



AJA

NEWSLETTER

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AJA NEWSLETTER – TERM 3, WEEK 6 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Planning for the 2007/2008 Academic Year

The new academic year will witness the beginning of a significant period of development at AJA with the commencement of the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and the Middle Years Programme (MYP) as a candidate school to complement the IB Diploma Programme that commenced in September 2005.

PYP

The Primary Years Programme will incorporate the current Early Learning Centre and Primary School. PYP acknowledges the importance of the traditional disciplines of particular subject domains: language; mathematics; social studies; arts; science and technology; personal, social and physical education. The knowledge and skills that constitute the essence of each of these subject domains are documented in detailed frameworks – scope and sequences– which set out the overall expectations for each subject within each age range.

However, PYP also recognizes that educating students in a set of isolated subject domains, while necessary, is not sufficient. Of equal importance is the need to acquire skills in context, and to explore content that is relevant to students and transcends the boundaries of the traditional subjects. In the PYP, this idea of human commonalities shapes the transdisciplinary themes. The programme defines transdisciplinary themes that identify areas of shared experience and have meaning for individuals in different cultures. These themes are part of the common ground that unify the curriculums in all PYP schools. They provide the opportunity to incorporate both local and global issues in the content. They are:

Who we are
Where we are in place and time
How we express ourselves
How the world works
How we organize ourselves
Sharing the planet.

Students inquire into and learn about these common human issues in the context of units of inquiry, each of which addresses a particular transdisciplinary theme. The students make their contributions and develop understanding through the perspective of their personal and cultural experiences.

Both the traditional subject domains and the transdisciplinary themes provide a focus for student inquiry. Within the subject domains students acquire the particular skills that define the discipline of that subject. For example, in language the students become literate and in mathematics they become numerate. The acquisition of literacy and numeracy, in their broadest sense, is essential as these skills provide students with the tools of inquiry. Within the transdisciplinary themes, the students acquire and apply a set of transdisciplinary

skills: social skills, communication skills, thinking skills, research skills and self-management skills. These skills are valuable, not only in the units of inquiry, but also in all the subject domains and in events experienced outside the classroom.

By developing the transdisciplinary skills, investigating the transdisciplinary themes and addressing the various needs of the child – physical, social, intellectual, aesthetic and cultural – the PYP ensures that the learning is significant, relevant, engaging and challenging, so that the child can reflect on the connections between life in school, life at home and life in the world. By helping the child make these connections and see that learning is connected to life, the PYP establishes a strong foundation for future learning.

The transdisciplinary themes have global significance; they promote an awareness of the human condition and an understanding that there is a commonality of human experience. The students explore this common ground collaboratively, from the multiple perspectives of their individual experiences and backgrounds. This sharing of experience increases the student's awareness of, and sensitivity to, the experiences of others beyond the local or national community. It is central to the programme and a critical element in developing an international perspective, which must begin with the ability to consider the point of view of someone else in the same class.

The PYP aims to develop this international sensitivity through the key questions derived from the concepts and through the content of the written curriculum, such as the requirement that all students receive instruction in a language other than the language of instruction of the school, starting by the age of 7 at the latest. One of the goals of exposing students to languages other than their mother tongue is to provide an insight into and an appreciation of other cultures, and an awareness of other perspectives. In addition, this sensitivity is enhanced through development of the behaviours listed in the PYP student profile and through the attitudes that are an explicit and essential element of the programme.

The student profile is defined by a list of behaviours that the PYP intends to develop in all students in all school cultures. Part of the adaptability and vitality of the programme lies in what these behaviours may look like from one school culture to another. The PYP supports students to become inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers to be knowledgeable, principled, caring, open-minded, well-balanced, and reflective.

The PYP also lists attitudes to be developed in the students which will contribute to the student profile. These are: appreciation, commitment, confidence, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect and tolerance. These attitudes should be explicitly accepted and modelled by the entire school community. This emphasis on the PYP student profile and the attitudes potentially becomes a valuable means for effecting school improvement.

MYP

The MYP Programme is a course of study designed to meet the educational requirements of students between the ages of eleven and sixteen years. The MYP provides a philosophical framework with a holistic approach to education. The Middle Years Programme aims to educate the whole person and to show the impact of each individual on the world around them. The programme fosters intercultural awareness and the importance of communication. Its goal is to constantly place learning within a context and to make explicit the relationship between various disciplines. The IB Middle Years Programme places the concept of Approaches to Learning (ATL) at the centre of the curriculum model, surrounding the student and is central to the programme. This is because it is crucial that students analyse and understand how they learn best and that they discover and master a range of skills and strategies. These Areas of Interaction are an explicit expression of the common realities shared by all subject areas and an expression of all the varied ways we impact the world through education. They are as follows:

- **Approaches to Learning** – The student is at the centre of the learning process and must develop responsibility for the multitude of strategies required to be a successful learner.
- **Homo Faber** – Translated this means “Man the Maker”. This Area of Interaction reinforces the concept that every action has creative potential – the ability to create.
- **Community and Service** – This reinforces our responsibility to our immediate community and the world around us.
- **Health and Social Education** – This area is concerned with mental and physical health and the importance of the decisions we make.
- **Environment** – This area is concerned with the interdependence of humans and nature and our responsibilities to the environment.

The IBO provides a framework for assessment in the MYP programme and student work is evaluated according to the criterion that clearly reflects the holistic philosophy of the programme. Self-assessment is an integral part of the process.

The MYP Programme is carefully structured to promote independence and confidence in students, to enable students to realise the ‘power’ of learning and the full extent of the responsibility it brings.

MYP students are at an important age of transition, of personal, social, physical and intellectual development, of uncertainty and questioning, of searching for relevance and meaning. Emerging adolescents, influenced by their years of primary schooling, are entering a phase where their social and cultural experiences in and outside school have a determining impact on their perception of themselves, their self-esteem, their sense of identity and their capacity to relate to others. The programme is devised to help students develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to participate actively and responsibly in a changing and increasingly interrelated world. This implies a ‘living curriculum’ (Beane, 1990), one which calls for more than ‘knowing’: it involves reflective thinking, both critical and creative, about ideas and behaviours. It includes problem solving and analysis, clarification and discussion of personal beliefs and standards on which decisions are made. It also leads to critical thinking and action.

The programme aims to enable students to:

- build upon their spirit of discovery to develop an understanding and enjoyment of the process of learning, independently and in cooperation with others;
- acquire knowledge and understanding and prepare for further learning;
- recognize the extent to which knowledge is interrelated;
- learn to communicate effectively in a variety of ways;
- develop a sense of personal and cultural identity and a respect for themselves and for others; and
- acquire insights into local and global concerns affecting health, the community and the environment, and develop a sense of individual and collective responsibility and citizenship.

From September 2007, MYP will be implemented in Years 7, 8 and 9 while Year 10 and 11 students will still undertake the IGCSE. During the following two years, the IGCSE will be incorporated into the MYP model with a review occurring within five years as to the future role of the IGCSE within the MYP model.

Organisational Restructure

To ensure the effective implementation of the Primary Years Programme, the Early Learning Centre and Primary Schools will be amalgamated to create a single school that spans the

Primary Years Program. From September 2007, the Primary School will comprise two sections:

Junior Primary: includes Preschool, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2; and

Senior Primary: includes Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6.

With this restructure, the leadership of the Primary School will comprise the Head of the Primary School, an Assistant Head of the Junior Primary, an Assistant Head of the Senior Primary, and the Assistant Head – PYP. The appointments to these positions will be announced in the next Newsletter.

It is important for students to be 'ready' to commence their formal schooling in Year 1. A Reception/Transition class will be established in September 2007 for those students whose skills and maturity have not developed to a stage of readiness to commence Year 1 successfully. Within the Senior Primary School, students in Years 5 and 6 will be placed into classes of boys/girls. This change reflects the current practice of segregating boys and girls for PE and attempts to overcome the organisational issues that are inherent in this model. These classes will interact within the Primary School and within grade activities.

Additionally, the leadership of the Secondary Schools will be restructured to reflect the uniqueness of each Secondary School – the Girls' Secondary School and the Boys' Secondary School. Each school will have its own Head of School who will be supported by a Coordinator (Girls' Coordinator, Boys' Coordinator). Curriculum responsibilities undertaken by Heads of Groups (English, Languages, Humanities, Sciences, Mathematics and the Arts) will incorporate both schools. Key appointments for the Girls Secondary School and the Boys Secondary School will be announced in the next Newsletter.

Returning Students

Each child was given a note to take home four weeks ago for parents to indicate their intentions for the new academic year. [Additional copies of these notes are available from each School's Secretary and Mrs Noura, our Registrar]. This note must be returned to the appropriate school secretary by 3 June, 2007. Unfortunately, non-returns will result in enrolments being declared vacant from September 2007.

For returning students, parents will be required to pay a deposit of QR2,000 per child. This non-refundable amount will be credited against Term 1 fees. New enrolments will be required to pay their Term 1 fees in advance.

These deposits have been implemented as a means of ensuring accurate enrolments for the new academic year. In the past, information supplied by a significant minority of parents has resulted in depriving potential enrolments of a place at AJA. In many schools, a term's fees are required as a bond that is released on 3 month's notice or when a student completes their schooling. In other schools, the entire year's fees are required to be paid by mid-August. Please remember the June 3 deadline.

ELC & Primary School Closed – 7 June

The ELC and Primary School will be closed on Thursday, 7 June, to allow staff to undertake a 2-day training program for PYP that will be introduced in September 2007. Please note this date in your diary/calendar.

Term 3 Reports

These will be available from each School on Wednesday, 27 June.

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

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Abu Dhabi Sports Tournament May 2007

The weekend of the 10-12 of May was an important milestone for AJA sport in the Boys Secondary School. The Year 7 and Year 8 boys participated in a football, basketball, volleyball tournament at Cambridge High School in Abu Dhabi.

The tournament kicked off with a game of football early on Thursday. It was a fast-paced match with real skills and talents on display. It was a tough and gruelling opposition that AJA faced in the sweltering heat of the UAE. Cambridge, with home ground advantage, took the lead but the AJA boys came back firing with Talal Nabina scoring the goal of the match. We may not have won the game, but it was a fantastic effort by all boys who competed.

Friday was a day where the boys had time to recover from the game and enjoy the company of their friends. The evening was spent ten-pin bowling, where the challenge was set to annihilate Mr. Henk and his world-class bowling skills. After some good bowling and a few strikes by a competitive team of boys, nobody could match the bowling prowess of Mr. Henk who took the lead and was victorious.

The following day began with a hearty breakfast and great enthusiasm for the next competition. The basketball component of the tournament was well underway when it became clear to some of the AJA team that a good night's sleep may actually be an advantage in sport!

The tournament ended on a high note, when the AJA professional volleyball players had their moment of glory with their deep touches and general skillful play proving too strong for the Cambridge challengers. AJA, a much younger side, took first place! Well done, lads!

This was a great opportunity for all the boys. I would like to thank the boys for making AJA proud, once again. And thank you to all the parents for their support and all who made this successful weekend possible.

Mr. Henk and Mr. Conrad



معجزة الرسول التي أثبتوها بعد أن أنفقوا 100 مليار دولار

واليكم القصة التي حدثت في عهد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم :

"إن كفار مكة قالوا للرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم : إن كنت صادقاً فشق لنا القمر فرقتين ، ووعده بالإيمان إن فعل ، وكانت ليلة بدر ، فسأل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ربه أن يعطيه ما طلبوا ، فانشق القمر نصف على جبل الصفا ، ونصف على جبل قبيعان المقابل له ، حتى رأوا حراء بينهما ، فقالوا : سحرنا محمد ، ثم قالوا : إن كان سحرنا فإنه لا يستطيع أن يسحر الناس كلهم!! فقال أبو جهل: اصبروا حتى تأتينا أهل البوادي فإن أخبروا باتشققه فهو صحيح ، وإلا فقد سحر محمد أعيننا ، فجأؤوا فأخبروا بانشقاق القمر فقال أبو جهل والمشركون : هذا سحر مستمر أي دائم فأنزل الله : (اقتربت الساعة وانشق القمر* وإن يروا آية يعرضوا ويقولوا سحر مستمر* وكذبوا واتبعوا أهواءهم وكل أمر مستقر* ولقد جاءهم من الأنبياء ما فيه مزدجر* حكمة بالغة فما تغني النذر* فتول عنهم..)"

انتهت القصة التي كانت في عهد الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم

في أحد ندوات الدكتور زغلول النجار باحدى جامعات بريطانيا قال إن معجزة انشقاق القمر على يد الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم تم اثباتها حديثاً ثم حكى قصة أثبتت ذلك:

قال أحد الاخوة الانجليز المهتمين بالاسلام اسمه داود موسى بيتكوك وهو الآن رئيس الحزب الاسلامي

البريطاني وينوي أن يخوض الانتخابات القادمة باسم الاسلام الذي ينتشر في الغرب بمعدلات كبيرة أنه أثناء بحثه عن ديانة أهداه صديق ترجمة لمعاني القرآن بالانجليزية فتحها فاذا بسورة القمر فقرأ (اقتربت الساعة وانشق القمر) فقال هل ينشق القمر؟

ثم انصد عن قراءة باقى المصحف ولم يفتحه ثانية .

وفي يوم وهو جالس أمام التلفاز البريطاني ليشاهد برنامجا على ال بي بي سي يحاور فيه المذيع ثلاثة من العلماء الأمريكان وكان يعتب عليهم أن أمريكا تنفق الملايين بل المليارات فى مشاريع غزو الفضاء فى الوقت الذى يتصور فيه الملايين من الفقر فظل العلماء يبررون ذلك أنه أفاد كثيرا فى جميع المجالات الزراعية والصناعية... الخ

ثم جاء ذكر أحد أكبر الرحلات تكلفة فقد كانت على سطح القمر وكلفت حوالى 100 مليار دولار فسألهم المذيع ألكى تضعون علم أمريكا على سطح القمر تنفقون هذا المبلغ؟؟ رد العلماء أنهم كانوا يدرسون التركيب الداخلى لهذا التابع لكى يروا مدى تشابهه مع الأرض ثم قال أحدهم : فوجئنا بأمر عجيب هو حزام من الصخور المتحولة يقطع القمر من سطحه الى جوفه الى سطحه فأعطينا هذه المعلومات الى الجيولوجيين فتعجبوا وقرروا أنه لايمكن أن يحدث ذلك الا أن يكون القمر قد انشق فى يوم من الأيام ثم التحم وأن تكون هذه الصخور المتحولة ناتجة من الاصطدام لحظة الالتحام ثم يستطرد داود موسى بيتكوك: ففزت من على المقعد وهتفت معجزة حدثت لمحمد عليه الصلاة والسلام من أكثر من 1400 سنة فى قلب البادية يسخر الله الأمريكان لكى ينفقوا عليها مليارات الدولارات حتى يثبتوها للمسلمين أكيد أن هذا الدين حق:

وكانت سورة القمر سببا لاسلامه بعد أن كانت سببا فى اعراضه عن الاسلام