

## Margaret Carpenter: Narrative 2

In my roles as Library Media Specialist, GATE (gifted and talented education) Coordinator, Social Studies Teacher and Curriculum Collaboration Team member, I have worked with curriculum and students in grades 3-12. It's been a fantastic opportunity to support the development of best practices. I share below specific ways that I activate my teaching philosophy with our students.

**a) Project-based learning:** Students learn more by doing, so I promote project-based learning in curriculum development and co-curricular activities. At TAS, I helped students learn about democracy by conducting a mock election and involving students in learning resources, media production and speech-making. At HKIS, I set up a student newspaper and coordinated its student reporters. I produced 2 video broadcast series for which students scripted, acted, filmed and edited. Under my direction, an ecology group promoted "green" living and our Student Council operated under a "living" constitution.

**b) Motivation:** The brain is social. I am sensitive to group dynamics and how important it is to establish a sense of belonging to nurture positive risk-taking. With the training I've provided, students employ De Bono's Six Thinking Hats to collaborate in project-based learning activities. They interact to dive deeper into learning in online classrooms I put on the internet with Moodle.

**c) Inquiry and Questioning Skills:** In the learning activities that I facilitate and reinforce in online media, students developed a good "questioning toolkit" that guru Jamie McKenzie would celebrate. I helped TAS to adopt and integrate a K-12 inquiry-oriented research process based on the Big6 that I support via our 21<sup>st</sup> century information literacy curriculum. Students demonstrate increasing confidence, skill and efficiency as we layer upon each new year carefully articulated instruction. Students develop skills to access, evaluate and use high quality, 21<sup>st</sup> century resources for their learning. We are proud of this collaborative work to prepare students for independent research and lifelong learning.

**d) Imagery:** Given that many learners in international schools are acquiring English as a second language, and that others are visual learners, I create learning tools such as videos, web sites and powerpoint slide shows that are abundant in imagery (pictures of our students, their artwork, graphs and time lines.) Those tools hook learners and help them to incorporate new learning much faster than print alone does.

**e) Technology and Information Literacy Skills** instruction is driven by learning needs that arise from the curriculum. I have creatively integrated and articulated in my collaborative work because of my commitment to cross-grade level conversation, documentation of resources and curriculum mapping. Empowered students demonstrate their 21st century skills in impressive research and technology products.

**f) Multi-culturalism:** I came overseas to learn from people around the world. I have studied and taught history, and worked to build a library collection, book recommendation lists, and experiences that offer cultural insights. These efforts contribute to building curriculum that is inclusive and sensitive to a variety of world outlooks. Honoring the identity of individual students, and celebrating the mosaic of cultures represented at international schools gives real meaning to my mission as a teacher striving to improve inter-cultural understanding.

**g) Habits of Mind** (Art Costa, et.al.) provide a vocabulary for helping students express how they are "learning how to learn." I champion the integration of Habits of Mind in unit development, on bulletin boards and in lesson plans used at our school.

**h) Individualization:** By accessing a broad range of library and internet resources that I house at our library web site, students have better control over their own learning. They are motivated when they or their teachers find materials that suit both their learning style and ability level. Furthermore, students are expressing their knowledge in an increasing variety of products for assessment thanks to the documentation of efforts to differentiate for special populations and a variety of learning styles.

**i) Service learning, Civic-mindedness and Compassion:** I am driven to help students think critically about the world and to participate in its problem-solving. Toward that end, my curriculum-writing efforts have encouraged a study of current events, global warming, world cultures and democracy-building. To make democracy "experiential," I have helped student councils write their constitutions and developed a Mock Election at TAS. To respond to the Southeast Asian Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, poverty in China, as well as the increasing pollution problems in Hong Kong, our "Beads for Needs" and "Read to Feed" fund raisers and also our "Green Dragons" ecology group were project-based and multidimensional efforts to channel children's anxieties and compassion. I involved children in making and selling crafts, developing videos for broadcast, reading and researching, making graphs to measure fund raising results, writing articles for the newspaper, and giving oral presentations to share our goals.