

WLSA REACH



Issue 1
Fall / Winter 2019

**Education for the
Human Condition**

**Inclusive
Engaged
Informed**

About

WLSA Reach is a biannual publication of the WLSA Foundation, a community of students, educators and leaders from secondary schools and universities around the world.

The WLSA Foundation seeks to foster cooperation and mutual understanding in education through programs, events and publications.

Published by the WLSA
Foundation November 2019

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Message from the Chair of the WLSA Executive Board

Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure and privilege to write this introduction to the inaugural edition of WLSA Reach.

As WLSA Associates we are not united in our participation and membership by our national education systems, our curriculum programs, funding basis or our pupil composition (by age, or gender mix). We are united by the appeal and relevance of a shared set of values in our work together with young people, and by our camaraderie with colleagues who work in a great range of different settings. This makes for a particularly stimulating and diverse set of perspectives and viewpoints to share.

We benefit from a strong level of personal engagement and session contribution from amongst our members, without whom this publication would not be possible.

We are honored and excited in equal measure to be able to bring you these important thoughts, experiences and commentaries. As we contemplate the political, economic, technological and environmental dimensions of change, pressure, uncertainty and opportunity that lie ahead for us all, I hope that the theme of this edition, Education for the Human Condition, is one which you find central, resonant and inspiring.

Eve Jardine-Young

Chair, WLSA Executive Board (NL)

Principal, Cheltenham Ladies' College (GB)

Message from the Editor

This inaugural edition of Reach would not have been possible without the thoughtful contributions of our writers, who brought to life the theme, Education for the Human Condition, with depth, candor and experience spanning different contexts in different parts of the world.

Dr. Suniya Luthar and her colleague Nina Kumar shed light on the very real stresses faced by high-achieving students and how schools might implement context-specific measures to help mitigate risks. Dr. Ronald Lalonde considers the other side of the coin; how adaptive practices of positive psychology are as relevant to school leaders as to students. Elaine France helps us to tune into our unconscious bias so everyone's views are heard "in the solution space" and Carol Artacho provides guidance for purposeful tech education in schools.

Running through all of these submissions as a surprising though not unexpected undercurrent is the future, both of our community and the work we do in education, and of the greater world. As ever we're faced with great challenges ahead, but what's clear in these pages is that a human-centered approach is part of the solution. As WLSA Student Council member Tanatsei Gambura so aptly suggests, we must be present, be open, engage, ideate, and commit to transforming institutions for "the full existence of the human condition."

Thank you to all the contributors for your valuable work and committing your ideas to these pages. We wouldn't be WLSA without you.

Cristina Rosu

Editor, WLSA Reach (NL)

Youth in High Achieving Schools

Maximizing Resilience

Suniya S. Luthar &
Nina L. Kumar

High Achieving Schools (HASs), exemplified by WLSA member schools, are those with high standardized test scores, rich extracurricular and academic offerings, and graduates headed to top universities.

While these schools provide students with the best opportunities, unfortunately, multiple studies have also shown that youth from HASs have levels of distress much higher than national norms; these students are statistically much more likely to show emotional or behavioral difficulties such as depression, anxiety, or substance abuse.

In 2018, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (RWJF) report on Adolescent Wellness noted the top four high-risk environments as exposure to 1) Poverty, 2) Trauma, 3) Discrimination, and 4) **High pressures to achieve – usually seen in affluent communities**. Subsequently, a major report from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), *Vibrant and Healthy Kids*, echoed the findings from RWJF. NASEM specified several groups at especially high risk for distress, including youth in poverty, those in foster care, children of incarcerated parents, and youth in high achieving schools, exposed to “long-standing, ubiquitous pressures to excel at academics and extracurricular activities”.

To illustrate the magnitude of these

problems, data from our own research on nine HASs, with SAT scores ranging from the 84th to the 97th percentile, have shown that HAS students were between 4.4 – 14.1 times more likely to show serious symptoms of anxiety / depression than students nationally. In many instances, rates of drug and alcohol use are also substantially elevated.

Why such high rates of serious distress? At the core is one major issue – excessive pressures to excel, that start early in children's lives and come from all sources. Parents want their kids to have the best possible resumes to ensure acceptance into a top college, as educators and coaches want their students to excel. Adults in the school community anxiously watch competitive sports games, just as peers constantly compare their standing relative to others. Rather than asking, “where does this pressure come from?”, we often ask “where is this pressure not coming from?”

An added stress comes simply from the fact that still more is, in fact, do-able. While students' goals are often lofty, they are also often within reach because parents are able to acquire the extra help needed to improve their performance. Children, in turn, feel obliged to fully take advantage of these extra coaching opportunities, so that the whole family contributes to the “I can, therefore I must” mentality.

What to do?

At Authentic Connections, our approach in working with HASs is based on two major tenets from developmental science. The first is from research on resilience, which represents doing well in life in spite of high stress. Seven decades of research have repeatedly confirmed that **resilience rests, fundamentally, on relationships**. So if we want children to thrive despite their highly competitive, stressful lives, we must work to foster their close relationships.

But which aspects of their relationships should we focus on, in trying to help? With parents? With peers? Teachers and coaches?

Common themes

While there are always differences among

schools, there are some themes that we have seen recurrently across schools.

First, among **parents**, we generally find that *“bad is stronger than good”*: Words of criticism generally have a stronger effect on kids than do words of praise.

Second, there are a couple of “culture-specific” aspects of parenting that are especially potent in HAS contexts, one of which is perceptions of parents’ emphasis on achievements. When children feel that both mom and dad disproportionately value the kids’ excellence in accomplishment, relative to valuing their decency as people, the children tend to be the most troubled (and actually have poorer grades).



Dr. Suniya S. Luthar, Co-Founder and Chief Academic Officer, Authentic Connections (US) was a keynote speaker at the WLSA 2019 Global Educators Conference.

Limit-setting is also very important, especially with regard to substance use. In HAS settings, many kids feel that they will face few repercussions from their parents if their parents detect drug or alcohol use. Not surprisingly, a perceived lack of consequences is linked with higher levels of substance use.

Among **peers**, two issues tend to be critical (the first of which generalizes to all schools, regardless of emphasis on achievement): Bullying by peers is strongly linked with students' distress. This bullying often occurs both in person and via the internet.

The second critical factor among peers, constant social comparisons, is seen more often in HAS settings than others. Students are constantly vying to be the very best among a generally very high achieving group, and there is constant fear of "getting left behind" relative to others.

In terms of **school climate**, the most critical dimension again centers around negative behaviors, namely perceived harshness from teachers. It's incredibly difficult for students to learn effectively if they feel embarrassed or alienated by their instructors.

Few educators would knowingly be unkind toward a student, but sometimes, we unwittingly convey what children perceive as being harsh. Unfortunately, it takes just one teacher seen as unkind to make a child feel inferior, and thus thwart learning and impact mental health.

In addition, it is critically important for every child to feel that there is at least one caring adult to whom they can reach out at school. In our research over the years, we have found that between 20 and 40% of HAS students tend to say there is nobody in whom they would confide

at school, if they had a problem.

What to do?

With regard to interventions at individual schools, the specifics depend on the "top three" dimensions that we identify through rigorous analyses, to be centrally important in a given school.

At the same time, there are some core principles that tend to emerge across schools.

For parents

- **Ensure parents' own well-being.** Parents are "first-responders" to highly stressed youth, and at high risk for burnout themselves. Thus, it is critical to ensure ongoing replenishment for their own well-being.
- **Encourage good, open communication... starting in early childhood.** Kids need to feel that they can comfortably tell parents about their problems and troubles.
- **Be vigilant for students' distress.** Parents need to check in frequently and sincerely if they feel the child is troubled – and stick with it, even when brushed off! If they continue to be concerned, parents should seek professional help.

In a forthcoming article in the American Psychologist, we have summarized all the research evidence indicating that troubles among HAS students are truly becoming an epidemic.



- **Set appropriate and consistent limits.**

There must be clear communication about (mutually agreed upon) repercussions for substance use as well as bullying, rule-breaking, and cheating.

- **Model kind behavior.** Kids do what they see, not what parents tell them to do. Parents modeling kindness & decency in their own everyday behaviors is particularly important in a highly competitive subculture.

For peers

- **Enforce a zero-tolerance bullying policy.**

Enlist students to help start a dialogue at school; help reduce stigma around reporting unkind behaviors among peers.

- **Condemn all forms of peer sexual harassment.** This includes calling kids “gay” in negative ways, or sending suggestive pictures or texts about them.

- **Address issues of social comparisons constantly.** Remind students that “ideal

elves” are presented on social media, not “real selves”. Involve students, e.g., with focus groups, in designing the best ways to address this.

For school climate

- **Reduce unkindness and alienation.**

Whether it is from students to students, adults to adults, or adults to students, unkindness must be eliminated.

- **Ensure that all students feel that they have at least one caring adult at school.** This can involve creative reassigning of responsibilities, and will need appropriate training and support.

- **Provide teachers and administrators with the support they need.** Like parents, teachers and administrators must ensure that they themselves are replenished -- this is a high-stress job!

Continuously Track Student Well-Being and Identify the Unique Risk and Protective Factors Within Your School

While we have found common themes and general guidelines for interventions among HASs, each school is unique. To truly effect change, schools must have an understanding of the **unique** risk & protective factors within their **own** communities.

In a forthcoming article in the *American Psychologist*, we have summarized all the research evidence indicating that troubles

among HAS students are truly becoming an epidemic in the US, and likely internationally as well. Rich data have allowed us to hone in on the most specific, useful intervention directions for each school with whom we work.

At Authentic Connections, we are committed to using science to improve student well-being around the world, and to this end, are offering free consultations via our Well-Being Index to all interested schools. We firmly believe that together we can make a big difference, and are deeply appreciative of every collaboration!

Suniya S. Luthar is Professor Emerita at Columbia University's Teachers College, and Co-Founder and Chief Academic Officer of Authentic Connections, a science-based, organization committed to maximizing individuals' well-being. Her research involves vulnerability and resilience among various populations including youth in poverty, teens in upper-middle class families, and parents (especially mothers) in high-achieving, stressful communities.



Nina L. Kumar is Co-Founder and CEO of Authentic Connections, an organization aimed at maximizing the well-being of individuals in their everyday lives. With expertise in Computer Science and Psychology, Nina is a graduate of Williams College, MA.



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The Past, Present, and Future of WLSA

Charlie Jenkinson

Attending a WLSA Global Educators Conference offers a refreshing change from the often-isolated nature of leadership in a single campus school. Indeed, as Anne of Green Gables remarked, “kindred spirits are not so scarce as I used to think. It’s splendid to find out there are so many of them in the world.”

When I attended my first WLSA conference in 2013, it seemed people were there largely out of intrigue. Could schools with such different constructs of education find areas of mutual interest and importance to work on purposefully together?

The answer, as seen in Prague, is overwhelmingly in the affirmative; despite the significant differences in our experiences, the WLSA community is united in common purpose, and the considerable action that has already been taken is having high impact.

Cultivating a mindset and landscape for collaboration has not been easy, and the work done by the extended WLSA team is to be celebrated and admired. Many delegates in 2013 knew what their institutions could offer but seemed very unsure of what they might gain and apply to their own unique setting. Misconceptions of what constituted ‘western’ and ‘eastern’ education systems were distracting and presented early stumbling blocks but over time a far more sophisticated and complex understanding has emerged.

The increased spatial reach of the WLSA network has contributed to this and brought a whole new dynamic to conferences.

WLSA’s strength is founded in a membership comprised of people and institutions with sufficiently distinct experiences and voices.



Center: **Charlie Jenkinson**, Education Consultant, Glocal Educate (US), right: **Tara Bubble**, Dean of Admission, Colgate University (US) and (not pictured) **Bill Nicholas**, Second Master, Marlborough College (GB) deliver a panel entitled *Who Are Our Students* at the WLSA 2019 Global Educators Conference in Prague.

The ever-growing impact of the College Admission Network (CAN) has brought perspectives that challenge, augment, diverge and cross-pollinate. Through this, WLSA conferences have become a key source for institutions to better understand how they achieve competitive advantage.

A key part of this is for secondary schools to understand the changing landscape of higher education so that students are prepared beyond just the entry point. The temporal perspective that emerges from a mixture of school and college representatives on the same panel and the growing sense of connectedness that was further reinforced by the overall thematic focus of the 2019 conference, has led to an improved understanding of human development and how we can address the variety of challenges our students and their families face.

I have often found that short conferences that try to cover so much ground are great at stimulating my synapses but it takes me so long to process my learning that I struggle to do anything meaningful with what I have learned as I am consumed by a multitude of other, more urgent, tasks on my return. The 2019 Global Educators Conference, however, was different due to the coherence of the sessions. Processing of one session was able to take place during other sessions, and it was through connection of ideas and comments in the moment that I was able to make sense in my own context in a way that has allowed me to take action on my return.

As ever, it was the conversations between sessions that added greatest value, offering challenge and extension to my thinking, particularly where 3-4 of us from very different institutions came together.

So, 2019 in Prague demonstrated a far deeper sense of connectedness and increasing

recognition of the growing interdependence of the WLSA membership. There was a clear and collective desire amongst delegates to tackle challenges of extreme magnitude in education under the banner of social and global mobility.

As I look forward to conferences in 2021, 2023 and beyond, I hope that the membership will have the confidence to take the next steps in WLSA's mission to lead change in education by moving from conversations and relationship-building towards action and growth within our broader sphere of influence.

I look forward to seeing friends old and new at future conferences, but more than that I hope that individuals as well as member institutions will seek avenues to maintain and act upon conversations between conferences.

WLSA has ambitious plans to support this but the energy of members continues to be needed if ideas that will drive change in education are to gain traction.

Charlie Jenkinson is an education consultant at Glocal Educate (GB). Charlie has held various leadership roles in three of the UK's leading boarding schools, including Eton College, and is currently designing Whittle School & Studios' signature Advisory program. Charlie designs innovative programs that deepen students' sense of identity and purpose in local and global spaces. The success of these programs as integrators of academic and pastoral learning results from Charlie's deep understanding of schools as complex systems, fostered through oversight roles in a variety of organizations, including as Vice-Chair of a multi-academy governing body. Charlie specializes in helping schools with international partners develop deep and meaningful programs for students.

Reflections on the WLSA 2019 Global Educators Conference

Charley Stillwell (US) As the Head of Episcopal High School, a boarding school with 450 students just outside of Washington, D.C. and a new WLSA Associate School, I enjoyed greatly my experience at the WLSA Conference this summer in Prague. It was a fascinating opportunity for Episcopal's Assistant Head for Academics and me to learn more about the range of programs and other supports that WLSA offers its Associate Schools and to meet a dedicated and intriguing group of educators from schools around the world. The conference program offered some interesting insights into best practice approaches pursued by Associate Schools across several continents. We enjoyed connecting in a less formal way with Deans of Admissions from a number of important schools in the U.S. We were most excited, however, to

have this chance to build new friendships with schools in various parts of the world. Our new friends from Westville Boys' High School in Durban will be visiting with us in September, and we look forward to new exchange possibilities with member schools in the future.

Charley is the 12th Head of School at Episcopal High School in 2016. A passionate educator, Charley is determined in his pursuit of excellence in academic and student life programming, global outreach, strategic growth, and student-faculty relationships. He has served as the president of the Virginia Association of Independent Schools, Vice President for The Americas for the International Boys Schools Coalition Board, and is a member of the Executive Committee of The Headmasters Association.

Hidemasa Okada (JP) My three days at the 2019 WLSA Global Educators Conference as a first-time attendee has been one of the most unique and enriching experiences of my life. Everything from the logistics and food to the staff and fellow educators from different parts of the world was absolutely splendid. The conference was very well organized and its structure was designed to facilitate synergistic interactions among the participants, which led to a wonderful atmosphere and sense of community rapidly developing over the course of the conference. The session in which I was a panelist, as well as the other sessions I attended, were both informative and insightful, and the people I got to know through them were all forward-thinking and thought-provoking, affably sharing their expertise, insights and suggestions

with me. The coffee breaks and mealtimes furthered discussions about session themes, with one precious encounter during the session leading to another at the coffee or meal table. The real strength of the WLSA Conference is the quality of the people involved; the pile of books currently on my desk – all recommended to me in Prague – serve as a pleasant reminder of how inspired, motivated and also deeply grateful I felt there.

Hidemasa is the Head of Overseas Education at Sugamo Gakuen, an independent boys' school in Tokyo with c.1,400 students in grades 7-12. He founded the Sugamo Summer School in 2017, establishing the three-month study abroad programs in the UK, Canada and Australia, and forging strong links to great schools across the world.

Rebecca Stanton (US) When you step out of the hotel and turn left and you find the best spot for authentic Czech specialties; pretzels, and Pilsner beer. Keep going straight and pass the Old Town Square, the Charles Bridge, before finally arriving at Prague Castle. This was my first visit to Prague, where tradition and modernity meet, where eastern and western Europe converge, and where streets are full of vibrancy, energy, and beauty during the warm days of July. I was there to attend the WLSA conference for the first time, and it became obvious to me why Prague was the ideal spot. Professionals from different parts of the globe met to discuss, share, listen to, and learn from traditional and innovative methods of education. Workshops were presented by panels which brought rich and diverse viewpoints about the issues discussed. Rooms were filled with passionate speakers

and vibrant audiences who were all caring and committed educators. We believe that educating our children is a powerful tool that goes beyond the individual, family or community, in order to embody the theme of this year's conference, the Human Condition. We came together bringing our diverse and beautiful cultures, and our respect for each other in order to make a difference in a globalized world of education.

Rebecca is a teacher at Groton School, where she also acts as dorm head, department head, advisor and coach. She recently completed her 26th year at Groton School. She studied business and law in France and the United States, and is also the founder of Rebecca Stanton Education Consulting LLC, since 2013, working with international families on education and cultural appreciation.



Left: **John Conner**, Dean of Faculty, Groton School (US) and right: **Rebecca Stanton**, Head of World Language, Department & International, Community Advisor, Groton School (US) at the WLSA 2019 Global Educators Conference.

Introducing the WLSA India Coalition

Nishad Das

China and India, separated physically by the mighty Himalayas, are ancient civilizations that have co-existed peacefully for over two millennia. The natural barrier provided by the mountains meant that in ancient times they never fought a war, nor did either kingdom try to invade the other. The spread of Buddhism from India to China was probably the most significant cultural event that marked the relationship between these two giant nations.

In modern times India and China are the most populous nations in the world with two of the fastest growing economies. Their political ideologies are significantly divergent, yet if these two nations chose to combine their economies in an Indo-Sino trading block, they would be

quite a force to contend with.

At the 2013 WLSA Global Educators Conference at Yale, Groton's Headmaster Temba Maqubela asked about WLSA's plans to develop the North-South relationship. Temba was keen to include African schools and I was keen to include Indian schools.

Physical barriers are no longer a hindrance to travel and communication, and if we as educationists don't take the steps to break down political barriers between neighbors, then who will? The co-founders of WLSA, Jack Jia and Tony Little were gracious in their response and were open to our developing these North-South alliances. Now, it was just a matter of getting in touch with the right schools in India.



Center: **Dr. Sumer Singh**, Education Consultant, Education Salad (IN) and right: **Siddharth Singh**, Director, The Emerald Heights International School (IN) with other members of the WLSA India Coalition at the WLSA 2019 Global Educators Conference.

The first person I turned to for advice was my high school English teacher, Dr. Sumer Singh. In his role as Head of School at Daly College, he has established himself as one of the most prominent leaders of education in India. Dr. Singh introduced WLSA to the young, dynamic Head of Emerald Heights International School, Siddharth Singh. Siddharth has a healthy global outlook to education and was eager to propel his young school onto the international stage. That was the start of the WLSA India Coalition, and the 2017 Global Educators Conference in Shanghai, was the first WLSA Conference with a presence from the sub-continent.

In the summer of 2018, I invited Jack Jia to visit a few Indian boarding schools. Though we were meant to start in Delhi, an unfortunate visa miscommunication meant that the delay caused us to skip Delhi and fly directly to Dehradun. There we met with the Heads of School of The Doon School and Welham Girls' School. Our pitch was to promote a cultural alliance between the students of India and China. Doon decided to wait before committing but Welham's progressive new Principal, Padmini Sambasivam, was excited to be included in this adventure. While Jack and I were traveling around India, Dr. Singh worked with Mayo College Girls' School in Ajmer to get them on board as well.

As a result of these efforts, the July 2019 Annual WLSA Global Educators Conference in Prague saw a significant uptake in attendance from Indian schools. Besides Emerald Heights International School, led by Siddharth Singh, there was Welham Girls' School in Dehradun, led by Padmini Sambasivam, Mayo College Girls' School in Ajmer, led by Kanchan Khandke, Cathedral School in Mumbai, led by Meera Isaacs, and Inventure Academy in Bangalore, led by Nooraine Fazal. Many of these heads were



Front **Padmini Sambasivam**, Principal, Welham Girls' School (IN) and back **Meera Isaacs**, Principal, Cathedral School (IN) at the WLSA 2019 Global Educators Conference.

WLSA panelists.

As we move forward, we hope to coordinate this new cultural and educational alliance between India and China through committees in respective countries. The India committee is being chaired by Padmini and myself and for now we are planning a mini conference in Shanghai in early January 2020. Looking forward we hope to hold the first full-fledged Indo-Sino teacher conference in Dehradun in December 2020.

Nishad is the Director of Global Education at Groton School (US) and is a board member of the GEBG (Global Education Benchmark Group). He grew up in India and was educated at the Doon School, St. Stephen's College Delhi, and Emmanuel College Cambridge, England. He started his teaching career in 1990 in a suburban London school called Caterham, moved to Cheltenham College in 1993, and then to Groton School in 2001. At Groton, besides spearheading the school's global initiatives, he teaches math and coaches squash.

Leading Progressive Conversations

Tanatsei Gambura

It's not every day that one receives an opportunity to spend a week in Prague, Czech Republic. It's also not every day that one is immersed in a room alive with an orchestra of voices, the buzz of conversation and bustle of movement. I enjoyed the privilege of engaging with both experiences over a painfully short weekend in July. I have been with the World Leading Schools Association for a little over a year now, and if there is something we do best, it is igniting hope through the sharing of ideas and daring to have difficult, important conversations about education around the world today.

The crux of the 2019 Global Educators Conference was exploring the human condition in education. With human-centred institutions as a dream for WLSA, the vision is to take a 360 degree approach to education. The conference sought to highlight the urgency of holistic teaching and learning as a means of ensuring that WLSA is playing a part in improving learning outcomes in the classroom and beyond. Personally, it was a privilege for me to be able to meet with and discuss my desires and grievances as a student to educators and stakeholders in education from all over the world. I felt listened to and valued, an experience I wish I had always had at school.

As we ideated solutions for reducing overall campus anxiety, stress, competition and other vices in both teachers and learners, something stuck out to me. Oftentimes, educational institutions are regarded as conservative and traditional, slow if not unwilling to accommodate new ideas and technology into teaching pedagogy. However, being one of a

handful of students amongst a sea of teachers, I witnessed the educators in the room leading progressive conversations that even some of my peers would respond conservatively to! From the use of electronic devices in the classroom, practicing mindfulness and sensitively and intentionally addressing gender and sexuality in schools, all topics of increasing relevance were discussed. It was both refreshing and affirming to realize that educators are not only capable but also willing to transform institutions for the full existence of the human condition.

When speaking to the conference participants during the opening address, I asked five things of them as a wish for them to live out during the course of their time in Prague. My wish is just as relevant now as it was then. As you consider the role of education in building individuals, imagine you are in Prague.

Be present – welcome the opportunity that this moment has presented you to reimagine teaching and learning for the twenty-first century. **Be open** – accept the new ideas that may be revealed to you about wellbeing in education, wherever they come from. **Engage** – talk to someone new, learn from the people and the space that you are in what you can about student, teacher and campus health. **Ideate** – put forward your brilliant ideas about how we can award education the 360 degree approach it deserves. Lastly, **commit** - make a personal commitment to the role you want to start playing in making this dream achievable in your part of the world. You have a powerful role in education. Start today, start here, start now.



Tanatsei is a poet and cultural practitioner from Zimbabwe. A member of the WLSA Student Council and an alumnus of the African Leadership Academy (ALA) in South Africa, she was awarded the Patrice Lumumba Award for Pan-Africanism in 2018. A passionate feminist and Africanist, her work explores the implications of culture, identity, the self and womanhood. She has been published by the Open Society Initiative for South Africa, Prufrock Magazine, POVO Afrika, and New Coin. Tanatsei has been recognized by United Nations Women, Impact Hub, and Global Citizens, for which she was listed as one of the SADC region's 100 Young Leaders by The Young Independent. This year, she is a recipient of the Diana Award for founding the 25 May Movement, a social enterprise working in the arts. Tanatsei is currently pursuing a BA Hons Intermedia Art degree at the University of Edinburgh as a Mastercard Foundation Scholar. *Photo: Tanatsei delivers an address at the WLSA 2019 Global Educators Conference.*

The Prudent Leader

A Model for Navigating Complexity

Ronald D. Lalonde, Ed.D., ACC, NCC

School leaders face pressures to adapt to change, and often that means taking on the responsibility of finding the way forward during complex times.

That weight can take a toll on both mental and physical health, sometimes leading to burnout but, more often, compromising our effectiveness in unnoticed ways. Anxiety, urgency, expediency, anger--I remember facing each of these at some stage with people I worked for, and, I also remember the times I exhibited each of these as a school principal.

The narrowing of attention that occurs in stressful situations sometimes keeps us from noticing the resources we have at our disposal. During the times when we most need the resources around us, our personal psychology may be keeping us from seeing what is available.

Positive Education, rooted in the adaptive practices of positive psychology, has much to say about how we can maximize our personal and institutional effectiveness. Practices of self care and self awareness can keep us mentally sharp and create the space we need during times of intensity and crisis.

This is not an earth shattering revelation, nor should it be. In many areas, positive education has done nothing more than generate scientific support for long-held beliefs. In some areas, though, it has challenged intuition and tradition. Most importantly, it has turned a critical eye toward the gulf between our knowledge of good leadership principles and the results we experience. Positive education goes beyond

knowing facts about leadership and recognizes that we need to nudge our behavior toward helpful practices that get regularly reinforced and strengthened. We can't just think our way out of the myriad stressful situations we encounter. We need to cultivate grace under pressure.

Self-awareness has been around in the leadership movement for a long time, but as Jim Detmer of the Consciousness Leadership Group explains, self-awareness is most often followed by self-criticism. Self-awareness often takes the form of eliciting a string of "should have"-actions that did not happen and, for which, we blame ourselves, others, or circumstances. This negativity steals time, energy, and often the willingness to take risks with others. It leads to contracting behaviors that stifle awareness.

To counter this tendency toward being hard on ourselves, there are many useful practices of self-care and self-compassion rooted in research that can assist leaders. Unfortunately, leaders often act as though self-care and self-compassion are admissions that they can't handle their roles. Work is equated with long hours, suppressing emotions, and self-denial. It is a model of self-exhaustion, not one of self-preservation. Between being hard on yourself and being easy on yourself is a third way -- being intentional with yourself. Being intentional with yourself means enlisting both self-care and self-discipline in the service of accomplishing important goals in your own life.

A good sleep routine, meditation, and careful attention to nutrition and exercise are not self-indulgence, they are the essential prerequisites to performing your best. Self-control that is limited to self-denial can only work in the short term. Leaders who find themselves caught in the self-denial trap need to expand their appreciation and use of the character strength of prudence.

Prudence often gets a bad rap as the character strength of caution and trepidation. If we go back to Aristotle's idea, prudence, or practical wisdom, holds the chief place among the virtues. It is the guardian of our most deeply held purpose, the "for the sake of what" that guides action. Prudence is actually the courageous virtue of sticking to our values when there are many distractions that can pull us off track. Cultivating the strength of prudence, for leaders, is a way to keep their organizational mission alive in their daily actions and decisions.

Prudence supports clear intentions and practices of evaluating the worthiness of a given action. In my quest to better manage my time, I have come to realize that what I really need to do is better manage my commitments. I am trying to enhance my strength of prudence through finding mental protocols and helpful questions to assist decision making. Even a simple statement like "Every yes is a no to a thousand other things" has helped me to be more responsible in my commitments and more discerning in what I say "yes" to.

I have recently found Dan Ariely's thoughts on calendaring very helpful. Dan speaks about the type of items that are easy to include in a calendar (meetings) and those that aren't (talk with my son). As a consequence of the usual type of calendaring: "your life will be filled with things that might not fit with your agenda. So the real

question is how do we get the representation of our lives to fit our real objectives?" I have taken Professor Ariely's question to heart and have spent more time calendaring things like my morning routine, my workouts, and even time to hang out with family. It feels awkward at first, but the additional time I am investing on the front end is paying off with days in which I am meeting commitments, feeling accomplished, and moving toward my goals.

Positive Education has just as much to say to school leaders as it does to students. In fact, leaders who model the cultivation of character strengths demonstrate to young people that the job of being your best self is a daily routine.

Ron is the Regional Manager of the Institute of Positive Education, and the founder of Riverspath Coaching and Consulting (riverspath.com). He is formerly the Middle School Principal of the American School of Dubai and the American School Foundation of Monterrey, Mexico. Dr. Lalonde has researched extensively and developed applications of positive psychology to middle level education. He continues to seek ways to reimagine student relationships with schools, and adult attitudes toward adolescents and adolescence. Schools under Dr. Lalonde's leadership have been commended for the healthy student teacher relationships and high student wellbeing.

You can contact Ron for Positive Education training, consulting and coaching at rlalonde@ggs.vic.edu.au



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Ending Unconscious Bias in Education Settings

Elaine France

As you read this, I invite you to become aware, conscious, of your unconscious bias around gender equality in all of the settings that you operate in, as you live your purpose as an educator.

You probably think that you are good on this stuff and a little intrigued, perhaps irritated, that I am being so direct. However, I guarantee that we all need to work a lot harder at changing this dynamic to create a level playing field for the youth that we are working so hard to guide into an increasingly uncertain future.

First, let me define what I mean by unconscious bias, so that we are all on the same page. I am focused on the unconscious bias in education settings when our references, narratives and set-ups forget to mention, include or acknowledge women.

"Unconscious bias refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control. It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences."

I still fall into this unconscious bias trap myself and I am tuned into fixing this on a daily basis, coming from a 25-year career in social change with leadership, operational and strategic, across different sectors. I know from my work that true innovation comes from everyone's unique creativity being shared into

the solution space. I share my expertise of working with changemakers and entrepreneurs into educational settings, to inspire children and youth as the new generation of leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs taking action to make positive impact.

I know that there is no ill intent. It is a habit. Cultural. Historical. It really is time though that we were present to our current moment of history. Quite frankly, children and youth are incredibly disappointed in us as a generation, they want better solutions, faster. They are not wrong. There really is no excuse for a lack of gender equality.

Why work so hard at combating our unconscious gender bias as educators? Because we need to create the conditions, at a local level in our communities, for achieving UN Sustainable Goal (SDG) 4 – Quality Education and SDG 5 – Gender Equality. Your school is a community. Education conferences are a community. Online learning spaces are a community.

Have you heard of UN SDG 5 – Gender Equality? The targets include access to finance, political positions, managerial positions for women and girls. Achieving this goal is intertwined with access to education for all children, especially girls. It is evidenced that inclusion and access for women and girls opens up economic opportunities for everyone. Last year, I created a student innovation challenge toolkit with UNCTAD inspiring youth to understand entrepreneurship as a tool for



gender equality.

Working towards these goals is systematically linked to improving youth wellbeing, taking climate action and building future of work skills. We need to cultivate the spaces to make them possible. We are working to achieve these global goals by 2030. Eleven years from now. That is shockingly close as a timeline when it feels that we are so far away from achieving them.

How are we going to do it? This is your call to action. My experience is that we need to choose to create the visibility, challenge our assumptions and walk into the fear. In the words of Brené Brown, "What we know matters but who we are matters more." Otherwise, why not just write the letter now to your female students and staff that they should be prepared to be invisible, get paid less for longer hours, be acknowledged less, have less access to finance to start businesses. And that is exactly what we all do when we do not disrupt our unconscious bias. Not only is it intensely frustrating to still be

on the receiving end of it, it also gets in the way of the urgent and immediate action we need to take to protect the planet and flourish together on it. It gets in the way of us achieving, what Dr. Tererai Trent calls our "sacred dreams."

The inequality caused by unconscious bias is not what our young men want either; it gets in the way of these same young men knowing how to shine in this space as equals and with equals. A couple of years ago, I was waiting for a flight in Geneva airport. The man at the table next to me was having a business call. He said, "Sarah is the best person to project manage this job...but we can't have her, she's young, too attractive, they won't take her seriously. No, we will use Paulo. She can coach him behind the scenes." Fairly explicit in terms of bias, you'll agree, and appalling for both young people. What are your reactions to this example? What aligns, albeit uncomfortably, with your unconscious bias?

Women are 'half the sky' as Nick Kristoff calls it. What can you do to take action to combat your unconscious bias as an educator? I want to bring your attention to two tools that we use to build a level playing-field in social innovation and entrepreneurship eco-systems.

First, in this article, I have deliberately used references from women as well as men. Whether you are speaking at a conference, in the classroom or at home, you need to sense check your references. I heard a senior male educator speak in the summer. In his ten-minute talk, every reference was to a male historical figure, approximately 15 of them. Seriously? Imagine being a female student and only hearing references to high achieving men, from a teacher – either male or female – a role model speaking into your ear several hours a day. Where is the navigation point there?

And, imagine conditioning young men to believe that women have not done much since the beginning of time. My first professional discipline is as a librarian, if you need some help finding new references to highly qualified, high impact women from all walks of life and all eras, give me a shout, I am happy to help.

Second, let me guide you to the Gender Panel Parity Pledge leadership network. It is used to create parity at events and is applicable everywhere. You can use it in the classroom, in Student Councils and Committees, as well as for education events, education steering committees and executive boards. Do not create a man-el. Do create a panel. Aim for equal representation.

Other more subtle nuances to this are to ask a woman on the panel to speak first, not second or third; and definitely not last, relegating female voices to the bullet points.

If, for some reason, you have not included any female voices, then you set out an empty chair for women who are not represented. If you do not want to set out an empty chair, then agree only to take questions from women in the audience.

You may think I am exaggerating. From experience though, once you start to pay attention, you will realize just how often all of these things happen, how often we all fall into the trap; and that if we are serious about creating equality in and through education, we need to use these tools.

Too often, I have heard the excuse that it is an all-male panel because there are no women experts in the field of discussion. If you think that, then you are not asking the right questions or doing the right due diligence to find the right people.

Start today, sign the Gender Panel Parity Pledge and share it with colleagues and

students. Show that gender equality is a visible and important part of the learning journey that you are on. Make your commitment to achieving UN SDGs 4 and 5, by taking action around your unconscious bias.

If there is one insight that holds true across my 25-year career, it is that massive change starts locally, organically and from daring to challenge the status quo. The level of innovation we need globally, to create a future for the youth we serve, requires urgent and immediate action. There is no longer space for business as usual. The career paths you are planning on their behalf do not exist yet, or are obsolete so we need everyone at the table.

With the fierce determination of Greta Thunberg in mind, I invite you to take radical steps to shift your unconscious bias, so that we can 'go together and go far' in a world in need of brave hearts.

Through Flow In Action, **Elaine** trains a new generation of innovators and entrepreneurs to take action for the planet. She works directly with youth, as well as with educators and entrepreneurs, using innovation and entrepreneurship challenges to develop wellbeing and future of works skills. She is an experienced consultant, coach and trainer, having worked with stakeholders in education, government advisory, UN, entrepreneurship eco-system. She was Head of Business Development – Public Services at Partnerships UK, a spin-out of HM Treasury, leading on market-making for social enterprises. She partners with UNCTAD, a division of the UN.

The logo for Flow in Action features the word "flow" in a light blue font, followed by a circular icon containing a stylized butterfly, and then the words "inaction" in a darker blue font.

www.flowinaction.org

To Tech or Not To Tech

Why We Should and How We Should

Carole Artacho Guerra

The use of technology in our schools is a perilous topic. Oftentimes we see it as a necessary evil, something that is distracting from the real learning that needs to be happening. Students' use of social media prevents them from engaging with education at best and puts them at tremendous risk for online predators at worst. And who can forget the horrendous plague of Yik Yak - the anonymous social media app that allowed for an electronic version of 'Lord of the Flies' at every school before we were able to block its usage on school grounds by geo-fencing our campuses? Many schools work towards limiting and controlling the use and access to technology; forcing students to log off the campus network at bedtime, or significantly limiting the kind of network traffic available during study hours. It is an attempt that not only presents issues of equity, but that is ultimately futile in even the most draconian of implementations. The problem disappears for only as long as your students are on campus or using campus resources. They are free to tech to their hearts' content when they leave school, whether that happens at the end of the day, at the end of the year, or at graduation.

I suggest that a shift in our thinking about technology is integral to education. As we think about preparing our students for the future, is it really possible to imagine that future without any technology? I wrote my research papers for high school by hand. I did not get an email account until I was in college, and that was a text-based program (PINE, anyone?). I think of

the tremendous advances that have happened in tech just in my lifetime. The technology that my students will be using when they are my age doesn't exist, it hasn't been dreamed of yet! As educators, our obligation is to prepare students for the future, to be more than full participants in that future- to be leaders. It is our responsibility to make sure our students are knowledgeable, responsible, ethical, creative users and designers of technology- and the only way we can fulfill that obligation is by teaching them how to use today's technology in knowledgeable, responsible, ethical, and creative ways.

The task of making technology an integral part of education is daunting, but when managed properly it can be truly transformative for our school communities.

Here are some ways to think about tackling tech implementations.

Involve a diverse group of tech-savvy faculty

Identify who your allies in this task are. Sociologist Everett Rogers defines five types of people in how they accept and adapt to innovation: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. (Diffusion of Innovations, 1962). Identify the early adopters at your school to ensure a great ride. Finding these folks will help you in two distinct ways:

1) These are the teachers who will be willing to run a test of the different options, and the ones who will give you knowledgeable, data-based

feedback on what the tech can and cannot do for them. Trust them to make the decision.

I was part of a group of teachers at a school who tackled the choice of learning management system (LMS). For a full semester, each one of us tested a platform (Moodle, Haiku, Schoology, Canvas, Google Apps for Education). After exchanging experiences, joys, and frustrations about the experience, in addition to conversations with the vendors, the group made a decision for the entire school and standardized the school's LMS. This approach guaranteed that the school adopted a system that made the most sense for the needs and realities of the school.

II) These early adopters will lead your implementation. Finding who these folks are in every academic department will mean that your teachers can find this colleague and ask questions big and small of someone who understands the context of teaching in a classroom, someone they can trust to speak their language, as opposed to the IT folks who (bless their hearts!) can talk tech but don't usually know much about the experience of teachers.

I know of a school which, as part of the transition to Google Apps, identified one or two experts in every department and trained those folks such that each group had a resident expert that would support their needs daily. This sustained availability of resources for the majority of the faculty guaranteed a successful and rather painless transition into this platform.

Align your tech with your institutional values

Tech for the sake of tech is not really helpful to anyone. The adoption of innovation should be based on priorities and institutional values. This is not just about the adoption of technology, but also about the technology implemented.

Turnitin.com is a fabulous tool that monitors for plagiarism. As a teacher grading papers, this program is so much more than that. It allows for detailed, electronic, customized feedback to students' work; it provides a time/date stamp for all submissions; it allows to track for revisions, and; yes - it identifies areas of potential academic dishonesty. You can set the



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system to accept the final version of a paper and give no feedback to students until you've graded it. The underlying philosophy behind this setting is that the teacher is trying to catch students plagiarizing, making it a tool of punishment.

Alternatively, you can set the system so that students can see what the teacher will see, effectively making this service a source checker that students can cross-reference with their bibliography so they can make sure they are indeed doing proper citations. Students use a spell checker- why not teach them how to use a source checker too?

Mandate manageable pieces

Requesting change of your teachers without training or compensation is a tall order, especially if it is perceived as 'extra work'. Do long term planning for best results. Breaking the full implementation of any new tech into manageable pieces will allow the early adopters to explore the options, and the rest of your faculty to not feel over-extended.

I worked at a school that implemented an electronic homework and attendance system. The expectation was that the first-year teachers would enter attendance daily, post homework with resources and reference materials online by 3 pm, and would maintain their gradebook using this system. It was a disaster because the faculty did not have the time or the energy to adapt to all these new requirements. In contrast, a school that decided that the first year using an LMS they would only require teachers to post their homework for the day online, without needing to scan reading materials or worksheets, had great success. The early adopters posted homework and went above and beyond, and the rest of the faculty was using the gradebook and a bunch

of other functions within a couple of years of implementation. Being realistic about what your faculty can and cannot do is key to success.

Screen time does not mean knowledge - students need explicit instruction!

Students are really good about using Snapchat, Instagram, Fortnite, and a handful of other apps. They likely spend ridiculous amounts of time engaged with these systems. And yet, this doesn't mean that they are knowledgeable about all aspects of tech. Students regularly walk into my classroom and state that they never knew that Excel could make graphs and there's always some of them that have never used Excel (or Numbers or Google Sheets) ever before. Explicit instruction around tech is part of our educational obligation, and it extends beyond how to use the tech itself.

Remember when you found out that writing in all caps meant that you were yelling? Our students' version of that involves the use of database and publication software; the purposeful management of their social media presence; the proper creation and annotation of code; the sifting through the tremendous amount of information for credible, reliable sources; the regular monitoring of privacy; protection against predators and scammers; and mastering the tone and genre for electronic communications (Snapchat to your friend vs an email to your professor). If we are not explicitly teaching students these skills, they are most certainly not prepared for the world beyond our classrooms.

A solution for every budget, including no budget at all.

Using tech does not have to be an expensive proposition. For all the awfulness that is on the Internet, there are some wonderful folks that make free software for educators and students. You will be surprised what you can do for minimal or zero cost, using devices that your students already have in their hands.

The obvious use of the suite of Google products that are freely available is only the tip of the iceberg. If you're interested in general classroom management, you can use All Here to keep attendance on your smartphone. For polling your students, including live, anonymous feedback to key questions during your lessons, Kahoot and Polleverywhere are free and easy to use – and can even be integrated into a presentation. Want a fun review game? Look no further than JeopardyLabs.com. For those of us using specific vocabulary in our classrooms, create a study set for your students on Quizlet. And quizzing those kids in the classroom on those words that they studied can be framed as a game with puzzle-maker.com – those kids love quizzes that involve crossword puzzles. Hoping to engage in lively multimedia discussions outside of class with your students? Flipgrid and VoiceThread are the way to go for an easy, audio-visual creation. As a science teacher, apps like Decibel X or ProTuner or RGB allow me to generate and collect data for anything involving light and sound using a smartphone. NightSky or StarWalk2 will get your students up and running with learning constellations and major star formations anywhere on the globe. And even VideoPhysics and Graphical Analysis present an extremely low-cost alternative to physics mechanics experiments.

The inevitability of technology in our lives, present and future, make technology education for teachers and students an obligation that schools must accept and embrace to remain relevant. Fear and mistrust will not help us understand and manage our digital lives. Rather, purposeful, explicit, meaningful tech education in school communities will help students become responsible, ethical, creative citizens of an increasingly technological world.

Workshop Description

STEM classrooms are often perceived as neutral spaces, yet the STEM higher education and professional arenas continue to lack diversity. Can we make our entry points into scientific endeavors more inclusive? This workshop will provide a framework to understand and classify our science practices through the lens of gender inclusion. We will also generate specific tools and skills to use in a STEM classroom to challenge the notion of neutrality and create more inclusive learning environments.

Carol is a bilingual feminist, physicist, Spaniard who is a member of the Science Faculty at Phillips Academy, where she teaches Physics and Robotics. Carol's desire to promote and advance women and underrepresented groups in science made her leave corporate America and join the teaching world, first at the university level and later in independent schools. Carol serves on the Board of Directors for The Independent School Gender Project. On her own campus, Carol is part of the advisory board for The Brace Center for Gender Studies. In her spare time, she is the leader for her daughter's Girl Scout Troop.

WLSA's Cross Cultural Leadership Program

Building leadership and communication skills for the future

Catherine Raw

This program developed out of a perceived need to educate the students in a variety of leadership styles while acknowledging the impact that individual cultural heritage has on the leadership process. The challenge is to connect students worldwide in a global yet personal space using an online platform.

All too often we see young adults glued to their screens oblivious to those around them. The Cross Cultural Leadership Program (CCLP) is designed to use this aspect of contemporary life to our advantage, building relationships across countries and continents through our online platform.

The challenge of an online program lies in the lack of personal connection between the students. The focus tends to be on finishing tasks individually to complete the course. Some connections may be made incidentally, but the emphasis is on individual success in dealing with the subject matter of the course. Our course, however, requires students to communicate meaningfully with one another under the guidance of a mentor. Students communicate with each other through the online forum on Spark, WLSA's online learning platform, and are monitored by mentors.

We've developed the program using four key educational assumptions.

- Communication development tools used in the physical teaching space can be adapted to an online platform.
- Relationships are developed and tested in a functioning work space.
- Leadership skills develop through 'doing'.
- Reflection on tasks and relationships has as much educational and development value as the subject matter and task itself.

Communication tools have been selected to mimic personal physical connectedness usually present in a Drama context. For example: Image Theatre (August Boal) - students frozen in positions representing a word or theme linked to a global issue like poverty while others comment on or adjust the image statue to improve the situation and promote discussion is replaced by a photograph of the student's community under the same theme and then posted to the forum as a springboard for discussion.

Relationships in the physical situation at the school level are often built through a step by step interaction towards a common goal. This may be academically, through sports, a performance or a service task. The learning about leadership content of the CCLP gives the framework within which the students are required to complete tasks that require interaction and a collective result.

Leadership learning, presented and tested theoretically, does not allow for the personal development required to grow leadership skills practically. Students will be required to identify a Leadership Challenge in their community. This



will allow each student to create a plan, execute it and reflect on the success of this process.

Reflection will form a substantial portion of CCLP. The students will be guided through increasingly complex levels of reflection. Strong reflective attributes will benefit students' leadership growth and their cross-cultural skills. The target age group is 15 to 18-year olds who have shown an interest in making meaningful changes in their community and in thoughtful communication with other students.

By the end of the program students will be confident in communication skills such as: asking questions, sharing thoughts and ideas, discussing opinions without negating the opinions of others, and reflecting on own and other viewpoints. They will have developed skills in leadership of self, including resilience and adaptability to circumstances. Through their Leadership Challenge the ability to lead others and the capacity to collaborate will be tested.

CCLP is structured over 20 weeks split into 2 terms of 10 weeks. Mentors selected from WLSA Associate Schools are crucial to the success of the programme. They will extend the growth of the students through comments and suggestions to develop more complex thought processes. These teachers will mentor positively

and proactively to build connections and understanding.

A capstone will be held the culmination of CCLP and this is where the students can meet in person and use the skills they have developed to devise a joint Leadership Challenge suitable for the location, community and culture where the camp is held.

The connection between the students is expected to continue after the completion of the program and should rise to an improved understanding of international relations.

Catherine's educational journey began in 1986 as a teacher of Drama and Theatre studies. This has informed her inclusive style of training and developing leadership expertise in students. She has recently taken on the challenge of opening a new school, Reddam House Ballito (South Africa) part of the Inspired Schools Educational group. This has allowed her to revisit what is core to the educational experience in a school. Catherine's passion lies in growing a future generation able to:

- communicate effectively,
- connect across cultures and countries without discrimination and
- lead with kindness and compassion.



Student Conference 2020

Leading with Cultural Intelligence

19 - 25 July 2020
McMaster University, Canada

The WLSA Student Conference brings together students from WLSA Associate Schools around the globe to take part in a program designed to facilitate networking, leadership training, and peer-to-peer education.

Learn more at wlsafoundation.org/studentconference

Candice Beauchamp, a teacher from South Africa, shares her experience teaching at WLSA Shanghai Academy.

Although teaching at Westville Boys' High School was where my heart lay, I did feel the desire to travel, grow and try something new. Luckily, I was offered a teacher exchange, one year in China! I had never thought of China before but teaching overseas had been echoing in my heart for quite some time. Perhaps South Africa had shown me most of what it has in store for me, but I craved a taste of a new adventure. China seemed like a challenge and I needed one.

Change is scary. Taking a leap and saying yes is not easy. Instead of parachuting out of a once-off opportunity, I decided to agree to the exchange. I knew next to nothing about China and did not know what to expect. I kept telling myself that an empty case is not a bad thing, it leaves space for your life to be filled with new experiences and memories. I desired to grow, challenge myself and see different parts of the world. Curiosity had shaken me to my core.

Entering WLSA Shanghai Academy opened my eyes to a totally new, fresh way of teaching. I went from facing five classes and teaching 160 young men to teaching three classes with 15 students in each class.

This fostered a more personalized, direct form of teaching. Students get excited to see, greet, and speak to teachers and even join them during lunch. They share personal experiences and ask for advice. Students in China are the absolute best! These students strive for greatness, do their best to avoid mediocrity and

Thank you, China!

Candice Beauchamp



are focused. Students here excel, work hard and are always positive, even though they are at school from 8am until 8:30pm. They visit during office hours, ask questions and regularly bring you work to look through weeks before a task is due. There is also a noticeable difference in absenteeism.

Students in China want to learn and enjoy the school culture that is felt here. These students are bright, fun, influential and independent!

I have had the opportunity to join China on the cashless society train, this place is one filled with technological advancements. Life is easy and convenient. If I want dinner, I pay through my phone and it is delivered to my door. I kissed cooking goodbye a long time ago, as it is not necessary for me anymore. I am spoiled in this regard. I also love not needing a car and to drive, instead I order Didi (a cab) or jump on the metro. Travel costs are low here and I have

enjoyed sightseeing all over town! I had never been on a metro or train before. I got lost many times and had fun finding my way around. Exploration is enlightening.

Shanghai is a city that does not rest its eyes. Streets buzz, construction is permanently on the move and crowds cannot be avoided. I come from a small town, so nothing would have prepared me for streets like these. It feels alive! I should really learn Chinese. Mine is beyond basic but it is easy to get by without it here. Perhaps that is the benefit of Shanghai: many foreigners are here. I have friends from many parts of the world, have tasted food from all over and can get almost anything that I was used to back home. Foreign trade shops, foreign people and different accents are amazing to be surrounded by. I have learned so much from many cultures.

China is hard to explain. It is a large mix of old, new, historic and modern. Yuyuan Garden, the Bund, Tianzifang- these are sights to

see! Disneyland is thrilling, Happy Valley is heaps of fun and The Captain is an amazing spot to ogle at the skyline. Rooftop pubs are the trend and Shanghai is a magical place to be. I am tempted to stay here as Shanghai has stolen a rather large piece of my heart and I am no longer who I was when I left South Africa. This experience has given me all I could have asked for. A fire for teaching and travelling has been rekindled. I am determined to accept change, hunt it down and am stronger than before. Comfort is a danger; it prevents people from thriving.

Candice is an English teacher at Westville Boys' High School in Durban, South Africa. She believes that making an impact on others and being a positive energy is the key to success. She is passionate, loud and eager to share thoughts, skills and ideas with others.

Teach in China at WLSA Shanghai Academy

The Teach in China program that provides educators from independent schools the opportunity to teach in a global classroom and leave a lasting impact at the WLSA Shanghai Academy.

Educators available to take a leave of absence or sabbatical year from their current position would be expected to join for one academic year (August - June).

There are ample opportunities to grow professionally from a global perspective and vibrant multicultural community with teachers from South Africa, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Australia and Ireland.

There are also long-term positions available for educators looking to relocate for more than one year.

Learn more at wlsafoundation.org/teachinchina



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