



# FACULTY NEWSLETTER

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

FALL/WINTER 2001

## EXPLORING OUR DIVERSITY

As part of last year's celebration of our 60th birthday, CAIS produced a written history (it's on our website at [www.caisca.org](http://www.caisca.org) if you're interested). One of the clearly observable trends in the demographics of association member schools which emerged from our research is their increasing diversity - not only within individual schools, but between schools as well. At mid-century, fewer than half of CAIS member schools were coeducational and there were no formally religiously affiliated schools, although some schools had chapel programs and Bible study as part of the curriculum. By the mid-90's, 88% of CAIS schools were coeducational and 35% of schools were religiously affiliated. The CAIS Board of Directors, in approving the Strategic Plan that will direct our activities through 2005, affirmed a clear intent "to continue to help schools to engage constructively with diversity in all its important dimensions...and to foster an inclusive climate." In line with this intent, CAIS offered a three day institute, *Developing and Mentoring Leaders of Color*, this fall, and co-sponsored a program with the Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education (CSEE) and New Horizon School, one of our Islamic members, called *A Conversation About Islam*.

- Sandee Mirell, editor

### Becoming a Leader of Color

by Alison Park, *Marin Academy*, English Teacher  
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An institute for leaders of color. I wasn't sure how worthwhile the experience was going to be. For starters, I don't sit well. The irony of my being a teacher is that I didn't do "being a student" that gracefully. I felt like time crawled; I cut classes; I read novels that weren't assigned; I fell asleep at my desk.

To this day, I dread lectures. The irony of my teacher education was that I was still subjected to lectures, including the experiential ed lecture about how students don't learn from lecturing. I use this experience as my holy grail in my daily classroom work and remain generally dubious, even about the pedagogy behind a program for educators by educators.

Then there was the whole "of color" issue. I'm Asian American in the fullest, most painfully aware sense. But there the opportunity was. And there was the fact that I'd considered and been asked to consider different "leadership" roles since I became an independent school teacher. I decided to go.

*"The stories affirmed that our stories had histories and that those histories were real."*

None of this was relevant when I arrived in South San Francisco on a Thursday in October. I'd just run the gauntlet of teaching my regular classes, leaving coherent preps for my subs, throwing clothes into a bag and fighting traffic through the city. I was tired. And not in the mood.

Armed with name tag and folder, I made my small talk and hugged old friends. Then we sat down and heard the stories. The stories were stories we'd all lived echoes of—if not actual parallels. The stories harkened back to years ago when teachers *really* made no money and the kind of discrimination that still goes on today was more direct. The stories affirmed that our stories had histories and that those histories were real.

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# EXPLORING OUR DIVERSITY

## Boys' Mentor Group

by Jeremy Little, *Marin Academy*, History Teacher

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Now in its third year, the Boys' Mentor Group (BMG) has worked to shatter stereotypes and to provide support for younger students at Marin Academy. As an outgrowth of the school's diversity program, BMG was designed to help freshmen adjust to the stressful and very different life of a high school student. Since then it has grown to be a larger support system for the boys at Marin Academy. A natural extension of the program is to challenge the stereotypes of what it means to be a boy or a man at different levels of society. The boys involved saw a need not only to help each other, but also to dismiss some of the messages promoted by the media that inundate our society.

The group includes young men from many different backgrounds and interests. Within BMG, there are athletes, actors, musicians, and leaders in the community who have come together to support each other. Because Marin Academy attracts students from all around the Bay Area, our organization is comprised of people from Oakland and San Francisco, as well as Napa and Sonoma counties, making BMG that much more lively.

As a mentoring organization, BMG helps establish relationships between upper and lower classmen. Ideally, we like to see juniors paired up with freshmen and seniors with sophomores. The hope is that, in order to create a lasting impact, the mentor/mentee relationship will have some consistency over time. The purpose of it is to give the older students a sense of responsibility and direction. By becoming the "teacher" in the relationship, upperclassmen learn more about themselves and can start to take a deeper look at the changes they have made in the last three to four years. These relationships are created in the fall when we pair students together. Personal interests and where people live are two factors that play into the creation of each partnership. From there, BMG meets biweekly to talk about issues such as becoming a man, sex, gender, substance use, and other topics generated by the group.

Between meetings, mentors are encouraged to make as many connections with their mentees as possible. These can be as simple as having lunch together or going to a home athletic match, to catching a movie or an A's or Giants baseball game.

Exploring the stereotypes and images that we see everyday has become one of the groups' main objectives during our meetings. What does it mean to be a "boy" or a "man" in today's society? When do you become a "man"? Questions such as these have started off our year and continue to help us launch into deeper and more difficult conversations. We then find, examine, and reflect on the pieces of our society that reinforce many of those stereotypes.

This has been the biggest test for the young men in the group. Conversations grapple with socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and sexual biases long imprinted in their minds. The group's contract, established and agreed upon during the first meeting of the year, allows the members to let down some of the defenses that are so much a part of their daily interactions in high school, thus creating an atmosphere that welcomes and supports a diversity of opinion, preference, and background. For the Boys' Mentor Group, this all adds up to a safe, fun environment in which young men are allowed to explore and question different pieces of their lives that they may not have the chance to look at otherwise.

“What does it mean to be a ‘boy’ or a ‘man’ in today’s society?”

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The stories required me to sit—and that was hard—but they were worth it. It really helped to know the stories of the institute faculty when it came down to having conversations about what brought us, the students, to this moment in our careers. Although I might've suspected it, here it was confirmed: they understood. They empathized. And they were offering help.

I admit, I didn't know at first what it was that I needed help with—I wasn't even sure what being a leader in independent schools meant. Was "leader" just another word for "head?" Was it possible, in an institution of learning, for there to be a leader other than the head (after all, what do we respect in schools, if not heads?)—if the hand led, would the head be willing to follow? ... Was I seriously thinking about becoming a head?

Boy, did I need help.

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The newsletter encourages contributions to all departments by teachers from CAIS schools. Submissions can be made by email at [smirell@caisca.org](mailto:smirell@caisca.org). Back issues may be accessed on-line at [www.caisca.org](http://www.caisca.org).

# EXPLORING OUR DIVERSITY

## Seeking Knowledge and Understanding

by Kate Fleisher, *St. James' School*, Assistant Chaplain  
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As a religion teacher, the tragic events of September 11 raised a whole new crop of questions for me. They came from colleagues, students, and most of all from myself. My knowledge of Islam, although better than the majority of Americans, was scant at best. I knew that only through education and understanding could peace be achieved, and I did my best to educate with what knowledge I had. Then along came a golden opportunity! On October 24, New Horizon School, an Islamic school in Pasadena, teamed with Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education (CSEE) and CAIS to present, "A Conversation About Islam For Independent Schools." This event provided those of us curious about Islam with the opportunity to learn from Muslim educators and activists in a comfortable, conversational setting.

The event was hosted by New Horizon School, and began with a delicious buffet luncheon provided by the parent association. The emcee of the afternoon was New Horizon's head of school, Ms. Necva Ozgur. Featured speakers were Dr. Hassan Hathout, scholar and author of *Reading the Muslim Mind*, Mr. Salam Al-Marayati,

“There can be no compulsion in matters of faith....dictatorship is farther away from Islam than democracy.”

Executive Director of Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) ([www.mpac.org](http://www.mpac.org)), Ms. Amira Al-Sarraf, educator and author of *Learning and Living Islam*, Ms. Leyla Ozgur, a college student, and Mr. Shabir Mansuri, Director of Council on Islamic Education ([www.cie.org](http://www.cie.org)). Dr. Hathout (with whom I had the pleasure of eating lunch) gave us the history of Islam and Islamic peoples in a nutshell. According to the book jacket on *Reading the Muslim Mind*, Dr. Hathout "has made it his mission to explain Islam as it (really) is." And that was what he did. I was surprised by what I learned, especially by the similarities and common ground shared by the "people of the book" – Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The Qur'an – the holy book of Islam – tells us many of the same stories as the Hebrew scriptures and Christian New Testament. Dr. Hathout is also very knowledgeable on politics and American foreign policy and the roots of today's problems in the Middle East.

Mr. Al-Marayati, also very learned in politics and Islamic history, pointed out that Islam flourishes in a free society. There can be no compulsion in matters of faith. He said that dictatorship is farther away from Islam than democracy. The United States allows Muslims the full freedom that is central to Islam. He also admonished that "Islamic" should not be used as an adjective for terrorism. There should be no religious labeling of terrorism because that validates the terrorists. Further, he said that we all should stand up for truth and justice – it is our duty to God.

Ms. Al-Sarraf, the middle school director at New Horizon School, said we all need to reach out with love, and work on turning a negative into a positive. As teachers, we are preparing the next generation of thinkers and educators.

She suggested finding the Muslim students in our schools and using them as resources. She recommended three children's books to us, *The Roses in My Carpet* and *Muslim Child*, both by Rukhsana Khan, and *Isabella – a Girl of Muslim Spain* by

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## Creating a Safe Place for Everyone

By Catherine Ramos, *Crossroads School*  
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Learning to respect and celebrate diversity is a hallmark of a Crossroads School education. A fundamental element of our school's philosophy is to "...promote social, political and moral understanding, and to instill in students a respect for the humanity...of the earth." Crossroads School, from kindergarten through twelfth grade, is committed to social justice and attracts a diverse faculty, parent and student

body. To achieve our goal of a multicultural, anti-racist, anti-homophobic community, the school welcomes students from a diverse range of family structures and racial, cultural, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds. As educators and parents, our obligation is to create a safe place for everyone in which all students and their families can learn and feel respected. To that end, we offer curricula in four areas: Family Diversity/Inclusion, Conflict Resolution, Steps to Respect, and Human Development.

The K-5 Family Diversity/Inclusion Curriculum focuses on:

- different kinds of families, including two parents, single parents, foster parents, adoptive parents, extended families, step-parents, and gay/lesbian/bisexual parents
- tolerance and respect for diverse families and individuals
- eliminating name calling
- myths and stereotypes that can lead to violence in schools and on our city streets

To assist students, teachers and parents in grades K-5 in developing

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# DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALLY

## Open the Window

by Teresa A. Dickey, *Marymount High School*, English Teacher  
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Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc., with administrative support from the Institute for International Education (IIE), established the Toyota International Teacher Program in 1999 to introduce educators from Alabama, California, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri and West Virginia to Japan. The multi-dimensional program focuses on culture and history, educational policy, environmental programs, and technological developments in Japan. As a 2001 program participant, I fulfilled a personal dream and brought my career into focus.

Despite extensive study of Japanese culture, nothing prepared me for the feel of contemporary Japan. Gargantuan towers rose like mountains out of the asphalt. Tokyo's surreal neon gaudiness made *Bladerunner's* landscape seem natural. The city's pulse matched the intensity of our first week. At International House, Tokyo, Japanese leaders, including Mr. Kazuo Matsushita, the acting vice-president for the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) lectured us on educational, political and environmental policies. We all received a lesson in global politics when, during the same week the USA announced its unwillingness to stand by the Kyoto Protocols. Mr. Matsushita voiced his concern over the Bush administration's decision. The lively discussion that followed concerning global warming and the Kyoto Protocols made me proud of my colleagues and reminded me how much I enjoy teachers and teaching.

In addition to the chance to see Japan, I most enjoyed the chance to meet other educators. I will never forget Jake from an inner city continuation school in Indiana. He knew little about Japan before applying, but hoped to bring a wider perspective to his students' sometimes limited vision. Rosalie, an honors English instructor from West Virginia, applied because she wan-

ted to explore Japanese spiritualism. Mike, a physics teacher from Michigan, studied the bombing of Hiroshima and the physics of the A-bomb. He planned to gather specific data to help his students comprehend the tragedy of August 6, 1945. Roberta teaches art in Long Beach and planned to bring Japanese aesthetics to her students by designing and maintaining a Japanese style garden. Each person's reason for applying differed, but the same desire bound us all: to share our experiences with our students and our communities.

While the intellectual approach to our study tour provided us insights into Japan's political, educational and environmental policies, the opportunity to visit sacred places took us into the heart of Japan. One such sacred spot, Hiroshima, lies on a coastal plain not unlike Los Angeles. An American cannot walk through the Hiroshima Peace Museum or the Peace Park without feeling a sense of wonder over Japanese resilience. Hiroshima rose from the ashes of the A-bomb like the phoenix and welcomes everyone to join in seeking peace — a particularly sobering thought since September 11, 2001.

Just off the coast of Hiroshima sits Miyajima Island, one of the "Three Most Beautiful Spots" in Japan, home to O-Torii, Itsukushima Shrine, Daishon Temple and the Five Storied Pagoda. Miyajima's sacredness derives from a marriage between man and nature. The lingering smell of incense blends with the sonorous tones of a priest's chanting mingling with the water splashing over rocky waterfalls.

As the days slipped by, we found ourselves in the ancient capital, Kyoto. For two days we explored shrines, temples, and museums.

“...serving as an ambassador for my country helped my career and my passion converge.”

On our final night in Kyoto, with a full moon rising over a distant temple, we waited expectantly for the arrival of *maiko* and *geisha* to entertain us. Our host, Sumida Sensei, the foremost tea master in Japan, selected a particularly appropriate poem for our evening: “After playing among the morning glories, the scent clings to our kimonos.” We agreed the impressions from our entire journey would long endure. The Toyota International Teacher Program brought Japan alive for me. More importantly, serving as an ambassador for my country helped my career and my passion converge. From the application process through the two weeks of travel, I confirmed that teaching tolerance for others and sensitivity to global issues must remain my primary concern. Sakichi Toyoda, founder of the Toyota Group and inventor of the automatic loom, says it best: “Open the window. It's a big world out there.” By building bridges of understanding across continents, Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc. and American teachers have the opportunity to turn our “global village” into an enlightened world.

*For more information on how to apply for the Toyota International Teacher Program go to the Institute for International Education website at [www.iie.org/pgms/toyota](http://www.iie.org/pgms/toyota) or call toll-free (877) 832-2457. Applications and supporting documents for the 2002 program must be post-marked by January 14, 2002.*



## New Teacher Support

by Juliet Henderson, *Westridge School*, Spanish Teacher  
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The turnover rate for new teachers is reaching an all-time high. One of the solutions to this epidemic is professional development that helps new teachers adjust by improving pedagogical and communication skills. A respected program that is not well publicized on the West Coast is the Klingenstein Summer Institute, offered through Columbia University's Teacher College and the Klingenstein Center.

The Summer Institute is a fellowship for teachers who have between two and five years experience in accredited private schools with a nondiscriminatory admissions policy. The application process includes submission of a personal essay, college transcripts, and letters of recommendation. Upon completion of the Institute, the teacher receives four graduate credits from Columbia Teachers College. It is a two-week, all expense paid program spent at The Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, NJ. The teacher's school is expected to pay for airfare.

I was fortunate to be a participant in this program last summer. My experience there was inspiring and truly made me appreciate the profession of teaching, providing me with both short and long-term goals for my career. Each day was divided into sections. I was with a study group, then a discipline group (foreign language, English, history, math, science and elementary), finally convening with the group as a whole to listen to a speaker. The speakers this past summer included: Grant Wiggins, president of the Center on Learning Assessment and School Structure (CLASS) and author of *Understanding by Design*; Beverly Tatum, professor of psychology, Mt. Holyoke College and author of *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*; and Michael Thompson, psychologist and author of *Raising Cain*. The evenings were filled with reading, writing, and preparation for the next day.

Besides being exposed to very distinguished educators, one of the most meaningful parts of the Institute was conversing with numerous people who were also new to the teaching profession. I was able to make contacts with new teachers from all over the country, and learn how other schools operate. There were activities, day trips, and free time during which I got to know all the other people quite well. We organized team sports, played games, went out to dinner, and bonded, both socially and professionally. The Institute taught me practical applications, and, more importantly, connected me with a group of people who shared experiences. I was taken out of the microcosm of my own school and obtained a broader sense of the critical importance of retaining good teachers.

If you would like more information on the Klingenstein Summer Institute, please check their website at [www.klingenstein.org](http://www.klingenstein.org), or contact the program coordinator, Carollyn Finegold at (212) 678-3870, or e-mail: [crf17@columbia.edu](mailto:crf17@columbia.edu)



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Over three days of orchestrated small group conversations, incidental hallway banter, formal and informal mentoring and not nearly enough food, I figured out that the challenge for me is teacher leadership. I didn't find a clear path or a fail-proof set of instructions on how to become such a teacher, but I did pick up some excellent tips on how to be effective and stay sane, and I met some excellent folks.

Not everyone was struggling with the same challenge that I was, but they were helpful nonetheless. They understood the universal questions that confront us as ever-aspiring teachers and administrators. What next? How can I do more and better? And they understood the particular question posed to teachers and administrators of color: how can I do more and better for myself, as well as my colleagues, our students and our communities of color?

When I returned home on Saturday after the conference ended, I sat quietly to still the raucousness inside my head—the intense whirling of hope, clarity, enormity and purpose. And when I returned to Marin Academy the following Monday, I felt inspired and relieved, knowing that although I'm alone on my path as an educator, I'm in the company of others walking their own paths.

*Editor's note: Alison was one of forty teachers and administrators from CAIS schools who attended the Institute. Faculty members were: Al Adams, Gene Batiste, Reveta Bowers, Hope Boyd, Bodie Brizendine, Vince Cordova, Ilana Kaufman, and Doreen Oleson.*



# HELPING STUDENTS LEAD

## Student Leaders Make Connections

by Katie Ward, Marlborough School, Dean of Students and Student Council Advisor  
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It's hard to be a student leader. How do you generate school spirit in March when your schoolmates are struggling to keep up with all of their obligations? How can you think of yet another idea for a fundraiser that hasn't been done a million times before? Working in the isolated environments of their own schools, the student leaders at independent schools must draw upon their own creativity and initiative to address these and other issues. But on March 10, 2001, students from eight schools in the Los Angeles area came together at Marlborough School to share their experiences and pool their resources at the first annual Convention for Student Leaders.

As they checked in at the registration table, 80 delegates from Marlborough, Loyola, Harvard-Westlake, Pilgrim, Archer, Marymount, Buckley, and Brentwood nibbled on bagels and regarded one another with a degree of awkwardness. Most were strangers to one another, familiar, perhaps, as the faces of opposing teams on playing fields. They received their group assignments—"purple 7" or "red 2"—and noted that schoolmates were rarely assigned to the same groups. They proceeded to a large-group meeting where Marlborough's student body president, Shaudi Falamaki, welcomed her fellow student leaders and promptly sent the students off to their "color groups."

Marlborough student facilitators led six different groups in a leadership activity. They began with introductions and the opportunity to share something that the student council had done at their school that had or had not worked. In some groups, what was meant to be a quick introduction blos-

*"It quickly became clear how much these student leaders had in common."*

somed into an animated discussion of successes and failures. It quickly became clear how much these student leaders had in common. In the leadership activity, students took the odds and ends provided in a "Bag o' Junk" and designed a product, which they presented to the large group. Designing diverse creations such as "Mardi Gras Man" and the "Arcade Fun Zone Clown Game," they contributed their innovative talents to the group efforts, only to find themselves afterwards analyzing the leadership roles they had played in contributing to the project.

By the time they came together for lunch, delegates from the different schools were laughing and conversing easily with one another. At the lunch tables they sat in mixed groups and carried on informal discussions about life at their respective schools, sowing the seeds of friendship, and exchanging email addresses. Before they knew it they were being called to join their "number groups."

Once again, the Marlborough facilitators led the discussions, analyzing five case studies of leadership issues. *A student council is experiencing serious personality conflicts—what should they do? A class finds itself contesting a closely divided vote for a fundraiser—how might this problem be resolved or avoided?* These questions, among others, provided the students with platforms from which to share their own struggles and triumphs as leaders. They had the opportunity to see that councils were dealing with the same issues from school to school and could benefit from

the wisdom of one another's experiences.

Returning to their "color groups," whom they had gotten to know earlier through the "Bag o' Junk" activity, students had the opportunity to share ideas on dances, fundraisers, spirit days, community service, and various other projects. Furiously jotting notes, they fired questions and threw ideas out to one another. *"Where did you have those dance flyers printed?" "I didn't realize there was a Krispy Kremes truck!" "Let's plan something together—an inter-school event!"* Contact lists circulated through the rooms so that the students could keep in touch with one another after the conference was over.

In the large group meeting to close the conference, delegates made announcements inviting the students from one another's schools to upcoming dances and community service events. They began making plans for a subsequent convention including newly elected student officers, and parted with a feeling that some bridges had been crossed and connections made. These relationships would need to be nurtured, but an important first step had been taken.

Faculty advisors got to know one another as well, also exchanging email addresses and planning to work together to assemble their new student body presidents to organize another convention. If all goes well, Marlborough's Convention for Student Leaders will be the first of many opportunities for the student leaders in Los Angeles independent schools to get to know one another and cultivate collaboration and friendship among the students at the various schools.



# REFLECTING ON THE PROFESSION

## The Goldilocks Principle (or Principal) at Work

by Barbara Thommen, *Laguna Blanca School*, Lower School Head  
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For many years now in education, I have used my time in the summer to reflect upon school life and the ways in which it continues to unfold differently each day, year, decade, and throughout my lifetime. I always have questions about the structure and the purpose of *what* we do in schools and *how* we do it. I gather up the newest books on education to gain the most recent information and perspectives, or I dust off my old favorites to reaffirm my deepest beliefs. With my many years of experience as student, teacher, and administrator, one would assume that these questions would have uncomplicated answers, but it is never true for me. From my inquiry and study come both enlightenment and confusion, I have finally realized that there is an under-

lying principle at work, which is why I persist in these complex pursuits, as do most educators. Here's the answer to my conundrum of many years.

It's all because of Goldilocks.

Yes, you know, Goldilocks. She is the curious and bold young girl in the popular children's tale, who went, uninvited, to visit the three bears in the forest. She walked right into their world, an unannounced, unexpected, spontaneous seeker of truth. Yes, indeed. It's all her fault - or, perhaps, her gift - to us.

As you may recall, in her quest to satisfy her curiosity and gain new knowledge, little Goldie went into the unknown and experimented in the house of the three bears.

*Goldilocks continued on page 12*

## Letting Go

by Jo Bradley, recently retired from *Prospect Sierra School*

One of my favorite quotations comes from William Blake. "I give you the end of a golden string," he wrote in 1815 in his poem, *Jerusalem*. This enticing invitation could well be applied to what we do as teachers: hold out the string and hope it will be attractive enough for our students that they will follow, out of curiosity, to see where it leads. We may not be able to deliver Jerusalem, but, with a bit of luck, in the course of our careers we will tempt a number of young people into the labyrinth of learning.

I held out this string for many years, and having retired in June, I'm thinking about what it means to let go. I find myself reflecting on the multitude of experiences school work has brought me, on the various "hats" I've worn, on the hundreds of children I've taught, and parents I've known. How to come to terms with leaving all this? How, above all, to avoid getting sentimental about leaving the school that has been such an important part of my life for the past sixteen years?

Since memories become rosier over time, perhaps I should give my

*“Even if yesterday your classes went so badly you didn't sleep all night and you are once more convinced you're in the wrong profession, there's an excellent chance that today will be fine.”*

self a dose of realism and remember the bad moments, the exhaustion of reports and parent conferences, the frustration of difficult faculty meetings, the anguish over the student who, despite all our efforts didn't make it through the school. Little things, too: blocked toilets, rained out camping trips, two fifth grade students temporarily lost on BART. There have been births and deaths, illness and recovery. I even had to survive a merger!

As I write this, I feel like an old crocodile that has dragged herself out of some torpid river to lie exhausted on the bank, relieved to be at last out of the slime and muck of it all. But this is not the true picture. I'm really still this person holding the string, quoting the poet, idealist to the end. The truth is, it's hard to let go.

What is it about education that's so engaging? There are several ways to consider this, and at different points in my career I have given different answers to the question. Starting with the children we teach, the greatest joy is that, at school, each day is a new day. Most young people - and I think this applies to teachers, too - are intrinsically optimistic. Even if yesterday your classes went so badly you didn't sleep all night and you are once more convinced you're in the wrong profession, there's an excellent chance that today will be fine. The boy who never picked up a book starts reading *Lord of the Rings*; the student from hell gives you an angelic smile. You learn a great deal about yourself while teaching - how much disruption you can tolerate - what means the most to you in your relationship with children. One thing

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# CONTINUED . . .

### Creating a Safe Place *continued from page 3*

more effective ways to handle everyday conflicts, the Conflict Resolution Curriculum focuses on the following key concepts. Conflict exists in our daily lives and can be positive if handled constructively with assertive, non-threatening communication. People have different values, feelings, preferences, styles of communication, and perceptions of the same event. Keeping cool is important in resolving conflicts. Faced with a conflict, it is valuable to Think It Out, which includes identifying the problem, preparing an I-Message, considering how the other person feels, and considering alternative behaviors and solutions.

I-Messages allow the speaker to describe his/her feelings about another person's behavior, rather than placing blame on the listener. Active Listening allows people to get information and defuse anger. To listen well, people need to temporarily put aside their own feelings in order to understand what the other person is trying to say. Students may elect to go to a designated Peace Place to cool down and Think It Out when they are engaged in conflict. Students are encouraged to use the Peace Path to resolve their conflicts by stating an I-Message; listening and retelling what was heard; reversing roles; suggesting solutions; listening and retelling what was suggested; reversing roles, and mutually agreeing on a solution.

The Steps to Respect Curriculum (K-5) attempts to increase adults' and students' awareness of and ability to respond effectively to bullying. Conflict occurs when two or more people on equal footing have a disagreement. Bullying occurs when a more powerful person or group repeatedly uses that power to hurt, frighten, threaten, control, or exclude another person. Students are asked to take some responsibility for the well being of other students. They are asked to have the courage to reach out to lonely children, and to report any bullying they see to adults. Students are taught asser-

tiveness, emotion-management, and healthy friendship strategies, and introduced to the "Three R's of Responding to Bullying:"

- Recognize the bullying
- Refuse the bullying (Refuse to be bullied or refuse to let someone be bullied)
- Report the bullying

A primary goal of the fifth grade Human Development Curriculum is to facilitate communication among families and assist in the development of persons who

- are knowledgeable about human development
- respect and appreciate themselves, their families, and all persons
- will neither exploit others nor allow themselves to be exploited

The concepts covered include: self-esteem, leadership, decision-making, peer pressure, puberty, body image and eating disorders, depression and suicide, sexual exploi-

tation/safe touch, AIDS Awareness, drugs and substance abuse, violence and self-defense.

Information is presented to both heterogeneous and homogeneous groups. Single sex discussion groups are formed to promote uninhibited communication. Guest experts are brought in to present information and lead some discussions. Underlying all discussions are the basic values of truth, equality, honesty, dignity, self-respect, responsibility, and respect for others. The curriculum is inclusive of all families in the community and is respectful of diverse values.



“As educators and parents, our obligation is to create a safe place for everyone in which all students and their families can learn and feel respected.”



**Save the date!**

CAIS Southern Regional Meeting  
March 11, 2002  
Campbell Hall  
North Hollywood

*Registration will be available on line in early January.  
Deadline February 1. Check our website for details: [www.caisca.org](http://www.caisca.org)*

# INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY

## English and History Teachers Collaborate on Web Site

by Karen Bradley, *The Head-Royce School*  
History & Technology Professional Development Coordinator  
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News flash! Technology itself—the machine—is neutral. The computer/fax machine/projector/software program should not be the goal, but rather the means to achieving an educational goal. Technology’s effectiveness all depends on how it is used. So we must constantly ask ourselves: “How can technology truly enhance the teaching and learning process?”

The idea for a research and writing web site for grades 9-12 originally arose at The Head-Royce School from the history teachers’ desire to collaborate as a department on our research and writing curriculum. The school’s heightened focus on technology in the 1999-2000 school year encouraged us to think of ways in which educational technology could assist us in our collaborative efforts. We realized that learning to do research and to write formal history essays is a very challenging task, one that develops over time. At every grade level, students need help reinforcing material they have already learned; every year they should become better researchers and more sophisticated writers. Teachers, in turn, need help crafting the step-by-step research and writing projects that will maximize student learning and rewards.

We know these things to be true: students learn better over time if the content is reinforced and built upon from year to year. Their learning is deepened when material they study in one classroom complements material they learn in another. They understand more completely when teachers in one class or grade level build *consciously* upon the work of teachers in other

classes and grade levels, and they are more successful when teachers define excellence in similar, clearly articulated, ways.

At our retreat in the spring of 2000, teachers in the upper and middle school history department discussed the idea of developing a “History Research and Writing” web site, and history department chair, Nancy Feidelman, brought the idea up again in the fall. We began to work in earnest after the new year. From January through March 2001, Nancy and English and history teacher, Margaret Yee, and I met weekly to plan the site, make and critique prototypes, and develop content. We edited existing handouts from history research projects and from the ninth grade English I-Search (a research project) to make them fit their new web home.

We presented the work in progress at a joint history-English teachers retreat at the end of March. It was enthusiastically received and the idea immediately expanded: why not make it a joint project, re-titling it the “Head-Royce Humanities Research and Writing Web Site?” After all, learning how to write well is not only a skill that develops gradually over time, it is also a skill that crosses curricular lines. Immediately we began to revise the plan for the site.

In April, English department chair, Carl Thiermann, wrote funding proposals to support teacher work time on the web site over the spring and summer. Two were granted. The project received one internal professional development grant for \$3,000 and an external grant from the Apache Corporation

for \$5,000. This money was used in the summer of 2001 to pay for eight teachers’ time as they built the humanities site (most had already developed web authoring skills), and the site was launched at the start of the 2001-2002 school year.

We see the Humanities Research and Writing Web Site not as a static document, which might well go the dusty way of too many research and writing handbooks, but as a dynamic, ever-evolving resource. We plan to refine pages in response to teacher and student feedback, and to add more writing and research examples. The site is primarily geared to grades 9-12 at the moment, but we are exploring ways in which we can make it middle school friendly as well. By continuing the discussion about the site’s uses and potential for development, we believe we’ll be more likely to promote true collaboration among teachers and departments on this critical part of the learning process.

“...we must constantly ask ourselves: ‘How can technology truly enhance the teaching and learning process?’”

English and History  
continued on page 15

# IMPLEMENTING RESEARCH

## Seven Ways to Make Learning Easier

By James Kingstone, *The Webb Schools*, English Teacher  
jkingstone@webb.org

So many findings in cognitive neuroscience and so much new theory about the human brain have emerged in the last few years that educators are asking themselves, “What does it all mean?” How can teachers benefit from the recent developments in medicine, psychology, biology, computer science, and philosophy? Much of the research has merely confirmed the common perceptions and classroom experience of teachers. But at the Webb Schools in Claremont, California, we are convinced that some new discoveries could lead teachers to be more effective.

We have heard for many years that learning is a lifelong process. Current research radically reinforces this concept. Although none of us can grow new nerve cells in the outer portion of the brain, we can increase brain capacity in the cerebral cortex, the most evolved part of the self. The limitations on brain capacity are speculative; many of our previous ideas are undergoing scrutiny and challenge. We are finding ways to help newborns and the elderly—as well as everyone in between—stimulate their brains and make learning easier. What are the lessons for teachers who wish that their students would use their brains? These seven are worth your attention.

### CREATE A CAMPUS-WIDE ATMOSPHERE THAT HAS AN ABSENCE OF THREAT

We have seen in recent years a push in schools for a safer environment for students, even as we have seen more violent behaviors encroach upon them. Since our emphasis here is more on the brain than upon sociological trends, it would be best to invite teachers to do what they can to make individual classrooms havens from the threatening environments that many students experience elsewhere. Perception is just as powerful as reality in this aspect of learning. Our brains are encoded with patterns for helping us identify threats. Much has been written about the human “fight or flight” instinct. How can we use this encoding to our advantage?

“How can teachers benefit from the recent developments in medicine, psychology, biology, computer science, and philosophy?”

One basic rule that teachers can follow is this: “praise in public, chastise in private.” We should find more private ways (on paper, after class, during conferences) to let students know they can be doing better and to prod them to higher achievement. That said, nothing will invite students to mistrust their teachers and close their brain’s synapses to messages from the front of a classroom faster than words that seem phony to them. Therefore, any praise needs to be genuine, and it needs to sound unrehearsed.

One small, yet powerful way of establishing a “brain-friendly” climate is for a teacher to greet students individually as they come into the classroom. When we become too busy with pedagogical objectives and routine administration, we tell the students that the small details are more important than the big picture of getting them to open their minds and see themselves in a place where people know them and want them to grow. The sweetest sound to a student’s ear is the sound of his or her name. Why not use it at the beginning of instruction time in order to establish the best classroom environment?

Teachers are urged to reflect on the many implications for asking questions in class, testing, and presenting material. Giving students time to think before they respond and making them feel comfortable in making contributions to the group offer ways to stimulate the brain. Feedback to students about inappropriate behaviors—and even wrong answers—will remain crucial roles for all educators. Still, we do not want students to “shut down” or view sarcasm, veiled threats, or hostility to be the norm in the classroom. The individual classroom is

a world of its own—and teachers can make that world a great one for learning.

### ENRICH THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The studies of scientists such as Marian Diamond have shown us that brain capacity is actually increased with an environment that stimulates the senses. The physical appearance of school and classroom can have profound significance. While we seem to be bombarded every day with new data about stimulating newborns and very young children, the evidence is incontrovertible that environment affects learning at all ages. At some point, it is possible to over-stimulate the senses, thus producing a negative effect on learning. However, teachers should resist imposing too much control on this stimulation and, thereby, holding students back. One model in this area of brain research is Gerald Edelman’s. He likens the electrochemical dynamics of the human brain to a jungle environment. The environment does not *instruct* us how to behave, but rather helps us to *select* from among the built-in options for behavior. Therefore, a jungle-like brain may make the best selections in a jungle-like classroom, one that has various layers of sensory input and peripheral learning. Schools and teachers would do well to look at their environments and examine how well they get the senses of their students excited.

### PROVIDE AN EMOTIONAL HOOK FOR STUDENTS

Emotion can be a double-edged sword. Positive emotion can stimulate learning in many ways. Indeed, no learning can take place without some

# IMPLEMENTING RESEARCH

emotional connection to the material. Scientists are beginning to re-evaluate the way we think about and talk about emotions. According to one researcher, Antonio Damasio, we need to distinguish between emotions and feelings. An emotion is a physical manifestation (e.g., an increased heartbeat), while a feeling is a mental acknowledgement that we are having a particular emotion.

Scientists have learned much in recent years as they have studied the amygdala, the brain's storehouse for emotions. Since students have underdeveloped amygdalas and cannot recognize their own emotions—and those in others—very well, teachers need to be able to identify the emotions of their students. Fear and anger, for instance, will cause the brain to be less creative and less critical in solving problems. Teachers who do identify facial expressions and body language can effectively facilitate learning. The best way to generate positive emotions is for students to observe them in their teachers; those of us who are having “bad days” should find a way to leave them behind, as much as possible, in crossing the threshold of the classroom.

## BALANCE INDEPENDENT SKILLS WITH GROUP WORK

Teachers need to develop a wide set of techniques in order to get students to maximize their learning. The work of Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, is very revealing and helpful. As he studied the mental development of children, Vygotsky identified the best circumstances for children to acquire their complex perceptual and problem-solving behaviors. The thrust of his research focused on two areas:

- the role of consciousness
- the contribution of tool use in the development of higher-order thinking

Advances in tool use (e.g., computer skills), Vygotsky believed, are responsible for promoting cognitive development by expanding and refining a student's understanding of the relationship between thought and language. With the advent of

the Internet, web-based scholarship is creating opportunities for students to have meaningful conversations with specialists in a variety of fields. Not only is the computer re-defining the role of the teacher, it is offering a way for teachers to re-think group work. Group activities and projects designed to promote the acquisition and development of problem-solving skills liberate students to establish their own frameworks for learning complex behaviors.

Moreover, group work makes it possible for teachers to address issues related to *metacognition* — how we learn — instead of focusing exclusively on what we learn. Innovative teachers are already making the elucidation of consciousness one of the major learning goals of the most sophisticated group exercises. By focusing on the fundamental features of consciousness—attention, perception, and memory—teachers and their students have the opportunity to engage in a profound dialogue about how problems are solved, and thus how we understand the world.

## TIE LEARNING TO LIFE SKILLS

Many of the skills that students practice in classrooms today are similar to the ones practiced in previous years, without much thought to what those students will do in the future. We know that the brain stores information in networks of neurons that the individual constructs out of his or her experiences. Students most need to know how to ACCESS information, how to ANALYZE information, and how to APPLY information. These basic skills are the ones that the brain has been programmed to perform. The environment of toddlers and young children is decided by parents and by schools. By the time a child reaches the age of 10 or 12, the situation is different. Teens largely determine their own brain development. The volume of the brain will not change much, but scientists have observed a growth in the gray matter in the frontal lobe between the ages of 12 and 16. Pruning (the process of withering away that connections among neurons undergo)

*Seven Ways continued on next page*

## SUGGESTED READING ON BRAIN-BASED LEARNING

1. Caine, R.N. and Caine, G. *Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain*. New York: Addison-Wesley, 1994.
2. Damasio, A. *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*. New York: Harcourt, 2000.
3. Howard, P.J. *The Owner's Manual for the Brain: Everyday Applications from Mind Brain Research*. Austin: Bard Press, 1994.
4. Jensen, E. *Brain-Based Learning*. Del Mar: Turning Point Publishing, 1996. *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*, Alexandria: Association for Curriculum and Development, 1998.
5. Kirby, G. and Goodpaster, J.R. *Thinking*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1995.
6. McGeehan, J.R., ed. *Transformations: Leadership for Brain-Compatible Learning*. Kent, Washington: Books for Educators, Inc., 1999.
7. Squire, R. and Kosslyn, S.M., eds. *Findings and Current Opinion in Cognitive Neuroscience*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998.
8. Sylwester, R. A. *Celebration of Neurons: An Educator's Guide to the Human Brain*. Alexandria: Association for Curriculum Development, 1995.
9. Vygotsky, L. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.

# CONTINUED . . .

Goldilocks continued from page 7

She tried it all, didn't she? Each time she tasted porridge from different sized bowls, or sat on various kinds and textures of chairs or beds, Goldilocks asked herself how it pleased her. "Is this it? Is this the one? Is this what I want or need? Is this a perfect match for me?" In addition, as you may recall, each time she explored, she found out that something was *just not right* about each new experience. "This one is too hard. This one is too soft. This one is too big. This one is too small." To her credit, she persisted until she found baby bear's chair which was "just right," but which, as she soon found out, didn't last. Her perfect little chair broke and left her still searching for something different, something more, or something unique to surpass the last experience.

For years educators have been trying to come up with just the right mix and match of academic knowledge, social and emotional skills, arts and physi-

cal education opportunities for students to grasp as they make their way through schools. The seesaw tips and the scales go up and down; we are always searching for the balance, always questioning our decisions, and planning for ways to do it better. We wonder how to make the pieces fit. How do we squeeze it all into the puzzle of our students' busy schedules and lives?

Not only is the curriculum at the heart of education, but so are the relationships that bind us together. Fortunately, our faculties are vibrant and engaging, our curricula are current and creative, and our students are curious and eager to learn. The mix never stays static, however. Change is also at the heart of education; no two days or lessons are ever alike. The porridge flavors and temperatures fluctuate; no two chairs or beds are ever the same each year. We strive to improve, knowing full well that parents will also be like Goldi-

locks and want more of this, less of that, or something completely different than what we have chosen.

Administrators learn from experience that we will never have it "just right" for all parents at all times. We hope that parents understand that we will experiment, try innovative ideas, learn from our experiences, and continue to seek the truth. Unlike Goldilocks, however, our decisions come from a deep well of caring, commitment, research, and knowledge, not just trial and error. Our strength lies in our perseverance and curiosity about life and how to best present it to the children in our schools.

I invite you to come by my office and try out a few of my chairs. Some are too hard, some are too soft, but I know at least one will be "just right" for you to have a conversation with me about education. (In lieu of a visit, please email!)



Seven Ways continued from previous page

is inevitable, because only those connections which get used will survive. Teachers have an impact on brain development. The key is to tie the skills they test in the classroom to those that their students can envision using in the future. Critical thinking will be one of the biggest needs in the years ahead. Students will employ those skills of critical reasoning when they see positive results and can project their current efforts to future scenarios that seem realistic.

## HAVE STUDENTS SOLVE PROBLEMS AS THEY LEARN

Studies have shown that significant amounts of dopamine and endorphins—the same chemicals present during intense excitement—are released in the brain when people solve problems. Naturally, the ideal problems for stimulating activity in the brain are those that resemble ones students might actually work on in their future lives. Furthermore, when students experience the excitement and pleasure of solving relevant problems in their daily work (despite protestations to the contrary), we can muster greater enthusiasm ourselves and help make the learning more satisfying.

## MOVE FROM THE CONCRETE TO THE ABSTRACT IN PREDICTABLE WAYS

We know that students learn best when they can hook new information to experiences they have had pre-

viously. The best learning environment is one in which the students can create their own experiences. The use of metaphors and similar figures of speech, of concrete examples to reinforce representations and abstractions, and guidance toward making connections between and among elements of the material will effectively enhance learning. We need to ensure that our students understand what they have heard or seen; most of all, we need to make sure they can apply what they think they understand.

In examining the skills we want our students to demonstrate, we should order our emphasis on reading skills and writing skills so that they reinforce critical reading skills. We should guide students to employ a taxonomy of thinking such that the answers to questions are at first derived from entirely fact-based knowledge through a close reading of source materials. Questions then should be answered through analysis and interpretation of those materials. This requires an understanding of what is implied in the reading (including charts, graphs, or images). Finally, students will answer questions, or indeed raise questions, by going beyond their texts. When they face the lessons in concrete form, in ways that the brain recognizes as meaningful, they can gradually move to a point where they are extrapolating, asking "What if?" questions.

Assisted by Donald Ball (history chair), Amy Brotschul (foreign language department) and Paul Tipton (former English chair)



# EDUCATING FOR CHARACTER

## Performing Arts Students Do More Than Entertain

By Ellen Salas, *The Buckley School*,  
English Teacher  
esalas@buckley-la.org

Moral education is one of the four main components of a Buckley School education as envisioned by the school's founder, Isabelle Buckley. Along with training in academics, the arts, and physical education, the curricula of the lower, middle and upper schools include programs that aim to develop the moral conscience of each student. But "motivational speakers" and "experts in the field" often seemed to leave our adolescent audiences numb and unimpressed. Over the past two years, a successful component of the moral development of middle and upper school students has been the work not of these professionals, but of our own performing arts students. Through productions conceived, written, and presented by students in Performance Lab, students themselves have been able to facilitate discussion and educate each other about difficult teen issues.

Starting with the 1999-2000 year, Buckley's most advanced theater stu-

dents have been asked by the faculty Character Education Committee to write and present sketches on issues of significance to teens. For their first attempt, the Performance Lab students tackled cheating and its possible consequences. Through lengthy discussions on the topic, the theater students were able to create dialogue that stimulated discussion among the audience members about the troubling gray area surrounding this problem. Neil Nash, director of theater, said that having students write these pieces is the key to their effectiveness. "The students are the ones who know how the dialogue should sound and which aspects of a subject are of the greatest concern to their fellow students."

So successful was the model of using students to educate their peers that for the 2000-2001 year, Performance Lab students were called upon to write and produce a sketch on the problems of teen drinking for seventh through

"...a successful component of the moral development of middle and upper school students has been the work not of ... professionals, but of our own performing arts students."

twelfth grade students. The play depicted adolescents at a fraternity party where alcohol is flowing freely. Among the dilemmas that arise are the consequences of teen drinking, including drinking and driving, the drugging of unsuspecting girls, and teen sex.

*Performing Arts Students  
continued on page 15*

## Values in Action

by Laura Taylor, *Brentwood Lower School*, Assistant to the Director for Student Services  
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National support is building for the implementation of character education programs within our schools. While it is recognized that families are the first and foremost teachers of character, the amount of time spent in the school environment calls for the instruction to broaden. Two years ago, Brentwood School recognized that we, as educators, must increase the energies we direct toward insuring that our students grow to be caring, respectful, responsible, kind and tolerant adults. We must work together as a community to help our children develop that internal voice that tells them right from wrong. Each and every day we are all presented with opportunities to model,

"Children are learning that they must respect others in order to gain respect."

teach, form and influence. Our actions and words speak loudly to children. As we have all heard: "What we permit, we promote." Brentwood School is proud to have made a commitment to provide our students with a first rate education within a caring community by continuing to teach and reinforce the valuable lessons our children are learning at home. We are pleased to witness the changes taking place in our students

as a result of this, and are happy to take this opportunity to share our values in action.

Through weekly class discussions dedicated to the development of character, lower school students have learned to define responsibility, caring, trust, honesty and respect. We encourage them to apply each of these definitions to their own words and actions and to those of others. These weekly discussions provide the children with a forum to discuss issues and concerns, and since everyone is participating, it models open and effective communication and takes away from any stigma of "tattling."

*Values in Action continued on next page*

# CONTINUED . . .

Values in Action *continued from previous page*

Our weekly class meetings have been instrumental in helping our students learn the value of trusting one another. Once trust is established, the discussions become increasingly candid and personal in nature. For example, in one class discussion, students shared times in their lives when their feelings were hurt. A few students, with tears in their eyes, felt safe to share experiences that touched all our hearts. Their peers reinforced their sense of security by being empathic, offering comforting comments and advice.

Throughout the school, teachers have incorporated techniques to teach caring as part of their everyday lessons. For example, one teacher created a "Pats Box." Throughout the week, if a child hears someone say something nice to another child, or sees a good deed, the observing child secretly puts that child's name in the box. On Friday, the box is emptied, the names are revealed, and those who were observed being kind are patted on the back. The pride on the faces of the children being patted on the back is unforgettable.

The value of respect is not only being taught and encouraged in every classroom, but within our athletic department as well. Children are learning that they must respect others in order to gain respect. Our lower school football coach has incorporated this concept into daily football practice. After each practice, the players sit in a circle and pass the football around to indicate which player has the "floor." They discuss and share issues surrounding sportsmanship, respect and care for themselves, the team as a whole, and their competition.

Emphasis has also been placed on teaching and encouraging effective problem solving and conflict resolution skills. Since introducing conflict resolution steps, we are approached regularly by students who want to tell us how they have solved a conflict using the steps. When they come to us in conflict, we help guide them through the resolution steps, and encourage them to develop their own solutions and plans, so they learn they are capable of resolving conflicts on their own. We are sure to positively reinforce their efforts to instill confidence in their abilities.

Last year, we added monthly assemblies to our character education program. Each grade (K-6) is responsible for heading a monthly assembly for all lower school students. Aside from serving to introduce the specific value we will be addressing during our weekly class meetings, the assemblies foster students' creativity and a sense of community. For example, the second grade created a video in which the students performed skits about honesty and acted as reporters, interviewing students of all grade levels for their perspectives. The creativity, humor, and grade level involvement captivated the audience! Third grade also integrated other classes into their assembly, as well as inviting their buddies at Headstart to share the stage. Hand in hand, they offered a wonderful musical performance, singing about the importance of trust, respect, and family.

Our character education program naturally ties into our community service program. Grade level community service activities have provided our students with opportunities to apply the lessons they are learning about the core values to the outside environment. Several students recently approached our community service coordinator inquiring how they might use a portion of their allowance to buy toys for children in need of support. We supported their efforts and continue to encourage students to take the initiative to give up something of their own to help others in need.

Through the continued efforts of the school, parents and students, we are confident the positive effects of our character education program will continue to grow and flourish!



*Letting Go continued from page 7*

is certain. From the minutiae of spelling tests and semi colons to the glory of dramatic productions or tear-jerking graduations, you will never be bored!

In the course of my career I have gone from teaching to administration, to curriculum planning and more teaching. I have worked with every grade level and taught a range of subjects. I have delighted in being a part of a community of teachers and administrators who had a vision of the kind of institution they hoped to create. The school from which I retired opened in a church basement with fifty-three children. Now, sixteen years later, there are 500 students enrolled. There's no longer need to hold art classes in the kitchen, or project slides on the wall by the staircase.

Large or small, however, the job was all about teaching. I have loved brainstorming with faculty, discussing new ways to present material, integrating disciplines just like life integrates experiences - loved helping students

make connections between what they studied at school and their everyday lives. My hope was always that they would leave school having made the discovery that learning is so interesting they want to do more of it!

Which brings us back to the golden string. As educators, for the most part we will never know what impact we have had on the lives of those we have taught, and it doesn't really matter. The teaching itself is its own reward. The magic moments stretch from that first day in kindergarten, when the parents have left and the teacher is alone with this little group that will be the center of her life for the next nine months, to Commencement Day, when the eighth graders teeter, shuffle and bounce across the platform to receive their diplomas. Just reel out that golden string as if you were launching a kite, hoping to see it fly, and when the time comes, I am telling myself, don't be afraid to let it go.



**Performing Arts Students**  
*continued from page 13*

Problems occur when the designated driver becomes attracted to one of the college boys at the party and drinks to excess, and when one 15-year-old disappears from the party after drinking and being drugged by one of the fraternity hosts. The theater students presented realistic portrayals of young college men out to "party hardy." Nash said that he gauged the effect of the presentation by the student body's reception of it. "When I heard the audience laugh and then get quiet in the right places, I felt we had been successful."

No commentary or explanation was offered to the student audience. They watched the convincingly real, and often humorous, performances of their peers and then, as in the previous year, broke into discussion groups. The aim of the discussions was to allow students to talk about what the choices the characters had

made and what they would do when faced with similar situations.

For the 2001-2002 year, Nash is making small, but significant, changes to the presentation. Students will again write and present the sketch. In addition to presentations to the middle and upper schools, however, a modified production, acted by the Advanced Theater classes, will be presented to Buckley's lower school children. For the older students, the sketch this year will not be followed by discussion, but audience members will be able to direct questions to the actors who will stay in character for their responses. Nash hopes that this interaction will prompt students to ask, "Why did you make that decision?" types of questions. The topic for this year has not been chosen because Nash believes that one will offer itself during the course of the year.

Not only does this project serve the entire school community, but also the four to five weeks of preparation required of the theater students allows them to build crucial skills of their craft. They develop their playwriting skills in the outlining and formation of dialogue, their directing skills as the cast works to clarify and edit the sketches for maximum effectiveness, their acting skills, and their improvisation skills.

In the difficult area of character education, Buckley's performing arts department seems to have found a formula that achieves its goal. The work of Buckley's theater students and the response of the general student body have illustrated that when asked to carefully consider dilemmas and problems, most teens will make the right choice.



**Knowledge and Understanding**  
*continued from page 3*

Yahiya John Emerick. I plan on adding all three to our school's library.

Ms. Leyla Ozgur gave us her views on being a young, religious Muslim in America today. She informed us of how practicing her faith influenced her life and her outlook. She is actively involved in organizations for young Islamic people, and her enthusiasm for life and faith was contagious.

Mr. Shabir Mansuri, told us of his work with the school textbook companies on including a positive Islamic image and history in textbooks. The Council for Islamic Education has many resources available for educators today, including *Teaching about Islam & Muslims in the Public School Classroom – a Handbook for Educators*. All the conference attendees received a

copy of this wonderful text. I used it to plan my unit on Ramadan for my fifth grade world religions class.

It is important for all of us to understand the role religion plays in current world events. We must strive to understand what we believe as well as what others believe. I am grateful for this opportunity provided by CAIS, CSEE, and New Horizon School to have a conversation about Islam. To quote the Prophet Mohammed, "The search for knowledge is a sacred duty imposed upon every person."



**English & History** *continued from page 9*

In a straightforward way, the Humanities Research and Writing Web Site is an example of how we can use educational technology to open the doors of our classrooms and the drawers of our teaching files to our colleagues and students, improving teaching practice and student learning. The Humanities Research and Writing web site will provide a central source to which new and experienced teachers in every department can refer when planning research and writing assignments in grades 9-12. It will enhance collaboration among teachers in English and history so that students receive clear guidance across departments over the course of their four years of high school. And it will be a place to which teachers can refer students when, in rare moments of uncharacteristic forgetfulness, they say, "Parenthetical citations???" We never learned how to do parenthetical citations!!!"

Feel free to visit the site at  
<http://ns.headroyce.org/~humanities>.



# CAIS CALENDAR

## 2002

### January 29, 2002

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DAY  
"Do I Belong in This Classroom?"  
A Conversation with Mona Halaby"  
*Oakland*

### February 2 - 3, 2002

TRUSTEE/SCHOOL HEAD CONFERENCE  
*The Argent Hotel, San Francisco*

### February 10 - 12, 2002

RETREAT FOR BEGINNING MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS  
*Mary & Joseph Retreat Center, Palos Verdes*

### February 27 - March 2, 2002

NAIS CONFERENCE  
*San Francisco*

### February 28, 2002

SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY & TECHNOLOGY  
PROFESSIONAL DAY  
"Bring History to Life Through Technology"  
*Atherton*

### March 8, 2002

ENGLISH PROFESSIONAL DAY  
"Teachers as Writers: Nurturing Our Creative Lives"  
*Oakland*

### March 11, 2002

SOUTHERN REGIONAL MEETING  
*Campbell Hall, North Hollywood*

### March 13, 2002

COUNSELING PROFESSIONAL DAY  
"Assessment of Sensory Integration Dysfunction and  
Nonverbal Learning Disability"  
*San Francisco*

### March 14, 2002

ADMINISTRATION PROFESSIONAL DAY  
"Leadership Development for Institutions in Times of  
Change"  
*Walnut Creek*

### March 15, 2002

MATH PROFESSIONAL DAY  
"From Linear Functions to Logarithms to Lego Robots"  
*Ross*

### March 17 - 19, 2002

RETREAT FOR EXPERIENCED TEACHERS  
*Smoke Tree Ranch, Palm Springs*

### March 19, 2002

PBC ONE-DAY TEACHER SABBATICAL  
"Globalization of the Curriculum Through Technology"  
*The Harker School, San Jose*

### March 22, 2002

VISUALARTS PROFESSIONAL DAY  
"Digging for Hidden Treasure: Artistic Inspiration on the Net"  
*Ross*

### April 5, 2002

LIBRARY SCIENCE PROFESSIONAL DAY  
"Archives and Preservation: Saving Our Schools' History  
and Special Materials"  
*Salinas & Monterey*

### April 17, 2002

SCIENCE PROFESSIONAL DAY  
"Science at the Exploratorium"  
*San Francisco*

### May 1, 2002

INTERMEDIATE GRADES PROFESSIONAL DAY  
"Bob Miller's Light Walk"  
*San Francisco*

### June 16 - 18, 2002

2002 ANNUAL MEETING  
*Four Seasons Biltmore, Santa Barbara*

### November 3 - 5, 2002

RETREAT FOR BEGINNING ELEMENTARY TEACHERS  
*La Casa de Maria, Santa Barbara*

### November 11 - 13, 2002

RETREAT FOR BEGINNING SECONDARY TEACHERS  
*Vallombrosa Center, Menlo Park*

## 2003

### February 1 - 2, 2003

TRUSTEE/SCHOOL HEAD CONFERENCE  
*The Regal Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles*

### February 26 - March 1, 2003

NAIS CONFERENCE  
*New York*

### March 10, 2003

NORTHERN REGIONAL MEETING

### June 15 - 17, 2003

2003 ANNUAL MEETING  
*Four Seasons Biltmore, Santa Barbara*

### July 2003

PACIFIC BASIN CONFERENCE  
"CREATING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND A BETTER WORLD"  
*Brisbane, Australia*