

GAZZETTE

BAC

Editorial

Message of the principal

أيها الأحبة،

يستعدُّ الناس، كلُّ على طريقته، لاستقبال حدث ما في حياتهم، مختارين أنماطاً في التحرك والإنشغال لمصافحة تلك اللحظة بشوق وارتقاء بل جلي. ولعلَّ هذا الشوق يفيض اغتباطه بتفاصيل التعبير عن ذلك الفرح المستريح في حنوِّ المقام الأرجواني الباث امتداداً الى الصفاء الطالع، فيستنبر وينبري وردياً. قد يبدو عجباً هذا التوصيف الوجداني، في اختبار النمو في العمل والتألف مع فرح الإجازة في عالمٍ كاد فيه الإستهلاك السريع لمساحات العمر، يحو سعادة الإبداع ويغلب شعلة الإبتكار.

في زمن الفصح الواهب إيانا نعمة التجدد الحقيقي، أتوجه إليكم عبر جريدتنا الفصلية، بدعوة لعيش فعل الكلمة المعنوية، واختبار قوة الرجاء المعززة واكتشاف معنى الكرامة المنيرة، فنتشدد معاً حتى لا نغرق في سطحية القشور المادية المتداخلة والمتداخلة في كل مناسبة، فرضاً بشوّه حبور الحدث!

هوذا الجيل الطالع بطرح أسئلته على الوجود راسماً استفهامات كبيرة، فهل جُرؤ على مرافقته في رحلة التفتيش والاكتشاف فنكون معه في خفر الوشاح المظلل بهدوء ووداعة؟

أيها المربون أهلاً ومعلمين.

هم أبناؤنا يجتاحهم عالم الصورة السريع، المقترح الفكر بأساليب متعددة تراكم في صمت متسائل، فهل جُرؤ على مواكبتهم بكلمة فاعلة توسع آفاق التواصل البسيط والهادف، فتسكب في قلوبهم ذخيرة الإبتعاد؟

هم أحباؤنا في انطلاقة الغد المستعجل نحو خبرات الحياة المتعددة في انتصاراتها وانكساراتها، تطل عمق النفس والحشى، فهل جُرؤ على مرافقتهم برصيد الإختبار الثابت المبني على صخرة الرجاء، فعل إيمان بنعمة مشددة، تعزيتها من فوق؟

هم أعزأؤنا يحاصرهم عالم المادة المسطحة للقيم في استفزاز فاحش، بل ابتزاز واضح، يُعري الكيان حتى يكاد يتحوّل رقم استهلاك عشوائي، ثمّنه في جيبه المثقوب وسرواله الممزق، فهل جُرؤ على احتضانهم بمكونات الحب، والثقة والإفتخار، عناصر حياتية حقيقية مصرفها الأول كرامة الإنسان؟

وبعد، فالتربية تلاق وتواصل، يُسأل عن تثيره، من اكتنز في عروقه مواهب الكارزين والمعلمين، وديعة يؤمن عليها فيحفظها ويغذيها لتنمو وتنضج. هكذا نحن جميعنا أيها المربون، في زمننا هذا وفي كل زمن، مدعوون الى الإبداع في الأساليب، والى الإبتكار في الوسائل لبقى التناضح والتراسل والتخاطب والتفاعل مع من نحب موجوداً!

فالخلاص بتجسد الكلمة حصل، ليصير التواصل بين الخالق والمخلوق حقيقة تُعيد وتثبّت فعل الكلمة، وقوة الرجاء ومعنى الكرامة؛ حتى جُرؤ على رغم ضعفنا وسقطتنا أن نتعزى بسرّبال من رضي عنا طوعاً أن يحمل الصليب.



My Father

Thank you Father,
For giving me this life that I live.
Thank you Father,
For giving me the chances to forgive.
I believe in you
I pray each day to prove that I do!

Thank you Father,
The Keeper and Ruler of Love.
Thank you Father,
You're all things on Earth...and above.
You opened up my eyes,
Your power cannot be denied!

Thank you Father,
The breath that I breathe
Just could not be.
In everything I do,
I ask for you
To help me see things through.

I know you are there with me every hour
And each day...
It is clear that you're everywhere!
With you...
Why should I despair?

My purpose here,
Is pleasing only you!
Thank you Father,
Thank you!

Mohammad Harb- G9



When Children Play...

When children play, they are not just having fun. In fact, they are practicing, developing, and enhancing both their motor and cognitive skills. When a child rolls over, crawls, or walks, his or her gross motor skills are at practice. When children touch objects in their surrounding, this helps in the development of their sensory skills. Children use their senses as they explore, examine, and certainly discover! As children express their thoughts and ideas, imagine or role-play, they develop their intellectual and cognitive skills. Play is the most natural, and at the same time an extraordinary means of learning.

It is very important that parents acknowledge the role of play, encourage their children to play, and actually engage in playing activities with them. Through play, children acquire social skills. When they play alone, they develop and project their self-image and perception. When they interact with other individuals in a play activity, they will not only develop their social skills, but also gain more self-awareness and self-confidence.

Planning different indoor and outdoor games will definitely contribute to a child's development on various levels: personal, social, emotional, mathematical, perceptual, verbal, physical, and imaginative. For example, parents need to encourage their children to play with puzzles, play dough, crayons, small balls, finger paint, beads, magnets, dolls, stuffed animals, simple objects such as pots, pans, wooden spoons, empty boxes, cubes to stack, Lego etc... They should also promote participating in outdoor activities such as swings, slides, inflatable toys, water toys, climbing games, etc... All these play activities of different types will prepare young children for school, and will stimulate their skills, abilities, and learning experiences.

Children, like grown ups, are thinkers. Through play, they will learn about themselves, other people, their environment, and the world around them. Through the course of this discovery, they will become able to read, write, and calculate as they enter school. Play is both a fuel for and a manifestation of what children learn.

Roula Soubra- Preschool Homeroom Teacher

The Importance of Parents' Involvement

Nowadays, it takes more than a good home to raise children and more than a good daycare and school to teach and educate them. What is really needed is collaboration between home and daycare or school for the proper development of all the aspects of a child's personality and his/her growth into a responsible and well adjusted adult.

At the daycare, children have the opportunity to discover themselves and the world around them through educational themes and activities. The activities done at the daycare provide children with all the prerequisites and skills that they need for their future enrollment in school.

Preschool is the first step into the child's schooling, and it bridges the school and the home. At preschool, children acquire all the basics that they need to fine-tune their motor skills, develop their cognitive and language skills, and discover the rules and regulations of socialization and behavior. They are introduced to letters and numbers, whereby they start to read, count, and write letters.

Is parents' involvement a valuable source of education?

Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Their involvement has a positive effect on children's attitude. Doctor of psychology *Laurence Steinburg* believes in his book *The Ten Basic Principles of Good Parenting* that, "Deep down, children value what they believe their parents value. By involving yourself in your children's schooling consistently over the course of their

education, you demonstrate to them that school is important to you."

The tips below can help parents be active and positive participants in their children's educational journey.

Talk to your child and encourage him/ her through:

- speaking positively about the child's school and teachers.
- explaining the benefits of educational exercises and activities.
- praising and encouraging your child and his/ her output.
- asking your child what he or she has learned in school each day.
- promoting autonomy by letting the child do simple things on his/ her own and take some decisions.

Learn and play with your child through:

- keeping books, magazines and newspapers at home in order to browse them together.
- engaging in fun as well as learning activities with the child.
- encouraging drawing, reading, writing and math skills.

Be implicated in what is going on at daycare or preschool through:

- participating in school's meetings, events and celebrations.
- reading the school website and gazette.

Create a routine for your child, which goes hand-in-hand with that of the daycare or preschool through:

- reinforcing the daycare and school rules and routines at home.



- assuring that your child has a good breakfast before school and that he/ she arrives to school well-rested.

- monitoring and limiting activities such as television watching, and playing computer and video games.

The Orthodox Sister Schools have never ceased to put a lot of effort in order to strengthen the communication between school and parents. Hence, our Schools, in collaboration with the parents' committees, have organized a series of seminars tackling Holistic Education in general, and targeting parents of children in various grade levels. The seminars are designed to take into consideration age-level characteristics and answer to parents' most common inquiries in a professional mode, in line with the Schools' Vision and Mission.

Nisrine Feghali- Head of BAC Daycare
Irene Abdallah- Preschool Homeroom Teacher



Don't Ask Sigmund

A couple of weeks ago, I was browsing a magazine-ful of kitsch. Among all the flashy scandalous photos and empty blabber of our so called "Artists", the advice column grabbed my attention. People sent their problems, and some supposed expert in human psychology and sociology provided them with tips on how their problems can be solved or at least moderated.

One problem was sent by a mother who was complaining about her teenage daughter. She said that her daughter would simply not get off the phone. The land line was always busy, the phone bill has rocketed, and the family was having major quarrels because of this.

The so-called expert provided all sorts of solutions: from trying to discuss the issue with the teenage girl, to reaching a consensus with her, to grounding her and forbidding her from touching the phone apparatus at an extreme. This "professional" did not mention that a more interesting alternative to speaking on the phone would actually moderate this problem if not completely solve it.

Children and teenagers differ in their hobbies. Some like interacting; some like working- out, some prefer to play actual or

virtual games. None of these hobbies makes them an obsessive generation of couch potatoes. Their hobbies are mere statements and manifestations of their personalities and influences.

Day after day, our children are becoming harder and harder to impress and please. They have a myriad of useful and harmful pastime options. Media has made their lives, as well as ours, very much similar to a kaleidoscope. Pictures, messages, and ideas are in constant battle over humanity's attention. The younger they are, the easier our children are prone to be amazed and carried away.

Children do not get born with an innate love of reading. We surveyed learners from Grades 3, 6, and 9 concerning their hobbies, pastime activities, and reading habits and preferences, and less than 10% of them exhibited a preference for reading. The largest chunk of this percentage comes from the younger learners whose parents read for them and encourage them to read. However, what was noteworthy about the majority of the answers is that they have expressed how the more accessible interesting reading material is, the more they will prioritize reading over other pastime activities.

Hence, if we intend on helping our learners become more avid and appreciative readers, we can't just tell them: read! We have to know what they like to read about and provide them with access to books, articles, and stories about this particular topic. Another noteworthy episode comes from my own experience at the library. Some secondary learners who once laughed at the idea of reading for leisure enthusiastically came to the library to borrow books about football.

The most interesting anecdote on reading comes from one of the stories we selected for our National Reading Days. The story depicted a little boy who cried each time he was alone. He always liked to be around his friends. His mother's solution to his problem was to give him as a gift a friend who will never leave his side: a book.

It may take wasted years before a child realizes the true benefit behind a good book, the secrets books unlock inside the individual, the broadening reading creates in a mind's capacity. In a nutshell, if you want children to love reading, you don't need the help of Sigmund Freud.

Missan Laysy Stouhi - Supervisor of the Unit of Libraries and Publications

What do you do in your free time?

- I read stories
- I draw
- I listen to music
- I play games
- I hang out with friends
- I shop
- I WRITE IN MY DIARY
- I do sports

Where do you read?

- In bed
- AT SCHOOL
- In my room
- In the library
- In the car
- Anywhere I feel like it

How often do you visit the library to read or borrow stories?

- TWICE A WEEK
- Never
- Everyday
- I buy my own stories

What activities do you do after you read the story?

- I draw things about it
- I try to act it in a funny way
- I DO NOT DO ANYTHING
- I answer the questions in the story
- I put it in my bag to return it
- I go present it to my sister and brother
- I search the net for other stories written by the author

What would make you read more often?

- Exciting big stories with easy words
- Boredom
- Nothing
- Playing teacher and making myself read for students
- Less studying
- When I am trying to sleep
- EXTRA READING ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL
- Interesting stories that I can relate to



Do you usually tell the story to someone after you read it?

- To my teacher
- To everyone
- To my baby cousin
- It depends on the story
- No because it doesn't interest me to share it
- IF IT'S EXCITING, I DO
- To no one



IT'S READING WEEK!

Youth Stewardship Program

The Experiences of a Lifetime

The Youth Stewardship Program our school launched in Summer 2007 aims ,in a nutshell, at helping learners take a reality check and witness first hand the experiences of groups in their society that lead somehow different lives, while providing support to them.

The institution my group selected was "Movement Social". Our role included spending time with young learners enrolled in the courses this institution offers during which we helped them enhance their academic and cognitive skills. We played games and did educational activities with them such as handcrafts, mind games, etc.

Through this experience, we became more tolerant and patient. We learned how to deal with children, especially those who come from a less privileged economic and social background. It helped us improve ourselves as individuals and taught us how to handle situations in which we have never been before.

Ali Ismail, Mahmoud Itani, Mazen Mansour, Mohammad Masri, Samer Rizk-Grade 12 Learners

Because We care

How can we show others that we care? Last summer, I had the chance to participate in the Youth Stewardship Program our school organized where learners grouped up and decided to do community work in Humanitarian institutions. My group chose to offer help at مؤسسة التنمية الفكرية a branch of "مؤسسة دار الأيتام الاسلامية". It was our way of experiencing human differences .We worked with mentally challenged children ,physically impaired children, and orphans .Our job was to tutor them.

The weeks during which we worked with this organization were very enriching, educational and enlightening. This direct involvement gradually built a more humane feeling inside each and every one of us. We gained more self-confidence and we became more tolerant and altruistic.

Hasan Dennawi ,Layla Kobrosly, Lina Mahmasany -Grade 12 Learners

A Journey with No Boundaries

The Children Cancer Center of Lebanon was the place our group chose as part of the Youth Stewardship Program. We were looking forward to becoming members of the large family of staff who never stop to give a hand to many children inflicted with cancer. Over a period of 3 months, we dealt with children who came from different backgrounds and different cultures. We played with them, assisted them with their summer work, taught them new information, and did many activities with them. We shared with them their joys and sorrows. It was very livening to see how the smiles rarely left their faces despite the fact that they were in a

constant struggle with the most malicious of all diseases.

Shocking as it may sound, we learned from these children more than they learned from us. They strengthened our faith in God who will always light the path; they encouraged us to cherish every moment in life and never to stop smiling.

Mira Abdalla, Nour Alawiyyeh, Nivine Hashem, Ghina Jammal, Shireen Makarem, Yasmine Makarem, Firas el Oud- Grade 12 learners

At "Foyer Saint George"

"Foyer Saint George" is a dorm where senior citizens receive medical care in an environment and setting which keep them safe and secure. We chose this place because we believe in their rights to care, support, and entertainment.

There, we helped them eat lunch, scheduled one day per week where we played mind and memory games with them, and sometimes we even challenged them in a game of playing-cards! We listened to their stories, and they gave us morals and pieces of advice about life, difficulties, success, failure, etc.

We gained a great deal of life experience. Even though we completed the number of hours the program sets for each of us, we are planning on going back to the Foyer to check on the precious new friends we made there.

Mohammad Abdalla, Ghina Halabi, Rami Houshaimy, Lama Naboulsi, Yasmine Refaat - Grade 12 Learners

« Sabt Beyrouth » des événements taillés sur mesure

Beyrouth est une ville active, une métropole du Moyen-Orient où tout s'entremêle; embouteillages, politiques, soirées, supermarchés, mode, et grandes surfaces... Un vaste éclectisme, parfois intéressant, occupe tous les Beyrouthins, mais oublie parfois les plus jeunes membres de notre société.

Les enfants qui vont à l'école, étudient et passent la plupart des après-midi de la semaine à la maison, attendant impatiemment le week-end. Que vont-ils faire comme activité? Où iront-ils? Qu'ont préparé les parents comme sortie amusante et intéressante?

C'est ce qui nous a donné l'idée de créer un endroit à Beyrouth où les enfants pourront jouer, voir un spectacle, ou s'amuser les samedis après-midi. De là, est né l'idée de «Sabt Beyrouth»: des événements culturels, ludiques, amusants et variés sont organisés pour inciter toujours la curiosité et l'intérêt de chacun de nos petits.

Nous avons donc commencé à organiser des spectacles, comme « The Red Nosed Clown » et «Hocus-Pocus» qui ont eu lieu au théâtre de l'Annonciation à «Beirut Annunciation Orthodox College», des ateliers de jeux pour enfants «Jeux et Talents» et de danse «Hip-hop» à l'École des Trois Docteurs...

Avec l'arrivée du printemps et du beau temps, nous planifions des journées thématiques (musique, couleurs, sport, livres, etc...), en plein air, avec divers jeux et activités dans les cours des écoles. Restez branchés et alertes!

Céline Khairallah
Directeur Artistique
Département de Communication



An Interview on Psychomotor Skills

Parents and Teachers sometimes have technical questions about their learners' psychomotor skills. For this purpose, we conducted an interview with Mrs. Gemma Gebrayel Matta (psychomotor therapist) where she answered to some preschool teachers' inquiries.

In brief, what is the job description of a psychomotrician?

A psychomotrician or a psychomotor therapist deals with the unity of body and mind. Psychomotricity is a discipline that integrates the cognitive, emotional, and physical interactions in an individual's ability to be, and to act, in a psychosocial context.

At which age and in what cases is a child referred to a psychomotrician?

A person can be referred at any age: from infancy to old age. Children who are referred are typically children with learning difficulties, motor or/and cognitive delay, sensory deficiency or behavioral difficulties.

In which cases does the psychomotrician intervene?

We intervene according to the needs identified in an assessment administered to each individual in the first few sessions. These assessments are Norm-based and evaluate the following functions: gross motor skills, fine motor skills, corporal schemes, laterality, spatial and temporal orientation, and handwriting. The result determines the degree of intervention.

How can we teach preschool learners to hold the pencil in a proper way?

Before focusing on the pencil grip, we encourage fine motor exercises to improve the digital ability, such as working on finger force, digital movements (movement of the fingers), and moving each finger independently.

How can we teach them to differentiate between writing in Arabic and in English?

For right-handed children, in Arabic, we train them to support the paper with their left hand and start writing from the side of the paper that is farther from the supporting hand. In English, it is the opposite; we train them to support the paper with their left hand and start writing from the side of the paper that is closer to the supporting hand.

How can we direct the learners towards writing numbers and letters in an appropriate way?

We adopt different steps before showing numbers and letters, and ask learners to write them. First, we show the letter in large scale and ask the learner to trace it moving his/her entire arm in the right direction. This is accompanied by the psychomotrician, or



the educator responsible, verbally guiding the child through the right movements to be followed. We should always specify a "beginning point" for writing each number or letter. After that, we use multi-sensory material to trace or make the letters and numbers. Finally, we move on to pencil-paper activities.

How can we teach them to leave enough spaces between words and to write between a limited space?

First of all, we work on the child's ability to move him/ herself appropriately in a big space. Next, we train the child to move and manipulate objects in a given space. These steps help the child become aware and master planning and manipulating space. After that, the child would be able to organize his graphic space (related to writing).

If the difficulties continue to show, we give the child a tool that is a small square appropriate in size to the space required, attached to a stick. He/she can place it between words when writing until he/she becomes used to leaving a space without using the tool.

For writing in between a limited space, we mark the assigned lines in a bolder color for them to be clearer. For a beginning writer, it is recommended to start with a larger space between the lines, making them smaller as his/her writing progresses.

What kind of activities help children generally improve their fine motor skills?

- Playing with play dough or dough
- Manipulating screws using screw drives (a game called "Mecano" is commercially available)
- Tearing and wrinkling paper
- Playing with wooden blocks
- Imitating finger movements of the educator
- Playing with seeds (gluing them between lines)
- Threading beads in a line or inserting beads on a wooden stick
- Manipulating the gymnastic ribbon independently or imitating an educator.

The Influence of Physics on a Society's Beliefs

New discoveries have always had their effects on how we perceive ourselves, our values, our arts, and all other facets of our cultural expression. Physics is one of the branches of science the new theories, laws, and discoveries of which had, and still have, a tremendous impact on human culture and thought. To dwell on this influence, we will consider specific instances where changes in the prevalent physical theory were followed by changes in the philosophical thought processes.

Determinism, for example, is a philosophical doctrine which implies that the universe is a vast machine operating with strict causality, whose future is determined in all detail by its present state. Determinism is rooted in Newtonian mechanics. When Newton's system of mechanics and law of gravitation gained general acceptance, people saw that heavenly bodies were no longer to be feared or consulted for their influences on human affairs. These celestial bodies were now considered simply as matter moving in space and governed by universal laws.

Newtonian physics further suggested that all bodies, even the smallest, were subject to the same laws of physics that governed the large planets and stars. That is, as change and motion are mechanical in their nature, the future follows from the past. The philosophical implication of this was that people did not have the freedom to choose between good and evil or to select their path through life. Or as the saying goes: "the ball could only go where the player sent it".

The effects that Newtonian physics had on philosophy, free will, and values would change with the introduction of quantum physics and its uncertainty principle at the beginning of the 20th century. One of these changes was to prompt a re-examination of the question of determinism. Quantum physics, like relativistic physics, showed that we could not assume that the physical laws which seem to govern a 50 kg mass moving at speeds up to few hundred kilometers per hour also applied to bodies with different masses or speeds and under different conditions. The impact of the uncertainty principle in quantum physics was to cast doubt on the possibility to ever be able to predict the position and velocity of every body for all future times, since it is not possible, in the first place, to determine without error, the exact coordinates of a body at a single instant in time. This conclusion was then used, philosophically, as the basis of the claim that humans have free will and that all is not predetermined as would seem to be the case in a purely mechanistic, deterministic world, governed by the laws of Newtonian physics.

All these are but few examples on how changes and new theories in science influence a society's thought process. Can you think of others?

Moussa Bachir- Physics Teacher

Values Through Extra-curricular Activities

Holistic Education is a new approach adopted by our Orthodox Schools of Beirut as it highlights the importance of the "Person". The Person is an entity who consists of body and soul that cannot be dissociated. The body is nourished with food and physical education; whereas the soul, with spiritual, cultural, moral and social values. Along with the taught academic subject matters, these values are implemented in the Extra-Curricular Departments and Activities. Below is a collection of paradigms of how values are integrated within the curriculum and through activities in the mentioned Departments.

Environmental and Agricultural Program

It is a challenge for learners to nourish the aspect of their self-knowledge which enables them to understand their natural environment better, develop it, protect it, bond with it and benefit from it. The Environmental and Agricultural Program plays a vital role in triggering learners to think of means of dealing with this challenge. This program, which targets learners from daycare till grade 12, operates on two levels. On one hand, it involves providing learners with practical experimentation of the theoretical concepts discussed in the course of their sciences curriculum. For example, in the grade 5 curriculum, learners study about the importance of grafting and pruning trees. The agricultural program takes this lesson one step forward, as learners are given the chance to graft and prune with their own hands. Consequently, learners' perspective of nature is elevated to a higher level. They will differentiate between cutting trees randomly, that is unhealthy, and cutting parts of some trees (pruning), that is a healthy way for blossoming. On another note, our grade 4 learners study about the cells found in plants and vegetables. Observing onion cells in the laboratory makes learners realize that all God's living creatures have something in common: cells. They will understand the difference and diversity in creatures by differentiating between different types of cells. Hence, learners assume responsibility and respect towards living creatures.

On the other hand, the Environmental and Agricultural Program is extended to the extra-curricular activities whereby learners are guided into ethical means by which they protect and benefit from their environment. For instance, reducing waste, reusing and recycling papers, preserving, fermenting and pickling food are some of the experiences our learners practice and share with their peers in school. Learners, after their involvement in the recycling procedure, will recognize that cutting trees is harmful and that recycling is a substitute. Eventually, learners enhance their creativity as they make out a product out of the recycled material, such as an envelope,

invitation cards, a calendar, a photo frame, etc. What is worthwhile in these activities, besides the concepts and the values taught, is the intrinsic reward, i.e. self-satisfaction.

Eventually, after getting all the necessary input and reinforcement, and after experimenting with such experiences, learners end up exhibiting their relationships with nature without fearing the least that they will be mocked or criticized by their peers.

Fund-raising activities: Food Sales

Fund-raising activities, notwithstanding the fun they generate for learners, are diverse and tailored according to learners' age. Food sales are one example. They fund the Environmental and Agricultural Program and the Social Activities.

Placing importance in the values of community and social life, we seek the cultivation of an attitude of thoughtfulness and courtesy (that includes cleanliness, manners, etc) in our learners through this simple activity. Throughout the various phases of food sales, learners act for the well-being of others as well as for themselves. They will not only respect others, but also food, hence appreciating God's offerings. By involving learners in such activities, we aim at reintegrating them in their community so that they make a change relative to their age. It enhances their characters, improves their ability to assume responsibilities, helps them acquire leadership roles, motivates them to carefully follow orders to fulfill tasks, and fosters their self-esteem, self-discipline and self-confidence.

Nathalie Abou Gharib- IEN:
Extra-curricular Activities Desk



At the Computer Lab

When asked, "why do learners study computer as part of their Extra-Curricular Activities," the response may be, "to learn how to operate a machine that has grown to become indispensable in our current day." Answer is true yet incomplete. Technically speaking, yes, learners learn to press the right buttons. Computer courses are designed according to a vertical progression. As learners grow, tasks and programs get more complicated and expectations are raised. Learners' problem-solving abilities are gradually enhanced. Moreover, learners get to a point where they develop a sense of autonomy in manipulating technology.

Cutting through the entire curriculum is a moral approach to the use of computers.

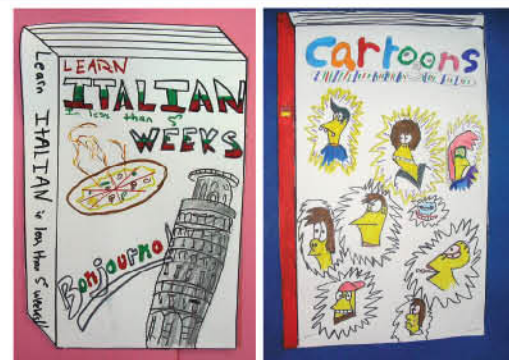
Learners are guided to be selective and to self-monitor their use of the internet in order to be able to access useful, truthful and genuine data. They are also encouraged to use this machine as an educational tool besides using it for mere entertainment.

Parallel to that, learners nourish their values and project these values in their behavior. They respect the computer lab as a professional work environment which should always be calm, tidy, clean, and exemplary. Computer Lab experiences nourish a sense of responsibility on the behalf of learners. They value the machine itself as a public property.

Learners are alerted to the changes technology has founded in our society and its growing impact in our current era, all sometimes hazardous. The machine is replacing manpower in some contexts, and enslaving humans in others. The role of the machine is to facilitate our lives rather than to replace us or to detach us from the world outside. In this context, educators adopt a holistic approach which guides learners towards mastering the skills of using the machine and more importantly, absorbing the values which cut through this experience. The machine should be a motive, a catalyst, and a tool for human beings to improve themselves.

Finally, it's parents' role to complement the schools' efforts to help learners control their computer exposure and benefit from their computer-using experience rather than spend a countless number of idle hours confined to the glaring light of the ever blinding computer screen.

Elie Khoury - Computer Department



Teaching Values through Art

Art is not just a pretty picture hanging on a wall; that's a point that is repetitively made in the art room. Art touches all facets of our lives; it is an attempt to organize and beautify our visual world. Everything we create can become a piece of artwork whether it's a picture, a design for a building, a piece of fashion, a book cover, or even a sports car.... All of these incorporate the elements of art: line, color, shape, form and someone has to make the decisions to arrive at the end product.

In the art room, learners take a journey in creating art, and it is this journey towards a finished art project that is exciting and rewarding. Books play an important part in the learners' daily lives and so the 8th grade

learners took on the role of graphic designers to design book covers for any topic they chose. They had a lot of decisions to make along the way, and thus their journey started....

What is the topic of their book? How to write a catchy title? Which style and size of lettering to use? What is the overall look of the book in terms of colors, pictures and so on? As each learner made his/ her decision, the book designs began to appear. Topics from Cooking Pasta, Kung Fu Skills, Learning Italian, Bead Making, to Drawing Cartoons were chosen. The designs were bright, bold, and appealing.

The learners came to realize that a lot of thought and decision-making goes on behind the scenes in many aspects of art. They learned that they can, step by step, and decision by decision, use their talents and know how to achieve their goals. They can now look at artwork around them and appreciate the fact that somewhere along the line, someone took a journey to create this art, and that the journey in creating the finished piece of art was as rewarding as achieving it.

Nancy Salamouny- Head of the Art Department



دمج القيم التعليمية من خلال الموسيقى

يساهم النهج الموسيقي المتبع في المدارس الشّعبية في اكتساب مهارات موسيقية متعدّدة وتنميتها لدى المتعلم كالأغناء السليم والتميز بين مختلف أنواع الموسيقى في كلّ أنحاء العالم، وتعزيز الطاقات الفردية وتنمية الذوق الفني والحس الجمالي....

ولكورس المدارس الشّعبية أيضاً دور أساس يضاف إلى ما ذكر أعلاه، إذ إنّ برنامجه المتبع يعزّز لدى المتعلم إنتماؤه إلى الجماعة عن طريق المشاركة في الأمسيات الغنائية التي تقام مراراً خلال العام الأكاديمي.

ومن الأهداف الأساسية في النهج، تنمية مختلف القيم الثقافية والاجتماعية والأخلاقية والتعرّف إلى تراثنا الموسيقي والمحافظة عليه، وتقدير الأعمال الفنية الجيدة التي تهذب المشاعر وتسمو بالنفس، والحرص على اختيار مواضيع الأغنيات التي تنمي إحساساً بالوعي والمسؤولية لدى المتعلم، كتقدير أهمية البيئة مثلاً وحمايتها، احترام الآخر، تذوق مظاهر الجمال، الارتقاء بمستوى الذوق والوجدان، التعاون الجماعي بغية تحقيق عمل موحد ومتكامل، وتنمية الثقافة العامة للمتعلم من خلال إطلاعهم على ثقافة مختلف الشعوب والاستماع إلى نماذجها الموسيقية والتميز بينها، بالإضافة إلى تنمية الجوانب الاجتماعية لدى المتعلم أثناء النشاطات الموسيقية حيث تزيد ثقته بنفسه، فيعتبر بصوته وجسده ويوطد علاقته برفاقه.

غبريال عبد النور- رئيس قسم الموسيقى

La technologie...pratique et valeurs

Il est vrai que la Technologie fait partie des matières que les apprenants pourraient considérer comme secondaires et banales, étant donné son faible pourcentage et le fait qu'elle soit donnée une fois par semaine. Mais la vision selon laquelle les sujets sont conçus, répartis et enseignés, par tranches d'âge, donne une idée claire de l'enseignement de ce cours qui transmet des valeurs nobles aux apprenants.

L'objectif du cours est basé sur deux idées principales: appliquer les concepts et les techniques acquises en classe pour résoudre les problèmes dans la vie réelle, et utiliser les moyens adéquats pour y arriver.

Ces objectifs sont atteints en illustrant où, quand et comment appliquer et faire le meilleur usage, dans la vie quotidienne, des différentes connaissances et théories enseignées dans d'autres matières.

Les apprenants sont entraînés à élaborer une procédure scientifique pour résoudre les problèmes auxquels ils doivent faire face. Les projets exécutés ont pour but de les initier à utiliser adéquatement les instruments qu'ils ont entre leurs mains.

En tout temps, les mesures de sécurité et leur importance sont enseignées aux apprenants. En effet, on leur rappelle toujours que plus leur sécurité, celle du matériel utilisé et celle de leur environnement sont respectées, moindres sont les accidents et dangers auxquels ils doivent faire face.

Au niveau des classes complémentaires et secondaires, les sujets sont conformes à l'objectif susmentionné, et les valeurs acquises clairement établies. En effet, les apprenants doivent même effectuer des sondages et des recherches sur le terrain, ce qui contribue à les forger quant à communiquer proprement avec leurs concitoyens. Des sujets plus complexes sont étudiés. Le cours donné sur la voiture pourrait être un exemple explicatif : les apprenants prennent connaissance des différents systèmes d'une voiture et de leur mode de travail en faisant eux-mêmes les recherches nécessaires sur le sujet. Ils sont familiarisés avec la façon de maintenir une voiture, et savent adopter les mesures de sécurité de rigueur, et ceci en étudiant une voiture sur le terrain. A la fin du cours, conduire adéquatement devient aisé et habituel.

Le cours de Technologie enseigne des valeurs essentielles à respecter dans la vie quotidienne de chacun, mais surtout, une valeur qui incite les apprenants à respecter la vie humaine: la leur et celle des autres.

Bassam Daoun-
Chef du département de technologie



From Physical Education to Character Education

Self-discipline requires an understanding of oneself and an awareness of the ways in which one can cope with difficulties, frustration, and disappointments. In order to assist our learners in their life journey, we need to have realistic expectations of their capabilities, and to help them develop these capabilities in the most appropriate and creative ways. Physical education is not only focused on fitness or athleticism; instead, it is about morality, ethics, interpersonal relationships, and group dynamics. Sports foster the spirit of honesty and respect among learners and thus prepare them for their interactions with their community on this basis.

As young learners start to develop their gross motor skills, physical education is a vital factor in this enhancement. For instance, when they dribble a ball, learners develop their ability to coordinate their hand and body movements to that action. Also at a football game, learners run in the proper direction, watch out for the defendant, kick towards the right direction at the right time, handle the ball, and surely try their best to shoot and score.

Sports training feeds the learners' ability to follow orders, work for a common goal, have a sense of responsibility towards this goal, and cooperate with a group. It also provides learners with the opportunity to assume leadership roles and behave accordingly, while receiving the required guidance from Sports professionals. For example, during a basketball game, learners appreciate fair and enjoyable play as well as other players' performance. They learn to accept dissatisfactory performances or results. They are encouraged to take losing as an incentive to perform better next time. Moreover, through playing sports, learners release tension and anxiety.

With a favorable attitude towards sports, parents can encourage learners to engage in sports activities that would help them take proper care of their health as well as build their character. To wrap up, Physical Education builds learners' personality while they are "playing".

George Mandaly- Sports Teacher



ONLY A HERO DARES

The Hero Inside

We were told that heroes are selected people, or immortal beings, who outdo ordinary men or women in skill, strength, and courage. We were made to believe that they are born solely for the role they play. We were taught that they are magnanimous to their followers, ruthless to their enemies, resourceful, skillful in many crafts, witty and wise in counsel. The list of their supernatural capabilities goes on and on...

We later came to realize that heroes are mortal men and women who suffer pain and death like any other person. We discovered that, despite the suffering, heroes live their lives gallantly and fully. We unlocked that they are capable of creating, through their own efforts and suffering, a moment's glory that survives in their memory, and that of their descendants.

But whether heroes are immortal beings or average persons, one battle seems to preoccupy them all: the battle between good and evil. The boundaries between good and evil may not be very clear-cut to most of us these days the same way they were portrayed in early epics and legends. But all the same, we are in a constant war fighting battles after battles, some of which are not only taking place in the world around us, but also deep down inside each and every one of us.

We will not delve into what good or evil are. But we should just remember the countless times that we go back to re-think and re-evaluate our actions. We go back to find out whether we have done the "good" or the "bad" deed, and which one has won. We feel inner peace and joy when we realize that evil was defeated in a given battle. Yet the war continues. It is fought by the hero in each one of us every day.

Taking a closer look at the heroes we know, and believe in, we notice that all of them, one way or the other, were involved in this war. They may have lost a battle or two during their struggle.

But they all rise up again...!

They surpass temporary defeat; in the final battle they conquer the evil in themselves and in their world. It does not matter whether they live to see their own victory or not. Their ever-fighting spirit transcends death and continues to live on among us.

Moussa Bachir- Physics Teacher

Becoming A Mentor

According to Homer's Odyssey...when king Odysseus went off to fight in the Trojan war, he left his son Telemachus in the hands of a wise man named Mentor.

After 2000 years, the word mentor soon came to mean:

"a wise and responsible tutor" – an experienced person who advises, guides, teaches, inspires, challenges, corrects, and serves as a model.

In the previous years, it seemed as a natural trend for almost everyone to have a mentor; almost everywhere one went, there was a kind of spiritual mentoring being passed on from one person to another.

But what about today?

Who will love and work with the new generations and help them grow spiritually strong?

Who will encourage, guide, and model the truth for them?

Who will call young believers to accountability and work with faith to help mold their characteristics?

Will you become one whom God can use to impart wisdom and to help others grow towards maturity?

Will you become a Mentor?

Will you become a Hero?

Fadia Ghanem - Parent

"Only a Hero Dares"

Given the chance to write about "Only a Hero Dares", I found it a good idea to say thank you to my mother on Mother's Day.

This stunning phrase made me stop for a while and read my life story again. It revived all those sad memories, but, on the other hand, encouraged the will inside me to reveal my story to others.

I consider my mother a true hero. Why? She is a sixty-year old woman who was about to retire from the tasks of raising her children after they already grew up. But she found herself again in rehabilitation after a 21-year old young man happened to have a severe accident, and fortunately survived.

These events led this young man to pass through the process of childhood once again. My mother is a woman whose weapon was faith and the belief that she was chosen for that duty that nobody else could attain. She had to suffer and overcome her suffering by living a situation that started nine years ago and is still going on.

May God bless all mothers who are empowered with will. They are the real heroes who only dare to experience and come up with a wisdom that would teach us about such a theme.

May Massalkhi Najem - Parent

فقط الأبطال يجروون

لا يسعني إلا أن أثنى على تصرفات ابنتي التي تدهشني دائماً بسرعة بديتها ونظرتها الصائبة إلى الأمور. جرو دائماً على قول الحقيقة مهما كانت صعبة وقاسية. تصارحني بموضوعية إذا ما أخطأت التصرف أو استعجلتها في أمر ما. أو إذا قصرت معها في إنجاز ما يجب إنجازه كأم. تُثني على تصرفاتي في الوقت المناسب لتمنحني جرعة حنان وحب لا مثيل لها لتخطي كل مصاعب الدنيا وهمومها.

البطولة الحقيقية هي في أن تكون نفسك وتتصرف بتلقائية من دون تصنع أو تكلف. الأبطال بحسب رأيي. هم الذين لا ينتظرون الشكر في مقابل خدمة. وينحون بحبة وبقلب مفتوح على كل الاحتمالات. البطل هو الذي يتقبل الآخر كما هو. وينمي في ذاته روح العطاء والمحبة في التعاطي مع الآخر. وينظر دائماً إلى الجانب الإيجابي من الأمور.

البطل هو الذي يفهم الآخر ويقدره كما هو. ويظهر مشاعره من دون خجل. قليلون هم الأبطال الذين يجروون على التعاطي بكل شفافية وثقة. قليلون هم الأبطال الذين يظهرون المحبة في كل عمل يقومون به.

في هذا العصر السريع والمادي. يتشابه الناس مهما اختلفت انتماءاتهم وجنسياتهم وألوانهم. الإنسان هو ذاته باختلاف الأزمنة والعصور والأبطال... ودهم المميزون يتركون الأثر الحسن في قلوب الآخرين وعقولهم.

ليس بالضرورة أن تكون عبقرياً أو مخترعاً أو صاحب ثروة لتصبح بطلاً. يكفي أن تقوم بعمل طيب ومفيد لتصبح كذلك بنظر الآخرين من محبيك وأصدقائك...

أحياناً الأثر الطيب الذي تركه في نفوس الآخرين هو ما يميز الأبطال ويحفز غيرهم على فعل الخير.

بهية عبدالله المفتي

Food for Thought

Clocking human folly

Compress earth's existence into 100 years. This means that the dinosaurs came and left the earth about one year ago. Man arrived only two weeks ago. Humans started burning fossil fuels, like coal and petrol, only five minutes ago.

However, in these five minutes, human actions have upset more than 99 years of the development of the earth's environment.

And, if we want to save the environment from irreversible destruction, we must act in the next four seconds...

By Ajay Dasgupta (www.pitara.com)