



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Normal?

Am I imagining it, or are we getting back to something approaching 'normal'? It has certainly felt like it over the past two weeks and we are not sorry!

Stay safe.

Peter MacKenzie

Director Search

The Board Search Committee has had a busy week and would like to update you on the search for the new Educational Director.

Here is our latest update:

- We had 65 applications for the position.
- Search Associates sent 10 finalists to the Search Committee.
- The Search Committee met and determined which finalists will take part in virtual interviews to hopefully happen in the next week.

Once the initial interviews are completed, the Search Committee will invite the strongest 2 - 3 finalists for a Virtual Site Visit at WIS. The finalists will have the opportunity to meet with various stakeholders including parents, teachers, admin, and students and be able to answer questions and gain a sense of how our community works together at WIS.

As mentioned last week, once these Virtual Site Visits are confirmed, the Search Committee will be reaching out to the community to ask for individuals to take part in these conversations. We hope you will consider giving time to being a part of this process.

Watch this space for more details as the process continues.

On Behalf of the Board Search Committee

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Now that we've been in school for two weeks as 'normal' and we have many new students, I thought it would be good to revisit the question of homework. The following is what I wrote for the 13 September 2019 (issue 150) of the Oryx.

Why do we have homework? Is homework worth it? Does homework really make a difference in a child's academic success? Is the homework model as we know it outdated? These are some questions that I believe are worth considering.

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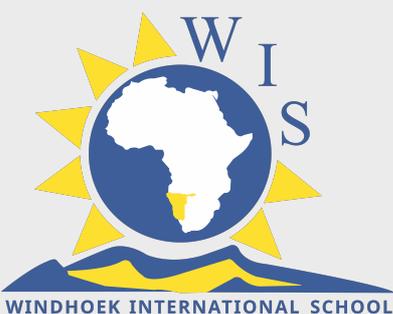
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Teacher Feature



Laura Smith
PYP Visual Arts Teacher

What is your educational background?

I hold a BA in MultiMedia and Sociology from the University of Greenwich (UK) and a postgraduate certificate in Art and Design Education from the University of Exeter.

Where did you grow up?

I am originally from the south coast of England from a seaside town called Poole in the county of Dorset. Famous for its pirates, fossil finding and beautiful beaches. I have not lived in the UK for 18 years now.

Where were you before Namibia?

After teaching in and leaving the UK 18 years ago I have taught and volunteered in Laos, Thailand, Qatar and South Korea before moving to beautiful Namibia and WIS.

What motivated you to be a Teacher?

I was a Special Educational Assistant (EA) for a number of years in the UK and have always volunteered with children with special learning rights (due to my parents profession). I realised it was a passion of mine to work alongside and advocate for young people. What better way to do this, then through and with the arts?

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I recently read an article written by Alfie Kohn in which he questions why we should force kids to work what amounts to a second shift after getting home from a full day of school, particularly when there's no evidence that any kind of homework is beneficial for younger students. He also suggests that homework may be the greatest extinguisher of curiosity ever invented. (*Education Week, September 3, 2019*).

I don't know that I've ever heard homework referred to as a positive experience. More often than not it creates tension or conflict especially when children remember just before bedtime that they have something due the next day, or they've forgotten the information they need at school. How many times do parents remind, nag, prod children to get their homework done?



Further to Mr Kohn's suggestion that children already put in a full day at school, many children then participate in a variety of after school activities, either at school or outside of school. They get home in time for dinner and then are expected to do homework when they are tired and haven't had any downtime. One of the Learner Profile attributes is *balanced*. So many adults don't have a balance between work and play. Shouldn't we be encouraging our children at a young age to develop this attribute? This certainly would be a valuable skill to have in life.

Many might argue that the purpose of homework is to reinforce, practise or rehearse concepts and skills. How much are children focusing and taking in when they are tired at the end of the day? Are they just going through the motions? Would it not be better to encourage our children to explore their passions? It has also been said that homework encourages time management, organisation and responsibility. If children are constantly being reminded about doing homework, how is that helping children to develop these skills? I wonder if these same skills aren't acquired in other ways throughout the day.

It is important for children to have balance in their lives, to have time to pursue their passions, socialise and play, all of which are an equally important part of their learning. It's time to revisit the value of homework and have discussions to answer the questions asked at the beginning of this article.

Regards,
Beth Smith

Grade 1 food

Part of learning a new language is exploring its culture, history, traditions and one of my favourites FOOD! Grade 1J has the opportunity this Semester, to explore the Portuguese Language and Culture. At the moment we are exploring food. And what better way then to experience a traditional, mouthwatering Pastel de Nata! We have many traditional foods in Portugal but nothing can quite beat the Pastel de Nata. Crispy pastry forms a case for the soft, sweet, custardy filling, with often a hint of cinnamon coming through.

The Pastel de Nata's history dates back over 300 years, to Jerónimos Monastery in Belém, west of Lisbon. Today the monastery is a major tourist hotspot and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, but at the time it was a busy civil parish where, in the absence of laundry detergent, nuns and monks would use egg whites to starch their

Teacher Feature Continued

What do you enjoy most about your job?

The students. I love witnessing students when they get that 'aha' moment, master a skill or super proud of themselves. One day is never the same in the art room.

What do you think are important qualities an international school teacher should have?

To be culturally competent in our thoughts and actions. To thrive to build understanding between people, be respectful and open, strengthen and represent cultural security and work towards equality in opportunity for all. I believe that is what a global citizen looks like. I also believe resilience is key, as there are the obvious benefits of having the opportunity to live and work abroad, but it comes with its challenges too.

What are your hobbies?

I love visiting museums and art galleries to learn more about heritage. I enjoy reading, painting and drawing, swimming, volunteering, walking and watching English Premier League football matches.

How would you describe your personality?

Building positive relationships is important to me as I think they make the world go round. I believe I am approachable and kind, and have a strong sense of justice. I am sociable with a good sense of humour who loves to chat and laugh with people.

What is your favourite educational motto that you use with students?

I'm not sure it is my favourite but I use it a lot in the classroom when someone says it's easy - "it is only easy when you know how" and I really appreciate the growth mindset and 'power of yet'.

clothes. This process meant there were lots of egg yolks going spare, so to avoid these going to waste, they were instead used as a major ingredient in desserts.

The monks of the monastery soon created a secret recipe to perfect their custard tarts, which they began selling as a means of creating income to support the monastery. When the monastery closed in 1834, this recipe was then sold to the owners of the Fábrica de Pastéis de Belém, which opened in 1837, and is the most famous place to try custard tarts in all of Lisbon. Today, the recipe is still a closely guarded secret, and the tarts sold in this location are known as Pastéis de Belém.



Yours in Cultural exploration,
Professora Jacky

A peep into Primary EAL

It's always such a pleasure and a privilege to observe happy children learning. This is what strikes me the most post lockdown, the sheer enjoyment that students revel in and reveal when interacting with peers and teachers in the environment of the school. Who would have thought?

Comprehension and assessment don't need to be questions and answers. Elements of a story can be found in the details of construction, spontaneous narration, and recounting as reflected in the images below.

The students continue to wow me with their progress. When phrases and parts of

stories are recalled with ease and verbatim, you know it hits the spot for English language learners.

Thank you, Roald Dahl and The Enormous Crocodile, for this charming story, rich with descriptive vocabulary, a beautiful setting, picturesque characters, a cunning and clever plot, with a happy ending.



Kathleen Britz

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

What are our kids learning for? Why do we “test” them?



During the past two weeks, we did testing for MAP Growth with the Grade 6 and 7 classes in Mathematics, Language Usage and Reading. And during the past week, I participated in an ACE Learning Principles External Review Visit for NEASC. In both these, MAP Growth as well as the ACE Learning Principles, the main aim of the exercise is to look at learners' growth and progress.

We spoke about this a little in our Parent Information Session last night as well. Our Progress Reports that went out at the end of last term, communicate student growth and progress to students and parents. When we inform parents about their child's MAP Growth scores, we want parents to look at the progress their child has made as an individual. Not how he/she compares to others or to the average, but how her/his progress is, compared to previous assessments. When we look at progress, we can determine if our child is learning and growing and we can take steps to support and/or extend this. [HERE](#) is the recording from the Parent Info Session.

In the ACE Learning Principles, the main focus is on the learner and how we as a school work with the learner to enable her/him to grow, to become independent and self-directed in their learning. If learners can take ownership of their learning, they become autonomous and at the same time learning becomes an intrinsic process that is driven by the learner themselves. The same applies to us as adults. We keep on learning right through our lives. If we are open to learning and growing, we search for opportunities of growth. Then learning becomes something rewarding and exciting.



My wish therefore is for families to take the time to talk about 'tests' and progress in that context - as an opportunity to grow. Numerical test scores do not communicate progress by themselves. Only by looking at growth and learning that goes with these, can they become a meaningful avenue for us to continue to grow as a person in our own right.

Regards,
Maggie Reiff



Self-Portrait-Still-life Grade 9 Art

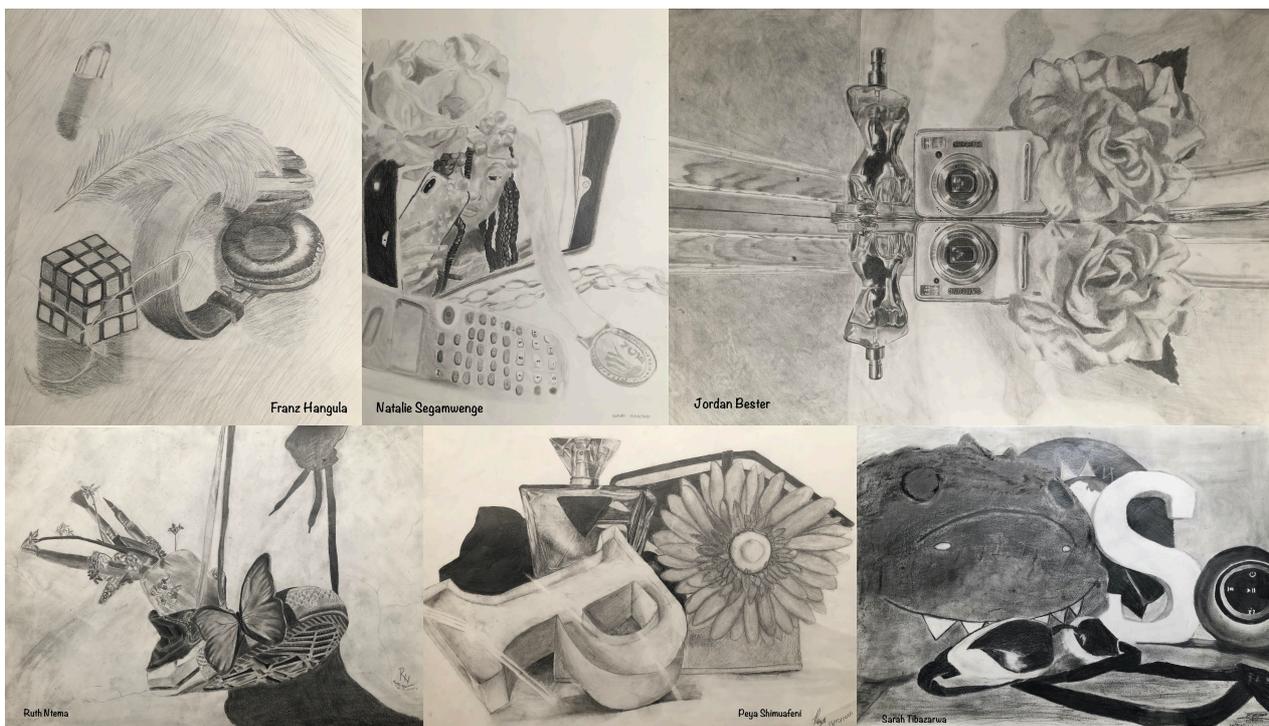
"Now what, Ms. Heike, a self-portrait or a still-life???"

This was the question that hung in the air of the art room.

The first part of this task was a matter of personal symbolism as homework. Choose five objects you think represent you best in your life here and now.

Compose a still-life with these objects and remember to include a significant ground and background. Then take photos, change them to grayscale and upload them for a class discussion about composition; re-think, re-arrange and re-take.

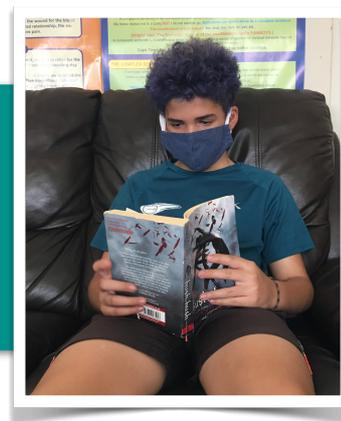
The second part of the task, creating an A2 pencil drawing of your best and most significant composition, wasn't as 'simple', but the Grade 9 students lived up to it and submitted work of a high standard.



Well done Grade 9s!

Ms. Heike

W.O.R.D.
Leo Jackson-Read in Gr. 7CK reading for WORD!



Events for November

Although we haven't had many things happen, other than quarantine, in the past 6 months November appears to be looking a little brighter.

For the weeks of November, we will be having 2 separate events, one of which will include parents and anyone who has the physical ability to grow a moustache.

Yep, **November** is starting this week Sunday and will last until the end of November. Here's a little bit of information: Movember is a 'competition' amongst all people with the ability to comfortably grow a moustache. It is an annual awareness event for men's health and suicide due to depression. Everyone shaves on October 31st, and from November 1st, they don't shave their moustache/beard until November 30th. At the end of November, both the length and thickness of your glorious facial hair are measured and then compared to the other contestants. A prize will be given to the participant with the most luscious locks.

We are aware that not everyone will be able to grow facial hair however we would love to involve everyone, we will therefore also be **selling masks with moustaches** for anyone who would like to help the cause.

The second event is for students only. It is a **writing competition**. Let me explain the rules: First of all, there is no specific theme, but it is encouraged that the story relates to Movember/men's health. It is always best to make your writing a narrative (a story). There is no designated word limit, but try keeping it within 350 to 400 words, so a short story.

The competition begins on 7th of November, and the stories must be in by the 25th. Any submission afterwards will not be included. A google form will then be sent out, and students will vote for which story they find best, the winner will then receive a prize.

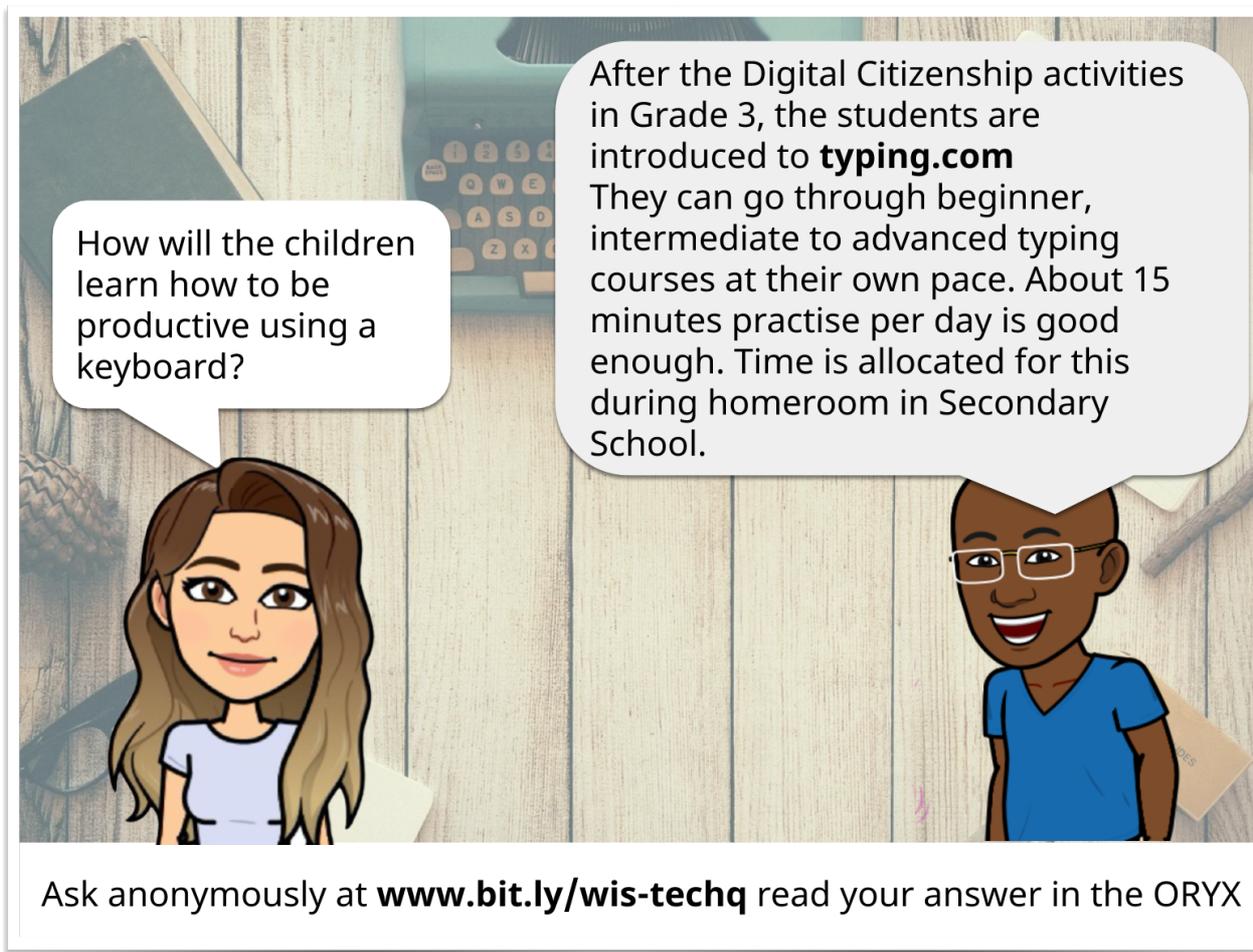
There will be a small entry fee for both events, and all the money collected will be donated to a men's health organisation.

More information will be coming next week on both events.

We really hope that you all will be taking part in the November events, who knows, maybe you'll have some fun, and right now, we all need a bit more of that.

Enjoy your November, and stay safe.

Leonhardt Fischer-Buder - Grade 10RG



How will the children learn how to be productive using a keyboard?

After the Digital Citizenship activities in Grade 3, the students are introduced to **typing.com**. They can go through beginner, intermediate to advanced typing courses at their own pace. About 15 minutes practise per day is good enough. Time is allocated for this during homeroom in Secondary School.

Ask anonymously at www.bit.ly/wis-techq read your answer in the ORYX

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MERRY Christmas & HAPPY NEW YEAR

Seasons Greetings

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