our side of the road in the direction of Villaggio. The students braved the blistery weather, and also the curious stares of passing motorists. Although they felt embarrassed at first, they quickly settled into the task at hand.

We then proceeded to the shopping centre itself. Each student had a pile of questionnaires that they had to complete by stopping shoppers to ask a series of questions. The data collected from the traffic count and questionnaire was then plotted on a variety of graphs so that certain deductions could be made regarding traffic congestion, efficiency of public transportation, area of influence of the shopping mall, the make-up of the population that visits the centre, and the reasons why people visit Villaggio.

The feedback from the students was positive. They commented on the absolute freedom of approaching people from different cultural backgrounds and engaging in a social activity that increased their awareness of people.

The students enjoyed the activity tremendously and appreciated the value of such a study. The discipline and enthusiasm of the students during the entire process were commendable.

Year 13 IB Geography Field Work in Wales

This group of students embarked on a groundbreaking overseas trip for a study of the features of a river in Pembrokeshire, Wales. The study forms a part of the Geography curriculum which requires that they submit a written report based on geographical investigation.

For the week that we were hosted by the *Dale Fort Fieldwork Centre*, the students were engaged in studying coastal landforms, settlements, topographic mapping and, of course, the investigation into, and writing up of, a local river.

The time at the centre was both intensive and extremely educational. Students were up at 7:00 am in the morning and concluded each day at 9:00 pm. Despite the length and fatigue of each day, the whole hype of the experience did not detract from their enthusiasm and diligence. In fact, students surprised me with their work ethic.

Apart from the academic value of the trip, students also reinforced social skills. They had to tidy their rooms daily, clean-up after meals and, more significantly, had to learn to live together with other students in the same surroundings for the duration of the trip.

I would like to commend the students on their good behaviour and the ambassadorship they displayed. It bodes well for future overseas trips of this nature.

Mr Gerry and Miss Gail



**Salama Al
Kubaisi**
“Portrait 2”



Huda Al Mulla
“Pharaoh with
Pyramid”



Gareth Brooks
“Werewolf Myth”

Year 13 IB Art Exhibition

Venue: Room 1 Girls Secondary School

Opening: 4th April

The Year 13 Visual Arts Students will be holding a final exhibition of their work on the 4th and 5th April. There will be an array of work on display from our budding artists:

Huda Al Mulla, who will present a series of watercolours and abstract paintings in exploring the mystery of Ancient Egypt;

Salama Al Kubaisi has spent the last 12 months experimenting with how artists use light and dark to develop imagery via charcoal portraits.

Gareth Brooks will showcase a series of work based on the theme of Myths and Legends - dark weapons and werewolf images that leave a haunting impression.

Come and enjoy the creative talents of AJA.

Miss. Melissa (Head of Group 6)

Girl's Secondary School 1st Annual Talent Show

On Tuesday, 21st March, the Girl's Secondary School held its first-ever Talent Show. Ten acts took to the stage to perform their talents in disciplines such as singing, playing the piano and a rhythmical gymnastic routine to name a few.

The show lasted 90 minutes and up to 150 people came to see the ten acts. A panel of judges was selected to choose a bronze, silver and gold medal act to be announced at the end of the show.

The winners of the show were the girls of 7G1 who sang a song from the Lion King animated film. A special talent award was given to Bronwen Brooks of Year 11 who composed a beautiful piece of music, but was unable to perform on the evening. Mr Eric, one of the musical directors of the show, played the piece, titled "Black China" on the grand piano that was transported to the stage especially for the occasion.

A very enjoyable evening was had by all and the event promises to grow in strength next year.

Miss Debbie

Secondary Girls Participate in a Sport Tournament in Abu Dhabi

A group of 14 girls from Year 8 and Year 9 travelled to Abu Dhabi to participate in a two-day tournament. It was with great excitement that the girls left Qatar on their first-ever tournament outside Doha. The tournament was hosted by Sheikh Zayed Academy in Abu Dhabi.

On Thursday afternoon we had the volleyball matches. We are proud of the girls who played very well and unfortunately lost in a nail-biting final match which made us run second.

On Saturday we first had football matches followed by basketball and in both of these sections we were the winners. Once again well done to all the girls!

The schools playing in this tournament were Sheikh Zayed, Al Nahda School for Girls and Al Shoubub School for girls.

The weekend was not just only sport because no girl can go without shopping! Once again, the girls were also very good at this task.

It was a fun weekend which will be remembered for a long time.

Mrs Mercia

