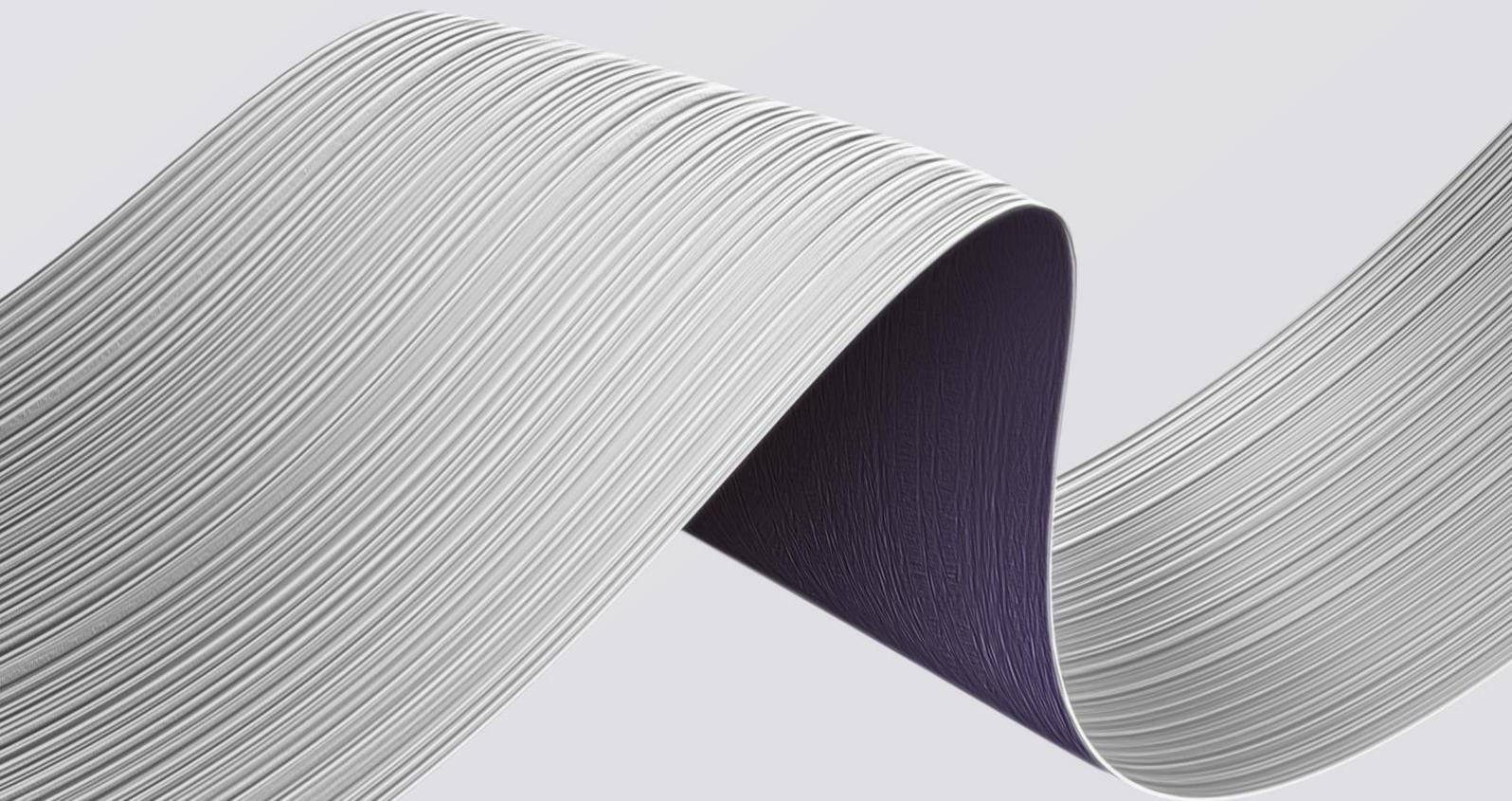


# Insight

Comments on current education topics from leaders across the Dukes colleges and wider family.

**Issue 3 | June 2020**



# Contents

---

|   |    |
|---|----|
| The challenges of teaching the creative arts in lockdown.....                             | 2  |
| Digital Media and Design: an exciting new A-level for virtual natives and creatives ..... | 3  |
| Education without borders .....   | 5  |
| GAP years and the new normal.....   | 9  |
| Global Economics: teaching A-level to EAL students.....                                   | 11 |
| Why you should do your undergraduate degree in Europe or Asia. ....                       | 13 |
| International secondary school curriculum and selective US university admissions .....    | 17 |
| UCAT and BMAT: the key to success.....  | 19 |
| Why study A-level Business Studies?.....  | 21 |
| The 'Power of Touch' .....  | 23 |
| The past, the present and the future. Tense. ....   | 24 |
| A call for change .....   | 26 |
| Changing the way pupils think about physical activity .....                               | 28 |
| Weekly quotes collection – May/June.....  | 30 |

# The challenges of teaching the creative arts in lockdown

---

*How do we at Hampstead Fine Arts College continue to inspire and support students during their physical absence from College? This is a question we all had to grapple with in March, and now two months later, it is clear that although the College resources are valuable, it is the commitment of tutors to share the love of their subject that is proving invaluable. The location has changed and the hands-on, 'Let me show you' has been replaced with, 'I'll find a You Tube video for you, and paste it into the chat'. Materials have changed and students are creating 'form', or ideas for fashion fabrics with paper, wire and items collected from around their homes; clearly demonstrating creativity can flourish in the most unusual of situations. **Candida Cave**, Founding Principal of Fine Arts College, recounts the experience so far.*

The Lower Sixth always begin research for their Personal Investigation theme in the Summer Term examining the 'here and now' as a starting point. For obvious reasons, this has become a very pertinent endeavour this year. The students have been exploring their 'Location in Isolation' with issues like security, captivity and claustrophobia under consideration. The negative effects of the lockdown are contrasted with a new appreciation of nature. The simpler life and reduced pollution have produced some unexpected benefits.

The Upper Sixth have continued to research their externally set assignments with themes like 'Gap' taking on an alarming new relevance. Our remarkable young artists have embraced the strangeness of their predicament making powerful statements regarding freedom and constraint in an array of media ranging from winged performances on rooftops to intense self-portraiture printing directly from the body onto rolls of paper.

The difficulties of teaching online have been partially countered with the use of films and talks that tutors have recorded to be enjoyed at any time, in any location. All our graphics students are being encouraged to create work for the 'Bow seat Ocean awareness contest', a competition launched by an American organisation for 11 to 18 year olds across the globe. The aim is to who raise awareness of the damage being done to our oceans and to publicise initiatives that will help prevent further damage. Students are encouraged to immerse themselves in research on the internet before using creativity and experimentation to come up with exciting graphics relating to the brief.

Teaching remotely has been quite a smooth transition for the Photography Department. The online setup suits the way Photography students and teachers operate. In fact, the immediacy of uploading work and getting feedback seems to have unleashed a great increase in creativity from the students. We live in a visual world, and technology is developed with the sharing of images and information in mind. As such,

we are able to utilise it in order to keep regular communication open with students, guiding them in their schoolwork, so that as far as possible, it's 'business as usual'.

It is exciting to be able to continue lessons with students in different countries, discussing work face-to-face and ensuring everyone is happy, safe, and well. Just as in 'normal times', students can use lessons to see each other and talk about photography in the way they would at college. The routine helps to keep everyone motivated, and the time spent together is something to look forward to. Together we are planning the possibility of new projects online, and an end-of-year virtual exhibition. We are lucky to have the technology at hand to do so, and we will continue to get the most out of it in these strange and unusual times.

## Digital Media and Design: an exciting new A-level for virtual natives and creatives

---

*Digital Media and Design is an exciting new creative A-level introduced at Rochester Independent College in 2019. **Nicki Komorowski** who has taught Film and Media Studies successfully at RIC since 2008 launched it and explains its appeal to a new generation of tech savvy students.*

It may sound similar to Media Studies A-level, but this new Cambridge A-level is really very different as it is 100% production based rather than having traditional academic content alongside project work. Students are taught a range of digital media skills and although the initial focus has been moving image and digital photography, we're looking forward to exploring mobile and multimedia applications next year.

The emphasis really is on 'media' and 'design'. Our students are encouraged to research, explore, experiment and develop innovative ideas influenced by different artists from different fields. We don't just look at the digital arena to take stock. For example, we've looked at theatre set design, performance art, sculpture and architecture to inspire us so far. And we do mean 'us'. We pitch ideas, evolve projects and introduce each other to things we've seen on our own daily digital journeys as the face of the internet is changing so quickly; the sharing of ideas from student to teacher is of equal importance in this subject because of the growing user experience. Lots of 'mini-projects' introduce a wide variety of skills and we take full advantage of a broad range of software, trialling new platforms and evaluating them to see if they meet our production needs for products such as:

- Music videos (including lyric videos)
- Visual poetry
- Short films (fictional, experimental and documentary for example)
- Animation shorts including stop frame
- Photostories and Photo essays
- Photographic installation or projections
- Animated visitor guides
- Web design
- Social media promotional films as part of an online campaign
- Mobile phone games
- Creative multi-media displays

Once basic skills have been established, our students follow their own interests and create their own path. Their final production is self-led which means they are free to write their own brief and target a suitable audience. This year's students all chose to create products they were passionate about, with three students dealing with real clients to create digital media content for an existing brand and target audience. Products included:

- A music video for an up and coming post-punk band
- A social media campaign for a new streetwear fashion label
- An architecture media projection
- A short neo-noir film
- An animated title sequence for Egyptian football
- A short social realist film with a twist
- A music lyric video
- Visual poetry influenced by German Expressionism
- An immersive digital experience for a museum on sustainable transport
- Photo essays inspired by documentary photographers and cubism

Digital Media and Design suits UK students as well as international students as the nature of digital content creation means that students can share their own experiences from across the globe. This year we had students from the UK, Ghana, Zambia, Reunion, Egypt, China and the Philippines.

[See a sample of this year's work from our students here.](#)

[RIC student Anna Cottrill's award winning 2019 coursework film "Irreversible", is available here.](#)

Anna's film was the winner of the ISA Film and Digital Art Competition.

Digital Media and Design really does work well alongside Film Studies and Media Studies as although there are some cross-over skills, the focus in the subjects are very different. However, students this year

studied a wide range of A-levels with Digital Media and Design from Maths and Economics to Graphics, Music Technology, History of Art and Photography. It is offered as both a one and a two-year A-level course and the perfect preparation for students looking at progressing to creative courses at university and film schools.

## Education without borders

---

*One of the elements of the winning formula at Rochester Independent College is the dynamic mix of local students with inspirational young people from overseas. At RIC 75 % of our 345 students are British and international students from 30 different countries study alongside them each year. Former RIC A-level student and current Admissions Administrator **Georgina Winney** explores how integration can be promoted in boarding schools and the benefits it brings.*

The decision to leave behind your family and relocate around the world to be educated is a huge one and one that comes with challenges that we as boarding schools should be aware of in order to make this transition as easy as possible. This is something that Rochester Independent College does well by implementing many different activities and by always providing a listening ear for our students to voice their concerns.

When moving to a new school, international students leave behind their social support networks which can be difficult to re-establish in a new country where there are more social barriers than students are used to. This can be particularly problematic for students moving from different cultures where close relationships are promoted, to a country where we have a more individualistic society (Skromanis et al., 2018). It is our role then to make sure students are supported in re-establishing social support in their new surroundings, both with staff members and more importantly in finding friends.

Making friends in a new school can be intimidating and when there is a language barrier and cultural differences to navigate this task can become even harder. It has been shown that one of the main factors in how quickly students adapt to their new country was how soon they establish a friendship group. Students have often left behind a large friendship group or a collection of close friends, whom they have built a relationship with over many years. Students who find themselves to be the only member of a certain nationality or culture have been shown to make more international friendships and this can be facilitated by encouraging them to mix with others in boarding who may share common interests. For those who find they belong to a larger cultural group they find it easier to make connections with others in their group as they will have an understanding of the cultural background and the possibility of a shared first language. This is not to be discouraged as students must feel settled but it would be advised to help them consider meeting others from outside of this comforting bubble to give them a more varied student experience.

ISI reported that at Rochester “Relationships between pupils are totally inclusive, creating a harmonious community of day and boarding pupils.” Alex Song from China, now studying at Politics at SOAS, confirms: **“There were more local students here than expected but this was good – to be honest, there is not much difference between the national or international students. We are all students together.”**

Studies have shown that international students desire contact with home students to enrich their experience of studying in another country (Ward, 2001). These are the relationships we should therefore be facilitating. In boarding this is done through trips and activities, especially with our boarding induction day where students work in teams to complete tasks such as orienteering or boating on the local river. In Year 12 there is a similar day where students will be grouped together with those they don't know to participate in activities. We should look to do this more often making sure that international students are given the opportunity to get to know home students. Research has shown that despite the desire to have contact with home students, international students are often put off from approaching them, as they feel they already have set social groups due to their shared cultural background. What we therefore should make apparent to our international students is that a lot of the Rochester cohort each year are new to the College and although they may share a cultural background they too are in a position of not knowing anyone; and are probably also finding the prospect of meeting new people quite daunting. Viviana D'Esposito from Italy says: **“I made more friends more quickly and from a broader range of people because I was on the Student Council, which was a really great opportunity to meet loads of different people that I otherwise would not have spoken to, let alone made such good friends with.”**

It has been shown that sharing accommodation with people from other cultures facilitates social interactions which can be built upon to form the basis of friendship (Bryne et al, 2019). This is something we feel we do well at Rochester. Students have their own individual bedrooms but the houses are mixed culturally and students can spend time together in the shared communal areas. We also have found that our cultural themed food nights have been extremely popular and break down some of the barriers that exist between international and British students in boarding. Bonding over food is something common to most cultures and experiencing new things allows for an open mindedness leading to conversation. Food brings people together and has the ability to help international students overcome other stressors in their relocation to a new country. (Bryne et al, 2019). Therefore, these events we host help students feel more at home, going forward incorporating more foods from different cultures may help our students settle in more quickly as it gives them a little bit of home whilst they are abroad. We have already taken on board suggestions from our students and now provide chopsticks in the canteen for those who wish to use them instead of metal cutlery.

We should all be aware of the stresses of moving to a new country to pursue education for our international students. They will be experiencing new culture, new educational experiences, working in a different time zone and navigating making new friendships. All these stressors can have a negative impact on student health and yet international students may be reluctant to step forward and speak to someone about their issues. Barriers to seeking help with health and mental health can be poor awareness of the support available and how to access it, language barriers and/or the perceived stigma

of asking for help and any impact disclosing a problem may have on their academic performance (Ting & Hwang., 2009). Therefore, it is essential that we ensure students know where to turn when they are in need and that a greater understanding of mental health is given to those who may not have been given an understanding of its negative effects prior to their move to the UK.

Here at Rochester we have a great team in boarding including our International Coordinators who operate an open-door policy where students can drop in and talk about any issues they may be facing. One thing that students seem to appreciate is the ability of the team to speak many languages which allows many of them to converse in their native language. In being able to talk freely without the fear of a language barrier problems can be addressed more quickly and issues are not misunderstood. The team are able to translate the students' concerns and pass them to the appropriate member of staff who is then able to address them correctly. In some ways when unwell it could be a comfort for students to be able to speak to someone in their native language as it will give them a reminder of their social networks at home and remove further stress of trying to explain symptoms they may not know the translation for.

We also have our onsite nurse and nurse assistant who work with the boarding team to ensure our students are well cared for and their health needs addressed. We also have close links with the doctor's surgery where our students are registered and on a couple of occasions they have asked if a student will require an interpreter in their appointment. With the team and external sources working together to ensure students are supported we feel that their issues are listened to and that they feel secure at the College. Students should feel that they have someone who is able to listen to them. Our personal tutors, form tutors and boarding team work as one to pass messages about student progress and welfare to make sure that all aspects of the students experience are monitored to ensure they have the best time possible and gain the most from their experience.

Chloe Xu from China, now studying Philosophy and Economics at the LSE says **"I chose RIC for a comprehensive education – there are lots of different nationalities and loads of different subjects. The boarding is really flexible which I like and the boarding staff are always available if you need anything. The classes are much smaller here than in China so you and the teacher can easily ask each other questions. The teachers are all really nice!"**

Studying alongside international students also has benefits for our home students. By mixing with international students in classes, everyone experiences a broader experience of life and may also learn new ways of tackling problems as educational understanding and techniques blend together in our small class sizes. Working with students who have come to us due to their educational performance such as the Thai scholars who the College proudly host each year, gives home students an incentive to work harder to keep up with their peers. This healthy competition in the classroom is of benefit to all and also allows students to work together, forming bonds as they tackle problems and overcome them as a collective. By working together in the classroom, they may also then develop conversation between classes which in time will develop into a stronger bond. Whether this remains as classmates or blossoms into a friendship does not necessarily matter, what does is the shared companionship, allowing home students to develop

their cultural understanding, whilst helping international students feel more supported and part of the whole school community.

Home students may also find that their social skills develop when spending time with international students as they overcome language barriers in their communication. With the current translation apps available this is becoming easier all the time, students can use their phones to instantly show each other words that they do not understand and in doing so communication becomes quicker. This is also something that can be considered in the classroom where terminology may be tricky for international students, they should be given the opportunity to translate words or phrases into their native language to aid their understanding. Here at Rochester our fantastic EAL team work with our students on phrases and vocabulary that is common in their subjects to aid their understanding and thus improve their performance in the classroom. By taking the time to explain what terms mean students are able to fully access the material rather than being left with gaps in their knowledge caused by a lack of understanding caused by the language barrier.

With the current coronavirus situation our role in supporting our international students grows. We must make sure that they are aware of any issues surrounding their arrival into the country, this can be done by making sure we keep up to date with the UKVI advice and keep in close contact with our visa solicitors. Any changes to how and when students can arrive in the country and quarantine measures they must take should be passed on to parents, agents and guardians in a timely manner so that they can adjust plans accordingly. When students arrive at the College they should be aware of any measures in place to keep them and others safe and healthy. This should be done in a factual and calm way to maintain a sense of trust and to prevent a sense of panic within the student body. We should remind them that we are all adjusting to this new form of education and they are not alone in their experiences. Perhaps if possible a translation of the advice can be provided to students on arrival, so that they have something to read that won't come with an additional language barrier. We will be doing all of these things at Rochester.

Most importantly though we should continue as we always have, which is to be warm and receptive and to do our utmost to make sure the students who have opted to leave everything they know behind are welcomed warmly, encouraged academically and supported pastorally to ensure they have the best experience of the UK education system possible.

---

Byrne, E., Brugha, R., & McGarvey, A. (2019). 'A melting pot of cultures' -challenges in social adaptation and interactions amongst international medical students. *BMC medical education*, 19(1), 86. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-019-1514-1>

Skromanis, S., Cooling, N., Rodgers, B., Purton, T., Fan, F., Bridgman, H., Harris, K., Presser, J., & Mond, J. (2018). Health and Well-Being of International University Students, and Comparison with Domestic Students, in Tasmania, Australia. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 15(6), 1147. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15061147>

Ward C. The a,B,Cs of acculturation. In: Matsumoto D, editor. *Handbook of culture and psychology*. Edn. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; 2001. pp. 411–446. [[Google Scholar](#)] [[Ref list](#)]

## GAP years and the new normal

---

*'Gap' years, pre-2008, had become a widespread expectation amongst privately educated students in the anglophone world. A year of post-school, pre-university recreational and educational world travel, with plenty of adventure, photo-opportunities and some service activities thrown into the mix, were part of the standard recipe, with destinations such as Vietnam, Brazil and India featuring large. The economic crash of 2008 changed that, such that the academic year 2007 – 2008 is on record as the year in which the largest number of students in the United Kingdom took a 'gap' year. **James Harding**, Headteacher at Earlscliffe, looks at Covid-19's likely impact on the 'gap' experience.*

The concept of the 'gap' year is far from being a recent phenomenon. A prolonged period of educational travel, sometimes known as the 'grand tour' has been a feature of the northern European educational experience since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The history of Italy's famous artistic cities, particularly Rome, Florence, Venice and Naples, is full of anecdotes and evidence of young, rich, male British travellers (the 'milordi') in search of aesthetic enrichment, a portrait for the family house at a knock-down price, and perhaps some antique statuary or other exquisite objects to ship back home. Education of this travelling elite was based on the classics, and so to finish a 'gentleman's' education, a trip to the locations featured in Vergil's writings, for example, was seen as a desirable completion. Such travellers were not only British, nor was the travel only to Italy. For example, in the early nineteenth century, Felix Mendelssohn, the German composer, famously visited Italy, but his extended travels as a young man also encompassed Scotland, a destination gaining popularity at that time due to the writing of Sir Walter Scott and the romantic age's preoccupation with striking scenery and 'remote' locations. As the Ottoman Empire weakened, Greece, seen as the source of European culture, became more accessible to northern travellers on the 'grand tour'.

The modern age has seen a revival of the idea of character-building, extended educational travel to places of cultural interest, and this has involved more significant numbers of young people. The 1960s and 1970s, for example, saw the establishment of many organisations set up for the sole purpose of organising and facilitating 'gap' years. In the early 2000s, school-leavers in the independent sector were increasingly encouraged to think about a 'gap' year which combined travel for pleasure with specific charitable or service elements: teaching English in a school, or becoming involved in an environmental project, for example.

An increasing awareness of the environmental impact of recreational travel has questioned the idea of the traditional 'gap' year (though Greta Thunberg's ongoing and extended 'gap' year with its sailing and train

travel illustrates how the concept could be adapted in the world of ‘Extinction Rebellion’). Awareness of the environmental impact of world travel has run alongside an increasing awareness of the negative and often destructive cultural effects of mass tourism. What’s the point of travelling to Bali to develop a new perspective on life and on the world, if you’re surrounded by and spend your time with English-speaking young people from similar cultural and economic backgrounds? How ‘authentic’ is cultural exchange when it involves local people providing for tourist visitors what they were expecting to find in the first place? How much economic and cultural exploitation is involved in that provision? And how ‘sustainable’ can such trips be if the means to arrive and depart is a jet aircraft?

The ‘new normal’ post Covid-19 is likely to call into question further the existence of the traditional ‘gap’ year. Air travel will be more expensive and will become yet more unfashionable for non-essential travel, as the serious impact of air travel on the environment becomes increasingly apparent. Worries about further waves of pandemic will prey on the minds of potential ‘gap’-year travellers. The large discretionary spend involved in ‘gap’-year travel is a further disincentive at a time of economic uncertainty.

Yet none of these anxieties should call into question the fundamental benefits inherent in the best ‘gap’ years. There’s no doubt that travel for cultural enrichment and the development of experience and character has an enduring and powerful value, and may often change for the better the lives of those who travel and those who learn from those travels. Mendelssohn, after all, composed his ‘Italian’ and ‘Scottish’ symphonies on the back of youthful, character-forming cultural travel. Mendelssohn in turn was inspired by the experiences and writing of his older friend Goethe. Goethe’s ‘Italian Journey’ is an eloquent, masterly tribute to the power of travel to open the mind and to develop long-term imagination and empathy.

If a sustained period of travel in distant places is approached with openness and humility, then it can be second to none as an unshakable foundation on which further experience can be built. The writer Patrick Leigh Fermor (1915 – 2011), famously expelled as a teenager from The King’s School Canterbury for being caught holding hands with the daughter of a neighbouring greengrocer, set off in his late teens for an extended ‘gap’-year, walking across Europe, from the Netherlands to Istanbul. Leigh-Fermor wrote up this extraordinary, formative journey of the imagination and character in three volumes of dazzling travel-writing, the last of which lay unfinished and in draft form at his death, tribute perhaps to the enduring capacity of educational travel to pose questions and to open imaginative processes which remain fertile for the rest of a lifetime.

‘Gap’-year activity post-Covid-19 will focus increasingly on sustainability, slow travel, cultural engagement, and voluntary work, and far less on adventure, photo-opportunities and airmiles. ‘Gap’ years may well be taken much nearer to home. Education in the new world of instant information and burgeoning AI will increasingly focus on the nurture of character, resilience, values and global citizenship. Within that redefined concept of education, the ‘gap’ year will continue to play a significant, formative role, creating experiences which will inspire and provoke the imagination and build character over the whole of a lifetime. ‘Gap’ years have the potential to be a timeless and essential component of education

for as long as we ensure that we spend them in ways which are responsible and beneficial: more walking, fewer airmiles, more service, less exploitation, and, above all perhaps, a more open imagination.

# Global Economics: teaching A-level to EAL students

---

*Rochester Independent College's Head of Economics **Michael Rowlands** teaches the A-level to international students on both intensive one year and more conventional two year A-level courses. He explores some of the challenges in doing so.*

When discussing A-Level options with parents and agents of students with English is an additional language (EAL), any suggestion of economics is usually met with concern. It is protested that economics is a very 'scientific' social science, deeply wedded to complex terminology. Furthermore, to fully understand economics at A-Level requires a great deal of cultural capital. For example, what is the role of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is the Governor of the Bank of England, why is Margret Thatcher such a controversial figure in British economic history? Only the most exceptional, and driven EAL students, could even begin to cope with this. This is not for 'my' student.

No doubt drive is important in every student's academic tool kit. But what if we were to look at these two points from a completely different perspective. There is no doubt that economics involves a lot of terminology; real GDP, Comparative Advantage, Quantitative Easing, to name just a few. These are not uniquely challenging to EAL students. These terms are alien to most English speaking students enrolling on an economics A-Level course. Far from putting EAL students at a disadvantage, it levels the playing field. Furthermore, economics teachers have been grappling with the issue of how to embed technical terminology into students' academic writing for years. They usually have excellent strategies for achieving this.

Secondly, the cultural capital required to fully understand the economic story of the UK is far from a problem - it is an opportunity. The study of economics will take the student to every corner of life in the UK. The cultural capital acquired by students during their study of economics is one of the things that makes them so sought after and valuable to undergraduate courses and future employers.

The stories we tell ourselves are very important. For four hundred years, William Shakespeare's plays have captivated theatre-goers worldwide, thanks to their unforgettable characters, gripping plots and poetic verse. To keep his actors on their toes, Shakespeare handed each member of the troupe only their own lines and cues to learn, intentionally leaving them in the dark about the unfolding plot. Soon after his

death, however, over-zealous editors added in complete lists of characters and, in plays such as *The Tempest*, introduced many parts along with their telltale traits. Describe a character as an ‘usurping duke’ and the actors already suspect that past wrongs are waiting to be righted. It changes how they behave; it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

What do students think? Well, the 2010 Economics Students Survey of International Students of Economics in the UK sheds light on the experiences and perceptions of international students. Students whose English is non-native were asked how not being a native speaker affected their learning; 54.3% reported feeling their learning was not greatly impacted, while 40.4% felt it had some effect but not very much. Encouragingly, only 5.3% felt that being non-native English speakers impacted greatly on their learning experiences.

What can we do as economic teachers to support EAL students? Well, a good thing about economics is the use of diagrams. The most powerful stories throughout history have been the ones told with pictures. If we want to fully engage our EAL students we need to embrace pictures and diagrams. From prehistoric cave paintings to the map of the London Underground, images, diagrams and charts have long been at the heart of human storytelling. The reason why is simple: our brains are wired for visuals. ‘Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it speaks,’ wrote the media theorist John Berger in the opening lines of his 1972 classic, *Ways of Seeing*. Neuroscience has since confirmed the dominant role of visualisation in human cognition. Half of the nerve fibres in our brains are linked to our vision and, when our eyes are open, vision accounts for two-thirds of the electrical activity in the brain. It takes just 150 milliseconds for the brain to recognise an image and a mere 100 milliseconds more to attach a meaning to it.

Another important aspect of effective teaching of EAL is to pay attention to the links between language acquisition, cognitive and academic development. This is important for providing work that is sufficiently challenging for all learners at all levels.

Some of the key features of visual EAL pedagogy can be summarised like this:

- Make the verbal curriculum more visual
- Make the abstract curriculum more concrete
- What are visuals?

Visuals provide context so that EAL learners can make sense of what is being taught in the curriculum.

Visuals that are useful for EAL learners include:

1. Visuals in textbooks and classroom resources: Consider using pictures, diagrams, charts and graphs as a starting point, as an alternative to the written text. For example, a learner could describe a picture then complete a differentiated task rather than reading a text and answering comprehension questions. Learners may then be able to record their response in the form of pictures, diagrams or graphic organisers.

2. Graphic organisers are also sometimes known as key visuals. They are not simply images, they are ways of presenting information visually. There are many different types of graphic organisers. Some of the main ones are:

- table, chart, grid, matrix
- Ishikawa diagram (fishbone), Venn diagram
- bar chart, pie chart, pictogram
- pyramid, ladder
- cycle, flow chart, timeline
- concept map, web (star), KWHL chart (what I **k**now, what I **w**ant to know, **h**ow I am going to find out, what I have **l**earned)

Using visuals works because EAL learners are given the context of what is being taught in the classroom. They clarify meaning between teacher and learner, between learner and teacher and between learner and learner.

Finally, structure is also very important. Making sure that course notes, definitions, dictionaries and pre-recorded videos are all readily available for students to use synchronously and asynchronously.

## Why you should do your undergraduate degree in Europe or Asia.

---

*Have you ever thought about going to university in Europe or Asia? **Theo Boyce**, Deputy Head of Oxbridge Applications examines the options.*

Scrolling through any world university ranking top 100 list will show that UK and American universities are frequent top scorers. Universities like Oxford, Harvard and MIT will merely shuffle around the top 10 year on year, but they also share the space with famous European and Asian institutions that many presume are not for English speakers. In actual fact, these ‘lesser known’ establishments are constantly providing a growing number of courses through the English language to keep up with their international demand.

So why would you want to consider Europe or Asia as alternative destinations to continue your education?

If generous funding opportunities or the promise of adventure aren’t enough to entice you, then it might be surprising to hear that according to the QS Global Employer Survey Report, getting international

experience will make you more desirable on the graduate job market and, statistically speaking, you could expect to see a 10% increase on your starting salary.

Of course, it's important to know which universities around the world are strong in which academic areas. To try and help with that, here's a round up I've put together of some stand-out options in Europe and Asia, what their subject speciality is and why I think you should choose them as places to pursue your undergraduate studies.

### **Sciences Po – Paris, France**

*Particularly good for: Social Sciences*

For those who envisage a career in international relations or diplomacy, you might consider crossing the channel to pursue your undergraduate degree at Sciences Po in the French capital. The university – which ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> for politics and international studies in the world QS rankings - has a thriving international community with over 7000 international students currently studying there.

Although their bachelor programmes in English may be limited, social scientists will be interested to learn that there are several highly regarded undergraduate courses relevant to them. Hosted at 'Le Havre' campus, students can specialise in an area of their choice, whether that be East Asia, the Mediterranean & the Middle East or the Americas. In addition to becoming an expert in your chosen area's history, culture and languages, you will also have intensive French language classes (even if you are a total beginner), in order to enjoy Parisian life to its fullest.

In an increasingly international and competitive job market, NGOs, the UN and governments require graduates who are multicultural and multilingual. A bachelor's degree from Sciences Po is going to put you at the top of the pile when being considered for any of these opportunities.

In terms of fees, around a third of students at Sciences Po pay nothing for their tuition, with a variety of scholarships and grants available. Otherwise, fees scale up to 10,700 euros depending on household income which is roughly equivalent to UK tuition fees.

### **Bocconi – Milan, Italy**

*Particularly good for: Economics and Business*

Established in 1902, this university boasts some of the most highly respected business and economics degrees. The English language offering is modest, but includes courses such as "World Bachelor in Business" and "International Economics and Management". Spending three or four years in the dynamic Italian hub of Milan will also give you an international experience that puts you ahead of your peers that went to LSE or Oxford. In terms of fees, programmes at Bocconi are set to around 13,000 euros with a variety of partial and fully funded financial aid options available.

**ETH Zurich – Zurich, Switzerland***Particularly good for: Engineering and the sciences*

When it comes to the sciences, UK universities such as Cambridge or Ivy league schools such as MIT are globally renowned for their award-winning research output, but did you know that Switzerland has several universities that stand up against these giants?

One of these universities is ETH Zurich which placed 13<sup>th</sup> in The Times Higher Education's global rankings. Particularly strong in the Engineering sciences, ETH offers a variety of scientific courses that would make the ideal first step in a career in research or any technical domain. Courses include 'Geospatial Engineering', 'Biochemistry' and 'Food Sciences' so there's something for every student on offer.

The only caveat with studying here is that the English language courses start from the second year, so you may need to have A-level of German to get through the beginning of your selected programme. For GCSE students, if ETH Zurich is where you would like to study, make sure to take up A-level German! It'll be definitely worth it to when you graduate with one of the most sought after science degrees in the world that rivals both Oxbridge and the Ivy League schools.

**The National University of Singapore – Singapore, Singapore***Particularly good for: Engineering (particularly civil and chemical), Chemistry, Biology and Computer Science*

In recent years, several universities in Asia have also established themselves as leading academic institutions with very high global rankings. What's more is that English for some of these institutions is the main language of instruction.

The National University of Singapore is a world leading research centre and is suitable for students considering a broad array of subjects from "Theatre Studies" to "Architecture" – all of which are taught through English. The university is particularly strong in the sciences, and its departments often rank as the best in Asia year-on-year.

Singapore as a city has a high density network of professionals and networking for a job opportunity upon graduation needn't be too difficult. The city is very multicultural, clean with low pollution levels and hardly any crime – an ideal alternative for students who are considering London universities but want more sun and adventure!

**Tsinghua and Peking ("Beida") University – Beijing, China***Particularly good for: Engineering, Politics, Sciences, Literature (Peking)*

With the boom of its economy in recent years, China's top academic institutions have swiftly moved up the league tables and are gradually offering an increasing number of Bachelor programmes through the English language. Tsinghua university along with Peking University (known affectionately as "Beida") – both in Beijing – are sometimes dubbed as the Chinese equivalent of Oxford and Cambridge. In The Times Higher Education's 2020 rankings, Tsinghua and Beida came 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in the world respectively and considering a decade ago they were around the 50 places lower, it wouldn't be unreasonable to think that these universities could break into the top 10 within the next decade.

With formidable reputations in China, Tsinghua and "Beida" will only accept a handful of the top performers of the Chinese Gaokao school leaver's examination. Aware of their rise in popularity and prowess, Tsinghua now offers more than 60 undergraduate programmes in English while Beida still needs to catch up. Nevertheless, there are a variety of generous funding opportunities available as the Chinese government is keen to build its number of international students studying in the country.

In terms of job perks, there's no denying China's global influence, so exposing yourself to its culture and language whilst studying at its most prestigious universities will be invaluable in virtually every career you can imagine.

Conclusion...

So there you have it – by no means an exhaustive list, but nevertheless a starting point for opening up the conversation about prestigious university options you may not have considered before. I encourage you to do your research on these universities and see what you find.

Becoming a scholar abroad will give you a unique undergraduate experience that will make you a rarity on the job market. In a time where we are asked for global compassion and cohesion, your time abroad will give you a refreshed and widened cultural perspective you will carry through with you for the rest of your life.

# International secondary school curriculum and selective US university admissions

---

*International students who hope to attend a highly selective US university will need to think carefully about their secondary school curricular choices. Students preparing to enter a new educational system with a liberal arts ethos should choose courses with the intricacy of this system in mind. This is the best way to become an ideal applicant and the best way to prepare for a US university education. For international students, this may mean making decisions differently than your peers who are focused on attending schools in their home countries. At A-List, we are happy to advise students about their course selection for GCSEs, A-levels, French Bacallaureate, International Bacallaureate, and the American system to ensure you have as many options as possible. **Dr Carolyn Tate**, Senior University Advisor, A-List Education, explores the significance of secondary school subject choices and aspirational US university applications.*

The first way admissions committees evaluate applicants is by assessing the rigor of their chosen courses. However, different national education systems have different core and elective courses and weigh certain subjects more significantly than others. The US system does have core courses that are slightly different to what is offered in other international systems. In the US, students take core courses plus electives for all four years of secondary school in the sciences (biology, physics, chemistry), math, English, history, foreign languages (both modern and classic). Common electives are in the arts including drama, fine arts, creative writing, and music. Because US secondary schools are designed to prepare students for a liberal arts education at university, the secondary education is also broader than what is commonly offered at international schools. American high-school students typically take six to seven subjects for all four years of secondary school.

What does this educational philosophy and practice mean for international students? First, please be reassured that a US admissions committee will evaluate you foremost by what your secondary school offers. No applicant will be penalized if they cannot take certain classes at their school. Second, students who do attend schools with wide course offerings should seriously consider taking classes that align with the US core courses. This might mean choosing to take A-level History rather than Politics. However, if attending a US university is your first choice, then that is a savvy decision. Third, international students may want to consider taking four courses (if doing A-level or Pre-U courses) rather than the standard three. This isn't an absolute necessity. However, for the most selective schools in the US, it can help you stand out from other applicants from your country and it also demonstrates that you are eager to take on and handle the rigorous course work at a US university.

The breadth plus depth approach of both US secondary schools and universities can also help international students choose their subjects. Though it can be common for international secondary school students to specialize in either STEM or Humanities subjects, those who are aiming to attend university in the US should consider if this approach will help them with their university goals. A humanities focused student who is taking A-level or HL English and History should also be considering continuing with math and/or a core science course. This demonstrates breadth of your academic interests which helps a US admissions officer realize you would fit in perfectly with the US liberal arts system. Also, this more balanced approach to course selection will benefit you beyond the admissions process. At A-List, we want our students to succeed once they arrive at their first-choice university. By taking a balance of writing intensive courses and continuing to refine your quantitative reasoning and scientific enquiry skills, you will be able to better handle the core requirements of US universities.

Though there are core subjects in the US secondary school curriculum, there is no national curriculum with mandatory exams. Thus, discrete school districts and independent schools determine their own evaluation metrics. This means, that schools assign grades rather than have students assessed by external exam boards. Depending on the school district, students are evaluated every four to six months and given firm grades. Over the four years of secondary school, students earn a grade point average, or the “GPA” you read about in US university brochures.

International students are evaluated quite differently. Most students have IGCSE or GCSE scores and then have either A-level or IB predictions. Because grades are the cornerstone of the US application, that means even more emphasis is put on these two sets of grades. Regardless of what your intended area of study is, all your grades will matter to US universities as the curriculum is broad. Keeping this in mind as you prepare for your exams as well will help you focus and achieve the desired results. Also, consulting with an expert US university advisor can help you determine which benchmarks you need to meet for the school you hope to attend.

There are unique ways international students can make their curriculum offerings work to their advantage. For example, the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) program is an excellent opportunity to produce original research or a product to showcase your talents to US universities. Most American high-school students will not have this opportunity in their school system. At A-List, we highly recommend that students in the A-level curriculum do an EPQ to demonstrate their unique passions and skillsets to US universities.

IB diploma students complete an “Extended Essay” which is a substantial body of work that impresses universities. When working with students, we encourage them to concisely explain the argument of this paper in any intellectual essay supplement. Also, after students have applied, a portal to directly contact the school is created. Students who are proud of their essay should upload to this portal as it offers schools the ability to see how prepared you are for the rigors of university research and writing.

Though there are significant differences in secondary school curricula across the globe, A-List knows that international students are academically competitive for top US universities. Our advice helps students make informed decisions so they can earn offers from top universities.

## UCAT and BMAT: the key to success

---

*Our Class of 2021 find themselves in the most unprecedented times; whilst most media coverage and university press releases have naturally focused on the incoming Class of 2020, attention need also be paid to our current Year 12 who are about to embark upon the unthinkable journey of applying to Medicine and Dentistry during a global pandemic. Applying to these highly prestigious courses is an obstacle course unto itself in any normal year, let alone in such tumultuous times of COVID-19. **Hayley Bendle**, Head of Higher Education and Careers at Cardiff Sixth Form College looks at the importance of the UKAT and BMAT tests in Medicine and Dentistry admissions at UK universities.*

Each year, Cardiff Sixth Form College welcomes and supports over fifty aspiring Medicine and Dentistry applicants to UK and worldwide universities. When speaking to students and exploring what they believe to be the most important aspects of a successful application, it surprises me how many immediately respond with “Excellent AS Results”, “High UMS” or “All A\* predicted grades.” Whilst, admittedly, these do play an important role, only a small minority of students even consider admissions tests at the outset.

As an analogy, I explain that applying to Medicine and Dentistry is akin to opening a door. First, we need to have a key, and specifically, the key that will fit the lock. Our individual profile (or, key shape) will only fit if we meet the academic profile that the lock (or, the university) is looking for. Once we meet the minimum criteria and our key fits in the lock, we then need to find the strength and determination to turn it and ultimately unlock the door.

Amongst other key components such as clinical and communicative work experience and volunteering to demonstrate their commitment, the Biomedical Admissions Test (BMAT) and University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) becomes the most significant criterion to demonstrate one’s strength and ability to opening that door. Utilised and critically analysed by all bar a select few of UK Medical and Dental schools, these admissions tests are designed to test applicants’ problem solving, critical thinking, written communication skills, alongside mathematical and scientific knowledge; namely, key transferable skills expected from prospective and practising doctors and dentists.

What makes these tests so different and more difficult is not what they test, but how they test. Studying A-levels, students become accustomed and comfortable with demonstrating their vast knowledge in national examinations, with enough time left over to double check their essay responses. Conversely, with BMAT and UCAT, students find themselves under a new kind of pressure; these multiple choice tests are

intentionally designed to trip you up with deliberate red herrings and nor do they give students enough time to finish – some sections only provide an average of 14 seconds per question! Evidently, it is a test of one's general skills and aptitude, and ability to make swift and accurate decisions in the heat of the moment.

Being ranked comparatively against the tens of thousands of other candidates around the world can be rather unsettling to students who have always come top in their high school class or cohort. These tests may challenge students both mentally and emotionally, but embracing these examinations, acknowledging that they do not need to be in the 100th percentile, and drilling mock and example tests are key to developing familiarity. Ultimately, the more hours of practice devoted to the UCAT and BMAT, the easier and more accessible the questions will seem.

Each medical and dental school utilises a different admissions selection process and therefore, to optimise our students' chances, we must encourage students to strategize and apply to and with their strengths! Unfortunately, Medicine and Dentistry are already amongst the most competitive courses in any year, especially amongst international students. With a government-imposed quota of only 7.5% of the overall Medicine or Dentistry cohort being non-EU, each year some universities receive as high as approximately thirty applicants to one international undergraduate space.

For 2021 entry, we must anticipate an even more competitive application round: our current Year 12 will also be applying alongside our Year 13 gap year students or reapplicants. The Guardian informs that approximately one in five students plan to defer their entry to 2021, with some universities even expecting an 80%-100% deduction in international student enrolments in September 2020. Some students may even withdraw altogether to reapply due to the current uncertainty regarding the impact of coronavirus on their Freshers' experience, or worries about the quality of online delivery. Therefore, we should expect and be prepared for the eventuality that our students will likely find themselves fighting against more applicants for even fewer spaces.

This week, we also learnt that both UCAT and BMAT examinations are still planned to go ahead: firstly, UCAT will be available and can be sat online in a test centre or at home from August 3rd to October 1st 2020. Secondly, BMAT is now only scheduled for November 4th 2020, without the possibility of a pre-application sitting in September – therefore, all BMAT applicants will be applying in the hope that they achieve the minimum scores needed to be considered further. Therefore, timed and assessed practice will be even more critical to mitigate this risk and to make informed and appropriate university choices.

In summary, with world-wide examination cancellations and the limited ability to find clinical work experience in light of COVID-19, our students need to stand out amongst the even larger crowd more than ever before. UCAT and BMAT will soon act as the biggest barrier to interviews than we have ever seen. Our students only have one chance to sit these aptitude tests, so let us encourage our students to not be deterred by these admissions tests but rather embrace the challenge. And if they do, they will add further strength to their application and be able to turn that key to open the door to a bright future in Medicine or Dentistry.

# Why study A-level Business Studies?

---

*At Rochester Independent College, Business Studies is a fast-growing A-level with students increasingly looking to study Business related courses at university. RIC's Business Studies teacher **Neal Layton** explains why it's far from being a soft subject:*

Have you ever heard a student say; "I don't know why we do that in class as I'm never going to use it when I leave here?" Well, one thing I can guarantee is that it will never be the case in a Business lesson, it's business that makes the world go around!

I view students who come to business as those who are looking to learn about the real world, about how and why businesses start up, how they are managed and how they become successful. Because ultimately I want the students who study Business to go on and work for these successful companies, perhaps even running some of them and be good at it.

Having spent over 30 years in senior management roles being involved in mergers, acquisitions, turnarounds and senior consultancy projects I think I have a decent grasp on what goes on in the "real world". You see, the simple fact is that there are no "correct answers" in business, just situations you deal with based on your experiences. What works in one business won't necessarily work in another and you certainly won't get the answers by reading all the textbooks out there – Business is a "contact sport" and it involves getting in there and getting your hands dirty.

So, if you want the easy A-level don't come to Business as I can promise you'll be challenged, questioned and be expected to state your own views and be able to justify your actions and decisions within real-life business scenarios.

I sometimes use this phrase to explain Business "In maths it's about knowing that  $2+2 = 4$ , in business it's about knowing why and being able to explain a situation when it might not be".

Covering subject areas such as strategy, finance, operations, human resources and marketing but all from the context of "what would you do, and why?" Being able to justify your decision is sometimes just as important as the decision itself, using balanced arguments and evaluation to allow you to come to a conclusion is a life-skill that you will be able to carry with you.

Business Studies and related subjects (such as the FAME group – finance, accounting, management and economics) are also among the most popular fields of study at universities worldwide, particularly at graduate level.

Types of Degree (or Degree Level qualifications) that are typical for business students to pursue post A-Level include:

|  |  |                           |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Accounting</b>                      | <b>Management sciences</b>                   | <b>Computer sciences</b>  |
| <b>Finance</b>                         | <b>Sociology</b>                             | <b>Entrepreneurship</b>   |
| <b>Marketing</b>                       | <b>Law</b>                                   | <b>Modern languages</b>   |
| <b>Human resource management (HRM)</b> | <b>Quantitative techniques (mathematics)</b> | <b>Sports management</b>  |
| <b>Strategic management</b>            | <b>Economics</b>                             | <b>Fashion management</b> |

Whichever level you study business at, and whatever field of specialisation you choose, you can expect all types of business degrees to have a strong emphasis on the practical application of theory, through the use of case studies, problem-solving tasks, project and team work, and often also internships and placement schemes both nationally and internationally. This is why the RIC business curriculum is structured in exactly the same way.

The combination of academic challenge and practical focus makes the prospect of studying a business degree highly appealing for those attracted to the competitive, yet collaborative learning environment offered by RIC. But, for most people, the answer to the question “why study business?” is best answered by looking at the potential careers available:

|                               |                              |  |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Management consultancy</b> | <b>Teaching/training</b>     | <b>Marketing</b>                             |
| <b>Trading</b>                | <b>Chartered accountancy</b> | <b>Market research</b>                       |
| <b>Advertising</b>            | <b>Retail buying</b>         | <b>Personnel officer</b>                     |
| <b>Investment banking</b>     | <b>Production management</b> | <b>Public relations officer</b>              |
| <b>Bank management</b>        | <b>Sales</b>                 | <b>Distribution and logistics management</b> |
| <b>Insurance underwriting</b> | <b>Consumer products</b>     |  |

Combine these opportunities with the fact that Business is consistently ranked as one of the highest salaries available to a new graduate Average Graduate Salary Guide 2020 and I think you can see why Business shouldn't be considered a “soft” A-Level.

Neal Layton tweets about all things A-level Business Studies related at: <https://twitter.com/RICBusiness...>

**Can I get into a good university if I study Business at A-level?**

Yes! In recent years RIC students have gone on to study degrees such as Modern Languages and Business at Newcastle, International Business at Loughborough, Finance at Durham, Economics at Edinburgh, Business and Management at Oxford Brookes, Business and Management at Cardiff and Fashion Marketing at Manchester.

For all universities, the most important thing with A-level choices is subject combination. It is always wise to avoid A-level combinations with too much overlap so students are best advised not to take Economics AND Business Studies at A-level.

It is the case that Business Studies continues to feature on “non-preferred” subject lists at a small number of universities, along with subjects like Accounting and PE. The LSE for example say that these subjects should only be offered in combination with two “traditional academic” subjects for their courses.

Combine Business with say Maths and a Modern Language though and you will be well placed for competitive top degrees everywhere. Combine Business with Graphic Design, Digital Media or Photography and a range of degrees including marketing and those leading to the commercial side of the creative industries are open to you. Some RIC students also study Business as part of their preparation for degree level apprenticeships.

## The 'Power of Touch'

---

*Caroline Dyal, Head of Creative Arts, Earlscliffe, shares her 'Power of Touch' photo series taken daily during lockdown:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5J6Mxl76pNs>

Human touch is an integral part of our lives. During life in lockdown this has been really emphasized. Some of us are fortunate enough to still cherish the comfort and relief of human touch. The 'Power of Touch' images show those quiet moments shared between loved ones. I hope the images evoke a feeling of hope knowing this time will pass and we will be reunited with our loved ones.

This is a lockdown collaboration with singer Sophie Loughlin on vocals and musician Dave Loughlin on guitar and recording. Sophie was reminded of Bruce Springsteen's song 'Human Touch' each time she saw my daily photo from my series of lockdown photographs.

# The past, the present and the future. Tense.

---

**Tom Arrand**, Head at Cardiff Sixth Form College, opens up wide-ranging questions for school and college communities to debate. The following letter was written by a Holocaust survivor to his local education board in the USA:

***I am a Survivor of a Concentration Camp***

*My eyes saw what no man should witness:*

*Gas chambers built by learned engineers.*

*Children poisoned by educated physicians.*

*Infants killed by trained nurses.*

*Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.*

*So, I am suspicious of education. My request is: help your students become human.*

*Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.*

*Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane.*

I first read this when training to be a teacher and was so struck by the power and simplicity of the message that I copied it out onto the front page of my dissertation (a lengthier, less powerful and more forgettable document). It became, and remains, the guiding message behind my call to teach.

In primary school, I was taught about slavery, the trading of slaves and the barbaric practices of the slave-owners. The topic, however, was not the growth of the British Empire or of the American nation. It was Ancient Egypt. As an older student, I was fortunate enough to attend a reputable school where, in the chapel, is a monument to a lesser known person of significance from history. Granville Sharp worked tirelessly, until his death in 1813, to bring about the end of slavery. His greatest achievement was the establishment of 'The Province of Freedom' (later Freetown, Sierre Leone) where enslaved Africans could be returned to their home continent and be liberated.

My college at Oxford bears a monument to the British Imperialist, Cecil Rhodes. This week, protesters outside Oriel College have been calling for the statue to be removed in recognition of the fact that the ruthless imperialism of Rhodes is a matter of national shame, not celebration.

In my career I have been privileged to teach at some outstanding schools. One of them has a name which links it, inextricably, with the slave trade. Edward Colston was a wealthy merchant from Bristol who made his fortune from trading slaves from Africa to the Americas. His wealth helped to build the city of Bristol, including hospitals and schools which survive today. Last week, protestors pulled his statue down and threw it into the harbour in Bristol.

This short walk through my biography shines a light on something complicated. The past is riddled with issues that we must face, understand, contextualise and address. Britain's imperialist past, the wealth it accrued from slavery and the exploitation of its colonies has been thrown into the spotlight as a direct result of the international demonstrations that followed the shocking death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the subsequent focus on the *Black Lives Matter* movement. All nations have questions about their own past that they need to address and the question for school leaders is how to address them.

Strong statements by Heads and Principals, which state clearly that we stand against all forms of racism, discrimination and bigotry; that we celebrate diversity as international, global communities, are of course welcome and necessary. However, school leaders must consider their wider purpose when it comes to viewing the past, healing the present and preparing our students for the future.

What we must not do is attempt to erase or cover up history. The renaming of buildings, towns and institutions can be a positive move but not if it serves to paint over the truth of the past. A school named after its founder, who traded slaves, must consider this but a school with a neutral name but which was, nevertheless, founded upon money that came from the same industry, should still address this problem in the same way. Removing statues that offend and replacing them with statues that celebrate the lives of the victims or those who fought for freedom, is also a positive move but for this to have value it should be achieved by democratic process and not by the angry mob. Moreover, those statues and the fact that they were once revered as emblematic of a nation's greatness, should be contextualised and considered, by future generations, in museums, alongside the stories of their victims.

My view is that the role of education, as perfectly explained by the anonymous author of the letter at the start of this piece is, besides the instruction of reading, writing and arithmetic, to help students to become more human. To teach them not what to think, but how to think. Whilst that should never mean indoctrinating them (I have always been of the opinion that a teacher should keep his or her own political opinions to themselves) it must involve challenging them, intellectually.

So, the practical steps I would advise any school leader to adopt, are as follows:

**Examine the curriculum content.**

By this, I do not mean insert new topics into the history curriculum to pay lip service to a current issue. I mean ensure that values are at the heart of the whole curriculum; that whatever the subject, the context of a topic is fully explained and the wider implications explored. Ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the modern world.

**Teach critical thinking.**

Again, this does not mean insert a 30 minute slot where a teacher with a bit of free time shows students how to examine an article. It means ensuring that every teacher shows every student the art of questioning, considering evidence and how to think critically in the context of their academic discipline.

**Celebrate intellectual curiosity over ability.**

Achieving high grades is a wonderful thing and no one who does well at school should ever think otherwise. However, it is the desire to find out more; the hunger for learning; the need to look beyond the regurgitation of 'what' or 'how' into the forensic analysis of 'why' that defines the true intellectual.

**Give Personal Social Education and humanities the same status as numeracy and literacy.**

Unless we teach our young people that personal, social, moral, spiritual, interpersonal, cultural and creative themes are of as much significance to their lives and to the future of our planet as the ability to solve equations and use correct grammar, we are not teaching them anything.

**Don't articulate values, live them.**

Too many schools and organisations make bold statements about their values. How many of them live those values through every interaction, every conversation and every assembly? How many of them post celebratory messages on social media that they have raised some money for a good cause, whilst failing to address homophobic language in corridors?

Addressing the past requires soul-searching, acceptance and response. We must consider, as a nation, what we want our monuments and memorials to represent. We must consider how we address the past by healing injustices in the present. And as school leaders, we must focus our energies on teaching for a better future.

## A call for change

---

*Tiffany Oguchi is in Year 12 at Earlscliffe. Here are some of her thoughts, observations, hopes and aims in light of George Floyd's death.*

One would have to be living under a rock to be unaware of the current events regarding the injustices towards black people, catapulted by the tragic killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA. There has been a global outcry from people of all colour denouncing systemic and institutional racism.

Ignorance is a disease which has eaten deep into our society, and one that prevents us from addressing and tackling the issues that bring us to where we are today. With the exception of a few, the majority have blissfully basked in their lack of knowledge and information concerning prejudice, discrimination and antagonism of people of colour, justifying the perception that the white race is superior to others. Some white people do not necessarily agree that there is systemic racism, whilst others just do not know what to say or do, and are now forced to sit in discomfort and admit that there is indeed a great deal that they do not know about black people's lives, experiences and the injustices they suffer. 'White Privilege' is a

system of inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice.

The injustice and oppression that has plagued black people dates back over 400 years ago to the time of slavery. Black people were forcefully dragged and sold out of their lands in Africa to The Americas and Europe. They were used against their will for 'unfree labour' for no pay. As well as being forced to change their names and religion they were severely punished if they went against their masters' wishes or tried to escape. They were whipped, beaten, and mutilated. They were marked with branded hot irons, raped, shackled in chains around their neck and feet and much more. They were subjected to working and living conditions similar to and often worse than that of animals. They were killed habitually as though their lives did not matter. The slave masters referred to the black slaves as 'n\*\*\*\*\*s'. They threw this word at the slaves like a stone. The malice and resentment behind the word is the reason why its use is widely held as a taboo, particularly coming from a non-black person.

This takes me to my next point about the 'N-word' and the offensive nature that surrounds it. The power behind the word is a reflection of more than just a nickname from the slave masters; it holds a history of institutionalised, racial discrimination against black people that is still far from elimination in society today.

'Black Lives Matter' is apparently a controversial phrase or movement, particularly to people who would rather say that 'All lives matter.' Here is the fact: all lives DO matter, however all lives cannot matter until black lives also do. I read an analogy that puts my point into perspective and should give clarity: if a house on a street was burning, naturally everyone would be expected to put hands together to put the fire out. It would be inappropriate at that time to question the importance of the other houses, which are equally as important, but which are not presently on fire.

We are now at a pivotal point for the minorities who are still being oppressed to date and are constantly subject to racial profiling, police brutality, stereotyping and enjoy minimal opportunities in society because of the colour of their skin. We have the audience of the world at large. This is a call to action for everyone to speak up in denouncing oppression and injustice in all forms, whether through subtle innuendo or blatant racism. We need to stop making excuses and seize the momentum in whatever capacity in order to speak out against wrongdoings. There is no 'neutral' in the face of injustice and discrimination. All races are equal. It is my desire for us all at Earlscliffe and in our immediate environs to become introspective and fully understand how we as global citizens arrived at this point, so that we can become more sensitive, respectful and aware. The change begins with us.

# Changing the way pupils think about physical activity

---

*Lisa Morton, Head of Pastoral Care at Cardiff Sixth Form College, examines the role of physical activity in the wider context of well-being*

The link between being physically active and maintaining positive mental health and well-being has widely been documented. The idea of a connectedness between the two was one channelled by the Ancient Greeks; believing there to be a harmonious link between the body and the mind. Physical fitness was seen as necessary to promote good health overall and even now, as I write this in our current state of lockdown, the notion that keeping active and taking care of the physical self is directly linked to positive wellbeing and mental health is one that prevails. Maintaining a harmonious existence between bodies and minds is one that has since been echoed in many studies and exercise continues to be attributed to improvement in sleep patterns, mood and as a successful tool to manage stress, anxiety and depression. In fact, research has suggested that keeping physically active “is not just good for reducing symptoms of depression, but may also prevent it”. <sup>1</sup>

All children and young people have access to distinct timetabled physical activity lessons within the curriculum, however for many learners these compulsory sessions can be seen as stand alone and unrelated to anything else they do in school or college. Data from Sport England’s Active Lives Children and Young People survey showed that only 17.5% of children met the Chief Medical Officers’ Guidance for how much activity children should be doing (at least 60 minutes every day). <sup>2</sup>

Wishing to continuously improve pupil well-being, last September at Cardiff Sixth Form College a different approach was adopted when re-designing the pastoral programme. Already being aware of the gains to be had from timetabled physical activity classes, incorporating exercise in a way that would inextricably link body to mind and vice versa was looked at. Cardiff Sixth Form College adopts a unique blend of both Eastern and Western methods within its teaching and learning practices and in order to foster a whole school approach to well-being a move towards a pastoral programme that also contained elements of these approaches was fundamental in order to highlight the holistic nature of well-being and ‘being well’ as a whole.

From September 2019 Personal, Social Education sessions at the college addressed the importance of nutrition on mind and body and elements of exercise such as pilates and yoga were timetabled into these sessions, allowing students to practice parts of these disciplines whilst learning about the philosophies that underpin them. This began to change mindsets as certain exercises were looked at holistically by pupils who were quickly able to see the evidential proof that physical activity has a direct impact on mental health. When addressing Eastern philosophy, meditation and breathing techniques were also

delivered as part of the new programme, resulting in extremely successful outcomes for pupils. Linking new developments to well-being philosophies, from both the East and West showed an even higher level of engagement from students and in a recent learner voice, pupils noted that they wished to address more of these practical solutions to stress and anxiety management in future PSE lessons; including the injection of physical activity they had experienced.

The CREATE© Portfolio and the newly released online Wellbeing Hub were enhanced to allow students to work towards targets addressing their diet, exercise and mental health and additional awards were added to the existing programme in order to allow pupils to gain Health and Wellbeing Awareness Certificates. Merging health and well-being practices in this way has not only been well received by students but the college has also seen a measurable difference in safeguarding statistics and numbers of pupils needing targeted pastoral support. In order to increase the levels of physical activity within the college, not only were activities embedded into the pastoral curriculum, but by encouraging students to engage in exercise, such as walking and participating with nature, pupils quickly made the link between how involvement in physical activity can have a positive impact on the mind.

Practising different ways of keeping physically fit and adopting a strong sense of well-being has continued for pupils remotely in the current global pandemic. Cardiff Sixth Form College's Wellbeing Hub has allowed learners to find new and innovative ways of developing themselves in these key areas and when lockdown eventually lifts, as educators, it will be even more important to make apparent the fundamental link between a healthy body and mind. As Plato himself noted, "...the right education must tune the strings of the body and mind to perfect spiritual harmony".<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Schuch, FB. et al, 2018. *Physical Activity and Incident Depression: A Meta-Analysis of Prospective Cohort Studies (online)*. Available from: *The American Journal of Psychiatry* [accessed 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020]

<sup>2</sup> O'Keefe, L, (2019, December 5<sup>th</sup>) *Active Lives Children and Young People Survey: Academic Year 2018/19* <https://www.sportengland.org/research/active-lives-survey/active-lives-children-and-young-people/>

<sup>3</sup> Lee, D & Lane, M, 2007. *Plato Republic; 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. London: Penguin Books

# Weekly quotes collection – May/June

---

Each week during term time, a colleague from our family of schools and colleges contributes to the 'Dukes Colleges Quote of the Week'. Here are the contributions from the last two months:

*'Borders - I have never seen one. But I have heard they exist in the minds of some people.'*

(Thor Heyerdahl)

**Tim Fish, Managing Director, Dukes Education (Colleges)**

*'There is no education like adversity.'*

(Benjamin Disraeli)

**Darryl Wideman, Principal at Radnor House, Twickenham**

*'All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.'*

(Julian of Norwich 1343 - c.1416)

**Candida Cave, Founding Principal, Fine Arts College, Hampstead**

*'There's no such thing as losing - only winning and learning.'*

(Gianluca Vialli)

**Tim Fish, Managing Director, Dukes Education (Colleges)**

*'Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.'*

(Marie Curie)

**Georgina Whinney, Admissions Administrator, Rochester Independent College**

*'It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.'*

(Theodore Roosevelt)

**Matthew Keyte, Director of Sport and Co-curricular Activities, Eaton Square Upper School, Mayfair**

We welcome topic suggestions for articles in future editions of 'Insight'. Please contact Tim Fish accordingly: [tim.fish@dukeseducation.com](mailto:tim.fish@dukeseducation.com)