News from the Director

With this being the first Newsletter since the issuing of reports cards last week, I would like to make a couple of comments with regard to assessment and report cards. It may feel as if testing, grading and reporting can sometimes feel like necessary evils of education—far removed from the loftier goals of international education that I tried to highlight in previous Newsletter articles. It doesn't help that many students see grades as evaluations of their intelligence, abilities, and potential, and not as a context-specific measure of how well they have met the specific learning goals of a course. Students often forget that receiving a positive evaluation is not, in fact, the central goal of a class.

Most students experience receiving a grade as a reward or punishment for their performance. Educative feedback serves a different goal entirely: it is provided for the sake of learning and encouragement, not for the sake of rating a student's performance. Students who receive feedback on non-graded, as well as graded performances come to see the process, not as a justification for a grade, but as an attempt to help them learn. Such feedback should lead students to improve their performance and balance constructive criticism with positive comments. To meet these goals, we believe at ISU that feedback should be

- frequent, to reinforce recent learning and to give students a chance to change study habits or seek help;
- delivered as close in time to the learning experience and performance as possible, not handed back weeks later without discussion;
- be clearly on planned, age appropriate and relevant assessment objectives and standards

Many can view “assessment” as the process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the expectations of a particular subject or course. Assessment is not only used to “judge” student work, but it is also used to help students learn. Good assessment takes into account learning styles, strengths and needs and reflects a student's achievement against a set of criteria (not against other students) and takes place over time. In the past, most of the attention was paid to marks/grades on student work. This is the major reason why our EYP and Lower School reports focus on effort and attributes. While we recognise the significance of, and need for, summative grades, teachers at ISU focus also on the ongoing feedback that is provided to students so that they clearly understand what they need to do to improve their work. A grade is assigned at report card time and is a summary of demonstrated learning. Assessment has three roles:

Important Upcoming Dates

5 - 6 March: MS ISTA festival ISU hosting
6 March: No School
16 March: IB DP Information Night for Grade 10 families (18:00-20:00)
20 March: ISU Careers Day (12:00-16:00)
21 March: U14 Boys and Girls Volleyball (TBC) at ISU
26 March: IB DP Art Exhibition at SWP Galerie
30 March: MSUS Parent Teacher Conferences
1 April: US Arts Celebration
**For learning:** providing students with feedback about their work

**As learning:** helping students to set learning goals and monitor their own progress

**Of learning:** evaluation and reporting of progress in the form of grades or marks assessment “for” learning.

Assessment “for” learning refers to the use of assessment data by students and their teachers to decide where the students are in their learning, where they need to go next and how to get there. The information gathered is used by teachers to provide feedback and adjust their instruction, and by students to focus their learning. Why is this important? The information gathered during this type of assessment is used for the specific purpose of helping students improve while they are still gaining knowledge and practising skills. This type of assessment incorporates dialogue between teacher, student and parents. When students are more involved in the classroom assessment they become more aware of their strengths and areas needing improvement. They can then focus their efforts on closing the gap between where they are and where they need to be. I hope that students over the coming week will use report cards simply look on assessment as a summation of their learning but more especially as a formative process. In other words, assessment as, and for, learning.

On Saturday 8 February we had our Open Day. Thank you for your help and support in promoting this event. A special thank you to our PTG members who provided refreshments and encouraging words to prospective families. We had over 23 families on Saturday. All of whom are seriously considering ISU as an option for their children either next academic year or sometime in the future. This compares with 60 guests last year and 26 individuals/families the year before. The work we've been doing with regard to profile building and marketing only goes so far, if it is not backed with authenticity, action and sentiment, and a commitment to live our Guiding Statements. A special word of appreciation for our Grade 11 and 12 students, who did a fantastic job with tours, meeting and greeting parents, and child care.

And finally, I would like to wish all members of our community an enjoyable and relaxing holiday. I look forward to seeing you back on Monday 2 March fully charged and ready to go again.

_Dr Liam Browne_
_Director_

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**Grade 11 Extended Essay**

The Grade 11 students started their Extended Essay this week. The Extended Essay is a requirement of the IB Diploma where the students have the opportunity to research a topic of their choice and demonstrate their learning, knowledge and understanding of the topic in a 4000 word essay. They were given a detailed presentation and have access to an Extended Essay guide book on Managebac. They will be helped through the process of writing an academic essay over the next six months. This is excellent preparation for further study where they will be expected to complete similar pieces of work in a much shorter time frame and on a more regular basis.

_Mr Richard Tomes_
_IB DP Coordinator_
In regards to one of our initiatives to lower our carbon footprint and use less paper, this year ISU have shared report cards via Managebac in a digital format. The reports can be found by following the instructions below. The reports are available now.

Please feel free to get in touch with Ms. Bachman or Mr. Rawlinson if you have any questions about the reports.

Via the Reports Tab
Select the appropriate child from the top of the page (if you have more than one child registered on Managebac). Select the Reports tab from the sidebar on the left-hand side. Here you can see your child's Term Reports and Progress Reports. You can click on each report to view and download it as a PDF file, as well as print it.

If you need log-in help for Managebac, please contact either Ms Bachman or Mr Rawlinson via the emails below.

l.rawlinson@is-ulm.de - Mr Rawlinson  
h.bachman@is-ulm.de - Ms Bachman

Also if you want to contact any member of staff you can follow the pattern of:

the initial of their first name then dot then their last name, then @is-ulm.de

Staff cannot be emailed via Managebac other than to notify of absences, however, their contact details can be found on Managebac.
Grade 8 and 9 Ski Week

Grade 8 EAL students have written the following account of our recent snowy adventure to Silvretta Montafon.

Everyone arrived at school excited about skiing. When we arrived, we went ice skating for about 2 and a half hours. This was a nice activity to do together, because the confident students helped the ones that hadn't done it before. Later that day we went to the hotel to see who our roommates were going to be. After we met our roommates and unpacked our stuff, we went to the Sporthall to play some games together.

The next day we went skiing and met our groups (beginner, intermediate, advanced). Unfortunately, we had to leave early because of a storm. So, for the rest of the day, we walked into the village to discover it. After that, we went hiking in pairs with flaming torches. It was nice to talk to people we don't always speak to.

On Wednesday we went skiing again, for longer than the day before, and had so much fun! In the evening after we ate, we did an avalanche safety instruction in the snow, it was entertaining and interesting.

On Thursday we went skiing for the third time and went to the “Fun Park”, where there are jumps and ramps. It was fantastic! In the evening we also went sledding down a long sledge track.

Then, on Friday, we packed up our stuff before skiing again. We finished skiing after lunch, got back to the bus, and drove back to ISU.

This week was a lot of fun and such a nice experience!

Written by Noel Kress, Moyuan Zeng and Sacha Harbonnier. Grade 8 EAL.
On February 8, our students Henry, Marc, Kazuki, Ahyan, Nishant and Andrés competed against Franconian (FIS), Stuttgart and Bavarian International Schools’s best basketball teams in a friendly Tournament at FIS.

It didn’t go as planned but these boys played their hearts out. During our last game against FIS, ISU held the lead at 18 points to 14 until the second quarter where we unfortunately got overtaken to lose by 4 points. The game had everyone on the edges of their seats in anticipation of who would take home the victory.

I am extremely proud of these young boys who kept their spirits high despite the results.

Mr. Neethling  
Basketball Coach

On the same day, another ISU team (high school boys basketball) went to Stuttgart International School to compete against some other international schools. It was a very competitive tournament, and although ISU suffered two initial losses, our boys were able to complete their tournament with a victory over Frankfurt International School (32-30), which represents ISU’s first victory ever in HS Basketball against international schools.

Well done to our coach Mr. Sauer and our high school boys’ players.

Last, but not least, on February 15, ISU hosted a high school boys basketball match between our school and St. George’s – The British International School.

It was a very balanced game between both teams, and in the last seconds of the match, ISU was down by three points but was able to convert a triple, forcing the match to go to extra-time. In extra-time, ISU ended up winning the game by 51-49. Well done, Justin, Berke, Sola, Salah-Eddine, Pharrel, Jovai and Mihai.

Congratulations as well to our coach Mr Sauer and a big word of appreciation for Ben, Marie, Mehak, Katharina and Emma for helping on setting music, refereeing and assisting Mr. Alex with any organizational aspect of this event.”

Mr. Alves  
ASAP Coordinator
As our children grow and develop, they must learn to navigate the world around them and that can be complex. They develop a physical sense of self; understanding how their bodies move through space and time. They develop an academic sense of self; understanding how to gather and demonstrate knowledge in different settings. And they develop a sense of social self; understanding who they are and how and where they fit in. Developing the social self is complicated and wrought with obstacles and challenges. This is when listening is required most and feels least effective sometimes. Listening doesn’t require fixing the problem but simply to listen, attempt to understand, and offer empathy. It involves being engaged with the speaker, allowing them to choose the words and timing. Our natural instinct as a parent is to protect our children from all forms of harm and fix it when any harm is perceived. Instead, they need our guidance in finding appropriate solutions themselves.

What type of social difficulties might our children be facing? There are standard issues of conflict and friendship that are experienced by students around the world and it’s no different for our population. An important part of supporting our children as they navigate friendship issues is to help them distinguish what is happening. Media of all sorts has publicized and popularized the term ‘bullying’ without educating the public as to what this is and this has actually added to social difficulties rather than solving them.

The chart above helps us to distinguish the types of social difficulties our children can face in their lifetime. Taking the time to listen to them discuss their issues and then correctly label them, helps us and the child find a solution.

How can we gather the correct information in order to help our child decipher what kind of issue they are facing? We can use restorative questioning practices that allow our children to speak, be listened to, and find their own solutions:

- What happened? How did it happen? How did you act in the situation?
- Who do you think was affected (hurt, impacted) in this situation? How?
- What needs to happen to make this situation right?
- If this same situation happens again, how could you respond differently (this allows students to use the social difficulty as a learning situation for future)?

Ms Angela Collins
School Counsellor
It's a little more than a month away but our third annual ISU Higher Education Fair is coming! This year, our fair will take place on Friday, March 20th, 2020 from 14:00-16:00. It will take place in the D wing of the school but we ask all guests to please enter at the main entrance and sign in. This fair is open to our wider community as well and we would welcome any of our community to invite their extended friends and family to attend.

This year we have outdone ourselves with our largest and most global representation of universities yet! There will be approximately 45 representatives in attendance this year coming from Canada, the USA, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Italy, the UK, France, Spain, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. There will be medical schools, comprehensive universities, technical schools, art universities, and business schools. In addition to traditional higher education facilities, we will be hosting representatives of IfT Institut für Talententwicklung Süd GmbH who will share about their annual vocatium where students can potentially find internships and make connections to local businesses.

Please refer to your Managebac accounts for a full list of attending higher education facilities. A presentation schedule will also be published in the ISU Parents Group on Managebac, very soon.

Ms Angela Collins
School Counsellor
Save the date!!
Our ISU Family Summer BBQ will take place on June, Sunday 7th.
As usual, we will be offering food, drinks and lots of fun activities.

You are invited... to a day-trip to Bad Urach to visit the waterfall on Wednesday, March 11th.

The Urach waterfall is probably the most famous of the Swabian Alb and is one of the special attractions of the "UNESCO Global Geopark Swabian Alb" and the UNESCO-recognized "Biosphere Area Swabian Alb".

We will carpool from the school, leave after drop off (8:30 am or so), and be back around 4:30 pm. Interested? Contact Birgitta via WhatsApp at +46 736 222 195 or send us an email to: ptg@is-ulm.de.

CONTACT US:
Feel free to contact us (for help, questions, ideas...), via email at: ptg@is-ulm.de or via the ISU School Community WhatsApp Group.
And of course, if you are not yet on this WhatsApp group, just send me a message to: +49 160 98187900 and I will add you with pleasure.

Have a lovely weekend,

PTG