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Connexions is the biannual newsletter of the Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA), a non-profit education association supporting the professional learning and school improvement strategies of international schools on the continent of Africa.

Through our programmes and services AISA provides for the varying needs of nearly 27,000 students and over 3,000 teachers and school leaders in 72 member schools across 34 countries in Africa.

Membership of AISA is open to elementary and secondary schools in Africa which offer an educational programme using English as the primary language of instruction and offer an international curriculum to suit the needs of its culturally diverse student body. Businesses and organizations who support the mission of AISA are also invited to join as Associate Members.

Connexions is produced by:
Editor: Chanel Worseling
AISA Director of Partnerships and Communications
Creative: kboodl
Greetings from AISA in Nairobi! We hope you’ve arrived back at school refreshed and excited by the joys and challenges of a new (or in some cases continuing) academic year.

AISA’s programmes are specifically designed to support all our member schools - be they running a US, British or International curriculum - not only by delivering great professional learning experiences, but also by connecting you with your colleagues in other member schools. Further, we can also connect you to the services offered by our Associates. As a valued AISA member I invite you to take full advantage of our learning and support programmes, our scholarships and awards offered to staff and students, our online community groups, our school exchange programmes, the annual AISA-GISS student event and to contact us about the various international consultants we have aggregated into our consultant pool.

Our 2018/19 learning programme continues to expand with over 30 Professional Learning Institutes (PLIs) located at venues across Africa, the annual AISA School Heads Retreat (SHR2018) and the AISA Educators Conference (AEC2018). There really is something for everyone so please visit the AISA website for full details of this year’s programmes. A reminder that this year there will be no AISA Leadership Conference as we will merge this with the 50th Anniversary edition as a combined AISA Conference event in Cape Town in November 2019. Don’t miss this one!

I would like to acknowledge the ongoing support we receive from Tom Shearer and his team at the Office of Overseas Schools at the US State Department. Without their considerable financial and technical support for our A/OS schools and our wider programmes, AISA would not be able to achieve anything near what we do currently.

One of the consistent pieces of feedback from our conference and PLI evaluations is that networking and connecting with like-minded colleagues in the AISA community is important to you. So, this year our monthly eCircular will be delivered to you directly with some new features. A Member News section will be dedicated to welcoming new members, profiling people who work in an AISA school, sharing school news and profiling the services offered by our Associate Members. Look out for this new section and please do send us your school news (along with any Hi Res photos). Or send us your own professional profile sharing what you’re up to so that we can celebrate the diversity and talent of the AISA community.

This year, AISA is also introducing eTime, AISA’s new webinar series. We know that getting to events can be costly and that the time away from school is not always easy to manage. The new AISA webinar series will be another way for members to easily access highly targeted, relevant PD in a timely fashion while allowing you to connect with others in the AISA network. Find out more about eTime under the Learning Events tab on our website.

We also know that, as life-long learners, having your professional learning formally recognised is important to demonstrating to your current and future employees that you are committed to your own learning and development. This year we are introducing Micro-credentials that will help you do just that. Please read more about how micro-credentials can help develop you achieve your learning and professional development plans on our website.

AISA would also like to welcome the incoming school heads for 2018/19 to the region. While some are returnees, for others this will their first time serving in Africa. On behalf of the AISA Board, the AISA Team and the entire AISA community of schools we welcome you. Please do contact me if there is anything you need at director@aisa.or.ke.

Finally, as a learning organization, we want to hear from you! We welcome your feedback and suggestions, particularly on AISA’s new initiatives, so feel free to reach out to any of us on the AISA team.

Dr Peter Bateman
AISA Executive Director
2. AISA News and Events

2.1 AISA Art Challenge Winners

Mwenge | 17 years

Christine You | 16 years

Louis-Andre Meffre | 14 years

Eva Dixon | Grade IB2

Annie Hsu | 18 years

Kimanzi Kyalo | 13 years

Sakina Karim | 15 years

Hannah Peffer | 15 years

Jenna McClure | 12 years

Sardor Tulaganov, Fatma Said, Sitti Mwinyi | Grade 6
2.2 Introducing eTime – AISA’s Webinar Series

AISA is pleased to be introducing a webinar series, eTime – a play on the theme of ‘me’ time and ‘e’ (electronically) enabled learning time. These webinars will cover a range of topics aimed at providing AISA educators with current thinking and best practice in international education. It is also designed to provide another platform to help our community better connect and engage with each other.

Webinars will take the format of an interview with a subject matter expert and will provide you with the opportunity to ask any relevant questions from the comfort of your staffroom or classroom. The webinars will range from introductory to advanced levels and will cover a range of topics ranging from, Top Tips for Teachers New to the Region, Making the Most of AISA Membership to What is Wellbeing and Why it Matters.

eTime will take place on the last Wednesday of the Month at the following times:
- GMT 16:00
- WAT 17:00
- CAT 18:00
- EAT 19:00

Check out our monthly eCircular or the AISA website for topics and links to register.

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AdvancED Improvement Network

Creating a world of opportunities for every learner.

Global Network with a Local Touch
As the largest global community for innovative and transformative Pre-K-12 Continuous Improvement and Accreditation, the AdvancED Improvement Network (AIN) spans 70 countries as a trusted partner to 36,000 schools and school systems.

Powerful Continuous Improvement System
The AdvancED Continuous Improvement System is a comprehensive framework of aligned and interrelated resources and processes that help guide and facilitate a customized improvement journey. Use the system to:

- Conduct classroom observations to measure student engagement using eProve™ eleot®
- Collect and analyze stakeholder feedback through research-based surveys in multiple languages
- Regularly assess the overall quality of your institution based on the School Quality Factors Diagnostic
- Develop a customized plan for improvement based on your own data

The North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accrediting divisions of AdvancED.
2.3 Micro-Credentials at the AEC2018
Providing Recognition for Your Learning with AISA

Gaining recognition for learning is an important way to communicate to your current and future employer your commitment to continued learning, growth and development. To help you with that, AISA is piloting micro-credentials as an extension of your professional learning after the AISA Educators Conference. In partnership with Digital Promise, Educators choosing to earn a micro-credential will:

• Learn about the micro-credential during the Deep Dives
• Work collaboratively in AISA’s online Community of Practice with others from their Deep Dive
• Gain support from the Deep Dive facilitator via a post-event, group coaching call
• Submit their evidence for the micro-credential directly to the evaluation body

Micro-credentials are offered free of charge for AEC2018 delegates.

What are the Benefits for Educators? Micro-credentials are competency-based, on-demand, personalised recognition for learning that is sharable with colleagues, employers and future employers. They enable educators to show how they have developed as a result of their professional learning, demonstrate how they have progressed through their career and how they embody lifelong learning. Those who earn 3 micro-credentials over 3 years will receive the AISA Professional Learning Award as recognition of their demonstrable professional growth.
2.4 AISA’s Professional Learning Programme for 2018/19

Introduced just a couple of years ago, AISA’s offering of Professional Learning Institutes (PLI’s) has now grown to over 30 events for 2018-19, providing many opportunities for all our educators to access high quality learning in Africa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Institute</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Learning Focus Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24-25 August</td>
<td>AP French Language &amp; Culture</td>
<td>Brian Kennelly</td>
<td>International School Kigali, Rwanda</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AP World History</td>
<td>Mike Burns</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-26 August</td>
<td>Building a Culture of Efficacy: Leading Impact Teams</td>
<td>Paul Bloomberg</td>
<td>AISJ South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-2 September</td>
<td>Governance as Leadership</td>
<td>Bill Ryan &amp; Chip Barder</td>
<td>AISJ South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-15 September</td>
<td>Transforming Schools: Leading and Learning in Complex Systems</td>
<td>Fran Prolman</td>
<td>ISK Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-18 September</td>
<td>School Safety &amp; Security Institute (West Africa)</td>
<td>Bruce Mills</td>
<td>ISD Senegal</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-22 September</td>
<td>School Safety &amp; Security Institute (East Africa)</td>
<td>Bruce Mills</td>
<td>ISK Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>22-23 September</td>
<td>Using MAP testing to improve student learning and support continuous improvement</td>
<td>Amanda DeCardy</td>
<td>IST Tanzania</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-6 October</td>
<td>Co-Teaching: Classroom Partnerships to Ensure the Success of ALL Students</td>
<td>Marilyn Friend</td>
<td>ISK Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
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<td>6-7 October</td>
<td>Making Math Meaningful: Modelling activities to support engagement, higher order thinking, and real-world application</td>
<td>Patrick Callahan, Jessica Balli, Solana Ray</td>
<td>AISCT South Africa</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-13 October</td>
<td>Building a Learning Culture in International Schools--PLC at Work Institute</td>
<td>Tim Stuart, Anthony Muhammad, Tom Schimmer, Darin Fahrney, Paul Buckley, Sascha Heckmann</td>
<td>ICS Addis Ethiopia</td>
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<tr>
<td>19-20 October</td>
<td>Student Agency: Personalized Learning</td>
<td>Taryn Bond Clegg</td>
<td>AISM Mozambique</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-28 October</td>
<td>Taking the Complexity Out of Concepts - A Continuation</td>
<td>Tania Lattanzio</td>
<td>AISJ South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3 November</td>
<td>Assessment: Reaffirming, Reworking, &amp; Rethinking Assessment</td>
<td>Tom Schimmer</td>
<td>ISK Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-11 November</td>
<td>Service Learning 101</td>
<td>Tara Barton</td>
<td>AISJ South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-11 November</td>
<td>Executive Assistants Institute</td>
<td>Angela Garry</td>
<td>ISU Uganda</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 November - 1 December</td>
<td>Adaptive Schools</td>
<td>Doreen Merola</td>
<td>AISJ South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-21 January</td>
<td>Cognitive Coaching (Days 5 - 8)</td>
<td>Doreen Merola</td>
<td>AISL Zambia</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-26 January</td>
<td>Educators as Change Makers</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Dar es Salaam Int Academy Tanzania</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-27 January</td>
<td>Instructional Agility</td>
<td>Tom Schimmer</td>
<td>AISJ South Africa</td>
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<td>Dates</td>
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<td>Facilitator</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-9 February</td>
<td>AISA Librarians Institute</td>
<td>Peer Led</td>
<td>ICS Addis Ethiopia</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-16 February</td>
<td>Literacy Institute: Developing stronger readers and writers</td>
<td>Kathy Collins</td>
<td>ISK</td>
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<td>Daniel Feigelson</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
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<td>16-17 February</td>
<td>AISA Counsellors Institute</td>
<td>Sean Truman</td>
<td>Amani Gardens</td>
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<td>James Rosow</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
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<td>Chanel Worsteling</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-17 February</td>
<td>Personalized Learning Symposium</td>
<td>Tim Stuart</td>
<td>AISJ</td>
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<td>Sasha Heckman</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>Jane Pollock</td>
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<td>Matt Glover &amp; Chantelle Love</td>
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<tr>
<td>22-23 February</td>
<td>Empowering the 21st Century learner through an integrated approach</td>
<td>Annette Ackermann</td>
<td>Ghana Int School</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-16 March</td>
<td>HR Managers Institute</td>
<td>Claudia St John</td>
<td>Rosslyn Academy</td>
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<td>Kenya</td>
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<td>15-17 March</td>
<td>Service Learning 101</td>
<td>Deanna Milne</td>
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<td>Tanzania</td>
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<td>6-7 April</td>
<td>WIDA: Scaffolding Learning Through Language</td>
<td>WIDA</td>
<td>AISJ</td>
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<td>South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-13 April</td>
<td>Rigorous Project Based Learning By Design</td>
<td>Michael McDowell</td>
<td>AISM</td>
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<td>Mozambique</td>
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</table>
Thanking Our Member Schools

AISA would like to thank and acknowledge our member schools who generously host the Professional Learning Institutes, opening up these opportunities to the AISA community.
Since 1955, International Schools Services (ISS) has met the diverse needs of schools, including recruiting the world’s best educators, providing professional learning opportunities, sourcing essential supplies, stewarding school foundations, and founding and managing student-centered, future-oriented schools.
2.5 AISA ALC2018 in Review

AISA WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM (WILS)

The inaugural AISA WiLS was masterfully led by Kim Rayl from AIS Lagos, with expert facilitation provided from Pauline O’Brien from CIS.

“Thank you for an extremely helpful and informative workshop. It empowered, motivated and inspired me again. Your wonderful work is much appreciated.”

This feedback from a WiLS delegate sums up the event and why AISA will be doing it again.

CHILD PROTECTION PRE-CONFERENCE

AISA was fortunate to have the team from Council of International Schools lead a two-day Pre-Conference on Child Protection. 50 participants from 28 schools participated in this pioneering event that not only delivered practical take-away’s but more importantly challenged us on how we think about child protection in our schools.

Left to right: Jim Hulbert, Joe Sullivan, Stephanie Howdle-Lang, Dr. Doug Walker, Jordan Greenbaum, Ray Davis, Susie March, Jane Larsson, Dr Peter Bateman, Pauline O’Brien, Tim Gerrish

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTION FOR TRAUMA IN SCHOOLS (CBITS)

Following the ALC, Dr Doug Walker, Clinical Psychologist, Master Trainer of Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) led a 2-day CBITS institute hosted by ISK. 27 delegates from 15 schools were trained on how to lead interventions for students suffering from trauma. Not only did the group learn valuable skills, but it was a great time to network and connect with other counsellors in the region.
2.6 AISA Turns 50 – Come and help us celebrate

Join us in stunning Cape Town, South Africa, for a very special AISA Conference.

Not only will AISA be returning to our combined format of tandem Educator and Leadership streams, but we will be throwing a huge party to celebrate 50 years of AISA.
Learning is a journey. It starts with curiosity and builds. Learning is the driving force behind transformation. It has the power to rewrite the way we think, feel, and act. Each of us are learners and every day we encounter new learning moments. What we do with those moments is the difference between failure and flight. For when we embrace the process, what we learn about ourselves may surprise us—we discover our own potential and grow. So, what does it ultimately mean to be The Learning Company? It’s about activating students’ curiosity, elevating their teachers’ potential, and transforming leaders into visionaries. Together, we are shaping the future of education, one learning moment at a time. It starts here: hmhco.com

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3. Learning ConneXions

3.1 Leveraging Project Based Learning to Reframe Student Success
by Kim Rayl

Formerly coined ‘soft skills’, there is an increasing awareness that thinking flexibly, persistence, demonstrating empathy, and working collaboratively are just a few of the non-negotiable attributes driving today’s global economy. Likewise, a toolkit of thinking skills (analysing, hypothesising, critical thinking, etcetera) are drivers to unlocking knowledge. However, while most international schools do not face the pressure of high stakes state and national exams, academic rigour and success are often measured by stakeholders through a one-dimensional lens that favours quantitative success (i.e. high Measurement of Academic Progress and IB Diploma Programme scores) to the exclusion of these often undervalued ‘soft skills’.

Held accountable to this limited definition of success, it’s easy for even the most intrepid international school to fall prey to the twin pressures of time and coverage, forcing an either/or choice between ‘soft skills’ development and content knowledge. But learners need time and authentic, scaffolded experiences that enable them to practice, and ultimately transfer, both content knowledge and skills and attributes. How can educators move from either/or to and? One powerful design tool that emphasizes content knowledge and soft skills is Project-based Learning (PBL).

PBL is a curricular and instructional design approach that emphasizes high-quality products and student agency through authentic, real world learning experiences. PBL can mitigate the twin pressures of time and content coverage by:

- utilizing a design cycle that plans for simultaneous outcomes for students.
- shifting the curricular focus from breadth to depth.
- providing students with authentic and relevant experiences that builds their capacity to become self-directed learners.

**Simultaneous Outcomes**

More than simply a series of culminating activities, PBL extends beyond teaching content knowledge; process is also emphasized through scaffolded development of student’s thinking skills and Habits of Mind. Through a guided design process, students identify authentic real-world problems, then design and implement solutions based on research and thinking drawn from multiple disciplines, blurring the sometimes-rigid boundaries between content areas. This type of work creates a wider definition of teaching and learning that extends beyond simply focusing on activities and content to include the thinking skills students need to be successful. Over time, students develop into self-directed learners, taking an active, hands-on role in their learning.
### Depth

Prioritizing depth over coverage is the first step to addressing the time conundrum. A tiered approach to content prioritization, best done through collaboration with colleagues, helps teachers target critical learning outcomes, thereby condensing the curriculum. Teachers go through a process to determine which learning standards are:

- **essential** to know and practice
- **important** to know and practice, but not essential
- **good** to know and practice, but not most important

When we can distil the curriculum into critical component parts, the pressure of time is mitigated.

A critical component of depth is ensuring that students have opportunities to engage with essential and important content at the highest cognitive level of Bloom’s taxonomy. When the stages of Meiosis are readily accessible through a wifi enabled cell phone, instructional time spent disseminating lower value factual content knowledge for recall by students is replaced with ‘just in time’ mini lessons and conferencing sessions that demand students work at higher cognitive levels to analyse, evaluate and create.

In project-based learning, process is key as the **project is the learning**, not merely an addendum. Time is spent scaffolding student development of transferable skills such as report writing, creating and giving presentations, and negotiating and navigating group dynamics. These are critical skills that once developed, continue to support student’s creation and presentation of high quality knowledge artifacts of their learning. Quality of product counts in project-based learning; when evidence of learning is of high quality, trading depth for coverage makes sense.

### Reframing Success

Educational research is clear: students benefit from deep, meaningful learning experiences grounded in the content knowledge, thinking skills and dispositional attributes critical to success in school now, and in preparation for their future work and personal lives. Project-based learning is an effective and rigorous design tool that reframes student success to align with the realities of our global, interconnected world.

**Self-Directed Learners**

There are Six A’s of project-based learning;

I. authenticity,
II. academic rigour,
III. applied learning,
IV. active exploration,
V. adult connections, and
VI. assessment practices.

These learner-centric components are what turn the traditional student-teacher hierarchy upside down as students become active architects of their learning. Transformed into burgeoning business owners, research scientists, and public policy officials, students research, conduct interviews and read case studies as they tackle real-world problems. Teachers are active facilitators and coaches, gradually transferring ultimate responsibility for learning to students. It takes time, support and patience on the part of teachers, but when done right, PBL brings relevance, rigour, reflective thought and relationships to the forefront of teaching and learning.

### About the Author

Kim Rayl is the Director of Teaching and Learning at the American International School of Lagos, Nigeria and a member of the Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA) Professional Learning Design Team. A former middle school English and social studies teacher, Kim also has experience teaching PYP and has worked as a behavioural therapist using ABA therapy for children on the autism spectrum. Kim has a Masters of Teaching, a Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, and a K-12 Administrator’s License. She has taught in public schools in the United States and at international schools around the world including Egypt, Mongolia, Bolivia, Indonesia and most recently, Nigeria. Kim is passionate about collaboratively designing and building teaching, learning and feedback systems that support school improvement initiatives.
What do we need for our educational journeys?
When traveling from place to place, it is in the journey, rather than the destination where we find meaning, purpose and connections to ourselves and others. As educators, many of us have embarked on a path to create meaningful learning experiences for our students. We hope these experiences will help them navigate and embrace a lifelong love of learning that supports their development as active, compassionate and engaged citizens of the world.

The challenge is often in identifying what our students will need to help them embrace and overcome the complexities of living in a diverse and interconnected world. What will guide our students along their journey? How will they navigate the triumphs and challenges that we all encounter along the way?

Navigating Our World (Global-Mindedness)
In a globally connected world, understanding a variety of perspectives and points-of-view is essential. When planning a journey, we often begin by developing an awareness of and connection to the places we want to visit. The concept of global-mindedness is the map that we use for guidance.

Global-mindedness is defined as a worldview in which one sees the connectedness of the global community and feels a sense of responsibility that includes a commitment to serve. In schools, this means that students must develop a mindset that allows them to understand the importance of culture, personal identity and connections to others.

As students explore the world, what competencies and skills should they develop to navigate difference? What affective skills and attributes will foster respect for other perspectives and compassion for others? Research suggests that developing an understanding of our identity, culture and place in the world can assist in developing a strong sense of self, which leads to a deeper understanding of others.

To support global-mindedness, classrooms must provide opportunities to explicitly teach and explore local and global contexts within the written, taught, learned and assessed curriculum. In addition, schools must provide time within the school day for the explicit teaching of the skills, attitude and competencies such as collaboration, reflection, inquiry and open-mindedness that allow students, and teachers, to develop a global mindset. When we better understand our own identities, and explore the ways we are alike and different, we are better able to enrich our own personal journeys and move towards new and exciting pathways.
Identifying Our Internal Compass (Social-Emotional Learning)

As many educators know, when faced with a new context, idea, or perspective, a certain level of discomfort may arise as we try to negotiate differences and understand other ways of life, traditions and ideas. How can we develop opportunities to ensure that our students learn how to respect and embrace new ideas and ways of knowing? How do educators develop learning expeditions that will develop the necessary skills such as collaboration, self-reflection, compassion and open-mindedness? Indeed, how do we as educators ensure these attributes for ourselves?

Perhaps the internal compass for this lies within the exploration of social and emotional well-being, both for our students and ourselves. Self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision making are key pieces that we all need in learning and in life. Taking care of ourselves, which includes the elements of resiliency and self-compassion are important things that we must all develop.

The intersection between the two important paths of global-mindedness and social and emotional well-being are essential in creating the pathways to caring, compassionate, and creative communities of learning. Both students and teachers will benefit from experiencing reflection, well-being and an education that is international. Remember, the journey of a lifetime begins with a single step. I hope you will join me as we discover and explore “Understanding Global-Mindedness for an Interconnected World” and/or “Social-Emotional Well-Being for Living and Learning”.

About the Author

With more than 25 years of experience in education, Dr. Maria Hersey has worked as a teacher, administrator, director and university professor. Maria’s love for international education and positions with the International Baccalaureate (IB) has inspired her work with international schools and organizations around the world. Maria is an experienced IB PYP coordinator, workshop leader, school visitor, lead educator and developer. She is currently serving as the Principal Advisor for Global Education Advisors.

For further information, please contact Maria at globaledadvisors@gmail.com or visit our website: www.globaleduadvisors.com

LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/in/drmariahersey/
3.3 Easy is Boring - Impossible is Depressing
Differentiation - how to meet the individual needs of all learners
by Ian Warwick

Why is differentiation still an area for development?
Many teachers feel ill-equipped to talk about differentiation, perhaps finding it hard to be explicit how differentiation actually works in their classroom. Whilst some aspects of the teachers’ craft are more implicit than others it is probably fair to say that there is some confusion over what differentiation is and how it works both on paper in planning and in classroom practice. A key issue is language. Until a school has a consistent language, a way to talk about strategies used to differentiate, then it remains a very complex area to evaluate. Unless there is an agreed common language and key strategies to achieve it, then Art, Maths, Drama, English and PE will never be able to talk to each other in a coherent and purposeful way.

What shouldn’t it look like?
Historically, many school’s More Able policies initially approached the issue of differentiation from two directions, which can be (slightly unfairly) summarised as:
• We set lots of open-ended tasks
• There is plenty of extension work for our pupils if they finish the task

This combination of open-endedness and extension is problematic. If open-endedness means creativity and critical thinking, fine. Otherwise, the first of these is essentially differentiation by outcome, which is simply inevitable. You turn up. So do they. Magic. And the reality is that open-ended tasks can deliver very closed responses. Learning to cope with open-endedness is a skill in itself and teaching or managing learning in more creative ways may take some colleagues well away from their comfort zone.

The second can be seen by many students as differentiation by punishment. Teachers setting tasks which reward learners for their hard work with yet more work, planning this in advance when it may not be used, possibly not having time to assess or even acknowledge it properly, is all pretty pointless. The danger of saving the best or biggest questions until last or providing rewarding work only to those who cope with the ordinary routine, with the gift of enrichment, is concerning.

Guilty until proven innocent?
In some schools differentiation is quite rigidly planned, with pressure exerted on teachers to prove how they will differentiate for all learners, sometimes way in advance of the lesson. This can involve colleagues taking hours to design tiered tasks, giving students a range of pre-arranged and pre-resourced choices, with extensive opportunities for enrichment. Never mind differentiation by process, this is differentiation by everything, including the kitchen sink, and it is frankly unsustainable. It is also counter-intuitive to what differentiation could mean.

Teachers are expected to scaffold learning, but this may have the effect of taking the difficulty out. Interventions to support may be limited to simplification, so that learners can ‘keep up’; with a focus on receptive understanding, when productive use is required. Research on the value of wait time in discussion appears to be at odds with the requirement for pace, which can lead us to come to the rescue too quickly, or to accept first responses too readily. Knowledge delivered without uncertainty, without the need for our learners to think is unlikely to be remembered. More able learners need to be given the opportunity for sustained engagement with a task, to be placed in situations that expose them to ambiguity, yet the requirements for clarity in planning may limit opportunities for doubt. How do we plan for student choice and provide spaces for them to think?

Teacher activity can always mask a lack of active engagement by the student. A more useful approach is to consider what the learner is actual being asked to do. From their perspective another definition of higher order thinking emerges. This involves any activity where learners are required to take a range of inputs (ideas, resources, knowledge, data, etc) and apply, rearrange and/or extend these to produce their own product (ideas, processes, solutions, analysis). Higher order thinking occurs when learners are required to think for themselves, so differentiation in turn relates to how teachers create the conditions for this to happen.
10 ways to think about differentiation

Through our work with more than 3000 schools we have devised a framework called 10 ways to think about differentiation, which presents differentiation through the following approaches:

1. **Task**
   How do we ensure a healthy balance between open and closed questions/answers?

2. **Resource**
   How do we offer additional content that supports genuine higher order thinking?

3. **Assessment**
   How do we provide a range of assessment methods to gain evidence of challenge?

4. **Pace/Sequence**
   How do we assess how much practice is required to achieve mastery of content and skills?

5. **Support**
   How do we offer support only when it is needed and how do we judge when it can be self-selected?

6. **Extension**
   How do we offer challenging extension materials without them being seen as just more work?

7. **Research**
   How do we best support the skills of active research and offer alternative sources of information?

8. **Dialogue**
   How do we use classroom questions to encourage exploratory talk and active listening?

9. **Grouping**
   How do we encourage the social skills students need to capitalise on the freedom of group work?

10. **We will explore all of the above approaches and questions in greater depth in the Deep Dive sessions.**

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**About the Author**

Originally a teacher in London for 20 years, Ian Warwick set up London Gifted & Talented as part of the ground-breaking London Challenge in 2003. Since then LG&T have directly worked with well over 3,000 schools and 11,000 teachers internationally and more than 150,000 educators worldwide have used our free e-resources.

Ian has published extensively in the field of education, with dozens of articles and chapters in national and international journals. He co-wrote Educating the More Able Student; What Works and Why for Sage and has spoken at over 100 national and world conferences.
3.4 Dreaming of a New Story of Learning  
by Mark Church

Despite countless demands that come with teaching in schools today, I am constantly reminded how hopeful educators can be. Throughout my travels, I continually meet colleagues who think deeply, dwell in possibilities, and strive to deepen their efforts to teach students well. I see teachers as a profession of dreamers.

Could I ask you to do a little dreaming together with me? I’d like you to picture yourself in the weeks leading up to a new school year. Someone at your school is creating your class roster of students. You’re visualizing this new group and you’re dreaming:

What three or four habits, attitudes, or dispositions do you wish these new students would bring to your classroom this year that would take their learning with you really far?

Take a moment for yourself. Jot down the three or four habits, attitudes, or dispositions that would make up your wish list. Do you have your list? What made you say those particular habits, attitudes, or dispositions?

Whenever I’ve posed this very question to educators worldwide, I’ve often heard teachers say they dream of students who are:

• Willing to learn from their mistakes
• Not afraid to give it a try
• Curious
• Willing to take risks
• Open to new ideas
• Empathetic
• Organized
• Persistent
• Able to listen to others
• Willing to consider multiple points of view, etc.

Though not exhaustive by any means, perhaps this list contains similar wishes to the short-list you just drafted for yourself. So, what can be learned from these dreams of teachers? Let me elaborate what I’ve noticed...

As I’ve taken note of these conversations in many places, it seems teachers’ dreams sort into three broad categories:

1. First, I’ve noticed a category of social dispositions on these wish-lists. These are the attitudes and habits that relate to how groups and people function. For example, a good sense of humour or empathy. While not having a direct path to any content learning itself, most of us can see how students having these dispositions would certainly be in a good position to take learning far.

2. Next, there seems to be a category that I’d describe as work dispositions, related to those attitudes and habits that involve school and work performance such as being organized or persistent. Again, not a bad set of habits for students to bring to their learning, whether they be five years old or fifteen.

3. A third category emerges that I’d designate as thinking dispositions. These include those attitudes and habits that facilitate and promote effective cognitive manoeuvring, such as being curious, healthy scepticism, or seeking perspectives. When students bring these thinking habits routinely to the classroom, learning is always better off, without a doubt.

So where am I going with all of this? Just how does noting these categories give us points of provocation for our teaching efforts?

Experience has taught us that social dispositions get quite a lot of time, attention, and visibility in the primary years of the K-12 continuum. Young children able to live, work, and play with one another in ways that are conducive to learning is at the forefront of many primary educators’ minds. Thus, primary schools set about promoting these very habits in their young students. Primary teachers send messages that these habits matter – they matter greatly – and they build systems and structures to support the development of these social dispositions.

On the other end of things, work dispositions seem to get a lot of air-time within the secondary teaching ranks. This isn’t so surprising. With a long list of content to teach and limited time in which to do so, secondary teachers often feel great pressure to help students stay focused on being organized, persistent, and self-directed to meet the demands placed upon them. Secondary teachers send messages to their students that these work habits matter – they matter a lot. Secondary schools thus bring language, time, structures, and routines to the development of these work dispositions among their students.
With that all being said, a question emerges for our collective consideration. If primary schools get good at bringing visibility to the social habits they dream of for students, and secondary schools get good at bringing visibility to the work habits they dream of for students, just where do the thinking dispositions we dream of get their day in the sun?

Most all of us desire students to bring curiosity, perspective-seeking, and openness to new ideas to their learning— but where within the PreK-12 experience do these very habits get promoted with fidelity, rigor, patience, and urgency? What kind of structures and supports could we put in place to help students grow these habits just as much as we provide them systems of support for other types of dispositions we desire to grow in them?

Making Thinking Visible
Making Thinking Visible engages educators in discussions of the development of thinking dispositions in focused, diligent, empowered ways. The goal of Making Thinking Visible is for teachers to develop students’ thinking dispositions while deepening their subject matter understanding. We believe that thinking dispositions cannot be “covered,” rather, they must be cultivated within ordinary, day-to-day learning experiences.

A question we continually reflect upon together with educators like yourself: How do we influence and shape classroom culture to make thinking a more central aspect of learning? We’ve developed a number of thinking routines that teachers worldwide make use of to foster rich thinking habits within their students.

Paying attention to developing students’ thinking dispositions is nuanced and complex; daunting and energizing. But if we do not bring intentionality to the development of a culture of thinking, I worry these dreams of ours could easily get buried in the busy of what happens day-to-day in schools.

In closing, it’s best that we return for a moment to the initial dream invitation. I encouraged you to draft a list of the habits you wish students came to your classroom with this new school year that would be key to taking their learning really far. That was actually a rather unfair burden to ask of you. The students who come to you are the students you get. There is no canvassing of our communities to cobble together some sort of dream class.

The better invitation I might ask you to consider is not one listing the habits, attitudes, and dispositions you wish students came to your classroom with this year. Rather, I ought to ask: Which habits, attitudes and dispositions do you wish students left your classroom with as a result of their learning with you this year?

That is a fair question we could collectively ask, and one, I believe, is worthy of our attention and efforts.

About the Author

Mark is currently a consultant with Harvard Project Zero’s Making Thinking Visible and Cultures of Thinking initiatives, drawing upon his own classroom teaching experience and from the perspectives, he has gained working with educators in various places throughout the world. Mark enjoys helping teachers examine opportunities for student thoughtfulness, use thinking routines as supports and scaffolds, interact with students in ways that demonstrate an interest in and respect for students’ thinking, and send clear expectations about the importance and value of thinking in learning.

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OpenApply is a modern online admissions office supporting every stage of the applicant journey and is fully integrated with ManageBac. Today over 250 schools in over 70 countries rely on OpenApply to help manage their admissions process.
What are the biggest challenges you face in your work?

When I ask teachers, “What are the biggest challenges you face in your work?” “What makes it hard to teach and reach all students?” The following “pain points” are at the top of most teachers’ lists:

- Never enough time
- Lack of student engagement
- A wide range of skills and language proficiencies in a single class
- Too much time spent outside of class grading
- Behaviour and classroom management issues

Teachers face myriad other issues in their day-to-day lives, but these particular pain points leave teachers feeling frustrated, ineffective, and exhausted. When I work with teachers, I tell them that these are the very same pain points that almost drove me from this profession. In my next breath, I share that my decision to embrace blended learning has mitigated or eliminated all of these pain points for me.

Blended Learning Defined

Blended learning is the combination of active and engaged learning online combined with active engaged learning in the classroom. The online components can take place in class and extend beyond the school day depending on the age of the students and their access to technology outside of class. Ideally, blended learning models are designed to give students more control over four aspects of their learning: time, place, pace, and path. There are several different blended learning models (e.g., Station Rotation Model, Flipped Classroom, Whole Group Rotation, Individual Rotation/Playlist, etc.). Each model gives students different degrees of control over these four aspects of their learning.

Learning from Failure

I wish I could claim that I embraced blended learning because I was forward-thinking and innovative, but that would be a lie. Technology was a lifeline. It opened the door for new approaches to teaching aimed at engaging students. I entered the teaching profession to light a fire in my students. I wanted them to be curious and excited to learn. I wanted to create a classroom environment where kids leaned in, engaged in conversation, took risks, and completed work that mattered to them. But I failed to accomplish these goals in the first five years of my teaching career.

Looking back, it isn’t a mystery why my students were so reluctant to engage. They didn’t enjoy any control over their learning. In those early years, my classroom was a teacher-centred, teacher-paced environment. What incentive did my students have to be active participants in a class where they did not experience agency? Not much.

Shifting the Power Dynamic in the Classroom

At its core blended learning is about shifting the power dynamic in the classroom. The models and the strategic use of technology are designed to place students at the centre of learning and allow them the time, freedom, and agency to make key decisions about when, how, and what they learn. The loss of control scares a lot of teachers who are comfortable in their traditional roles. My goal when working with teachers is to make the prospect of relinquishing control to students less scary by highlighting the incredible transformation this shift can have on both the teacher’s and students’ roles in the classroom.
Making More Time for What Matters

Now, I use the station rotation model, where students rotate through a series of online and offline stations, to create smaller learning communities within the larger class, differentiate tasks for students at different levels, work directly with small groups of students, and capitalize on my limited technology. I have also used this particular model to pull feedback and assessment into the classroom, where I believe it belongs. Too often teachers assign work, students complete that work in isolation, then teachers collect the work and assess it in isolation. This traditional workflow results in a missed opportunity to have a conversation about student work and progress. Using my teacher-led station to provide real-time feedback as students work or conference with students to discuss a finished product has allowed me to stop taking grading home. If I want to assess something, I want my student sitting right next to me. I want them to understand where they are at in their journeys toward mastering specific skills.

The flipped classroom model allows students to self-pace through instruction pausing, rewinding, and rewatching videos as needed and frees me from repeating instruction. As soon as I shifted the transfer of information online and stopped using our valuable class time to tell students everything I knew about a topic, I was freed to design student-centred activities. Instead of taking the practice home to complete for homework, students were able to apply the new information with the support of their peers. Although the initial iteration of the flipped classroom required students to watch the videos for homework, several adaptations allow teachers to pull the flipped content into the classroom.

Redefining Roles in the Classroom

The station rotation model and the flipped classroom are just two of several models that have allowed me to redefine my role. Instead of feeling the pressure to have all of the answers and be a fountain of knowledge, I know see my role as twofold. I am an architect of learning experiences and a coach. I design the structure of learning experiences, but students make the meaning. They work from a blueprint, but they make key decisions about what form that lesson or project will take. I am also a coach. I sit side-by-side with my students supporting the development of specific skills. My shifting role has required that my students also assume a new role. When I stopped talking at them, they were forced to take an active and engage role as generators of information, collaborators in shared tasks, investigators exploring topics, and creators of products.

About the Author

Catlin Tucker is a Google Certified Innovator, bestselling author, international trainer, and keynote speaker, who teaches in Sonoma County where she was named Teacher of the Year in 2010. Catlin’s books Blended Learning in Grades 4-12 and Blended Learning In Action are both bestsellers. Her fourth book Power Up Blended Learning: A Professional Learning Infrastructure to Support Sustainable Change will be available September 2018. Catlin is working on her doctorate at Pepperdine University.

She is active on Twitter @Catlin_Tucker and writes an internationally ranked education blog at CatlinTucker.com.
3.6 Effort vs Accomplishment
by Karen Boyes

It is Friday afternoon and my inbox is again featuring our children’s school weekly newsletters. (I’m sure I just read the last one yesterday!) Today, however I was struck with the sheer volume of congratulations and achievements of students over the past weeks – the newsletters are always filled with this, however suddenly I saw this in a different light.

I have been reading and studying in more depth the work of Carol Dweck, Stanford University psychologist. She speaks and writes about Mindset in relationship to success and achievement and advocates there are two types. A fixed mindset and a growth mindset.

People with a fixed mindset believe that their intelligence or talents are fixed – and success happens without effort.

People with a growth mindset believe their basic qualities can be developed with effort, focus, training, coaching and hard work.

This graphic outline some of the differences ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Mindset</th>
<th>Growth Mindset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence is static.</td>
<td>Intelligence can be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to</td>
<td>Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• avoid challenges</td>
<td>• embrace challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• give up easily due to obstacles</td>
<td>• persist despite obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• see effort as fruitless</td>
<td>• see effort as path to mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ignore useful feedback</td>
<td>• learn from criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• be threatened by others’ success</td>
<td>• be inspired by others’ success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My sudden challenge with the school newsletter is that what is being rewarded is the achievement – not the effort. Now this is not to say that the people being featured have not been successful through extensive efforts, it is just that all we usually see is the end result.

I often reflect on the dangers of taking social media too seriously – if you are not metacognitive, you could be mistaken to believe ‘everyone else’s’ kids are always winning awards, getting top in class, excelling at something... and of course they are not – social media is like the antithesis of the news media – focused on reporting bad news (because it sells). Social media tends to be about showcasing the good – now I’m all for this. The challenge is when you take it out of context – the more friends you have the more likely you are to see posts about achievement. You are unlikely to see posts that say, “My kid is the reserve on the B team” or “woohoo – straight C’s or B’s on the school report!” or “Yes! Our darling came 17th.”

Without the metacognitive processing, you could be lulled into a sense of ‘everyone else’s kids are doing well and mine isn’t.’

Developing a growth mindset is essential for success, especially in a fast-changing world where problems and challenges are going to randomly pop up throughout life. A growth mindset means that as teachers and parents we must create a love of learning and ensure that developing resilience is high on our agenda. Carol Dweck suggests teaching a growth mindset creates motivation and productivity in business, education and sports. She says it also enhances relationships.

So how do we develop this learning culture? I deeply believe that to learn to learn you also have to be willing to fail, to make mistakes, to screw up and then be able to learn from these opportunities and experiences. This takes reflection and time. To learn to learn, you must know that is it hard to learn new information, but the more we do it, the easier it gets. As adults we need to step back and let children struggle and work it out for themselves. I see so many children displaying learned helplessness because a teacher or parent is constantly jumping in to rescue and help them. We need to showcase the effort and the journey not just the result.
When praising people, praise their effort, concentration, strategies and give specific feedback. Comments such as “Your persistence really paid off in completing your work today” is far more effective than “great work.”

Avoid comments such as:
“Good boy/girl.”
“Wow, your voice is amazing, you are my rock star.”
“You got a wicket in your first game of cricket – you will be a star.”
“You got an A without studying – well done.”

Instead use phrases such as:
“Taking the time to go back and check your work has produced a great result.”
“Wow, you really stopped to think about your answer and plan your project.”
“Outstanding effort in writing neatly today.”
“Your focus and attention to detail is why you got such a great mark.”

Reflect on the praise you often hear yourself giving – is it the effort or final result that you are acknowledging?

The next time you read a school newsletter, go to prize giving, read your social media feed, be sure to stop and reflect on the effort versus talent.

About the Author

Winner of the NZ Educator of the Year 2014 and 2017 and the NZ Speaker of the Year award in 2013, Karen is a sought-after speaker who continually gets rave reviews from audiences around the world. Her dynamic style and highly informative content—which turns the latest educational research into easy-to-implement strategies and techniques — sets her apart from others in her field. Karen will be leading an Institute on Mindset at AISA Conference 2017.

Karen Boyes
Les Elfes, established in 1987, is a family-run business with over 30 years’ experience in providing safe, challenging and educational experiences for young people. Our camps are nestled in the Swiss Alps and the variety of mountains, forests, lakes and open spaces offer a playground for outdoor adventures. The camp operates year-round and is packed with activities from skiing and snowboarding to hiking, rock climbing, mountain biking, leadership training and language studies. Whether visiting us in the Summer or Winter our programmes are all centred around 5 main learning opportunities for students.

**Building Courage, Working Together and Taking Risks**
Supporting classmates in challenging situations, stepping out of their comfort zones and recognising their own value in a team, through belaying in rock climbing or helping a friend put their skis back on after a tumble. Working as part of a camp environment, appreciating their strengths and building self-efficacy.

**Forming the basis for a balanced and healthy lifestyle**
Understanding the role and importance of physical activity for wellbeing and happiness and building lifelong healthy habits. Enjoying mountain biking or snowboarding and understanding that the outdoors provides opportunities for recreation, relaxation or even future careers.

**Being curious, creative and connected**
Developing appreciation for the natural world around us, exploring and being comfortable in wild terrain and finding new ways to enjoy being outside. Thinking ethically about our impact on the environment and having respect for and a principled attitude towards nature.

**Forming an active part of a camp community**
Caring for others, showing compassion, reassuring teammates who are anxious or sharing knowledge and skills to help others progress. Taking an active role in creating a welcoming and supportive environment in the camp, embracing open-mindedness and meeting students from around the world.

**Building Resilience, Confidence and Independence**
Being away from home students will need to manage their belongings, their timekeeping and dress themselves properly for the wild outdoors. They can build resilience in challenging weather or gain confidence in their own ability as they kayak further than they ever thought possible.

At camp our Elfes learn to cope with adversity, harness equanimity and gain confidence in expressing themselves. At the end of the week it will be time for them to go home, but they leave with the knowledge that their resilience and personal strength can enable them to achieve astounding things!

Find out more at our website: leselfes.com

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*Brad McClain, School Head at Ambatovy International School, was the lucky winner of an all expenses ski trip to Switzerland, generously sponsored by Les Elfes at the ALC2018.*
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