THE PATANA JOURNAL

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Back to school

Introduction

Welcome to the fourth volume of *The Patana Journal*. As we broaden our authorship to include both student and parent voice, I am delighted to share with you a journal rich in both academic research and reflective insight; I sincerely hope you will enjoy the breadth and depth of the articles included within it. In the future editions we wish to continue being a voice of our whole Bangkok Patana family so do contact me if you would like to contribute; we welcome individual and collaborative articles.

In this volume Michelle Brinn writes a paper exploring in detail how teachers in our Foundation Stage can develop a shared understanding with parents about their child's learning. She asks the question to what extent can there be a partnership approach between the teachers and the parents and what prevents this from easily being attainable? The article ends positively concluding that within the research a shared understanding between parents and school was achieved. This research is invaluable in creating a situation where we can improve teacher and parent partnerships to enhance children's learning still further at Bangkok Patana.

Head of School, Matt Mills sets out to define what makes a good leader in his article. These observations stem from the presentation he shared at a FOBISIA Heads and Senior Leaders Conference held at Bangkok Patana in November 2014. During the conference some of our Patana students shared with the attendees what they felt a good school should be; these presentations were phenomenally powerful and were well received by all. The joint transcript of Palida Leenabanchong, Molly Chalk, Pattrawararan (Teal) Uahwatanasakul's speech is included giving great insight into what our Primary students believe. The eloquently written transcript of Sam Gray, one of this year's graduates shows the reflections of a student who has been on at Bangkok Patana for many years and is an interesting account of what our students really want from us.

We are thrilled in this volume to have our parent voice represented and Daphne Seiler writes sensitively and insightfully on some of the challenges of having a child with Asperger's Syndrome. This personal account is extremely moving and effectively portrays the day to day issues, challenges and rewards of being the parent of a child with a special learning need. It is a testament to the trust Daphne has in our Bangkok Patana family that she was happy to share her experiences.

VOLUME 4 / JUNE 2015
CONTENTS

The articles in this volume are diverse and Andrew Roff writes convincingly on how we can ensure that our students achieve their optimum grades at IB (International Baccalaureate). Andy reflects on the proud history we have at Bangkok Patana of having few limitations on entry criteria, whilst reviewing how we can ensure that we are really helping our students achieve their full potential. The article is the first of a series of two. In it he specifically reviews the Year 11 Options and how we can use data more effectively to inform the support offered by the IB pastoral and academic team in encouraging students to make good choices. Andy, hopes to share with readers in a future volume of our Journal, the results of the improved programme the team are currently implementing.

Libraries are central to good schools and we are glad to have an article in this volume where Secondary Librarian Sathita (Waree) Kitcharoenthumrong reflects on her own role within the school. Khun Waree evaluates the changing roles of modern librarians and shares her own personal journey, as she has searched to find her place helping our students to use the library facilities and resources effectively. This interesting and insightful article, set within a context of exploring 'change' shows how our students' learning is constantly at the forefront of our library provision in the school.

Adrian Palmer leaves us with no doubt that not all learning takes places in the classroom and writes convincingly on the immense potential of introducing a unit on climate change and mangrove forest ecology at Bangkok Patana. Adrian's passion for a fieldwork approach to learning shines through as he explores how valuable it is to our students' learning. The power of such a unit, Adrian explains, is that it encourages our students to take control of their own lives and visions as they are encouraged to reduce their own carbon emissions through lifestyle choices, conservation and involvement in tree planting. This article is a clear indicator of the importance we give to caring for the environment at Bangkok Patana.

In the final article in this volume, Mick Smith, our Secondary Principal shares his educational philosophy and writes convincingly on the importance of 'democratic leadership' in a school, analysing the extent to which a school such as Bangkok Patana can be truly democratic. Mick's interest in democratic leadership was stimulated by discussions regarding the purpose of Key Stage 3 at Bangkok Patana as far back as 2010/11. It stems from his desire to ensure that we help shape what our young people will be when they move into their adult lives and not limit ourselves to what they know and what they can do.

A publication such as this doesn't just happen by itself and it is important to thank the following people. Firstly it is important to acknowledge the role Mick Smith and Jackie Houghton have played. Five years ago it was their enthusiasm and belief in the power of collaboration and the importance of having a portal for sharing our ideas that led to the creation of the Journal. Cheryl Rego (Communications Coordinator) has been a wonderful advocate of the Journal and is responsible for the layout and design. We are indebted to Rob Brown who has tirelessly proof-read the articles in it. The biggest thanks must be reserved for the authors of these interesting and insightful articles. There is no doubt that Bangkok Patana School is a very busy school, we are constantly striving to achieve excellence in all that we do and improve on our already very high standards, yet despite this our contributors have found the time and effort to share with you that which they are passionate about. For this I cannot thank them enough. I sincerely hope that you enjoy reading this fourth edition of the Journal as much as I have enjoyed being part of its creation.

Sally Flint
Editor

Investigating Home–School Communication in the Nursery

Michelle Brinn
Year 1 Teacher, Bangkok Patana School

Within this article, the research inquiry of a doctoral study undertaken within the academic year of 2012/13 will be discussed (Brinn, 2015). The aim of the research and the literature underlying the inquiry will be explored. The methodology and findings will be briefly outlined and the tentative conclusions reached at end of the study will be examined.

The Aim of the Inquiry

Underlying the inquiry was a desire to understand more about home-school interactions within the Pre-Nursery of a British international school in Thailand. This aim was influenced by UK Early Years policy (namely the Early Years Foundation Stage - EYFS, DfE 2012) which emphasised the central role of parental partnerships within quality Early Years provision (DfE, 2012; Tickell, 2011). Nonetheless, an examination of the contextual development of the EYFS revealed a number of complications within the concept of parental partnership which had implications for home-school interactions, especially within international education.

The EYFS was influenced in its development by a number of important UK initiatives (for example, the EPPE project, PEAL, National Children's Bureau [NCB] and Sure Start). It was postulated that this created a set of powerful 'governing principles' (Popkewitz, 1998 p. 560) that had specific implications for practice. Many of these initiatives aim to alleviate social disadvantage through early intervention and thus overcome noted discrepancies within the quality of home learning environments (Melhuish et al, 2008; Evangelou et al, 2009; Tickell, 2011, Wheeler and Connor, 2009; Desforges with Abouchaar, 2003). It was hypothesised that, although necessary and worthwhile, this aim could commit practitioners to extending their professional role beyond the setting in an attempt to enhance the learning relationship between parent and child within the home. Consequently, a crucial but potentially unnoticed distinction between home-school interactions that 'scaffold' parents into the professional's view of the child as a learner and those that attempt to mutually co-construct an understanding of that child, may have been created.

Jordan (2004) notes that scaffolding and co-construction are both terms drawn from the theories of Vygotsky and refer to the types of interactions that assist a child within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1962). Although these terms most commonly refer to the relationship between practitioner and child, interesting parallels can be drawn to the relationship between practitioner and parent/caregiver. For Jordan (2004), a clear distinction can be made between differing interactions within the ZPD, a point also made by Cancemi (2009). For Jordan, within the notion of scaffolding, power and control rests mainly with the more experienced adult, who creates a supporting structure that allows the less experienced participant (in Jordan's discussion this would be the child but in ours this could also refer to the parent/care-giver) to gradually gain understanding and competence. Within this metaphor there is a clear goal within the mind of the more experienced participant and the 'scaffold' is put in place to help the novice reach this goal. Within the co-construction of meaning, however, control and power are shared; no predetermined goal exists and the expertise of all participants is regarded as valid and is utilised to negotiate new meaning (Jordan, 2004 p. 37). Although differing interpretations of the role of negotiation within the process of scaffolding exist (see Moll, 1990; Chaiklin, 2003; Cancemi, 2009), Jordan's distinction highlights different attitudes towards the role of the more experienced participant that are relevant to parental interactions.

The stated aim of the EYFS is to support all children to fulfil their potential (DfE, 2012). Nonetheless, the need to overcome noted discrepancies within the quality of home learning environments (Melhuish et al, 2008; Evangelou et al, 2009; Tickell, 2011, Wheeler and Connor, 2009; Desforges with Abouchaar, 2003) may favour parental interactions that scaffold parents towards a previously identified good quality home learning environment. Furthermore, a

tension at the very heart of the notion of parental partnerships may encourage practitioners to compartmentalise parental offerings as supplemental to the learning dialogue rather than central, as to fully recognise the role of the parent may undermine that of the professional (Hughes and MacNaughton, 2000). However compartmentalising parental contributions may make it difficult to explore in conjunction with parents differing notions of an effective home learning environment. This is especially important when engaging with parents whose views of education may differ from those of the practitioner and thus may be crucial for international school educators, wherein very high levels of cultural diversity mean that parents and professionals may hold different, but potentially equally valid, viewpoints on what constitutes quality within home learning (a point explored by Van Oord, 2005).

At this juncture, it must be noted that the importance of retaining professional expertise and avoiding complete relativism in learning practices, was understood. However, it was postulated that the full complexity of engaging in parental partnerships was not, a point noted by O'Gorman and Ailwood (2012). Thus, practitioners could be left in an unenviable position, unable to satisfy either policy makers, setting management or the parental body. Appreciation of this dilemma led to the decision to explore parental partnerships within the Nursery. In addition, whilst it was understood that institutional change might be necessary to sustain the co-construction of meaning between home and school (Guskey, 2000), it was postulated that changes could be initiated in the 'specific plane' (Hedegaard, 2012, p. 130) of interactions between practitioner and parent. Thus, three research questions were devised:

- *How can a Pre-Nursery Teacher in a British International School develop a shared understanding with parents about their children's learning?*

- *To what extent can an international school develop a 'partnership working' approach with parents?*

What are the conditions that support or hinder the development of shared understanding between home and school within an international school?

Exploring Intercultural Understanding within Home-School Communication in an International School

As noted, the study at the centre of this paper was prompted by a desire to understand 'partnership working' (DfE, 2012, p.3) within a diverse international school parental body. It was hypothesised that this necessitated the co-construction of meaning between home and school. Nonetheless, the manner in which this could be achieved was unclear, as little was understood about parental involvement within this context. Consequently, an explorative case study was instigated within which attempts were made to gain greater understanding.

The enquiry was intended to be a context dependent exemplar of 'practical knowledge' (Flyvbjerg, 2006) influenced by Cole's view that a researcher should be a 'participant and an analyst' (1996, p. 349) and use their systematic theoretical knowledge to 'help things grow' (p.349) in the context within which they are immersed. Consequently, the development of practical strategies was deemed the necessary starting point for the inquiry. The strategies chosen were influenced by EY policy (DfE, 2012) and literature (Tickell, 2011; Evangelou et al, 2009; Jordan, 2004 and Carr, 2001, amongst others) as well as concepts of dialogue (Bohm, 1996; Buber, 1947 and Bakhtin, 1981) and interculturalism (Tate, 2011; Poore, 2005; Davy, 2011; Joslin, 2002; Van Oord, 2005; Allan, 2003; Heyward, 2002). Theoretical reflection suggested that encouraging parents to systematically share observational information about their child's learning at home might enhance the potential for the co-construction of understanding about that child (Whalley, 2007). Accordingly, a decision was made to involve parents within the redevelopment of the reporting and assessment tool called the Learning Journey. Thus, the first step in the inquiry would be to garner parental viewpoints on the current use and prospective redevelopment of the Learning Journey. It was hoped that any information gathered would enhance understanding of parental needs and desires within this particular context and could be used to shape and hopefully enhance parental interactions and Learning Journey use throughout the remainder of the year. The parental meetings were regarded as being Phase One of the study. Phase Two would in-

vestigate the subsequent use of the re-developed Learning Journeys across the remainder of the academic year.

Phase One - Gaining the Parental Perspective

In order to provide a narrative of most relevance to international school practitioners, a decision was made to focus Phase Two of the study on the use of the Learning Journey within the Pre-Nursery across the duration of one academic year; the academic year and the class group being the most common temporal and organisational boundary shaping their relationship with any one child and their parents. Nonetheless, a decision was made to invite the current parental cohort (the cohort of 2011/2012) and the previous parental cohort (2010/ 2011) to attend the initial meetings. This was done for practical purposes. Potentially, the Pre-Nursery parents at the centre of the case may be completely new to the school. Consequently, their experience of the Learning Journey would be limited or non-existent and their ability to comment on its role within their child's learning minimal. The widened population could provoke a deeper understanding of the role of the Learning Journey in home-school interaction but remained delineated by involvement within the Pre-Nursery for a single year. However, once the group discussions were completed, the intention was to return the research focus to the relationship between home and school within the parental cohort of 2011/2012. This provided a potential population of 60 families which were all invited to attend a small group or one-to-one meeting to discuss conceptions of learning and the potential role of the Learning Journey in enhancing that learning.

Overall, seven meetings took place (five group and two individual) with a total of 19 participants. Within some families, more than one family member attended a parental meeting. Consequently, 16 families attended, amounting to 26% of the target families (see Table 1). According to the class list provided by admissions, eleven nationalities were represented with the potential population. Within the parental meetings, 10 different nationalities were represented, although passport nationality was used only to compare the range of participants and not as basis for analysis (See Table 2), as this would have negated the intercultural aspirations of the research.

Table 2: Parental Meetings, population and sample

Parental Cohort	Families in population	No of participants	No of participating families	No of families where both parents participated.	Percentage family participation
2010 – 2011	30	8	7	1	23.3%
2011 – 2012	30	11	9	2	30%
Total	60	19	16	3	26%

Table 2: Parental Meetings, nationalities of population and sample

Parental Cohort	Families in population	No of nationalities in population	No of nationalities represented.
2010 – 2011	30	11	10
2011 – 2012	30	11	10
Total	60	11	10

The discussion within the parental meetings was lively and informative and led to a greater understanding of the parental cohort. As well as supplying a range of practical ideas for the re-development of the Learning Journey, they also led to a crucial reexamination of many preconceptions held by the researcher with implications for the subsequent direction of the study.

Prior to the interviews, it was felt that widespread differences between home and school perceptions on learning may exist. Specifically, there was a concern that parents may be expecting the direct teaching of academic skills, even amongst the youngest children. This would not necessarily be reflected within the Learning Journey, thus creating a potential barrier to dialogue. It was felt necessary to understand these, and any other potential differences, prior to the re-development of artefact. Nonetheless, what emerged from the data was a surprising degree of overlap between Pre-Nursery and parental conceptions of learning and aspirations for their children. This overlap was displayed by all parents whatever their cultural background. In addition, there was a great desire for cross-over and communication between home and school. Nonetheless, many misconceptions of the Pre-Nursery curriculum were noted that could act as potential barriers for effective communication. Interestingly, parents also clearly articulated a desire to share in our professional knowledge to be, as it were, 'scaffolded' into our expertise. This was perhaps the most unexpected surprise in the findings and resulted in a crucial re-assessment of the role of scaffolding within home-school interactions.

Phase Two – Enhancing the Potential for Co-construction

Prior to the parental meetings, it was feared that the process of scaffolding might alienate parents by assigning the teacher the role of 'professional expert' and sidelining parental knowledge as 'other' (Hughes and MacNaughton, 2000, p.242). Analysis of the parental dialogue, however, indicated a closer integration between the concepts of scaffolding and co-construction than originally thought. It became apparent that scaffolding parents into a clearer understanding of the Pre-Nursery pedagogy may be necessary to prevent misunderstanding and initiate meaningful dialogue. Consequently, within Phase Two, the study was expanded beyond the Learning Journey and a range of strategies aimed specifically at scaffolding parents into a stronger understanding of Pre-Nursery practice were instigated. This considerable change of stance was further supported by the clearly articulated parental desire to share in our professional knowledge.

The parental meetings also indicated that, although the school provided parents with an array of curricula and administrative information, unless this was presented within a meaningful context (Donaldson, 1978) its significance was likely to be lost (a point reiterated within Hughes & Greenhough, 2006). Consequently, whilst resisting attempts to individualise all communication within Phase Two, ways were sought to enhance the scaffolding potential of existing tools by making the information they contained more meaningful to parents. This did not necessitate any major changes. Instead, increased understanding of parental need led to the refining of tools and strategies, the appreciation of which had been indicated within the meetings. Consequently, changes were made within the Pre-Nursery newsletter, the class blog and the termly Open Mornings. Furthermore, greater co-operation was instigated between the Admissions Department and the Pre-Nursery resulting in greater dissemination of Pre-Nursery values and practice to new and prospective parents. Nonetheless, reflecting on Jordan (2014), it was important that a range of other responses with greater dialogic potential supplemented these strategies. Consequently, modifications were also made within the use of the Red Book, Pre-Nursery planning and in the format and distribution of the Learning Journey. In addition, opportunities for face-to-face interaction with parents were increased within the Open Morning and 'soft start'.

As the year progressed, many exciting changes in home-school interaction were noted. The extent of the initiatives and the enthusiasm of the parents created a vast pool of data for detailed analysis. It was understood that isolating the 'necessary and jointly sufficient conditions' (Hammersley, 2012 p.401) to indicate causal relations between the

implementation of any of the adapted practices and subsequent interactions would be impossible. Nonetheless, the data might contain evidence of the co-construction of a shared understanding about the child. Jordan's (2004) definition of co-construction indicates the mutual negotiation of novel meaning. However, identifying that this had occurred would be incredibly difficult as it was unclear what this may look like. Theoretical reflection led to the hypothesis that within the context of this study, co-construction could be reflected in the development of a new 'image' (Bakhtin, 1981, p.361) of the child as a learner or even a new learning practice. However, it was also hoped that other relevant but unanticipated themes might emerge from the data. As within the analysis of the parental meetings, both the purpose and assumptions of the research were brought to the fore. It was hoped that being fully cognizant of the 'preexisting conceptual lenses' (Anderson and Kragh, 2010, p.49) shaping the research might allow 'surprises' within the data to surface, whilst retaining the 'voice' of the participants (O'Hara et al, 2011). Consequently, an analysis of the Learning Journey, Red Book and email data from those parents who had given their permission was begun.

From the initial analysis, a number of categories relating to the form of communication that took place between home and school began to emerge (See Table 10 for initial categories). The intention was to refine this initial analysis through a process of reiteration between data, theory and previous assumptions as within Phase One. Nonetheless during the initial analysis it became clear that there was one home-school relationship that would be of particular relevance to the research questions at the centre of this study. Consequently, a decision was made to focus the analysis of the interactions between myself and this particular parent (Parent Y). This decision was made because, within this relationship, an unprecedented level of communication was achieved. Furthermore, this communication focused predominantly on sharing information about Child X's learning rather than procedural exchanges and thus could be pivotal to the study (Bailey, 1992; Flyvbjerg, 2006) in that, if no indication of the co-construction of

Category of mail	Overall number of mails	Percentage of overall mail	Number of mails in category sent by Parent	Percentage of mails in category sent by Parent Y
Routine requests about logistics, informing of absence etc.	133	51%	16*	12%
Parent initiated sharing of information about a child's learning at home (including photos or examples of work)	25	10%	11	44%
Specific requests for action related to a child's learning in school	18	7%	1	5%
Informal pleasantries initiated by parents	13	5%	2	15%
Miscellaneous requests for information about an aspect of learning.	8	3%	7	88%
Requesting course of action different than recommended by myself or school	3	1%	0	0%
Replies to e-mails sent by myself about their child which extend on the information contained within the initial mail	14	5%	1	7%
Responses acknowledging receipt of information sent about their child (including pleasantries)	47	18%	3	6%
Total e mails	261		41	16%

shared understanding could be found within this data then it was unlikely to be found in any other. Consequently, data from Parent Y became the main focus of the analysis.

Table 10. Comparison of e mail communication between home and school.

Category of mail.	Overall number of mails.	Percentage of overall mail.	Number of mails in category sent by Parent	Percentage of mails in category sent by Parent Y
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Total e mails	261		41	16%

Within the Literature Review, it was noted that 'partnership working' (DfE, 2012, p.3) may depend upon developing a reciprocal relationship between home and school focusing on the child. In the analysis of interactions with Parent Y there were indications that this occurred. Firstly, there was evidence that communication between home and school resulted in a new and shared understanding about Child X as a learner. Furthermore, in some cases this led to a co-constructed course of action. In addition, advice was sought but also given by both parties, indicating a deep level of trust seen by many as essential in an egalitarian exchange (Genat, 2009; Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Bohm, 1996; Buber, 1947). Also, Parent Y clearly expressed her appreciation of the efforts made to 'scaffold' parents into the Pre-Nursery pedagogy and used the knowledge gained to support learning at home; the consequences of which were fed back to staff to further enhance their understanding of Child X as a learner.

Although the data analysis focused upon the relationship between school and parent Y, many changes in parental involvement were perceived throughout the year. These included a growth in open morning attendance (in previous years supervision was needed for children whose parents did not attend but this was not necessary this year), increased Red Book communication and a rise in parental attendance during the Pre-Nursery soft start. In addition, the blog was regularly viewed (evidenced by the number of recorded hits and the number of comments received). Furthermore, home-school communication from a wide range of parents contained a high degree of dialogue about learning, rather than procedural enquiries. This was evident within all forms of interaction, verbal and written, and led to a greater knowledge and understanding of the children as learners, both at home and school.

In addition, there appeared to be a growing sense of trust between parents and myself. This was perceived through a marked increase in parents seeking advice on a wide variety of topics. The most common query centred on the best way to enhance English language development whilst retaining the home language. However, discussions covered the whole gamut of home and school life with young children. Although such exchanges had taken place in previous years, they had been sporadic and limited in scope. Throughout the study year, however, the exchange of views and information became a regular occurrence with a wide range of parents. Dialogue about learning occurred most frequently within face-to-face interactions during the soft start, open mornings or at home time, but also occurred through written communication within the Red Book or email. Consequently, Pre-Nursery staff were incredibly positive about the levels of parental engagement throughout the study year.

Conclusion

To investigate partnership working with the diverse parental body of a British International School Pre-Nursery an explorative case study was instigated wherein a range of strategies were used to explore the potential for the co-construction of meaning between home and school. At the conclusion of the study, evidence indicated that the development of a shared understanding between home and school had been achieved. Although the nature of the study meant that no definitive conclusion could be drawn, the evidence suggested that partnership working might be enhanced when conceptions of scaffolding and co-construction were integrated within home-school strategies, rather than separated as originally hypothesised.   Nonetheless, successful integration may depend upon a deep understanding of the subtle distinctions between these concepts.

Nevertheless, understanding the motives and competencies (Hedegaard, 2012, p.130) of all participants appears central to the development of a consistent whole-school approach (seen as essential by Goodall et al, 2011; Van Oord, 2005) and thus ensure the sustainability of successful home-school communication. The need to understand and respond to the particular needs of the parental cohort is reflected in the conclusions of UK-based researchers (Harris & Goodall, 2008; Hughes & Greenhough, 2006 and Goodall et al, 2011, for example) and within the demand to respond to multiplicity and difference seen in EY literature (Langston and Abbott, 2005; Moss et al, 2000, amongst others). This inquiry only scratched at the surface of understanding parental partnerships in this context and highlighted the necessity of developing a deeper understanding of the parental cohort within international education and suggested that differing solutions to those of UK settings may be required. Furthermore, the diversity found within international schools themselves (Hayden, 2006) may mean that an array of differing solutions may be required, dependent on each schools particular needs. Nonetheless, the integration of the concepts of scaffolding and co-construction outlined above may support responsiveness whilst retaining consistency.

Whilst further investigation may still be required to deepen our understanding of home-school interactions in an international setting, this research indicates that enhancing partnership working with parents is possible, even within the limitations of the specific plane of interaction (Hedegaard, 2012). Within any setting, the dialogic potential of existing tools and strategies may not be fully utilised. Exploring collaboratively with parents how to maximise this potential could be a very fruitful and beneficial first step, even for individual practitioners. The scale and nature of this may differ tremendously within each setting, as will the needs and expectations of the parents. However, this research indicated that even the smallest change could have a large impact and this understanding continues to shape my practice and, in my view, enhance my relationship with parents.

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School Leadership: Reflections from the 2014 FOBISIA Heads and Senior Leaders' Conference

Matthew G Mills
Head of School, Bangkok Patana School

In November 2014, Mr Matt Mills, Head of Bangkok Patana School, hosted and spoke about leadership to our next generation of school leaders participating in the FOBISIA Heads and Seniors Leaders' Conference. This is an annual conference opened up to all of the 47 schools in the federation to experience quality CPD (Continuing Professional Development) provision and general networking with other like-minded schools in Asia. Bangkok Patana School hosted over 220 attendees from all over Asia including principals, assistant principals and educational exhibitors.

The opening welcome included some of our own students sharing in the style of a TED Talks presentation their own ideas on how teachers can improve the quality of learning for their students. This informal paper includes both Mr Mill's reflections on the subject of School Leadership which was explored at the conference and transcripts of some of our Patana students' presentations.

School Leadership – Reflections by Mr Matt Mills – November 2014

Harry Truman once said:
"I learned that a great leader is a person who has the ability to get other people to do what they don't want to do and like it!"

In other words, good leaders take people with them and get them to do things they normally wouldn't do. Leadership skills and techniques can be learned – you don't have to be a natural leader. Very few people are. Three things I have noticed about really good leaders are:

• They inspire others by their own example – i.e. they show enthusiasm, passion and energy. They are invariably highly-motivated people.
• They know where they are going and how they are going to get there, i.e. they set goals.
• They possess real character and integrity - i.e. they have strong moral values and know the difference between right and wrong.

Student leadership is quite simply what it sounds like: leadership on a student level. Why is this an important characteristic for a school to have? Because each school, whether small or large, has similar attributes to those of a community. Within our school there are hundreds of students, all from different backgrounds, with different beliefs, values and abilities, all coming together with different focuses in life. In most cases, these students all share one building, and many of them also share one goal: To become accepted. No student wants to go to school, whether early years, primary, upper key stages, or senior school, and be rejected, finding that she doesn't fit into "the crowd". This is a prime instance of where student leaders can step into action. If someone could approach a new student and just give him a handshake or a high-five, saying something like:

"Hey, how are you? My name is Matt. What's yours?"
"Oh, Hi, Matt. Nice to meet you. Well, I'm glad you are here at this school, and hopefully I'll see you around."

If an unsure student can realise that he or she can be himself or herself and be accepted at school, then this student has already taken the first and hardest step of fitting into a community, and that is being accepted for who one is, instead of being accepted for who one is trying to be.

Another characteristic I believe student leaders need, is the humility to give oneself for someone else. Whether one gives one's time, an ear to listen, a shoulder to lean on, or just a handshake, showing someone that they are important enough to get to know is showing them that they matter.

I have noticed one main truth about student leadership throughout my 32 years of school experience. This truth is that every student who wants to make a difference in his or her school must be willing to take action. Just talking about the student who is eating alone a few tables across from you in the canteen does not comfort him. Just talking about the girl that gets made fun of in science class will not help her situation. Do something. Many of today's student leaders understand this virtue, and I just hope that over time more students catch on.

Also, as a leader, always remember that it is okay to make mistakes – be open to criticism and be prepared to change.

How Can Teachers Improve the Quality of Learning for their Students?
Student Transcript from a speech delivered by Palida Leenabanchong, Molly Chalk and Pattrawararan (Teal) Uahwatanasakul (students at Bangkok Patana School)

"Do you remember your early school days? Do you remember the teachers who motivated and inspired you? Or do you remember the teachers that forced you to stare in wonder at the pigeon outside? Remembering back that far might be a hard feat for some, considering how "experienced" you are….. however anyone who has fond memories of their school days can often associate it with an effective teacher or some good playground games.

We feel fortunate to have such enthusiastic and motivating teachers here in this school. However just as we have targets with our learning, we feel that teachers should also have targets to improve their teaching skills. You are here to teach us but we can also teach you! So we're here to give our perspective on what you can do to help improve the quality of learning for us students. We believe that the best teachers have the most patience and make us feel motivated and comfortable in their classrooms. They set high expectations that are reasonable and understand each student's learning needs.

Teachers don't generally have to know every single detail about their students to connect with them. To have a good relationship between teachers and students, the students have to connect with the teachers and the teachers have to connect with the students so both of them understand each other. We don't need to know your favourite breakfast cereal, or the number of childhood illnesses you had, or what toothpaste brand you use. However, we would be interested to know a few basic things about you such as your family members, favourite hobbies or personal interests like bands or sports. As students, we feel that knowing these facts would strengthen our understanding of you as an individual and teacher and make our connection with learning more enjoyable and memorable. Basically we don't want to see you as a figure in a shirt talking to us but we want to see you as someone we consider our friend, someone we can trust and someone we can rely on. It's a win-win situation: you get to know us and we get to know you.

 We find our lessons more enjoyable and interesting when the teacher sets high expectations, but it's also important to know what a reasonable expectation is. To do this you need to get to know your students individually, discovering their strengths and weaknesses. By setting higher expectations, we are challenged and have something to strive for that doesn't come too easy for us. This makes our learning interesting, not too easy and as a result we work hard and apply good effort. Be realistic though, like you we have good and bad days and sometimes we might not be meeting your expectations and adjustments might need to be made.

If you gave us more freedom in choice then we might even exceed your expectations and begin to think outside of the four walls of our classroom. Lower down the school the children get the opportunity to choose their own learn-

ing experience and to design and make a learning environment that excites them. Sometimes teachers presume that because the older we get the more mature we become, that we don't need a say in the layout and design of our classroom. We find that having an interactive classroom motivates and inspires us and helps our mind travel through its labyrinth and unlock the room that holds all our precious creativity. We are still just children and we do like to play and explore. Don't be afraid to give us some power in classroom decision making!

To make learning more engaging teachers should try and minimise their "teacher talk" and maximise the learning time for the students so they can get their brains flowing. And when we do get that brain in gear and set off on our journey, we shouldn't suddenly face a red light after just turning the first corner! Do you know how frustrating it is to just start your writing and then hear that dreaded "clap"? It's as frustrating for us as it is for you when you have just finished those delightful reports, go to click save and the computer crashes!

Presenting learning in different ways such as quizzes, through art, ICT, cooking and with more hands on experiments and investigations opens up our minds and makes learning more enjoyable. More enjoyment and focus with the learning experiences that you offer us results in quality learning of skills and knowledge taking place. Don't just stay in the classrooms! Get out and use the amazing school facilities we have here at Patana.

The teachers talk a lot about the relationship between what we learn in school and real life so we would like to highlight the importance of more opportunities to get out of the classroom and experience things ourselves. Residentials and field trips are great fun but we need more than one experience to link our learning with the environment we live in.

We all learn in different ways and each of us prefers a different learning style. Some people may love to sit down on a comfy spot on the carpet and watch a video about photosynthesis, whereas others may prefer doing a hands on experiment or listening to an audio clip. We feel that our teachers should try and leave some time in the week free for us to follow our passions or interests, or if that is not possible, to have a choice in what we want to learn about and how we want to express our learning. We KNOW teachers have their favourite quote, "Sorry we don't have time , we'll do it later", and then……..the later becomes NEVER. But if you handed the time over to us to follow our interests we are then in charge of managing that precious time.

To conclude, we feel that we are very fortunate at this school to have such a wide variety of teachers that are dedicated to helping us develop as learners. We hope that we haven't forced you to search for the nearest pigeon outside the window and that our advice is helpful for you to reflect on your teaching.
Thank you for listening."

How Can Teachers Improve the Qualtiy of Learning for their Students –
Transcript from a **speech delivered by Samantha Gray (Student at Bangkok Patana School)**

"Some of the greatest learning I have ever experienced, must have been the times that classes were tailored to my needs. As pretentious as it may sound, I learn quite differently in classes than many of my peers – especially if you take traditionally academic subjects, say the sciences. Often those who excel in these courses are auditory or visual learners, those who only need to see or hear the information in order to absorb it, making videos or experimental demonstrations excellent for these types of people, and these tools are great in such subjects.

However, for me, I need to do it with my own hands; watching others do it makes my fingers twitch and makes me wish I was doing it myself, which I know identifies me as a kinesthetic learner. This doesn't surprise me, being an avid performer and being able to express myself through physical movement; but I know that when a teacher asks my class to be particles in different phases – so we run around to be gases, stand and wobble to be liquids and clump in the middle of the classroom to be solids – that I would never forget it.

This is where I realised that one of my favourite approaches to learning was – for lack of a better phrase – to pick your poison. If in class, I get options, if I could read and highlight, watch a video, or present back to the class after independent research, regardless of how difficult the task was, I got to choose how I did it and so I *wanted* to do it. This idea first came to me when I watched the story of Gillian Lynne. Have you heard of her? Some have. She's a choreographer and everybody knows her work. She did Cats, and Phantom of the Opera, she's wonderful. It was funny that she came to be so successful as she struggled terribly at school, always fidgeting and becoming distracted, so her parents took her to an educational specialist.

Nowadays, he would likely have diagnosed her with ADHD and prescribed Adderall or Ritalin, but such disorders had yet to be invented. So this expert asked to speak to her mother privately, and asked her to just watch her child through the glass door, having left on some music. She began to dance. On this experts recommendation, she was enrolled in dance school. After her first day she told her mother: 'I can't tell you how wonderful it was. We walked in this room and it was full of people like me, people who couldn't sit still. People who had to move to think.'

She was eventually auditioned for the Royal Ballet School, she became a soloist, she had a wonderful career at the Royal Ballet, and then founded her own company, the Gillian Lynne Dance Company, and met Andrew Lloyd Weber. She's been responsible for some of the most successful musical theater productions in history, she's given joy to millions, and she's a multimillionaire. Now somebody else might put her on medication and tell her to calm down.

Although this is more extreme than most require, this idea of physical education was stressed a few years ago. I've progressed through the school and watched it fall away, much to the distress of my fellow kinesthetic learners, nevertheless as workloads pile up and syllabus statements multiply it is wholly understandable that these options just are no longer plausible. But take the time, give the dark-eyed, barely-awake IB students ten minutes to recreate a battle in History or let them build the optimal box from an A4 sheet while you're studying differential calculus, because just moments of movement make all the difference for minds that work like mine.

As much as it simplifies classes to have a lecture-style system, questions and answers, there is no substitute for real relationships and group learning.

My mother tells me so many fascinating things every day, but the number that sticks is embarrassingly few. But if a classmate tells me the same thing, I'll go home and repeat it to her, much to her agitation – what does this show? How many students just do not understand until they hear it in another voice? I know that in Physics, my favourite subject for excellent learning anecdotes, that definitions will stay firmly planted in my mind only if I hear them in the voices of my cleverer classmates. Knowing that they know it pushes me to remember and it builds relationships so it forces us to ask the question: *who* am I learning from?

Not only does this idea allow for these relationships to form, an area that is often neglected in the upper school as academics surpasses the need for group cohesion, but it takes that little bit of stress off teachers. As distracting as talking can be, it is so essential to remember from ourselves that sometimes we will only even retain what is said by someone other than the person we trust to tell us – be it my mother, my peers or my teachers.

One of my theatre teachers here told me the saddest story, I think so at least, of a boy at the end of his two-year , higher level Theatre course who came up to her, pointed at one of his classmates and said "what's her name?" IB Theatre is arguably one of the most intimate Baccalaureate courses, with small classes – no more than ten – and after all was said and done there were still people who didn't even know each other's names. The IB teaches us to be global citizens, to be open-minded, inquisitive, caring, but how can we when these basic needs are neglected? How am I meant to sit in my HL physics exams and try and recall the voices of the hyper-intelligent girls in my class if I don't even know their names? Relationships, their formation and maintenance are a very specific education in two parts, the literal and the extended. Allowing students to build these in a subject-specific manner aids learning in a way that is often overlooked – I have physics friends and that is the majority of our conversation topics, and

having partners who are up for discussion outside of class keeps the material ever-fresh in our minds, in a way that is so much easier than post-its on our bedroom walls.

I'd like to finish with my absolute favourite part – inspiration. I know that it is often overused and probably at least a little cliché, but that is for a very good reason. While I was researching this paper, I could not find a single person who didn't say that they loved their favourite subject *because* of someone who inspired them. And guess who these people usually were? It's not going to surprise you at all – it was their teachers. I thought this was so gorgeous in a sort of unattached way, until I realised that the exact same applies to me.

I am in theatre now because of a woman who inspired me, who noticed the spark in me before I ever noticed it in myself and brought it to light. I love Physics because of teachers whose eyes sparkle when they talk about the stars. But most of all, we love to learn because of teachers who love to teach and I've cheekily coined a term for this – bidirectional inspiration. It is a beautiful cycle of inspiration once it begins, with educators being these motivational characters just through the love of the subject and once that joy is conveyed to students they will only ever radiate that inspiration back, hence the idea of bidirectional.

But realistically, who am I to try and form theories? I haven't even graduated yet, but let me share one salient thing with you all – I have not even begun tertiary education yet, but I know I want to be a teacher. That, to me, is the hallmark of an excellent education, the need to pass it on. Gillian Lynne would never have wanted to choreograph – to teach what she learnt – had she not received the world-renowned ballet training that the Royal Ballet School offers.

I have received some of South-East Asia's greatest education, had learning experiences with some of the greatest educators available to IB learners, having my passions nurtured in one of the kindest, best-equipped environments possible.

But what I will take from my 13 years at this amazing school is not the excellent final grades that I attained, nor will it always be the people that I shared the experiences with – but it will be the love of the subjects that inspirational and influential educators instilled within me. This is something that cannot be written in any number of syllabus statements that cannot be written in the mission statement of the IB, nor the A Levels, nor the Scottish Highers, but runs much deeper.

It is said that nowadays, education is no more than the mass production of useful human beings, but I believe that educators cannot let this be true. I do not believe that education has succeeded when a student passes an exam with flying colours, or even passes the exam at all. I believe that education succeeds when a person is touched by what it is they learn, when they are impassioned, when they have the need to pass it on."

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Children with Asperger's Syndrome at Bangkok Patana School

Daphne Seiler
Parent, Bangkok Patana School

Off we go the Flow House on Sukhumvit Road. This is such a fun day out as we all like to give it a try. My daughter gets on very well. From the outside of the flow, I look at what she is experiencing.

1. The loud pumping of the water, the whistles of the instructors to get the riders' attention to show them what to do next; the instructors having to shout over the noise of the water; the music; the other children and friends shouting at her to try a new trick; me yelling that she is not listening to the instructor; her sister yelling to hurry up as she is waiting for her in the waiting pool. (Auditory).
2. The water splashing in her eyes; the sun shining in her eyes; the instructor standing in front of her showing the next steps; the friends sitting on the side waving their arms, her sister standing next to me hopping up and down waiting for her, looking where she is so she can change direction. (Sight).
3. Water pumping her body to the point where it is mildly painful; the feeling of the plastic under her legs; the feeling of the water when she sits up and lets her hand guide her board; the feeling of the wet swimsuit against her body; the wet hair against her scalp. (Touch).
4. Going on the board she rides it and loves it but inside her head her body works really hard to keep her balance. That's what makes her so great. We use our middle ear to position our bodies upright or when we do have some adventure fun, to make sure our bodies know which way is up. (Vestibular System).
5. She looks at all the people with a very confused look and keeps asking me what they said. Are they happy or sad? Are they angry or is that just their faces? Previously I explained that the instructors may not be laughing or smiling at her, but rather with her because that is what instructors do when they are so proud of you. And when they have got serious faces maybe they are concerned that you shouldn't go too close to the edge or else you may get hurt. (Can't read facial expressions).

The difference was, however, that on this day there were a few new instructors and she had all five of the above factors to deal with. She holds her emotions inside because she is trying to be a 'risk-taker'. On one of the walks down, her foot got stuck on the foam seat and in order not to slip she threw the boogie board down to get her balance and then she climbed over. One of the new instructors blew his whistle at her and told her not to throw the boogie board but to put it down gently... even though he did not appear threatening, his face to her was a face she could not read and she put it in the 'mean' category and that was that - immediate meltdown.

The thing about a meltdown is that you cannot control it, she cannot control it, and removing her from the situation is all you can do. Some parents may think that she is acting in a spoilt way, but she is dealing with the world on another plane which none of us understands, where nothing makes sense.

Background

Our daughter was born at 32 weeks, eight weeks prematurely. Some children go home and don't have any problems, some go home and have severe problems like loss of sight; we were just happy that after all the tests we got to take home a healthy little girl.

We expected the occupational therapy to ensure that she could catch up with her peers who were not born prematurely so that she could reach all her milestones on her birthday and not her due date. When her occupational therapist recommended another therapist, off we went because we wanted her to walk on her birthday. Once she walked the therapist said to come back when she was 18 months old for a re-evaluation. At 18 months we did the hearing test, the eye test, and all the other assessments that we were advised to do. She reached all her milestones and we were very happy.

Our little girl went to preschool when she was two years and a bit. Two weeks into settling in the teacher asked if she was hard of hearing. Having done the tests a few months ago I said "no". The lady kept insisting that when she called her in the class she doesn't respond. My heart dropped and I eventually redid the hearing test. Nope, all was well. Next stop the Paediatrician, or I was nuts? He said to keep calm, let's rule out physical probabilities then the next step is the OT (Occupational Therapy). He referred me to another OT. She did a two-hour assessment and told us she had a Sensory Processing Disorder which is very common in premature babies. Our daughter needed an hour a week of OT. She cannot be cured but we aimed to get to the point where she, once older, could identify what sets off the alarm bells in her head, and then be able to remove herself from that situation. Until then, I am the alarm bell and remover from the situation.

What a long road, but I am finally seeing her taking that role over from me, which in a way is also sad.

She went to school at six. She kept telling me it was too loud and the children didn't know how to behave but school is school so what choice does one have? Then, one day I got the call. My daughter got caught in the bathroom with her finger down her throat trying to make herself throw up in order to tell the teacher she is ill so she can come home. (In her world lying is not allowed, so you have to throw up by any means before you can say it.)

We went to see a paediatric neurologist on recommendation from the OT who we had been with for three years at that stage. He played some games and talked with her, gave me a book and gave me a section to read while he went off to play with her with some dinosaurs in the sand. I read, and reread, closed the book and thought 'what an idiot!' My daughter does not have Asperger's, it cannot be, and what is this autism business? He's a wacko! But as the first tear rolled down my cheek, images popped in my mind of all the things she does that the book identified. By the time he came back, I wiped the last tear and said "So, what do I do?" and he said, "Just love her."

Medical

The Medical Perspective

The website AutismSpeaks.org (2015) states that: "Asperger's syndrome is an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) considered to be on the "high functioning" end of the spectrum. Affected children and adults have difficulty with social interactions and exhibit a restricted range of interests and/or repetitive behaviours."

Asperger's syndrome was first described in the 1940s by Viennese paediatrician Hans Asperger who observed autistic-like behaviours and difficulties with social and communication skills in boys who had normal intelligence and language development. Many professionals felt Asperger's syndrome was simply a milder form of autism and used the term "high-functioning autism" to describe these individuals.

Professor Uta Frith, (cited in AutismSpeaks.org, 2015) with the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience of University College London and author of Autism and Asperger's Syndrome, describes individuals with Asperger's syndrome as "having a dash of Autism". Asperger's syndrome was added to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) in 1994 as a separate disorder from autism. However, there are still many professionals who consider Asperger's syndrome a less severe form of autism. In fact, the current plan of the APA is to remove Asperger's syndrome from DSM-V in 2013.

Similarly, pioneer work done by Simon Baron-Cohen from 1985 to 2000 has shown that "Asperger's Syndrome is a specific cognitive disorder of mental blindness, an inability to interpret non-verbal clues and make inferences from these cues" (Autism Speaks, 2015). The theory of mind, mentalising ability, was examined by using tests of false beliefs. The person with Aspergers syndrome acts on the basis of his or her own beliefs rather than on the basis of how things really are.

Recognising the Characteristics of Asperger's Syndrome

The following explanation from Asperger's Syndrome for Dummies, updated in 2015 describes in simple steps how to recognise the characteristics of Asperger's Syndrome.

"Asperger's Syndrome is a condition on the autistic spectrum that affects how someone makes sense of the world, processes information and relates to other people.

Unusual behaviour is characteristic of people with Asperger's Syndrome or other conditions on the autism spectrum. The autism spectrum applies to people who have difficulty with social communication, social interaction and social imagination.

Unwritten social rules and social expectations are widespread in our society. If a pause occurs in conversation, people fill it with chit chat about the weather, even if they aren't particularly interested in the weather. People ask other people if they're feeling okay out of politeness, rather than because they really want to know the true answer. These sorts of social niceties are often a mystery to people with Asperger's Syndrome. In fact, many people with Asperger's Syndrome have to learn such things by rote, if they're able to learn them at all.

If you have Asperger's Syndrome, you may have difficulties with the following things:

Understanding social interactions, social rules and social expectations

Recognising other people's feelings and emotions (by their facial expressions, tone of voice, or body language and gestures)

Making friends and keeping friends, even though you may want to have friends

Making conversation (knowing when to start or end a conversation and what to talk about)

Understanding jokes, sarcasm, idioms and metaphors (you may take language very literally)

Figuring out what other people are thinking (you may find other people confusing and unpredictable)

Imagining alternative outcomes to a given situation." (Asperger's Syndrome for Dummies, UK edition, 2015).

Helping a Child with Asperger's Syndrome Communicate

The *Asperger's Syndrome for Dummies* continues to be very insightful giving clear advice on how to help a child with Asperger's Syndrome communicate. It sums up (2015) that children with Asperger's Syndrome or another condition on the autism spectrum have problems understanding the nuances of what is being communicated to them. It is important that instructions, questions and conversation are all very clear. It presents the following advice:

Speak slowly, and give only one instruction at a time: For example, rather than saying, 'Go and brush your teeth then get dressed,' ask your child to brush his or her teeth, then wait until that task is finished before you ask your child to get dressed. The same thing goes with questions. One thing at a time is always best.

Avoid sarcasm, metaphors and idioms: People on the spectrum find these really difficult to understand because they tend to take words and expressions literally. So if you want your child to know that you're keeping an eye on him or her, don't tell your child that (you can't put an eye on someone without doing yourself a lot of damage) or worse, say "I've got eyes in the back of my head" (how scary!). If you remark that it's "raining cats and dogs", expect your child to look outside and be a little confused.

Be clear about what you mean, and be concrete when you talk about abstract concepts: This applies especially with things like feelings, which children on the spectrum will have even more difficulty understanding.

Be patient and give your child plenty of time to respond to any questions or requests: It will take your child more time to process verbal information than you may expect, so count to ten before expecting a response or before repeating your question." (Asperger's Syndrome for Dummies, UK edition, 2015).

Sensory Intelligence

The SPD Foundation (2015) state: "Sensory processing (sometimes called "sensory integration" or SI) is a term that refers to the way the nervous system receives messages from the senses and turns them into appropriate motor and behavioural responses.

All children with Autism Spectrum Disorders have some form of Sensory Processing Disorder. Whether you are biting into a hamburger, riding a bicycle, or reading a book, your successful completion of the activity requires processing sensation or "sensory integration."

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD, formerly known as "sensory integration dysfunction") is a condition that exists when sensory signals don't get organised into appropriate responses. The SPD Foundation (2015) explain how pioneering occupational therapist and neuroscientist A. Jean Ayres, PhD, likened SPD to a neurological "traffic jam" that prevents certain parts of the brain from receiving the information needed to interpret sensory information correctly. A person with SPD has problems processing information and then acting upon it which leads to many challenges in them completing everyday tasks. "Motor clumsiness, behavioural problems, anxiety, depression, school failure, and other impacts may result if the disorder is not treated effectively."

"Sensory Processing Disorder can affect people in only one sense – for example, just touch or just sight or just movement–or in multiple senses. One person with SPD may over-respond to sensation and find clothing, physical contact, light, sound, food, or other sensory input to be unbearable. Another might under-respond and show little or no reaction to stimulation, even pain or extreme hot and cold. In children whose sensory processing of messages from the muscles and joints is impaired, posture and motor skills can be affected. These are the "floppy babies" who worry new parents and the kids who get called "klutz" and "spaz" on the playground. Still other children exhibit an appetite for sensation that is in perpetual overdrive. These kids often are misdiagnosed - and inappropriately medicated - for ADHD."(SPD Foundation, 2015).

Sensory Processing Disorder is frequently diagnosed in young people but people who reach adulthood without treatment also experience symptoms and continue to be affected by their inability to accurately and appropriately interpret sensory messages. (2015) These "sensational adults" are likely to have difficulties when involved in work, close relationships, and recreation. This can then lead to them experiencing depression, underachievement, social isolation, and/or other secondary effects.

Asperger's Children and Sensory Issues

Hutten, (2015) states "Children with Aspergers may have problems processing information from one or more of the following seven sensory systems:

1. auditory (hearing)
2. gustatory (taste)
3. olfactory (smell)
4. proprioception (movement)
5. tactile (touch)
6. vestibular (balance)
7. visual (sight)

These processes take place at an unconscious level, and they work together to help attention and learning. Each

system has specific receptors that pick up information that is relayed to the brain. The sensory characteristics of children with Asperger's can be responsible for many of their negative behaviours and unpleasant emotions. Reactions to sensory stimuli for typically developing children often become stress responses for those with Asperger's."

Hutten writes sensibly on the website 'My Asperger's Child', sharing with the reader this useful account of the Sensory System Impact on Children with Asperger's:

"1. Auditory System – Hearing: While they have intact hearing abilities, kids with Asperger's may not efficiently or accurately interpret auditory information. They may be hyper- and/or hyposensitive to noise, responding negatively to loud or small noises and failing to respond when their name is called. We have opted for noise reduction earphones. But as she gets older, she feels embarrassed and have started implementing the coping strategies we have trained her for in all the years of OT. OT cannot 'fix' the system function, but can teach the children coping mechanisms.

2. Gustatory and Olfactory Systems – Taste and Smell: Issues related to the taste system manifest themselves in avoiding certain foods, eating a very circumscribed diet, and/or being very picky about foods. Closely related to the sense of taste, the olfactory system in the nose is most often characterised by a hypersensitivity to many of the smells that others enjoy or fail to notice.

3. Proprioception System – Movement: The proprioceptive system makes carrying multiple objects (e.g., backpack, books, and musical instruments) down a packed hallway possible by providing information about the location and movement of a body part. For some, these movements do not come naturally. Problems in the proprioception system can result in poor posture, a lack of coordination, and chronic fatigue accompanying physical activity. Some children do not receive accurate information from their bodies about how hard or soft they are hitting or pushing something. This can result in their using too little or too much force when tagging a peer or kicking a ball.

4. Tactile System – Touch: The tactile system provides information about objects in the environment. Tactile defensiveness may involve physical discomfort when coming into contact with someone or something that others might not register. Standing in line, taking a bath, unexpected touch, touch that is either too light or too heavy, and using a glue stick present potentially stressful situations for tactilely defensive individuals. In contrast, children who are hyposensitive fail to respond to the touch of others, yet often use touch to explore the environment for the tactile input they crave.

5. Vestibular System – Balance: The vestibular system is stimulated by movement and changes in head position. Children with vestibular hypersensitivity have low tolerance for movement and exhibit difficulties with changing speed and direction. They may experience nausea from spinning and have difficulty sitting still; others may display gravitational insecurity. Some may seek out vestibular input by crashing into things or rocking, might be considered clumsy, or have difficulty "switching gears." Others, like my daughter, may have good balance because they have had additional vestibular input from a very young age.

6. Visual System – Sight: Compared to other sensory areas, the visual system appears to be a relative strength for children with Asperger's. The problems that do arise are often related to hypersensitivities to light, poor hand-eye coordination/depth perception, and hypo-sensitivies that make finding an object "in plain sight" very difficult. Some children may have perfect 20/20 vision yet have difficulties with visual tracking and convergence. These problems can be detected by an exam with a behavioural ophthalmologist or optometrist." (Hutten, 2015).

At a young age we built my daughter a 'nest' (a tent). At one stage we noticed that she dragged all her pillows into the shower and closed the door with all her soft toys inside. This is a retreat from all visual input to help calm the sensory input the child may be experiencing. Children tend to retreat into corners or build caves to find their safe zone but parents can create these themselves. I found that my expensive ideas were not used and a corner in the

room always ended up with pillows and a blanket thrown over it.

A Mother's Perspective

Thanks to Google and lots of books and going to every seminar presented by anyone who appears to know anything, I have been there. I can talk the talk and walk the walk when it comes to my child. I know why she does what she does. I know she is kind and gentle and very smart and will not hurt an ant. I try hard to explain to other children in words they can understand why my child may not want to play at that particular time or why she does not look at them. I think parents need to be educated about the world and how people and children are different in order for their children to become more tolerant individuals.

I still have good days, we still have bad days and we always will. But if one child can be her friend by just accepting that sometimes people are just a bit different, it will be a good day.

How Bangkok Patana has Helped my Child Grow and Overcome Her Fears

When the school has a day with a theme or dress-up activity, we will prepare carefully. This is especially critical when it comes to something as 'big' as Residential. We will print the programme and list of things to pack well in advance. We are talking months of preparation to try to predict every hour of what will happen on every day. If she is prepared we reduce the anxiety and the teachers and support staff are great at assisting and reinforcing what I implement at home as anxiety-reducing strategies.

I have to commend the school for the careful and sensitive placement. She is happy in her class with a wonderful caring teacher and children who do not judge. On big sporting days I will see her having serious anxiety attacks and before I step in and remove her, I will see little boys and girls all holding her hand and patting her back trying their best to calm their friend. This I know will not help as by that time she just wants to run away; but it is the sweetest thing to see the caring and nurturing behaviour in the class.

She has been seeing the counsellor for over a year and this has been to teach her how friendships are made, what different facial expressions mean, how friendships are built and what is actual, compared to pretend, play. This has been a huge help in making some friends. Even though she still has no best friend, I see her walking down the corridor and will greet every child that passes; they are most often not in her class and this shows she is kind and caring and able to befriend others.

As she has good mental cognitive abilities, she has memorised the nine attributes that an IB Learner should strive for:
- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Principled
- Open-Minded
- Caring
- Risk-Takers
- Balanced
- Reflective

She will often come home from school and say, "today I was a risk-taker", or "I was open-minded." I will scratch my head and she would tell a story of what happened that day and eventually link this to what made her a risk-

taker. She has been part of a group of girls in her class who read at an assembly. This is something which she would have never done before, but now she has the courage to do it.

All the support from her teacher and support staff has improved her ability in making friends. Asperger's is not a disabling 'disease'. It is limiting her social being, and mothers can only do so much and encourage up to a point or else we embarrass and interfere. With the support and teamwork between myself, her lovely and caring teacher, and school-provided support, we can have a holistic approach to address the social problems that Asperger's and the sensory issues may cause, and she may get the tools to lead a normal life.

I bought her a book called *Kevin Thinks* by Gail Watts. The book is written for Asperger's children so they can learn it is okay to be different. The first time she read it she gave it back to me with this look on her face like, "Do I look like an idiot?" Then I caught her a while ago sitting in her secret corner reading it again and I could see the "Ahh" moment. The book is now in her bookcase. I want to give you a sentence from the book…."Well, many people famous for changing the world sometimes think how Kevin thinks. They have been successful because they think in a different way to other people. They have been able to think of amazing things that no one else has thought of."

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Raising Attainment in the IB Diploma

Andy Roff
IB Coordinator, Bangkok Patana School

Bangkok Patana School has a proud history of operating a non-selective Senior Studies programme, and this is something we are determined to maintain; simultaneously, we are aiming to effect an increase in our examination results to achieve a raised average-points score for students undertaking the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. It is my role over the coming period to implement, reflect and revise the efficacy of a number of developments intended to achieve this aim. Specifically, here I will review the Year 11 student options process and the extent and efficacy with which we utilise data to inform the support offered by the academic and pastoral teams.

Refining of the Student Options Process

The student option process in Year 11 has always been a supportive one and one that has year on year enabled us to achieve excellent results with our Senior students. However, it was felt that there was scope for significant improvement in this process so as to enable our students to achieve even better results. Students are provided with, and encouraged to read, lots of information provided by subject leaders about their courses in order to enable them to, as far as possible, make informed option choices for their Senior Studies programme. These resources range from videos detailing the type of study engaged in, to subject briefs giving an overview of the course on a single sheet, to exemplar student work to provide a taster. There have been opportunities created for students to consult with their teachers and current Senior Studies students. We have not, however, rigorously used colleagues' professional judgement to give strong guidance to students as to the most suitable option choices for them. This has been a hugely untapped resource, given the experience and expertise of our staff. With this in mind we have developed the process to seek subject teachers' recommendations for courses/ levels within which each student in Year 11 is likely to be able to find success with. This year, we have achieved this by inviting students' teachers to indicate on a shared document a student's potential for success in their subject at Standard or Higher Level in the IB Diploma. There have been a number of different approaches to this. Some subjects maintain a very much open-entry policy; typically these are skill-rich subjects, where the majority of the skills needed for success in the subject are taught and developed during the two-year IB course. Other subjects, typically the more content-heavy courses, have set clear benchmarks for success to help guide students as to their likelihood for success in the subject and these have been used, along with significant professional judgement from teachers, to make clear recommendations.

There are a number of benefits we expect to see from this: firstly, improved attainment as a direct result of students continuing in their strongest subjects, particularly where students have historically struggled in subjects. Secondly, it narrows the options choices down for a number of students, allowing them to specify their research towards the subjects that are most appropriate for them and make more informed decisions between them. Thirdly, it will vastly reduce the number of option changes that happen early in Year 12 as students find out by experience rather than by good prior research that certain courses are unsuitable for them. This has historically had the negative effect of students needing to find time to catch up work missed in subjects they have newly joined while at the same time trying to adapt to the huge leap in workload and expectations of the Senior Studies programme.

Utilising Data

Bangkok Patana School has a very well-established Secondary School programme. We have for many years structured our programme to enable students to progress from attaining (I)GCSE to IB qualifications. With such a well-established programme it is only sensible to make use of accumulated data to advise students on their likely pro-

gression and to inform their options accordingly. Plotting the (I)GCSE results for a five-year period against the IB results achieved by those same students two years later makes for valuable data to inform students of their likely outcome at the end of Year 13 (as Figure 1 shows). While it is important to recognise that students don't all fit a single trend, being able to construct a relationship that projects likely outcomes for a student at IB based on their (I)GCSE scores that is specific to Bangkok Patana School is certainly of great help. We are able to show that a good indicator for success with the IB diploma (i.e. achieving 24 points or more and fulfilling all of the other requirements too) is an average (I)GCSE grade of C or better. With this in mind, we advise a benchmark for achieving success in the IB diploma as 6 C grades or better (i.e. a C grade at IGCSE or better in every subjects that is chosen for continued study at IB).
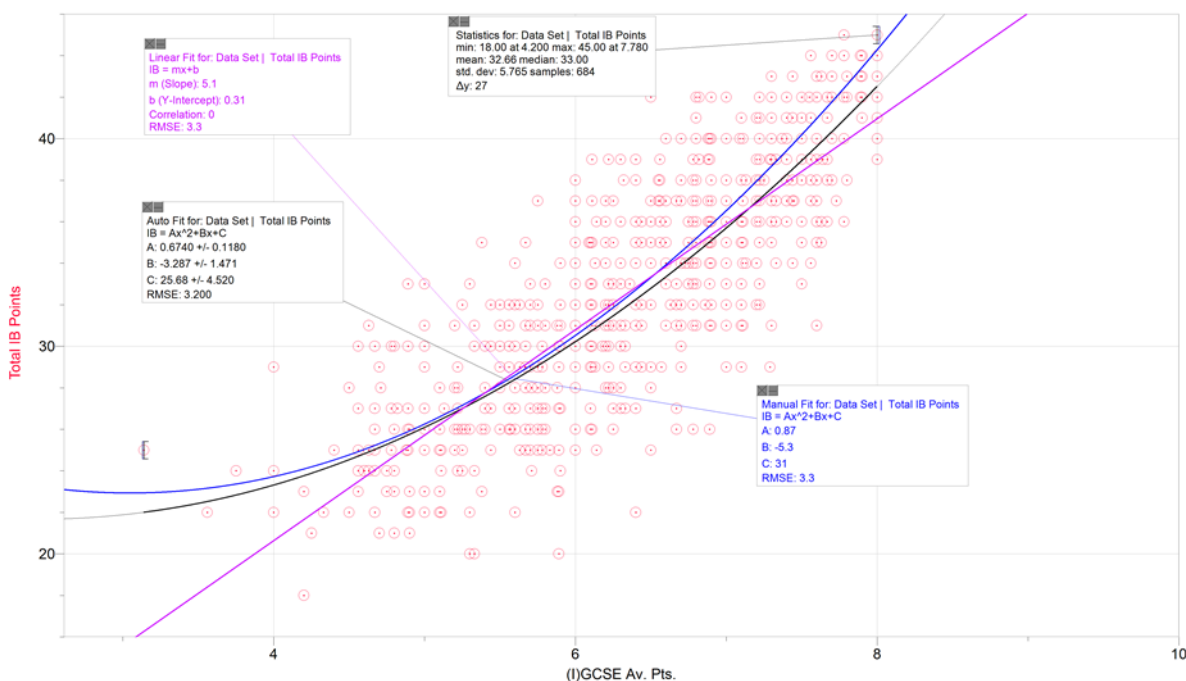

Figure 1: Accumulated data for six years of graduating students from Bangkok Patana School showing average attained IGCSE grade (A*=8, A=7, etc) against Total IB Points Score attained in the IB Diploma.

Using subject-specific data from the same period has also made it possible to construct models indicating likely points scores in individual subjects for students based on both their average total (I)GCSE score and (I)GCSE score in that subject (or particular indicator subject). These models are less accurate in many cases, given sample sizes, and indeed some subjects do not have sufficient data to produce statistically-relevant models. Nevertheless, some subjects certainly do, and the sharing of this information will be key to better informing subject teachers' recommendations in the future.

Historically, Bangkok Patana students have undertaken CEM ALIS adaptive skills testing (CEM, 2014) at the start of Year 12 so as to provide projected IB grades for each student's subjects. Until recently, this data was largely used in reflection at the end of the IB course for summary results analysis. We have made the decision to be much more proactive in the use of this data now. The CEM ALIS data is now used in combination with teacher professional judgement to construct a target grade for each student in each subject. At every reporting cycle, this target grade is reviewed by the teacher and a current attainment grade is issued. Analysis of this data allows for intervention and support such as mentoring and parental meetings to take place for students who do not appear to make the sort of progress towards their target grade that would be expected. At a holistic level, intervention comes from the students' tutor, Head of Year or IB Coordinator, at a subject-specific level from their subject teacher or a suitable member of that subject team. In this way, it is much easier to identify early issues relating to attainment and address them.

University and Careers Counselling

With the expansion of our Careers and Universities Counselling team to consist of four dedicated guidance counsellors for Senior students, as well as one for younger students, we are better placed than ever before to advise students in Years 10 and 11 about appropriate subject choices that lead to appropriate courses at suitable universities. This information is hugely important to students. Good counselling sets students up on courses of study that appeal to their particular skills and preferences which will consequently lead to improved, more motivated students who are on the right courses with a clear goal in sight. It is expected that this will consequently lead to improved results too.

Alternatives to the IB Diploma

For some students, the IB Diploma programme is inappropriate. For these students, the Patana Certificate Plus programme is offered (an individually-tailored academic programme with an appropriate number and level of IB subjects, as well as CAS and some level of the other core aspects of the Diploma). Ensuring these students receive strong guidance and excellent support is also critical to improving our results in Senior Studies, and it will ensure students move forward with confidence in the courses they are taking with clear direction as to where it leads them.

Change

Sathita (Waree) Kitcharoenthumrong
Librarian, Bangkok Patana School

In this article, Khun Waree, a Secondary School Librarian at Bangkok Patana School, explores the importance of being prepared to adapt and develop as a person in order to be equipped to deal with change in the modern workplace.

Background

I gained my Master's Degree when I was fifty. Many of my friends congratulated me on the achievement, but also many people said that at this age I should have a PhD. They asked why only a Master's Degree? What had I been doing for the past several years? Had I not thought about furthering my study before? I responded to them that I had definitely thought about it, but had never put my thoughts into actions.

I first joined Bangkok Patana in July 1985 as an Assistant Librarian. After four happy years, I left to work for Qantas Airways, where I worked for almost five years. After realising that helping children and giving service to people was the kind of work I enjoyed the most, I rejoined Bangkok Patana in February 1993 as a Secondary School Librarian; by now I had no doubt that working in the library was the best career path for me. In 1993, Bangkok Patana's Secondary School Library was to be built - there would be new library systems, new technology, new resources and also a new team to start working together. I was excited and planned to work tirelessly for the library and its users. However, alongside my enthusiasm I was tinged with doubts about my role. My day-to-day job was fulfilling and complete but what I had started to notice was how the world was changing around me.

What had Changed?

Our library had always been viewed positively. I regularly received compliments from visitors such as librarians from other international schools, Thai teachers and librarians, including visitors from the Thai Government. As far back as 1993, it was considered to be one of the most modern libraries among the international schools in Thailand. It stood as a centre of learning and research. When I rejoined, it was slowly getting digital resources to supplement the books. Internet and emailing facilities were also implemented and the Library team started to realise that in addition to coping with day-to-day roles (which were to interact with users, information services, provide learning resources from books, magazines, and prepare textbooks for the classes), it was essential that they also became digital citizens.

The world was changing quickly and I feared that the Library was becoming less important than it had been previously. Learning styles had been gradually changing. Students and teachers began to have less time to read books and spent more time on computers. Students used the information from CD-Roms rather than getting it from reference books. Most new teachers didn't ask the Library to reserve topic books for assignments as the students mainly used the internet for research. They rushed into the Library at break or after school mainly to use the computer and access the internet.

Another change I was aware of was the way people communicated. They sent messages via email rather than talking on the phone and searched various information from the internet rather than going to the real place to see what was happening. Although technology helped people to communicate more quickly, it was rather impersonal. Whilst personal interaction decreased and book circulation numbers plummeted, technological communication increased exponentially. The physical library resources were neglected and seldom used. I felt that the library was becoming less central as a place of learning. I had noticed these changes but was not quite sure what to do. I still tried to encourage people to use the library resources but at the same time I felt I was being left behind.

What Needed to Change?

"Without learning, the library in a school would be nothing, as the need to learn is often the driving force that brings students to use the library." (Tilke, A, 2002 p.37). Working in the school library had always been my passion, and I considered how our library could provide more effective services to enable more learning by the school community. As I was a member of Patana, I needed to be sure how to stay abreast of change in the school and how to stay in tune with its vision and objectives. I was aware that the library must embrace the digital world and felt that a new-generation library must have something special that could attract the users; however, I was unsure exactly what this was.

I started to think seriously about what I could do. Whilst I could not make any big changes happen around me, one thing I could change was myself.

I realised I needed to:

develop my technology skills to catch up with the digital world.

communicate more effectively to ensure the library resources were fully utilised.

help to make the library a place where people would still visit and enjoy.

It took me several years before I came to my decision that the best and most practical way to start enabling these changes was to further my study. Family commitments and lack of confidence had delayed my decision, but eventually with the support from my family, friends and colleagues, my attempt to make the changes happen began. I signed up for a Master of Arts degree in Applied Communication.

Why Choose a Master of Arts Degree in Applied Communication?

I investigated several Master's Degree programmes from several universities before deciding to apply for an MA in Applied Communication at the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA). This course is designed for our modern era of globalisation and entails cross-cultural and transactional communication. As language is a major means in communication, knowledge and skills in language and communication are essential for all professionals; as such, knowledge and skills will enable people to excel in their professional and personal endeavours. The length of study was two years and the objective was "to produce people who are responsible in communication and related fields to improve their abilities and skills more efficiently." (Course syllabus, National Institute of Development Administration, 2011 p.2).

Strong communication skills are essential in an international school library as we interact with users at different ages and from many different nationalities, including many visitors from outside the school. Additionally, as mentioned, the library needed to adapt to embrace the changes that improved technology was creating. Through studying, I hoped to be able to facilitate better library services and work more efficiently.

How I have Applied my Learning

"Communication and Social Change explores the dialectical relationship between communication and society." (Course syllabus, National Institute of Development Administration, 2011 p.2). It investigates the impact of communication technology on the roles of various types of organisations, including the library. Studying this topic has helped me to gain a better understanding of how technology is changing society and how new generations communicate. This encouraged me to gain more technological knowledge. I learned to help users to access library resources on mobile devices. I also learned that the library could not wait for the users to come to us, but rather we must go to them and publicise all that we have to offer. For example, I tried to enhance the library services by learning how to make e-books accessible on the library system. I practised lots of presentation technology skills to help with the promotion of library resources and made some physical changes to some collections so the users

Sathita (Waree) Kitcharoenthumrong

Change

could easily access them.

The study of communication in a multi-cultural society is one of the subjects that helped me to understand that people from different cultures communicate differently, either by verbal or non-verbal language. People have been brought up differently; they have their own identity and different beliefs, values and culture, etc. which influences how they act and communicate with each other. It also affects how people react to the communication they receive. (Padungcheewit, J. 2000). For example, some users may seem demanding and almost aggressive to a Thai member of staff, but in a different culture the same behaviour would be considered to be perfectly polite. In the same way, the desire amongst Thai people to save face can be deemed frustrating to foreigners, yet to Thai people this is polite and respectful behaviour. It is a greater knowledge of these cultural differences that has enabled me to not only meet our customers' needs but also to celebrate and embrace our differences.

My further study has also helped me have a better understanding of organisational practices. Global Perspectives on Organisational Communication has helped me to understand where our organisation is going, its vision and how I should work to meet its objectives. (Course syllabus, National Institute of Development Administration, 2011, p.1). I have a clearer understanding that it is important that staff members know what they are working towards. I have changed my own working style to be more organised and pro-active in planning ahead, rather than simply fulfilling day-to-day duties. I have opted to get more involved in issues and events on a wider scale. For example, I deliver library induction sessions to new members of the school's business staff so they know what facilities the library has and I also interact with our school visitors to share what our Library has to offer.

Organisational Culture and Communication has helped me to reflect on how to efficiently and effectively work with other departmental colleagues. "Organisational culture emerges from the interactions of organisational members as they use messages and symbols to pursue their personal and professional goals and objectives relative to the organisation's goal and objectives." (Keyton, J, 2011 p.39). I realised that the way we act and communicate at any one time creates our organisational culture; therefore, I try to remain positive at all times. I deal with the other departments in a friendly manner but also have a clear vision about how to accomplish our aims. I encourage the team to give the best services to our users and thus ensure that the library maintains its excellent reputation.

Conclusion

When I decided to further my study in order to enhance my technological knowledge to keep abreast with change I embarked on my journey of learning. I have to accept that, in terms of requiring help with research, the face-to-face communication between the librarians and users has decreased, but I am now skilled and available when required to help users search effectively with Google, or on our databases. I have a clear understanding of how the library can communicate with the modern world to ensure that we remain up to date and relevant. Studying has helped clarify my thinking about what technology skills I still need to develop. I firmly believe that, "a school librarian in the twenty-first century needs to develop a wide range of management skills, aptitudes, knowledge and competencies in order to make the school library service an effective, intrinsic part of the school learning community." (Tilke, A. 2002 p.256). I gained a qualification that I hope has helped me adapt and change to meet the needs of the Bangkok Patana School Library users.

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Exploring the Potential for a Fieldwork-based Approach to a Unit on Climate Change and Mangrove Forest Ecology

Adrian Palmer
Biology Teacher, Bangkok Patana School

This report explores the possibility of teaching about climate change for the new environmental systems and societies (ESS) curriculum. It is based on some activities previously carried out with IB students from Patana; the exploration covers part of Unit 7 in the new ESS curriculum, through a series of classroom and fieldwork activities that promote learning by enquiry and conceptual connections to other parts of the course and the IBDP. The holistic investigation is planned to take place in the mangrove forests and surrounding societies in the Gulf of Thailand in and around Bangkok. The complexities of the systems involved are described through a series of nested flow diagrams, which show mangrove responses to sea level rise, interaction between adjacent systems and ecosystem interactions with the local societies.

Students assess their own carbon emissions from personal transport and estimate sequestering rates to see how much mangrove is needed to offset this. Mangroves are studied in the field, looking for evidence of human impact on the systems and assessing systems resilience using International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria. Students use the exercise to inform their own future visioning exercises and write a written report on solutions to issues as they see them. They are further encouraged to take action regarding their own personal lifestyles, by reducing carbon emissions through personal lifestyle choices (mitigation) or through tree planting (adaptation and mitigation).

Introduction

This climate change education unit has been planned to work as piece of supported fieldwork, with lessons before and after a field excursion, in support of the course Environmental Systems and Societies for the IB diploma.
The bioregion type is the fringing semi-natural ecosystems and forests around the coast and the mouth of the Mae Nam Chao Phraya River. This includes a mixture of zoned mangrove forest and Nipah palm (*Nypa fruiticans*) swamp forests. The role of this vegetation is considered, with the fieldwork focus on mangroves in particular. The field sites that could be used are places such as Bang Pu Nature Reserve, or the Wat Asokaram temple complex, which spreads out into the mangrove.

The society being considered in this context is that of Bangkok and the surrounding populations between it and Samut Prakarn. A key focus of this educational unit is to consider the value of these forests to the societies in the area, in particular the role the forests may play in protecting against rising sea levels or increased intensity in tropical storms. These perceived threats are projected by the fifth assessment report on the physical science from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to increase with a probability of "likely" (IPCC, 2013). Responses are currently being planned for by the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority (BMA), on balance with other aspects that lead to flooding, including subsidence in the urban area (Bangkok Metropolitan Authority, Green Leaf Foundation and United Nations Environment Programme, 2009) (Panya Consultants, 2009). Full cyclonic typhoons do not currently affect the area as they have travelled across land and lost power. However, tropical storms are a risk and associated storm surges have occurred, such as Hurricane Linda in 2007 that caused flooding in Samut Prakarn (Panya Consultants, 2009).

Other additional benefits of mangroves, including ecosystems services and natural capital, are considered. The local communities also use the forest for natural resource harvest, including fishing, roofing materials. Competing land uses in the current area of the mangroves including industrial, urban and transport needs are considered, as well as

those land uses behind the mangroves as may be required for a managed retreat type of adaptive response. Prawn and salt farmers work in areas of cleared mangrove forest, but there is a limited recreational and tourist use of these areas.

Image 1 - Location Map of the City and Fieldwork Sites (source: Google Maps)

The Rationale for the Pedagogical Approach

The IBO (International Baccalaureate Organisation) encourages inquiry-based and conceptual approaches to teaching and learning and this unit is intended to promote both as stated in the mission statement. This statement has a good fit to the general aims of EfS (Education for Sustainability) and ESD (Education for Sustainable Development); see for example Wade & Parker (2008). Furthermore, the unit exemplifies an approach to holistic understanding that is required for ESS, in requirement of the overriding aim of the course:
"The systems approach provides the core methodology of this course. It is complemented by other influences such as economic, historical, cultural, socio-political and scientific, to provide a holistic perspective on environmental issues. During the course, students will look at examples on a variety of scales, from local to global and in an international context." (IBO, 2014)

The course encourages the use of "big questions", as overarching conceptual frameworks to apply to units. The Big Question F *"In what ways might the solutions explored in this topic alter your predictions for the state of human so-*

cieties and the biosphere some decades from now?" (IBO, 2014), fits well with this unit and should be discussed throughout.

In EfS the approach is intended to be "doubly ecological" in both the traditional understanding of the term in Biology and the relational description described by Sterling (Stibbe, 2009, pp. 77-83). The field study is thought to promote holistic inquiry, through the use of nested flow diagram models and it is also seen as encouraging understanding complexity in the systems through "problem-based interdisciplinary learning modules" of Tomkinson (Stibbe, 2009, p. 167).

Use of Feedback to Encourage Engagement

Engagement in these learning activities should be ensured through effective feedback, as research has indicated a large effect size of 0.95 for this feature of educational design. An effect size of 1.0 indicates accelerated learning at about 50% above average, according to meta-analysis of 4,157 studies (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Effective feedback at four different levels is to be encouraged when teaching this unit, as summarised in table 1.

Feedback should be built in to the design of this unit in a nested structure e.g. (Refer to the table below) Ft for a fieldwork activity - likely to be direct and verbal, Fp by clear classroom explanation in advance, provision of suitable support materials and follow up with the write up. Fs will be in particular in regards to the quality of the report and how suitable it is for determining an IB level and Fe with the most relevance to the deeper EfS meaning of the whole trip. The use of the Yale survey technique (Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, 2013) before and afterwards could be useful and students could evaluate if their personal values have changed (see appendix 1). For Diploma students this represents an ideal opportunity to link to the Theory of Knowledge course.

Table 1: Feedback Levels for the Unit

Type of Feedback	Definition: What is it?	When should this be used?
Task Feedback **(Ft)**	How well tasks are understood or performed.	Classroom teaching for instruction on how to calculate carbon emissions and sequestering, and for fieldwork exercises.
Process Feedback **(Fp)**	The main processes needed to understand and inform tasks.	Ideally through plenary sessions and discussions to review the teaching and learning in the classroom, in the field and on return. Using the big question will help to ensure true understanding.
Self-regulatory **(Fs)**	Self-regulating and monitoring of tasks.	The whole sequence of teaching and overall purpose should be shared at the start of the unit, final assessment through a written report.
Personal evaluation **(Fe)**	Personal evaluations and reflection; this is about the learner.	Time for personal reflection is important here. Students can take the Yale survey before and after the unit (see text below).

Terms and Definitions from (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Student and Teacher Survey

To gauge understanding and awareness, a survey was carried out of students and teachers at this Bangkok Patana School using an online survey tool such as Survey Monkey (Survey Monkey, 2015). The survey link, questions and answers can be viewed in appendix 1. Participants were asked a range of questions designed to evaluate awareness of current climate change predictions and discussions, sea level rise and its causes, the perceived vulnerability of Bangkok to climate change and attitudes and responses towards climate change. Attitudes were briefly assessed using terms relating to the Yale survey. Additionally, a further 14 students took the full Yale survey as part of their Theory of Knowledge class and in Year 8. Fifty eight IB students and five teachers (mixed subject backgrounds including Biology, ESS, IT and Languages) participated in the survey.

The survey shows that most students and teachers declare that they are concerned or very concerned about climate changes, with almost 80% choosing concerned or cautious. Less than 10 percent declared they are doubtful or dismissive. Full Yale surveys carried out with students indicate that the skepticism seen in adult populations in the US (Leiserowitz, Maibach, & Roser-Renouf, 2010) and UK (Spence, Venables, Pidgeon, Poortinga, & Demski, 2010) is far lower than in the student body of this school.

Many students are aware of the climate change threat, but revealed some widespread misunderstanding of details. In terms of predicted warming the two degree threshold was widely accepted at Copenhagen as a target to avoid exceeding, though some scientists argue there should be a much lower target given the changes that are being observed in the arctic system at present, which are caused by under one degree of warming (see for example the presentations of the UNFCCC at Lima COP 20 (UNFCCC, 2014) or AMEGs website (AMEG, 2014). 43% of those surveyed agreed that two or under is the minimum acceptable. 12% suggest that 5 degrees of warming would be the limit for catastrophe, a temperature that could see the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheet collapse and the Arctic sea as warm as today's Mediterranean (Lynas, 2008), this dynamic thinning of land-based ice would cause sea level rise of up to 1400mm by 2100 according to the Potsdam Institute (Henson, 2011).

The causes of predicted sea level rise from the IPCC reports was widely given as due to melting arctic ice, a common misconception. Some students correctly identified thermal expansion as the more significant cause. In short, many students have grasped the idea that melting ice equals rising sea levels, but not the complexities. Given the uncertainties in predicted sea level, perhaps this is not surprising. There is greater scientific uncertainty about these projections than for the warming of the atmosphere (IPCC, 2013) and current research indicates that the projections have been underestimated (Connor, 2015). Most of the modeling in the IPCC reports is based on thermal expansion in AR4 IPCC 2007 - 180 -590mm by 2090-99 (compared to 1980-99 levels) (IPCC, 2007), which suggests that rapid ice loss from land could add 100-200 mm to the margins. Later, in AR5 glacial and ice cap melt is added to predictions which are now 52cm and 98cm by 2100 for the high emission scenarios (IPCC, 2013).

Aims and Objectives
Aims:

Engage students in hands-on field-based activities that can give direct experiential understanding of the ecosystems involved.

Consider how personal lifestyle choices are interdependent with an intact ecosystem.

Provide students with an example of how ecosystems may be vulnerable to climate change.

Show by example how protecting ecosystems can have potential for promoting both adaptation and mitigation responses to climate change.

Engage students in visioning exercises so that they consider various future scenarios for the future coastline.

Provide students with an opportunity to engage in climate change solutions through mitigation and adaptation.

Objectives:

   Use fieldwork techniques to look at the vulnerability of mangroves to climate change and sea level rise.

   Use quantitative techniques to estimate carbon sequestering in the ecosystems and emissions from transport.

   Use techniques to provide visions of a future system as influenced by climate change though the use of systems models, diagrams and tables.

   Provide students with opportunity to reduced carbon emissions through personal lifestyle choices (mitigation) or through tree planting (adaptation and mitigation).

For specific ESS objectives covered see the Bangkok Patana School 2015/16 Curriculum Guides.
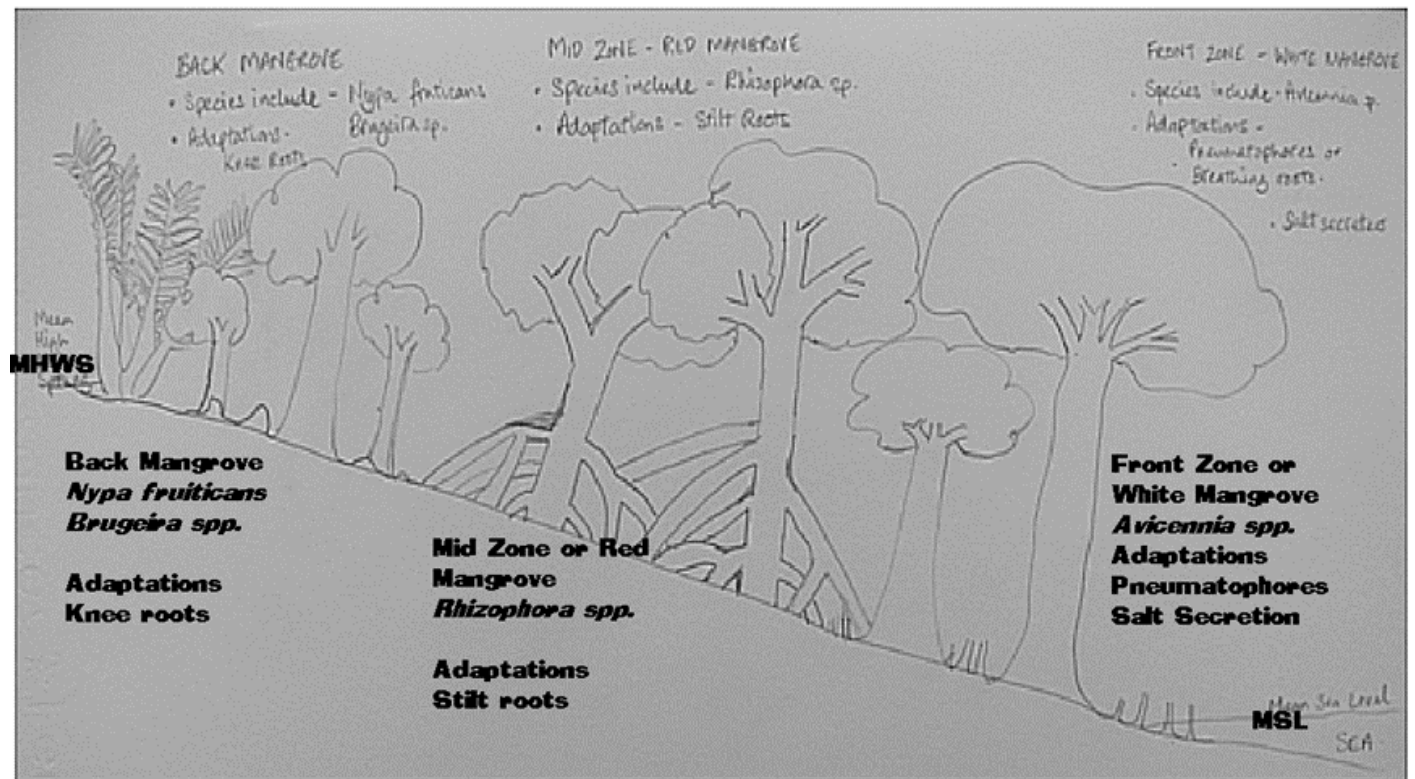
Defining the Context: Flow Diagrams, Drawings and Data Tables

Three flow diagrams, a sketch drawing and a table are presented here to model how mangrove forests may respond to sea level rise. There is an assumption that the kind of basic zonation pattern in mangroves is understood, and can be seen in the image here drawn from field observation at Bang Pu.

Image 1: Classic Mangrove Zonation Patterns (Note: Avicennia sp. and Rhizophora sp. may swap position depending on the conditions)

Emphasis should be given in the first diagram to the influence of sea walls, which trap sediment and freshwater. There are two consequent effects: one, it will stop the coastline deposition that allows mangrove to build seaward. Mangroves do not always grow out into the sea but only on pro-grading coastlines (Tomlinson, 1986). Furthermore the IUCN criteria for assessing site resilience rates sediment input highly (McLeod & Salm, 2006). Secondly the zonation pattern of the mangroves may be disrupted as the salinity is influenced, as brackish water species like Nypah palm migrate towards the wall. This can be seen at Bang Pu, based on personal observations. If this is taking place in small fragmented sites, like Bang Pu, this could cause mangrove tree species extirpation with no prospect for

Flow diagram 1: Showing Potential Mangrove Ecosystem Responses to Climate Change and Sea Level Rise
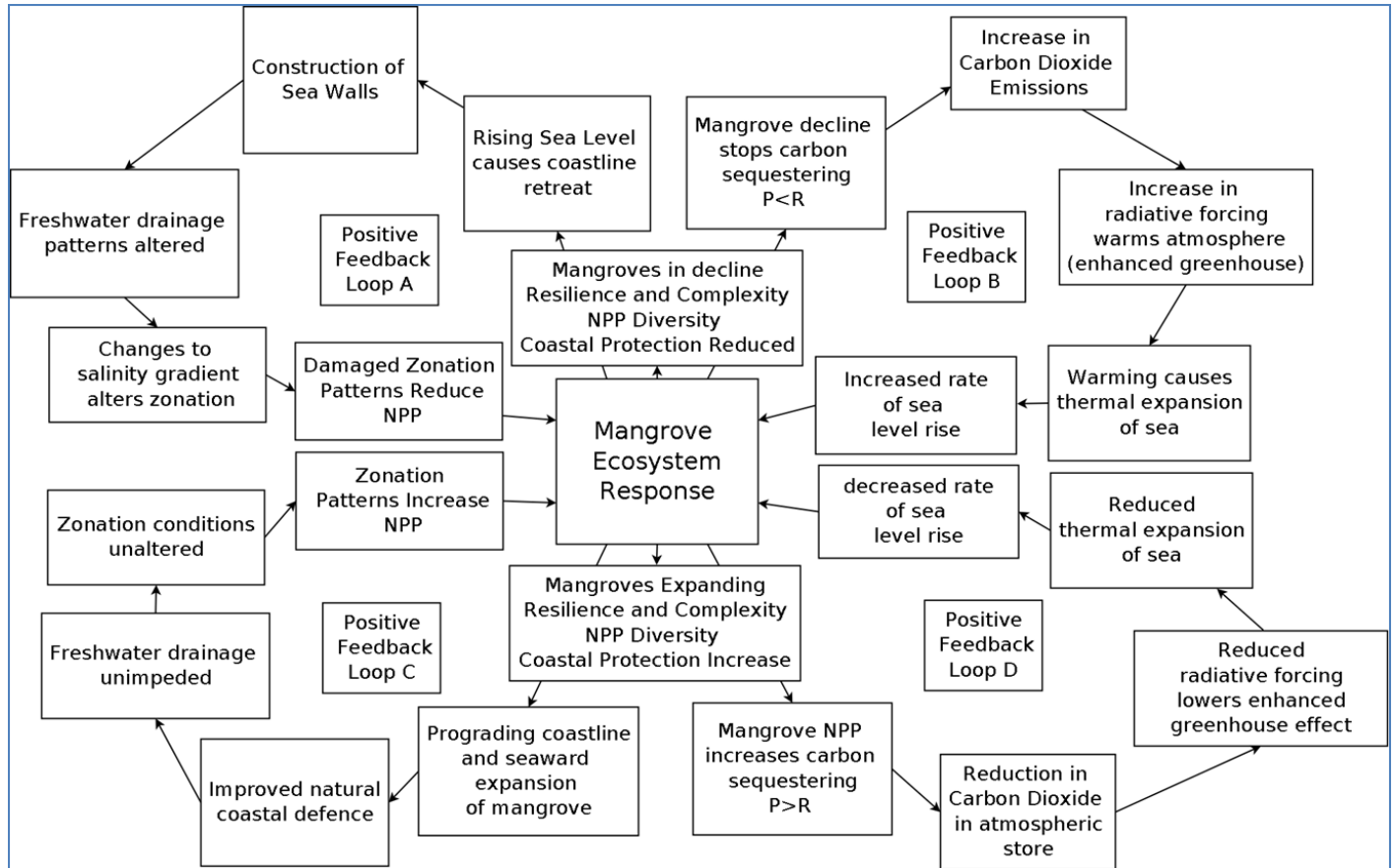
Flow Diagram 2: Showing Some Features of Ecosystem Interdependence in the Coastal Zone of the Gulf of Thailand
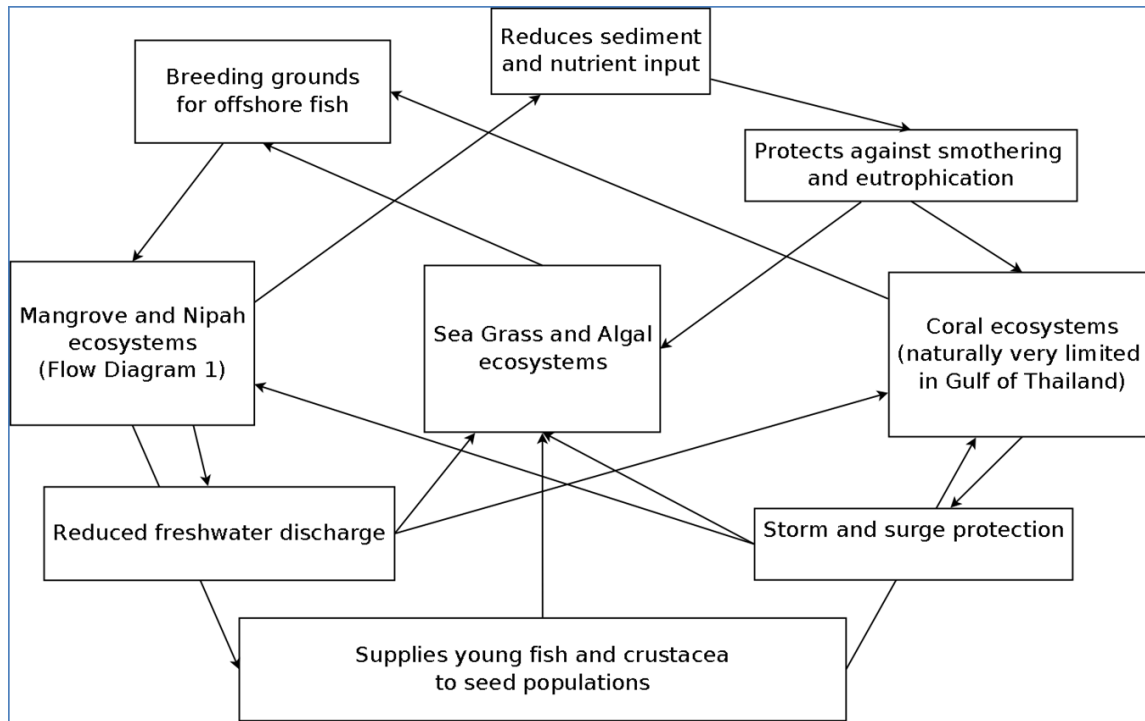
Flow Diagram 3: Showing Some Features of Ecosystem and Society Interdependence in the Coastal Zone of the Gulf of Thailand
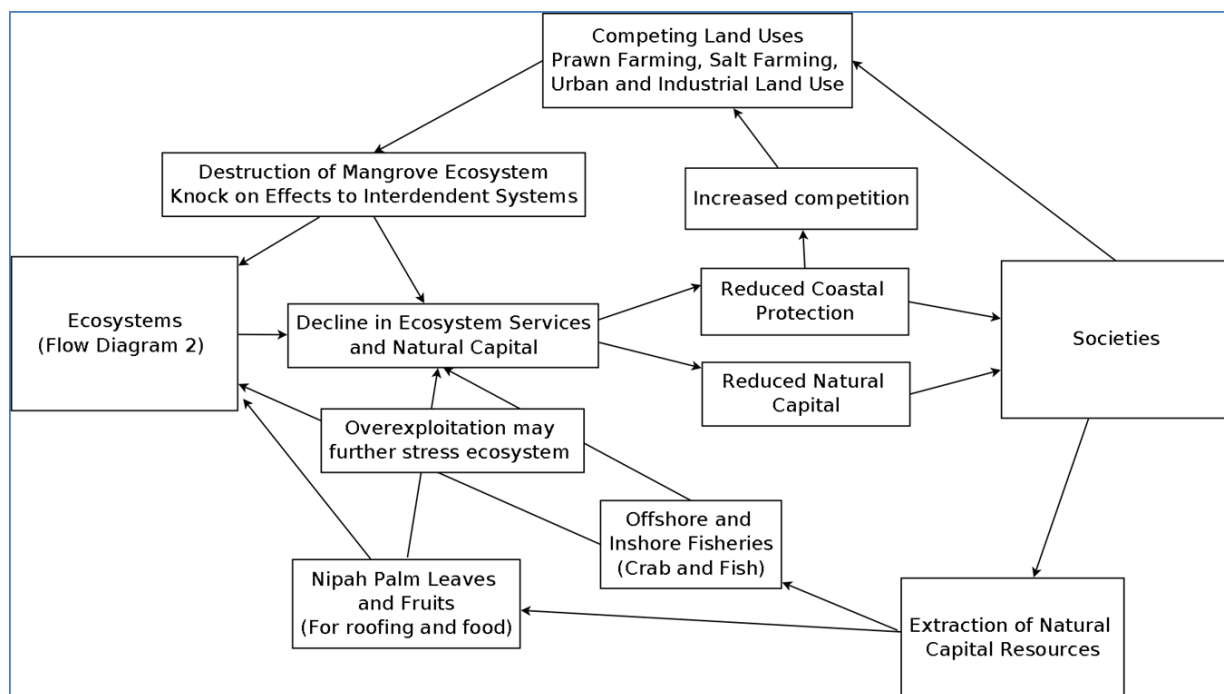
Table 2: Solutions, Targets and Consequences: Some Background Data for Discussions

	Data from Antarctic Ice Cores, from previous 650,000 years			**Values of CO2 measured at Mauna Loa, Hawaii**			**By 2030 - Targets (To achieve these levels most industrial countries will require a reduction in CO2e emissions of 85%-95%** (Monbiot, 2007)**)**			**IPCC future scenarios** (IPCC, Climate Change 2007: The physical science basis, March 2007) **By 2100** *Note this has now in AR5 the upper limit has increased to 0.98m.*				
	Glacial Minimum	Inter-glacial Maximum	Pre-industrial	1959	1990	present				B1	A1T	A1B	A2	A1F1
Warming in Degrees Centi-	-8.5	3.6	0	0.2		0.6	<2.0	2.0	>3	1.8	2.4	2.8	3.4	4.0
ppm CO_2 [2]	180	300	280	316	354	404	400[3]	450 (Stern, 2006, Oct)	550	600	700	850	1250	1500
Sea Level Rise(m)		4-5m								0.28	0.32	0.35	0.37	0.43
Carbon Emission Level GtC						670								

[1] Warming increases are given for 2090 related to 1990

[2] ppm (parts per million) or ppb (parts per billion, 1 billion = 1,000 million) is the ratio of the number of greenhouse gas molecules to the total number of
molecules of dry air. For example: 300 ppm means 300 molecules of a greenhouse gas per million molecules of dry air.

[3] Potsdam Institute calculates a 90% chance of keeping warming below 2^0C if CO_2 kept under this (Monbiot, 2007)

Proposed Teaching Programme

Classroom Preparation

By the way of introductory lessons to the unit, students need to be introduced to the context of the study through the diagrams above.

Use techniques to provide visions of a future system as influenced by climate change though the use of systems models, diagrams and tables

There is an assumption that students have covered zonation in advance and can recognise this pattern in the mangroves, as mangrove trees have species-specific root zone adaptations and the zonation patterns are quite conspicuous, though often varied. Consideration should be given to the causes and uncertainties in the sea level predictions presented in the table. Further discussion of this can be found in the IPCC reports, newspaper articles or good introductory texts (Pearce, 2002) or (Henson, 2011). A simple demonstration showing the lack of direct sea level rise due to melting sea ice can be shown as a lab model of melting ice in a beaker with the height of water indicated. However, this should not be left there, as it may give the impression that arctic ice melt does not have serious consequences. Secondary impacts such as methane release and disruption to the tri-cellular model and the oceanic conveyor should be considered; see for example (Henson, 2011) (UNFCCC, 2014).

Following this introduction to the context, there are two further parts to the pre-fieldwork teaching activities; this can start with a personal consideration of transport emissions in day-to-day life in Bangkok, with a comparison to secondary data for mangrove forests.

Use quantitative techniques to estimate carbon sequestering in the ecosystems and emissions from transport

Transport Emissions

Students need to record all the usual transport that they use in Bangkok during an average school day, in kilometres. Access to Google Maps (Google, 2015) is an ideal way to calculate this. Student journeys are likely to include the following: private cars, motorbikes, minibuses, skytrain, taxis, tuk-tuks. Weekly emissions can then be converted to carbon dioxide emissions using the following adjustment factors, either by hand or by entering data into a spreadsheet for the class.

Table 3 Fuel Emission Factors
Estimates are based on various sources (Nilrit & Sampanpanish, 2012), (Monbiot, 2007).

	Vehicle emission in grams per km.	Calculations assuming there are additional passengers for public transport.*	Estimated Emission Factor Grams of Carbon Dioxide per passenger kilometer
Skytrain or MRT		NA	20
Buses	1200	30	40
LPG Taxi	150	Divide according	150
Motobike Taxi	40	To no. of	40
Pick Up or Van	300	passengers	300
SUV/Cars	175		175
Tuk Tuks	75		75

*Note if you are taking a motorbike taxi, tuk tuk or taxi, this does not count as shared. If you have a driver who is

driving only for you, then you need to also include the return journey and cannot share the emissions.

Students can then convert their daily rate average to a yearly rate, to compare to mangrove sequestering. Here is a basic calculation as an example: a student is dropped off by his parent at school each day over two kilometres in a private car, including the return journey:

2 x 175 = 350 kg C

To average this for one year of 180 school days:

350 x 180=63000 kg C per school year

Students could assume other days are similar, or adjust for recreational trips in weekends and holidays, and add in long-haul flights. Considerable extension could be made into including electricity usage, using bills and suitable conversion factors. But for a simple worked example we can assume every day is the same.

350 x 365 =122750 kg C per year

Carbon Sequestering in Mangroves

Students can now look at their carbon emissions from transport in terms of mangrove forest storage. A variety of figures can be found for calculating mangrove storage rates of carbon. There is a good review of figures in Bouillon et al., 2008. Kilograms of carbon storage estimates which vary considerably depending on the type and quality of the mangrove stand; I suggest using a figure of 1.5 kg/m^2. Online data on carbon storage in mangroves is found in many different units, which need to be converted to kg/m^2 to be of use to offset the above. So it would be easier to use one figure, though this can be discussed and evaluated by the students.

So in our worked example, how much mangrove would be required to offset this? The original emissions figure can be divided by the areas of mangrove required, for example:

122750 kg C emissions
Can be offset by 122750/1.5 = 81833 m^2 or 0.08 km^2 needed

Students can then discuss this in the context of offsetting emissions from their lives, Bangkok or the country as a whole and consider this in relation to the conclusion.

Fieldwork

Use fieldwork techniques to look at the vulnerability of mangroves to climate change and sea level rise.

Orientation

Students will need orientating to the location of the site, for example the Bang Pu Nature Reserve in Samut Prakarn. They should explore where the site is in relation to their school and the hinterland around the mangroves using programmes like Google Maps (Google, 2015) or through worksheets (available from the author).

On-site Orientation

Students need orientating to the site features of relevance by the teacher or a competent student leader; for example - a few species, site history, the coastal defences (if present), observations of surrounding land use. To help with understanding the nature of change in such a site, ask students to imagine how it looked in the past, during the most recent ice age and the previous interglacial (see figures in table 2), before the second world war, at the end of 2100.

Field Exercise 1

Students are taken on a guided walk and look for evidence of root shape or species changes at around 5m intervals. Take photographs or sketch the pattern observed. The exercises that follow are best carried out in small groups of

three or four. Students then complete field exercises 2-4 using provided worksheets.

Field Exercise 2: Questions
Students answer questions in relation to the sites fragmentation and natural resilience.

Field Exercise 3: Assessing Human Impacts
Students rank human impacts on the site in a table, from their own perspective.

Field Exercise 4: Assessing Vulnerability to Climate Change
Students use IUCN criteria to assess the vulnerability to climate change at the site.

Concluding and Evaluating Thoughts
Provide students with opportunity to reduced carbon emissions through personal lifestyle choices (mitigation) or through tree planting (adaptation and mitigation)

On return from the field, a plenary lesson should be used to follow up and discuss the findings through open questions and answers to discuss the objective above. Bringing in personal context is a useful way to build the storyline here, for example much of the forest that protects Bangkok in the areas south of Phra Samut Chedi is accessible by canoe, which I have recently done. There is considerable encroachment on the forest for housing, and this has exposed sections of the mangrove to wind throw. This area includes some of Bangkok's poorer communities and the unplanned development that is making them and the city even more vulnerable to climate change (Panya Consultants, 2009). Teachers can encourage students to consider the impacts on the wider community, with a range of additional benefits of restoring degraded mangrove and swamp forests brought in. Return to the nested systems diagrams and sea level rise predictions and discuss questions:

What seems likely in relation to the IPCC scenarios in Table 2?

How likely is a sudden catastrophic rise due to an unpredicted event or tipping point?

Which is better preparation, to restore the mangroves or build a sea wall?

What is the best course of action?

It may be useful to consult guidance on how to discuss climate change best, such as the principles researched by Futerra (Futerra, 2005). I will extract just one here: "Don't create fear without agency".

Students need to prepare a final report and presentation. As part of the final report and in accordance with the new ESS curriculum, the students should propose a solution to the issues discussed in this unit. Task feedback methods can be used, to check on progress along clear protocols established in advance. Task feedback should include follow up to ensure that students have all the necessary information from the field study and class work. The process feedback elements can be followed up through concept checking, which can be done in small groups, or during the presentations. Self-regulatory feedback is very useful for considering the value of the whole unit, and students can be provided with rubrics or writing frames to help structure this if necessary. Students need to develop inquiry skills and develop some personal engagement for their own design of investigation that will be assessed for the final grade in ESS.

For personal evaluation and reflection, students need time to consider the implications of the study. It may be useful for the teacher to have some of this shared with them, for example through an evaluation form. The students consider sustainability options and suggest future pathways; they are encouraged to engage in these and to reflect critically on the impact of these future visions on their own lives and in the context of the big question. More practically students can be provided with an opportunity to carry out their solution, as part of their personal Creativity, Action, Service requirements for the IB diploma.

At the outset, the students were presented with the Big Question "F", to which they should now return for their presentations:
 In what ways might the solutions explored in this topic alter your predictions for the state of human societies and the biosphere some decades from now?"

Discussions of future visions may be useful, combined with discussing any changes to values and attitudes that may come about, though there should be no expectation of this as values and attitudes may not have shifted due to the study. Based on my own teaching experience of the last 20 years, attitudes are slow to change. As Futerra points out, information cannot change values and attitudes alone (Futerra, 2005). Furthermore, as Klein has written, they may not change at all if they conflict with many other elements of an individual's world view (Klein, 2014). The real evaluation of the teaching and learning success of this unit then, is how well they have achieved an answer to the big question, through their writing or presentations.

Appendix 1 –Student and Teacher Survey

The original survey can be accessed at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/S3RYPBV
Based on results from 58 Year 12 students and 5 teachers, surveyed in January 2015.
Q 2 - How many degrees of warming would you consider globally catastrophic for human civilisation?
Q 3. How many degrees of warming would you consider most likely by 2065?
Q 4. What would you say is your main source(s) for your opinions given above?

Q2-3 Responses

Temperature Increase in degrees Celsius	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	Q4 Responses
% Response to Q2	0	4.5	4.5	9	25	12	21	3	4	4	12	
% Response to Q3	0	4	9	7	9	9	26	7	7	6	15	

Sources of information given as:	% Responses (more than one allowed)
IPCC	5
Classes (Including ESS, Biology, Economics and Geography)	20
Newspapers/Magazines	30
Internet	75
Social Media	41
Academic Journals	18
Other (TV documentaries)	12

Q5 According to the intergovernmental panel on climate change's Fifth Assessment Report (IPCC 2013) sea level rise is predicted to be in the range of 0.17m to 0.38m by 2065. Which of the following would you consider the most significant cause of this predicted sea level rise?

Q5 responses

Cause of Sea Level Rise (as predicted in AR5 of IPCC)	% Responses
Melting Arctic Sea Ice	43
Thermal Expansion of the Oceans	13
Melting of land based glaciers and ice caps	30
Sudden collapse of the Greenland Ice Cap	9
Sudden collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Shelf	4

Q6 What would be the minimum level of sea level rise likely to inundate over half of Bangkok? (That would include your school being permanently under water)
Q6 responses

Sea Level Rise in metres										
0.5m	**1.0m**	**1.5m**	**2.0m**	**2.5m**	**3.0m**	**3.5m**	**4.0m**	**4.5m**	**5.0m**	
% Responses	1	7	15	19	15	22	6	4	3	6

Q7 When would you think the above is most likely to happen without further coastal defence?
Q7 responses

Answer Choices –	% Responses
2030-9	19
2040-9	16
2050-9	9
2060-9	18
2070-9	10
2080-9	9
2090-9	12
Never	7

Q8 Which of the following would be your priority to guard against sea level rise?
Q8 responses

Answer Choices	% Responses
Build a large sea wall with pumps	22
Other forms of coastal defence	13
Plant mangrove forests	49
Managed retreat (relocated flooded areas in-land)	15

Q9 Which of the following would you consider the most effective way for you to personally respond to the threat of climate change here in Bangkok?
Q9 responses

Action Chosen	Reduce emissions from electricity consumption	Reduce emissions from personal transport	Encourage mangrove restoration	Encourage forest restoration elsewhere e.g. Khao Yai	Do nothing	Other
% Responses	31	28	25	13	1.5	1.5

Q10 How would you describe your attitude towards climate change? These categories are based on the Yale Survey, if you interested you can take the survey on this link.
Q10 responses

Answer Choices	% Responses
Alarmed	1.5
Concerned	43
Cautious	38
Disengaged	9
Doubtful	6
Dismissive	3

Full Yale Surveys of Bangkok Patana Students

%	USA according to Yale	8M survey	8P Survey	TOK Class 2014
Alarmed	16	33	10	0
Concerned	27	43	30	57
Cautious	23	24	50	36
Disengaged	5	0	10	7
Doubtful	12	0	0	0
Dismissive	15	0	0	0

(Year 12 TOK and Year 8 during the climate change connect in 2014)

Appendix 2 - List of Abbreviations and Acronyms Used in this Report

EfS - Education for Sustainability
ESD - Education for Sustainable Development
ESS - Environmental systems and societies
IBO - International Baccalaureate Organisation
IBDP - International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature
SLR – Sea Level Rise
BMA – Bangkok Metropolitan Authority
IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
AR4 – Assessment Report Four on the Physical Science (IPCC)
AR5 – Assessment Report Five on the Physical Science (IPCC)
UNFCC - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Ft - Task Feedback
Fp - Process Feedback
Fs - Self regulatory Feedback
Fe - Personal evaluation

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What is Meant by 'Democratic Leadership' in Education? To what Extent has it Developed in the Secondary School of Bangkok Patana School from 2012-2014?

Mick Smith
Secondary Principal, Bangkok Patana School

My interest in democratic leadership was stimulated by discussions regarding the purpose of Key Stage 3 here at Bangkok Patana School as far back as 2010/11, which focused on consideration of our responsibility to help shape what young people would 'be' in their future adult lives, rather than 'simply' what they would 'know' or be able 'to do'. Wide reading enabled me to see the connections between this interest in helping our students become active, ethical participants in the societies of the future, and providing more opportunities for democratic practice here in school. This article can be seen as a summary of aspects of my recent Masters dissertation in this area.

School Context

In a highly competitive market, Bangkok Patana is promoted as having a strong British ethos, highly academic but caring and with strong sports and arts programmes. British and Thai families account for over 40% of the population that comprises over sixty nationalities. What does democracy mean here and how can our interpretation of it secure the endorsement of such a diverse community? We aim to unite our community through a clearly stated and shared educational vision. (Strike 2000p624 in Haydon 2007p 95):

Our mission is to ensure that students of different nationalities grow to their full potential as independent learners in a caring British, international school community.

Individual families may interpret 'fulfilling potential', the everyday distillation of the Mission, in different ways. For many 'potential' relates primarily to academic attainment and rigour in achieving this is a feature of 'Britishness'. Pastoral care and values development may be important but not to the detriment of access to top universities. (Wylie 2008). Ensuring that these 'essentials' are met while providing a broader, democratic interpretation of the Mission developing capability for students to play full, ethical and positive roles in wider communities, is a challenge. (Haydon 2007).

Literature Review

Earlier research into democratic education unearthed a field where there is debate regarding what democracy in education actually means. (Woods, 2004, 2005; Fielding, 2011, Fielding & Moss, 2011; Fullan, 2011; Hayden, 1995, Apple, 2005).

In a school, is it concerned with how widely leadership is distributed and where boundaries within are placed?
Should the focus be on staff and students or the wider community?
What role do existing leaders take and how much control should they retain?
What might the purposes of greater democratisation be?
Should it aim to 'improve' the school?
Is it more concerned with the nature of democracy in a much broader sense, aiming to develop positive and participatory future citizens?
What might constrain schools from becoming more democratic?
What might the benefits of democratisation in schools be and how could they be measured?

Mick Smith

What is Meant by 'Democratic Leadership' in Education? To what Extent has it Developed in the Secondary School of Bangkok Patana School from 2012-2014?

How might greater democratisation be implemented?

This was used to identify pre-existing features of democratic leadership in the Secondary School and became a starting point for an investigation into whether greater democratisation took place between 2012 and 2014. These features were:

1. In general terms, the school is aligned through its mission with broad democratic values.
2. There is considerable distributed leadership amongst staff but only pockets where this may be considered genuinely democratic.
3. Students have considerable voice and are consulted, but have limited opportunities to be involved in actual decision making.
4. Further democratisation may benefit the community but may not be seen as organisationally important.
5. The International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile may be useful to describe personal attributes representing democratic values, and may provide a means to evaluate their development in the student body.

As Principal, I had an understanding of school culture, of some obstacles to further democratisation and of the areas that I could impact upon with regards to democracy-creating opportunities (Woods 2004) but questions remained:

What really constitutes democratisation in a school?
Is democracy compromised if it rides on the back of, or is part of, a drive for school improvement?
How do we know when a school has become democratic?
How do we know if it has a positive impact on student learning and on the school?

There are two approaches to democratic leadership in education. The first focuses only on a widening distribution of leadership functions as the capacity of teachers for greater leadership is encouraged and developed. The second includes this but is concerned with broad principles of social justice, equality, citizenship, and understanding that each community member has a responsibility to actively and positively contribute to it. Woods (2005) creates a democratic framework and draws a very clear line in the sand with regards to what exactly constitutes, in his view, genuine democratisation in education. Fielding and Moss (2011) offer a more practical but equally radical interpretation of how more democratic leadership in schools is necessary to transform both student learning and society more widely.

What is Democracy in Education?

Hayden (2005) states that democracy should be viewed as not just a political concept but as a socio-cultural one. San Antonio (2008 p. 43-44) draws upon Fullan (2008) and Starratt (2001) in accepting a definition based upon fundamental values of equality and respect where democratic leadership grants greater empowerment for the whole school community in an environment of trust, honesty, openness and compassion.

Woods (2006) also urges school leaders to nurture a positive atmosphere of 'constructive dissent' where all are free to challenge policies and procedure while Davies (1999) encourages 'dissensus' to fuel change and perhaps push a school to 'the edge of chaos'. This wouldn't be popular at Bangkok Patana but we would welcome the belief that "deep democracy is about the ever-present possibility of change with students in the forefront."(Davies, 1999 p.19). Fielding and Moss (2011 p. 42) state that "Democracy can also be understood...as a way of thinking, being and acting, of relating and living together", whereas Woods believes it is about "liberty, belonging, growth towards true potential as human beings."

Mick Smith

What is Meant by 'Democratic Leadership' in Education? To what Extent has it Developed in the Secondary School of Bangkok Patana School from 2012-2014?

Referring to the UK, Woods discusses how economic circumstances deny many the opportunity to reach their potential making social justice central to developmental democracy (2005 p. 9). At Patana this is not the case. However, although the socio-economic baseline is high, there are still significant socio-economic disparities, especially towards the upper end, sometimes presenting challenges for teachers and leaders. Fielding (2009 p. 498) challenges (British) schools to be more radical and genuinely democratic rather than hoping that young people will somehow acquire democracy later in life. Bottery (2000 p. 226) believes that UK teachers have recently 'de-professionalised' in terms of their wider role of developing young adults into participants in society. Do we do enough at Patana to overtly develop the attributes that we hope our graduates will leave us with?

Fielding and Moss (2011 p. 134) make a compelling case for the kind of school that they would like to see where there are:

> …democratically agreed values and ethics, collective choices, values that attach importance to justice, solidarity, experimentation and democracy; and ethics that are 'non-denominational' and relational, foregrounding care and respect for diversity, and developing the capacity for all members of the community to make responsible, contextualised ethical judgements."

Why Should we Seek to Enhance Democracy in Schools?

Fielding and Moss (2011 p. 18) through their study of two radically democratic schools - Reggio Emilia in Italy and St. George's in post-World War London - argue that genuinely democratic schools can make a strong contribution to a wider democratic society. They believe that current UK priorities on competition and measurement are reducing education to a 'technical practice'. Their language is emotive and strident but their argument is nonetheless compelling… (a) "dangerous shift in our very idea of democracy…from 'thick' collective forms to 'thin' consumer driven and overly individualistic forms." Biesta and Lawy (2006) and Ranson and Martin (1997) agree that the UK lost its post-war (WWII) focus on social justice by the 1980s and since then, democratic citizenship, including in schools, has been based on the primacy of the individual rather than the collective. They consider that young people need to experience democracy in context to understand it, to learn through practice, identifying issues, discussing and acting on them to develop their democratic decision-making through constant review.

This raised a concern that our students may not grow into democratic citizens because they feel disconnected and that they don't belong to any one culture or society. If we want students to feel responsibility to participate then we need to help them to see a connection with their own citizenship. (Biesta and Lawy) Bottery (2000 p. 220) adds that students should be engaged in learning '*fo*r rather than *about* citizenship' to contribute actively as adults.

Referring to international schools, George Walker, former Director General of the IBO (in Bunnell, 2006 p. 158), asserts that they should aim to develop 'tolerance, compassionate thinking and understanding'. Phillips (2002, in Bunnell 2005) refers to a striving for 'international humanism'. Within an international school environment finding these shared values to develop *cosmopolitan (global)* citizens is necessary due to the nature of our community. The challenge for Patana and similar schools is in encouraging our students to be active, *republican* (Miller 2000 p. 82) participants in spreading democratic values in the wider, international community.

How can Further Democratisation be Encouraged?

Woods encourages schools to create "…an environment in which people are active contributors to the creation of the institutions, culture and relationships they inhabit…" where anyone who is affected by a decision has a right to participate in it. (Woods, 2005 p. 13). This is challenging but the dispersal of leadership to genuinely share power rather than merely consult is fundamental to greater democratisation. Empowering the community to actively par-

Mick Smith

What is Meant by 'Democratic Leadership' in Education? To what Extent has it Developed in the Secondary School of Bangkok Patana School from 2012-2014?

ticipate in debate and dialogue may require 'democracy creation' by established leaders to act as a stimulus emphasising dampening of power differences. Once conditions are in place 'democracy-doing' can begin to take place beyond traditional leaders. (Woods, 2005, xviii). Fielding and Moss (2011 p. 141) offer a practical roadmap for how this can be achieved: *Desirability* –what are the ethics, values and goals; *Viability* –what would work; and *Achievability* –how do we actually get something done?

Frost (2011 p. 869) focuses on capacity building within the student body through wider distribution of leadership to improve schools. He refers to two large-scale UK research projects where teachers and students collaborated to encourage greater student involvement in their learning.

Curriculum

Fielding and Moss seek to oppose fixed knowledge and propose a more dynamic, interpretation-based model. They refer to Biesta and Osberg's idea that "knowledge is not something already established … transferred from teacher to student, but … is 'inventionalistic'." (2007 in Fielding & Moss, 2011 p.25); and to Dewey (1939) for the 'indeterminacy of education', and agree with what Davies (1999p23) describes as 'unfinished knowledge'. They desire broad education rather than compartmentalisation of knowledge to enable students to collaborate to co-construct meaning in relation with each other and their teachers. (Fielding & Moss, 2011 p. 81).

What Role should Senior Leaders Play in Encouraging Democratisation?

How much can senior leaders realistically be expected to deliberately 'back away from power' or 'shed status' (Trafford 2003 p. 64, in Woods 2005 p. 107). Woods (2005) believes they can by aiming for high trust relationships where all who share in initiative through collective effort contribute to democratic leadership. It could be challenging though to prevent either manipulation or tokenism as leaders may not stand by and see changes introduced to which they are not committed. Significant cultural shifts will take time and progress unsteadily but small actions by senior leaders can gradually leave an accumulation of significant organisational footprints.

Fullan (2011 p. 108) quotes Leithwood et al (2004) stating that "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on learning" (2008 p. 69) so clearly senior leaders can play a major role. However, Hallinger and Heck's (2010) analysis of the low impact of collaborative leadership initiatives (including staff and students) on student learning highlights the need to ensure that planned changes actually make it to classroom level once agreed.

What Factors may Hinder Democracy?

School Size

Fielding and Moss (2011 p. 94) describe large schools (such as Bangkok Patana) as 'forever and inevitably compromised' being too large to retain a focus on community, and genuine relationships. Smaller school activities such as the weekly General Meeting of the whole school at Summerhill (UK), recognised as more valuable than a week's curriculum of school subjects (Fielding, 2009 p. 498) simply aren't practical in large schools.

Parental Expectations

International school parents expect an academic focus and may be less concerned that measuring students academically only prepares them for an unfair labour market. (Fielding and Moss, 2011 p. 129). A private, international school such as Bangkok Patana is undemocratic by its very existence. A concern for all democratically-minded international schools is that they may simply perpetuate the status quo of wealthy home nation elites and privileged

Mick Smith

What is Meant by 'Democratic Leadership' in Education? To what Extent has it Developed in the Secondary School of Bangkok Patana School from 2012-2014?

expatriates. (Hallinan, 2004 in Bunnell, 2006 p. 167). Woods (2005 p. 44) may rail against the forces of modernity being undemocratic but many international school parents count themselves among the 'forces of modernity' and hope that their children follow in their footsteps.

Existing Culture and Potential Instrumentalism

Woods (2005 p. 103) emphasises the importance of trust in building strong, collaborative relationships. This challenges international schools where contracts are generally fixed, and where teachers tend to move more often anyway. Fielding (2011) and Woods (2005) warn of the non-democratic nature of schools which may seek student and staff feedback but make changes only for instrumental purposes of seeking to improve their market position. Schools may consider whether instrumentalism that actually benefits learning is problematic but Fielding (2011 p. 64) is scathing of 'benign intentions' (that) may manipulate students' views into meeting organisational goals.

Teachers and existing leaders may not be in favour of more democratic change. Leaders may feel threatened or believe that strong, directed leadership is crucial. Teachers may believe that leaders should lead. Teachers may also question the benefits to learning of greater democracy. Parents and governors may prefer hierarchical leadership for clarity of direction. (Woods, 2005 p. 78-80).

Summary of Literature Review

There is an argument for further democratisation in schools where, if students are expected to become participatory, ethical citizens in future societies then they should experience this during their school education. Additionally, schools should endeavour to provide wider opportunities for democratic leadership for all community members with regards to participation in decision-making. Central to this is the philosophy behind the school, the idea that holistic development of students and staff along broadly democratic and ethical lines must be paramount if democratic change is to take place. Schools and established leaders should avoid instrumentalism or manipulation of their community for school improvement under the guise of greater democratisation.

However, would this hardline stance aiming at 'pure' democracy actually prove untenable in the reality of a private, competitive, international school? Does there have to be tension between school improvement and a democratic ideal, especially if moving towards a more democratic stance is part of that school improvement?

Methodology

Following the literature review, the most obvious area to examine through the lens of democratic leadership was the review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum and the changes that were being implemented. This involved:

1. Observing the process of planning and implementation of specific initiatives aimed at promoting more democratisation.
2. Evaluating the success of specific initiatives and whether they had advanced democratisation of leadership and practices by April 2014.

With regards to Key Stage 3, Heads of Faculty supported a review of the academic curriculum understanding that recommendations may be for sweeping changes, significant 'tweaks', or more cosmetic adjustments. Additionally, the Secondary Leadership Team (SecLT) wanted closer connection between the Secondary School Values, the IB Learner Profile which needed more prominence, and the school-wide mission of 'fulfilling potential'. This stimulated wide discussion into what we hoped our students would **be** (attributes) alongside what students would **know**

Mick Smith

What is Meant by 'Democratic Leadership' in Education? To what Extent has it Developed in the Secondary School of Bangkok Patana School from 2012-2014?

(knowledge) and what they would be able to **do** (skills) in the future. In May 2011 SecLT agreed the following:

1. To pilot a cross-curricular six week 'Balance' unit for Year 7, produced by the International Middle Years Curriculum, where students would work collaboratively on a big question after considering it in each subject area.

To use this as a stimulus for a broad review of Key Stage 3 based around the triangle of attributes, skills and knowledge.

To consider how the IBLP could be used more effectively to contribute to this.

This provided potential for more democratic leadership by handing much of the responsibility to staff. A Key Stage 3 Review Team of a Senior Teacher and two newly-created middle leader 'B' posts led the process, asking colleagues to trial and feedback on pilots, to join Development Groups examining various areas of school life, and driving the redesign of subject Schemes of Learning (SOLs). 'Interference' from SecLT, and especially from myself as Principal, was to be minimal while retaining ultimate responsibility for outcomes.

Initial recommendations were produced in March 2013 following the pilot study with Year 7. The concept of a 'feedback loop' (Denscombe, 2007 in Belln 2010 p. 7) or 'spiral of steps' (Thomas, 2009p113) enabled ideas for change to be implemented and evaluated before beginning the cycle again throughout the review.

Consideration of my own position was important in terms of emphasising my role as researcher rather than Principal. However, the desire for further democratisation in the Secondary School came from my interpretation of the Mission; a wish to build capacity among staff; to enhance the learning experience of the students, and my general alignment with views supporting democratisation in education. From a democratic perspective this could easily slip into manipulation or instrumentalism. (Woods, 2005). Being directly responsible to the Head of School for 'results' also made 'democracy creation' a challenge.

Working closely with the Key Stage 3 Review team and specific middle leaders whom I directly line manage meant that I was at least able to receive direct feedback, listen to concerns and support problem solving where possible. In conclusion, I tried wherever possible to reduce three areas of potential conflict: the requirements of my institutional role in overseeing the process, my personal wish to have an input, and the wider aim of empowering colleagues to take on more leadership. Of course, this wasn't always possible.

Ethical considerations were particularly important given my school role as school principal. It was made clear to colleagues that participation in the questionnaire and interviews of September/ October 2013 was voluntary and for academic purposes, though insights gleaned may be used (anonymously) to inform further developments. Teachers were not to be 'judged' on comments and there could be no recriminations afterwards. (Bell, 2010). Additional questionnaires were also conducted by the Key Stage 3 Review Team at the end of each pilot, in March 2013 (Balance) and February 2014 (the Wider Learning Opportunities or WLOs).

Summary of Results of Questionnaires Following the Balance Unit (March 2013)

There was support for a greater emphasis on connectivity, for student interdependence to solve problems, and for increased independent learning. Parents clearly did not want to weaken the curriculum. Staff were concerned that the pilot forced artificial links, was too abstract and required as yet undeveloped student skills, in addition to high demands in terms of planning and implementation of cross-curricular collaboration. Key recommendations from the Key Stage 3 Review Team were:

Mick Smith

What is Meant by 'Democratic Leadership' in Education? To what Extent has it Developed in the Secondary School of Bangkok Patana School from 2012-2014?

- Connected learning projects (Wider Learning Opportunities or WLOs) should be created with an agreed format, focus and duration.
- Time for co-planning of the curriculum needed prioritising.
- Improvement of parental communication was necessary.
- Greater clarity of purpose required for students regarding the nature and purpose of projects.
- Encouragement of wider discussions on overall purpose of education.
- Student feedback on curriculum should be more actively sought.
- Creation of a single format for all Schemes of Learning (SOLs) to enable staff to see a holistic picture of student learning.
- A variety of ways of learning including connections to real life, open-ended learning, creativity, collaboration, physical learning and solutions oriented-learning should be incorporated into Key Stage 3.

Reporting and assessment of Key Stage 3 should be further reviewed to support these developments.

As a Result the Following were Introduced for 2013-14:

- Creation of Development Groups to encourage staff leadership and enhance cross-curricular collaboration especially pertaining to Key Stage 3.
- New SOLs to be completed for phased implementation starting with Year 7 in Term 2 2013/14. Heads of Faculties to agree the framework including reference to big questions, development of IBLP attributes and appropriate cross-curricular links.
- Preparation of less abstract, less subject areas WLOs for Year 7 and 8 during 2013-14 ending with a 'connected' off-timetable student collaborative response to the big question.
- A Learning to Learn course should be introduced for Year 7 students (led by one of the Key Stage 3 Review Team through a Development Group) focusing on developing a skillset and mindset to support learning closely aligned with the attributes of the IBLP.
- Development of a new reporting system for 2014/15 to reflect these changes.

Summary of Results of the Questionnaire of September 2013

Teachers felt involved in the Key Stage 3 Review thus far, tempered by some fear of instrumentalism in the form of a leadership 'masterplan'. There was wide agreement that developing democratic values were an important part of a teacher's role but concern that the school didn't feel democratic to some. Overall, along with the recommendations from the March 2013 feedback, the evidence showed general support for more democratic change during 2013/14. The interviews that followed were designed to develop and clarify these responses further.

Summary of Interviews with Staff in October 2013

The interviews provided mixed feedback on broadening democratic leadership and development of wider democratic values in the school. Some felt that leadership was still top down or any widening of it superficial, whereas others saw progress and felt listened to. Most believed that the school sought to develop strong democratic values amongst students with some disagreement regarding whether parents and even some students shared them. Most felt that fee-paying parents and important stakeholders such as board members ensured academic achievement remained the top priority. Feedback reiterated the importance of further widening of leadership into 2013/14 through the revised WLOs for Year 7 and 8, the Development Groups, and revisions to the SOLs.

Mick Smith

What is Meant by 'Democratic Leadership' in Education? To what Extent has it Developed in the Secondary School of Bangkok Patana School from 2012-2014?

Summary of Feedback from Questionnaire to Teachers Following the WLOs of March 2014

This survey only sought future recommendations as the Key Stage 3 Review Team were receiving constant feedback from teachers involved in the WLOs. The comments were generally positive, especially regarding the Year 8 'Islands' collaboration. Again concerns regarding time to organise and collaborate were raised. The Year 7 project feedback suggested that there was still a skills gap for students and that more careful preparation could lead to better final outcomes.

Focus Group Feedback from Year 7 and 8 Students January – March 2014

The WLO aimed to ask big questions, seek to provide opportunities for links to be made in some curriculum areas (reducing from the 'overkill' of the previous pilot) and enable students to work collectively to reach solutions. Year 7 investigated: "Why are relationships important to us?" while Year 8 were asked: "How will climate change transform my world?" The students provided a great deal of useful feedback, particularly Year 8, who had experienced the pilot the year before. They felt greater ownership, that they had been listened to and had more control over their learning. The IBLP attributes and links to other subject areas had been more carefully incorporated into a topic that had more meaning for them:

> "...more creative, fun, more straightforward and accessible, more independent choices, less teacher time, more realistic – building a community not just another school project..." (Year 8 student).

Year 7 had more advice and fewer commendations, asking for less teacher talk, more opportunity for them to risk making mistakes and requests for choices of final outcome.

Completion of Reports by Development Groups

Observation of the groups working on aspects of the Key Stage 3 Review was too time-limited to draw genuine conclusions regarding how they had collaborated together. It was clear in some groups that individual teachers had taken on leadership responsibility, sometimes by someone who already had a responsibility post elsewhere. Nonetheless, this was still distribution of leadership as they were leading beyond their specialism and sometimes directing more senior members of staff. Organisational freedom meant that some groups moved away from their original focus but this was 'democracy creation' in action and specific recommendations from the reports of groups including academic mentoring, CPD, WLOs, Co-Teaching, Differentiation, Learning to Learn and Anti-Bullying were incorporated into development planning for 2014/15.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum Schemes of Learning (SOLs)

The production of the new SOLs for Key Stage 3 was effectively the learning and teaching outcome of the whole review period of almost two years. The SOLs were to include big questions, necessitated the forging of links with other subject areas and a commitment to overtly map the development of the IBLP attributes. By May 2014 the SOLs were complete and had followed the agreed priorities.

In addition to formal feedback there were ongoing discussions with the review team and SecLT as well as with individual teachers and students regarding their experience. The members of the review team had enjoyed the opportunity to lead out on a Secondary-wide initiative but had been challenged by the time required to complete each aspect to their satisfaction. The WLOs and devising of a Learning to Learn course were both very demanding organisationally and time-wise especially as each involved leading specific teams of 'volunteers'.

Mick Smith

What is Meant by 'Democratic Leadership' in Education? To what Extent has it Developed in the Secondary School of Bangkok Patana School from 2012-2014?

Overall Conclusions

The research considered two areas relating to democratic leadership: the broadening of decision-making capacity in the school and a commitment to demonstrating an alignment with democratic principles outlined in the literature review, what Woods (2006) describes as 'developmental democracy' and how it may begin to take shape as expressed by Fielding (2009) and Fielding and Moss (2011).

The following indicators were identified as measures of success:
- Greater staff involvement and sense of ownership in curriculum development.
- Opportunities for staff to take on additional formal and informal leadership roles.
- A perceived shift in focus at Key Stage 3 towards a more holistic view of what is understood by student progress.
- The provision of opportunities for students to engage in more collaborative, problem solving-based learning.

The Key Stage 3 SOLs were an example of staff being empowered to create new learning opportunities for students. These were completed by all teams by April-May 2014 and should be considered to be clearly successful. SecLT provided the framework and requirement for parity for attributes development but the curriculum and the WLOs was the product of faculty teams, the Key Stage 3 Review leaders and the Development Groups. When SecLT, in October 2014, asked teams to evaluate how the SOLs were actually being used there was inconsistency, especially regarding collaboration across teams and use of big questions to structure learning.

Student feedback was collected regarding WLOs. Their clear endorsement of more collaborative, student-centred projects and recommendations for 'tweaks' has resulted in the continuation and improvement of WLOs in 2014-15. The Development Group reports indicate overall that each group felt valued and their recommendations, particularly with regards to specific groups, were incorporated into the 2014/15 Secondary Development Plan.

These aspects provide evidence that the school has become more democratic over the study period with a wider distribution of leadership in terms of curriculum development, empowerment of specific teachers into leadership roles and active student input into the nature of their academic learning. However, even with regards to this more readily measurable part of the research, a closer look at responses, especially from teachers, reveals that not all have felt included and that there is still some suspicion of the motivation of senior leaders.

Identifying closer alignment with democratic principles is less easily measurable. The questionnaires showed that teachers have a high level of awareness of their role in developing students into future participants of society, suggesting that they haven't become 'de-professionalised' as Fielding (2009) believes. However, there is still scepticism that democratic ideals are really valued highly by the school when high academic results are striven for and comparisons with other schools made. Others believe that overtures towards more democracy are merely a smokescreen to get things done, Woods' 'inauthentic democracy' (2005 p. 82) showing that more work on developing trust in a common vision is required. Some of our teachers may agree that we are at least a 'High Performance Learning Organisation' if not yet a 'democratic fellowship' (Fielding and Moss, 2011 p. 55):

> "…high-performing, where relationships are important and student voice is elicited and acknowledged, where community is valued, but all this is primarily for instrumental purposes within the context of the marketplace…"

The difficulty for any school considering adopting wholesale developmental democracy is that it is extremely demanding and prescriptive. The idealism that makes it attractive is difficult to translate into practice. The focus on engaging in the search for common human good, the ethical rationality (Woods, 2005 p. 118) that stands at the

Mick Smith

centre of Woods' model is difficult to prioritise amongst other and more easily measurable priorities in an international school environment. However, at Patana our students are certainly capable of accepting the responsibility of greater input into their experience with us and translating what they learn through democratic practice, into their lives as future leaders in societies around the world. Our teachers are able to not only engage upon democracy creation themselves by taking on leadership but also to role model the attributes and attitudes that we want to develop in our students.

Is democracy in the Secondary School merely an 'aerosol' word? I don't think so. Significant developments have and are taking place in Key Stage 3 beyond what Woods describes as the lack of idealism of simply widening distributed leadership. (Woods 2005). We could define our leadership model as **dispersed, democratic leadership** and still share the principle that:

> …Democratic leadership is concerned with enabling people to share power (by dispersing leadership and diminishing hierarchy), share hope (by extending opportunities to raise humanistic potential) and share the fruits of society (through fair distribution of resources and cultural respect)… (Woods 2005p139)

Mick Smith

What is Meant by 'Democratic Leadership' in Education? To what Extent has it Developed in the Secondary School of Bangkok Patana School from 2012-2014?

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Mick Smith

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Mick Smith

What is Meant by 'Democratic Leadership' in Education? To what Extent has it Developed in the Secondary School of Bangkok Patana School from 2012-2014?

Bangkok Patana School

The British International School in Thailand
Established 1957