



# Nightingale Faculty Newsletter

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This issue of the Faculty Newsletter is dedicated to the gift of time that summer brings—a time to reflect, rethink, innovate, hone our skills, and plan. It is a time of renewal and inspiration that comes in many forms; Marc Travanti's preparation for the 30-year retrospective of his work; travel; participating in a scholarly seminar; living a simpler, slower-paced existence away from modern life....

Some travelled, others found the inspiration and resources they needed at school or at professional conferences, and still others did both. While some focused on our academic curriculum, others addressed our pastoral role, all bearing in mind our vision for the Nightingale Graduate of 2020. Eighty-four faculty members participated in the summer stipend program which, in the words of Betsey Osborne in her article "Sixth Graders: Becoming Human," is "the practical mate of the joy of teaching something new, and by extension helps to make the curriculum one's own...." Our fall *Faculty Newsletter* is a sampler of this summer's activities and living proof that teaching is by definition a work in progress. Thanks to all of you, particularly those who took to the pen to share your journeys, and you the readers for your interest.

*Kitty Gordan*

# Entanglement: 30-Year Retrospective in Kenosha, Wisconsin

Marc Travanti / Art Department, Head

I am currently having an exhibition in my hometown of Kenosha, Wisconsin, at the Kenosha Public Museum, which is located on the banks of Lake Michigan between Chicago and Milwaukee, less than an hour drive from each. The exhibition is a retrospective with painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, and ceramics extending from 1977 to the present.

Three weeks before the show, my brother flew from Wisconsin to New York, and together in a rented truck, we transported 164 pieces to the museum. When it became time to install the art, I took charge of the process, much of which I had planned months in advance. In addition to the selection and positioning of each piece, the work involved the placement of several interior walls and pedestals, as well as lighting design. By the time the installation was finished, I had narrowed down the number of pieces to 110.

The title of the show, *Entanglement*, primarily refers to a series of paintings and drawings entitled *One and Another*, in which entangled couples are depicted tumbling through an indeterminate space. Whether they are embracing, fighting, or protecting each other from falling is intentionally unclear. These pieces suggest the blunt physicality and implicit messiness of human interactions in a society that increasingly becomes urbanized, commercialized, and dominated by technology.

The ceramic work, approximately one-fourth of the show, is represented by groups of pieces that have slowly evolved over the years. My approach to ceramics is primarily process-oriented. I continuously experiment with methods, forms, and colors, until chance, trial and error, and multiple firings eventually lead to results that seem inevitable to me. Two- and three-dimensional features of the ceramic pieces, such as lush color combinations, carefully formed curves, and suggestive body parts, are echoed in the other artwork. Therefore, a sensual quality dominates the exhibition space, even where humorous, social, or political elements are prominent.

A recurring subject is hair, which appears in my work as actual human hair, wigs and the primary or exclusive subject of a painting. For years I have dealt with the carnal qualities and animal connotations of hair, along with its ability to represent one's identity.

Some of the art is more conceptual. Based in semiotics or images of corporate logos, African masks and stock charts lead to signs that symbolize a tribe or represent a culture. In a series of photographs entitled "Sculpture Grounds," the idea of creation and destruction are mixed: images of abstract modern sculpture are inserted into pictures of scenes from the current wars in the Middle East.

In comparison to nearly forty exhibitions in New York City and abroad, this is by far my largest. It is also the first time I have mixed utilitarian ceramics with two-dimensional work. It is rewarding to see the development of a narrative paradigm that has occurred over three decades: the puzzle pieces have come together as the evolution and overlapping of themes and working processes are apparent everywhere. It was almost as if the connections happened on their own, without my agency, forming a coherent tapestry.

Thirty years ago, I came to New York City intent on cultivating my art and my career as an artist. I have continued to maintain a home base in my hometown and visit there many times each year. The Kenosha Public Museum was the site where I created my first piece of ceramics, a clay angel crafted at the age of six. This clay angel continues to reside in my mother's kitchen. Standing in the middle of thirty years of my life, in the company of my own creations, with the life they have taken on, was a humbling experience. Seeing all of these works, in many cases together in the same space for the first time, was very satisfying. It was a revelation. I saw my life as an artist before my eyes. It was a homecoming. My art left Kenosha thirty years ago; it blossomed in New York. Now it has come home.



# Entanglement

John Loughery / English Department, Head

What kind of art would a painter interested in dance, theater, and the martial arts produce? What forms might the work of a sculptor or ceramicist take whose inspiration comes from the city, African art, tantric yoga, magic, and (one might as well say it) a healthy interest in sex? It would, very likely, be about movement, partnering, coupling, mock-tension, transformation—controlled frivolity. It would probably be infused with a sense of the dramatic and the erotic, some measure of visual trickery, a nice blend of rigor and gentleness. It could be puckish. It would certainly be stagey but unpredictable. All of that describes my experience of the work of New York artist Marc Travanti.

To anyone with an interest in contemporary art, the body as a creative arena comes as no surprise. Post-abstraction, post-pop, post-minimalism—artists in recent years rediscovered the human figure with a vengeance. What is surprising though, is how much of this work aims to unnerve and disorient, how much of it is belligerent, implying that our alienation isn't merely a product of mind and culture. It's in the blood, so to speak, our sinews, our very tissues. Some contemporary artists ask us to open ourselves to the possibility that craft and pigment can trump the sadness of our very inartistic flesh (think of Jenny Saville's self-portraits: sumptuous pink brushstrokes that almost obscure the grotesquely bitten nails and mountains of exposed flesh), and some is pure parody and slapstick (e.g., the balloon breasts of John Currin, the miniature mommy and daddy nudes of Charles Ray). Artists like Kiki Smith, Robert Gober, and Marina Abramovic treat us to the excretions, fluids, dismemberment, and pain that are the core of our bodily existence. For Travanti, the body is something rather different. It is the means by which we know the world and each other; attempt connections; romp; savor deception; define ourselves; and experience that one great, universal,

even primal urge: to assert our physical selves in an increasingly cerebral, antiseptic, and screen-dominated culture.

The series "One and Another" is the most obvious and dramatic expression of that outlook. In each painting, amid an undefined space, faceless pairs of people clutch desperately or longingly at each other. Any pretense of polite distance has been abandoned, gravity itself appears suspended, and the origin and nature of—what shall we call it?—the interaction, or exchange, has been obscured. In *Lillian/Marc*, only the title and the booted heels give us a clue to the gender of one of the actor/combatants, who might otherwise be taken as both male as they wrestle against a pink, orange, and faintly blue background. In *Gordon/Marc*, two men in jeans strain to pinion each other's torsos, their t-shirts pulled up, the boxers of one and the lower back of the other exposed. On *Brokeback Mountain*, this would be rough play leading to the delight of a high-altitude slam. Outside a bar, it would be a liquor-fueled ritual of humiliation. Are these possibilities—both rooted in a need to touch, to exclaim a need, to break decorum—necessarily at odds? *Stripes*, a detail from a larger picture of the series, suggests a sexual act in progress and the thrill of a contrast in class or age as a man in pinstripes, his head and hands out of range, crouches before a man or boy (or is it a woman?) in sneakers, the latter figure seen only from his calf down. But that sexualized reading of the pose and the abrupt cropping can only be conjectural, presumptuous, like being set up to pick the wrong card in a card trick. Heads burrow into midribs and limbs are extended in these photograph-based paintings, but the key to the narrative is withheld, and what we are left with is the sheer exuberance of bodies touching and conventions being violated.

Women hold their own in the "One and Another" series, which is an interesting fact in itself, and hair is power. In *Greg/Beth*, we would assume Beth's hair is being bizarrely stretched toward the top of the canvas by the effect of a wind tunnel. Turn the canvas upside down, or reposition your own head and angle of vision, and her cascading hair is falling naturally toward the floor. In some paintings the woman's hair becomes a subject of its own, rendered with a lover's attentiveness. Its length and thick strands denote energy, fecundity. A middle-aged male head, viewed from above, feels vulnerable: the skin exposed, the hairs dwindling, manhood arrested.

Bodies and parts of bodies turn up in odd places in Travanti's art, both playful and haunting. The "Stick Figures" series, a collaborative project with the artist's wife, Margaret Clark, embeds fully clothed, faintly comic modern men and woman in slender, seven-foot-tall, roughhewn tree trunks. If familial spirits are a part of the lovingly carved wood of African art, containers of memory and soul, these urban types are not having any of that. The black-and-white "Sculpture Grounds" photo series makes use of actual photographs, to which images of large public-space sculptures have been superimposed on scenes of carnage. The sculptures, biomorphic forms themselves, stand or stretch immobile and seemingly invulnerable amid the mire of human destructiveness. Soldiers crouch behind tanks on city streets, dead civilians sprawl in a ditch, and a solitary figure walks down a desolate lane amid abandoned, graffiti-strewn buildings. The nearby sculptures are a disconcerting, even impertinent presence, as if they exist in another dimension, a future when artistic memorials will mark the site of the anguish we are witnessing in present time. Other photographs, "Flesh Forms," take an even more determined surrealist turn, straight out of Dali, as we try to decide what an identifiable toe, a possible testicle, and other vaguely, equally intimate human shapes might be metamorphosing into.

As much as Travanti is interested in works on paper and canvas, he is also a devoted maker of some of the most free-spirited, well-crafted ceramic work being done today. Of course, ceramics in and of itself is a form we can never disassociate from its making, from a persistent mental picture of the hands that clasp the wet clay, mold it, guide it, and apply the glazes—from the thought of our own hands holding the object in a way we can't with a painting and shouldn't with sculpture. Not surprisingly, Travanti's ceramic work is anything but sedate or dispassionate. His "Totemic Vessels" are vertical composites of radically different shapes and colors. The "Lip" bowls and earthenware "Hole" containers lead us to dwell less on the exterior or interior of the object and more on the portal to that inner space, our means of access, while the intricate "Sleeve" even more explicitly suggests a bent arm and its material covering. The adjective that describes the "Lush" series could apply to all Travanti's work in this medium: shapes that surprise; rich color that drips and soaks; a celebration of a fertile, healthy disorder.

Finally, the series of "Tribe Line" paintings would seem to have nothing to do with the body. An abstract, urban skyline is formed by juxtaposing the pulsations of the stock market chart against a blue, cloud-filled sky. The clash of culture, quantitative and acquisitive, and nature, fluid and timeless, is ably evoked, but which will prove more significant in the end is an open question. On the other hand, the agitated lines that designate rising and falling stocks eerily suggest troubled readings from heart monitors, as well. Man's material drive, and nowhere more so than in the world of finance, is ultimately a disembodied experience. The "tribe" has lost its way; there is no "one and another" to be found in the towers of the modern city, dazzling as they seem. Far better, Travanti's diverse and cagey art implies, to pay homage to lush lips, soft curves, taut muscles, and all their permutations, to appreciate what we can see, smell, taste, and joyfully hold.

# It Is More Than Song and Dance

Abby Balafas / Music Department, Head

When I meet someone for the first time, the conversation usually goes something like this: the new acquaintance asks, "What do you do?" and I say, "I'm a lower school music teacher." Their response is almost always along the lines of, "Wow, it must be so much fun to sing songs and play games all day!" And while I agree that my job is quite enjoyable, I always find it necessary to explain that general music classes can be so much more than singing songs and playing games. I realized just how much more as Deadra Hart and I began work on our summer stipend project.

*We were able to evaluate whether or not concepts were being introduced sequentially and receiving appropriate reinforcement, as well as to identify any gaps in the spiral.*

Over the summer, Deadra and I took on the task of formalizing the Lower School music curriculum for Classes K–IV. To begin this process, we took a look at the musical goals that we have for each girl as she leaves Class IV and enters the Middle School. For example, we hope each girl leaves the Lower School music program with the music literacy skills necessary to sing in a chorus or play in an instrumental ensemble. Also, we hope these students will be appreciators of a wide variety of music and have the knowledge and vocabulary necessary to describe these genres and styles.

After we established goals for our Lower School music students, Deadra and I considered the importance of music as an additive process. Much like math, the music curriculum is spiral in nature, constantly building upon skills previously learned. For example, by the time girls leave Class IV music, we would like them to be able to sing in two-part harmony. Unfortunately, this doesn't happen by showing them a piece of music with two parts and asking them to pick one; the foundation for singing two-part harmony is laid as far back as Kindergarten. In Kindergarten music class, students experience singing together as an ensemble. They learn to listen to each other and follow a conductor. In Class I, they begin to experience two-part music as instruments and ostinatos (repeated patterns) are added to their unison songs. By Class II, the girls are able to sing partner songs as well as two-part rounds or canons. Class III students take this one step further by singing three- and four-part rounds. By the time the Lower School student reaches Class IV music, she is fully prepared to conquer the goal of two-part harmony.

The final step in our process was to determine the organizational structure of the Lower School music curriculum guide. Deadra and I decided to divide the curriculum into six strands: melody, rhythm, harmony, form, timbre and expression, and repertoire. Then, we classified each of the concepts and objectives that we teach into one of the six strands. We followed this process for each individual grade level, and then merged the information into one larger document. This particular organizational structure allowed us to look at the curriculum with a more critical eye. We were able to evaluate whether or not concepts were being introduced sequentially and receiving appropriate reinforcement, as well as to identify any gaps in the spiral.

The music program has already begun to reap the benefits of a formalized Lower School music curriculum. This year, Deadra will be teaching Class II Music for the first time. In preparation for this new class, she will use the Kindergarten and Class I portion of the curriculum guide to see what skills the incoming IIs already have. For example, she may notice that quarter note and eighth note patterns were covered heavily in Class I, so she can do a quick review of this skill and then move on to more challenging rhythm patterns in Class II. In contrast, playing Orff instruments while singing was practiced at the end of the Class I year, but the Class II students will need much reinforcement if they are to master the skill.

The same proves true for the Class IV strings teachers. The strings teachers are able to use the curriculum guide to gain an understanding of what the students

have learned in general music, and then reinforce those concepts in their instrumental classes. For example, Class IV girls are able to identify notes on the treble and bass clef staff by their letter names. It is helpful for the strings teachers to know that they can, and should, refer to these notes in the same way when teaching students to play the notes on the violin, viola, or cello.

In conclusion, our work on the Lower School music curriculum was an extremely worthwhile project, with numerous benefits for both music teachers and Lower School music students. As always, we see this document as a work in progress, and will be updating and fine-tuning for months and years to come. Our work this summer laid a solid foundation, and we are grateful for the opportunity to take a step back, evaluate, and plan for the future.

# Odds and Ends

Panayotes Dakouras / Classical Languages Department, Head

For the past few years, my summer work has typically focused on a central project: preparing for a new AP course, finishing my dissertation, publishing my book, creating a Visual Education curriculum for Classes VI–IX, working on Middle and Upper School curriculum mapping, etc. The work I did this past summer was not of this nature; it was comprised, instead, of many mini-projects, odds and ends, as the not-particularly creative title of my article indicates.

The first such project was work on the ISP (Independent Study Program). Right after graduation and after I had finished my twenty exhaustingly-long ISP reports, I spent some time reflecting on my first year as the program's director and looking back on what worked well and what could have worked better. I was proud of the work produced and presented by the Class of 2010 as a whole, but there was certainly room for improvement.

I thought that the two-step proposal process was successful. Students submitted a preliminary proposal and a final one in which they incorporated comments from the project mentor and the ISP director. This resulted in stronger, more focused proposals. I also liked the different evaluation forms that I designed and decided to continue using them after making minor improvements in the questions asked. The separate forms for mentors, for readers, and for those who attended the oral presentation provided a more accurate assessment of each project.

All ISP students remained motivated throughout the spring term, but the majority of them faced a distressing time crunch when they reached the deadline for the submission of their paper's first draft in late April. To remedy this, I will start requesting a substantial writing sample, a mini paper of sorts along with an outline,

before spring break. This will not only compel students to begin the writing process much earlier than they did this past year, but it will also make them feel more confident about their progress and bring them closer to achieving their goals. One final area on which I worked was my own seminar notes and handouts on such topics as effective note-taking, online research tools, bibliographical citations, self-evaluation, and useful tips for the final presentation. I now look forward to receiving the new proposals from the members of the Class of 2011.

My second project was somewhat lighter in nature and certainly entertaining. My goal was to find more activities for the Middle School Greco-Roman Club and the Upper School Latin Club, which I can very proudly—if not arrogantly—say are two of the most popular clubs in the school. I did research on age-appropriate films the best way one can do research on such films: I watched them. Apart from two contemporary blockbusters, *The Clash of the Titans* and *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*, I watched a number of older movies. I discovered the charming retro stop-motion animation of Ray Harryhausen, known as “dynamation,” in such movies as the 1963 *Jason and the Argonauts* and the original *Clash of the Titans* of 1981. I also watched the 1959 *Hercules* starring Steve Reeves and the 1955 *Ulysses* with Kirk Douglas in the title role and one of my all-time favorite stars of Italian cinema, Silvana Mangano, in a double role as Ulysses' faithful wife Penelope and the sorceress Circe. These films are now part of our Classics library on the sixth floor and will be put to good use very soon.

I also did some research on games. Besides “Gauls and Romans” and “Around the World,” two staples in our Latin classes, “Stump the Student” and “Charades” with

Latin vocabulary, as well as mythological and historical figures, will be welcome additions to our club meetings. Working in the area of games also led me to devote time to creating lists of Jeopardy-style questions to ensure that the Upper School members of the Latin Club will continue their undefeated streak at the next "Latin Certamen." This is a tournament among Interschool institutions that tests participants' knowledge in Latin vocabulary, grammar, history, and culture. Our Latin scholars have participated in a Certamen twice and have achieved impressive scores, bringing the trophy home on both occasions.

The next project on my agenda, though not quite as creative, was very useful and enjoyable, mainly because of my collaboration with Jeff Kearney. Our goal was to revise parts of the Class VII curriculum, a project that we had been putting off for a couple of years. The problem with our assignments was a rather long review period at the beginning of the year and a very slow pace throughout the fall term. Conversely, we found ourselves in a frantic race to complete the curriculum during the last few weeks of the spring term. An adjustment was deemed educationally appropriate, if not absolutely necessary, for both students and teachers. Jeff and I revised our review lessons and assessment materials, and restructured our September, October, April, and May assignments. We expanded some of the important grammar lessons in the spring term and even introduced a creative project involving tombstone inscriptions. I have never been so happy with our Class VII curriculum.

My last project involved our study tour of Rome and Southern Italy this coming March. Thirty-three students from Classes X through XII, along with chaperones Jeff Kearney, Laura Kirk, and Damaris Maclean, will join me on this trip. My first task was to find a ten-minute on-site presentation topic for each participant. This seemed quite effortless at first, but it was anything but that. Finding thirty-three monuments or artworks that would give our students the opportunity to make a comprehensive and engaging presentation was no small task. I wanted each assignment to be a "good fit" for each student, something that appealed to her particular interests, tastes, and areas of expertise. I thought I had done a fairly good job, but whenever I looked at my list, I made more changes. This is undoubtedly a sign that I must stop looking at my list.

I also did extensive research and prepared copious notes on three sites for which we had used tour guides in the past: Pompeii, Cumae, and the Archeological Museum of Naples. This will not only reduce the cost of our trip, but has also provided me with a deeper knowledge and understanding of the history, culture, and art of Campania.

The earlier part of my summer was taken up by these projects. Even though they lacked the focus of major undertakings of summers past, these projects were enjoyable and have already made this very busy academic year much easier to navigate. As always, I am indebted to Nightingale's summer stipend program, which continually encourages and supports our desire to be better at what we do.

# Online Map Library

Linda Field / History Faculty

For the past two summers, I have had the pleasure of working on projects that support the curricula that I teach and can, I hope, be helpful to my colleagues. In the summer of 2009, I created an online map library that is available through the Nightingale Web site to all members of the school community. In the summer of 2010, I began a list of Young Adult (YA) historical fiction that is related to the Middle School history curriculum. Both of these projects are open-ended, and I plan to continue to add to them when I can, as the need arises.

The map library can be accessed through the Academics section of the Nightingale Web site; click on "Faculty Web Pages," and then "Map Library." From there, you may choose physical maps, political maps, historical maps, maps related to current events, and blank or unlabeled maps. These images can be projected on a SMARTboard, viewed on an individual computer screen, copied and inserted into a document such as an assignment sheet or test, or printed. The collection as it stands now is heavily weighted toward the interests of the history department, but I would love to add maps that other departments might find helpful for use in class or by students on their own. I encourage any of my colleagues who have suggestions or requests to send them my way. I also want to thank Adam Van Auken, who taught me how to create a Web page and patiently guided and assisted me throughout the project.

My list of YA historical fiction is a labor of love. I often read YA fiction just for pleasure, and I've always loved

historical fiction. I have discovered over the years that Middle School students are often receptive to a book suggestion that is related to what they are studying, and that some middle-schoolers are always looking for something new to read. So I set out to read as much YA historical fiction as I could, writing a description of each book that not only introduces the story, but also highlights the historical period in which the story takes place. I began with books that can be found here at school, either in the library or in the classroom libraries on the sixth floor, and I have nowhere near exhausted those sources. This means that I am benefiting from our librarians' expertise in book selection, and I thank them for their help! Right now, there are about 30 books on the list, in categories from Ancient China and Greece through the medieval world and early American history up to World War II and the McCarthy era. Again, I welcome comments and suggestions. You can find the list in the Faculty Shared folders under History; the file is called "curriculumrelatedYAfiction."

As teachers, we are so fortunate to have the summer to recharge our batteries and to focus on projects that require extended, close attention. I could not have launched either of these undertakings without the stretch of unstructured time that the summer affords, and I am grateful to Nightingale for supporting my ideas. I am enjoying my second year using the map library, and I look forward to recommending curriculum-related novels to my students. I hope that my colleagues and their students will benefit from my efforts, as well.

# Social and Emotional Learning in Class III

Naomi Hayashi / Lower School Faculty (Class III)

“Educating the heart and the mind” is a phrase heard often inside the blue doors. At The Nightingale-Bamford School, we pride ourselves on being an institution that cares not only about the academic side of life, but about the emotional side, as well. Last year, faculty members across all grade levels spent time in workshops and meetings consulting with the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) team from the Nueva School in California. Although the training sessions were informative and offered many curriculum ideas, the program’s overall agenda and goals were not new to the Lower School.

Over the last few years, Lower School teachers have worked together to incorporate teaching strategies and methods that promote academic learning while creating a positive social environment in the classroom, understanding that learning happens best when these two areas overlap. In addition to looking closely at the Nueva School’s program, Lower School teachers are trained in the Responsive Classroom approach. Specifically, Class III uses components of Project Charlie, an acronym for Chemical Arrest Resolution Lies in Education. At the Class III level, we focus on identifying areas of self-esteem, but with bits and pieces of various curricula integrated at different stages and levels, the social and emotional work done in class was beginning to feel a bit scattered. Over the summer, I worked to develop an SEL curriculum for Class III, pulling ideas from various programs in order to effectively and realistically integrate them into our classroom.

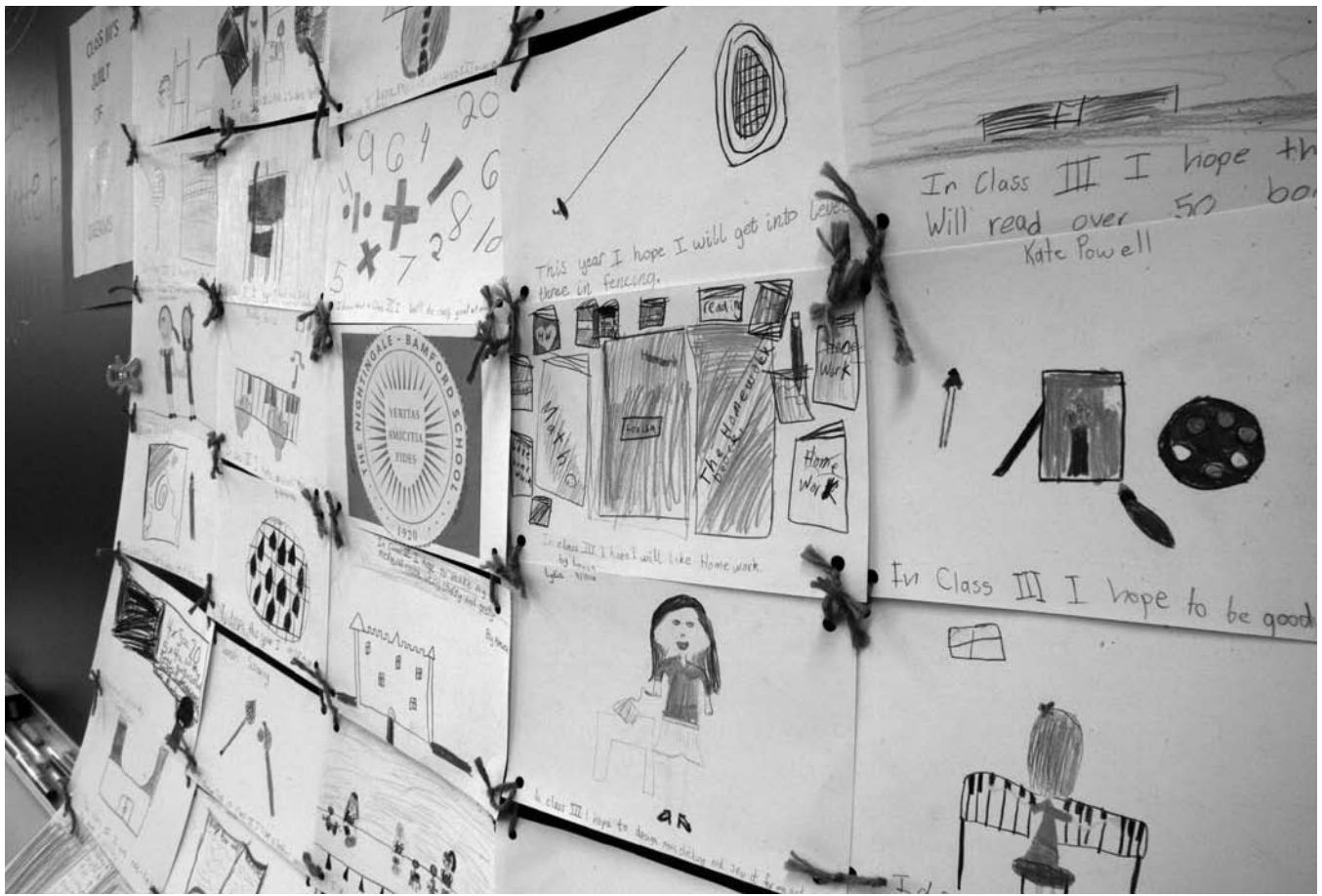
It became clear in looking at the entirety of the Class III program that over-arching goals in the social and emotional realm include:

- Build self-esteem
- Acquire positive social skills
- Build responses to negative peer pressure
- Become aware of how one’s behavior can affect others
- Teach conflict resolution skills

With this in mind, I broke down our SEL teaching into four basic categories: *emotions, cooperation and communication, conflict resolution/problem-solving, and improvisational exercises and games*. Within these categories, there are modified lessons and activities used throughout the year on a daily/weekly basis. Building on some of the techniques and methods that have already been successfully incorporated into our program, Class III SEL lessons are underway.

So far this year, we have used homeroom meetings, greetings, morning message charts, quiet signals, celebrations, and sharing activities to help students develop and strengthen their community bond. We have introduced Project Charlie’s notion of “Warm Fuzzy Awards.” Girls have the opportunity to anonymously acknowledge random acts of kindness that they notice amongst their peers. Students have also formulated personal goals for the accomplishments they hope to achieve in Class III, portraying these hopes and dreams artistically through representative symbols. These symbols were woven together to create a classroom quilt of hopes and dreams, which is currently on display in the Class III homeroom.

In addition to fostering a growing sense of community, the Class III team is working to instill a sense of autonomy. This is defined in Responsive Classroom materials as, “the ability to function independently, without constant adult control or direct supervision... governing oneself with an awareness of the needs of the community.” A Classroom Code of Chivalry, or set of governing rules, was created by the Class III girls within the first few weeks of school. These guidelines, which are to be followed by the class, will help us to have a productive year.



We also began discussions about conflict resolution and opened the Nueva School's SEL toolbox to teach the "I-statement." This statement is designed to help students find an assertive and effective voice when dealing with conflicts. It encourages active listening, paying attention to tone of voice, and delivery of a direct (kind or firm) message.

"I feel \_\_\_\_\_(insert feeling word)  
 When you \_\_\_\_\_(insert the action that upsets or confuses you)  
 And I want/need \_\_\_\_\_"(insert the action expected)

The "I-statement" empowers students by providing them with a tool for solving confrontations in an independent manner. We will further study emotions and problem-solving by looking at the Nueva School's lessons on *The Emotional Thermometer*; *Inside/Outside Feelings*; *Escalating and De-escalating*; and *Win-Win, Win-Lose,*

*Lose-Lose* situations. Cooperation exercises focusing on team-building and positive peer interaction will be integrated on a routine basis. Students will be continually encouraged to reflect on their experiences, through either writing or drawing, so that they can articulate their learning for themselves.

Each day, we see further growth in the area of SEL as the girls begin to internalize the messages, methods, and vocabulary of the program. They are able to utilize many resources in their learning, including their community and each other. One of the difficulties, to date, has been finding time in the schedule to include thorough and meaningful SEL lessons. The work accomplished, however, has added immensely to the academic and social growth of our students. It is, without a doubt, an important part of our job as educators. SEL provides a formal teaching structure for achieving the balance of heart and mind so valued in the Nightingale girl.

# Ecce Romani and the Art of the Ancient Spin-off

Jeffrey Kearney / Classical Languages Faculty

The history of television can read like a passage from Genesis. In the beginning was *All in the Family*, which begat *Archie Bunker's Place*, which begat *The Jeffersons*, which begat *Checking In*, which CBS smote from on high; and then there was *Maude*. After the *Mary Tyler Moore Show* came *Rhoda*, mother of *Phyllis*, mother of *Lou Grant*, father of *Carlton Your Doorman*. From *Matlock* sprung *Jake and the Fatman*, and America saw that it was not good.

*Much like that audience who first tuned in to The Jeffersons in the fall of 1975, they are following a curiosity. Yet in time, they are hooked—and gladly so.*

Though these programs vary in quality and longevity, they all share a noble common ancestor: the ancient spin-off. Before there were *Hogan's Heroes*, after all, there was the *Iliad* and the legions of epics, epyllia, lyric poems, and tragedies that it inspired. Because Homer, like Norman Lear, did not have the narrative space or desire to develop each of his characters to the same degree that he did Achilles or Agamemnon, it was up to subsequent writers, like Sophocles and Ovid, to do it for him. Their creations did not simply extend the original story, in the manner of a sequel. Homer himself had seen to that with the *Odyssey*. These poems and plays recast the story from an oblique angle.

The tragedians, in particular, narrowed the narrative scope. Their work, much like that of Lear or Aaron Sorkin in spin-offs, presented the action through the eyes of a supporting character given short shrift in the original.

Euripides' *Rhesus* offers a good example of the ancient method. The drama is an expansion of just over a hundred lines from the *Iliad*, which had presented a swift, Greek-oriented version of the story. King Rhesus, King of Thrace and ally of the Trojans, joins Hector's cause only to fall victim to a Greek ambush the same night. What in Homer had been something of an afterthought, one body in a lengthy series of kills, becomes an entire play in Euripides. In spinning this episode into an entire drama, the

playwright deepens the Rhesus character in a way that Homer had not. Euripides explores Rhesus's conflict with Hector upon arrival, as well as the emotional fallout for the Trojans and his own family after his death. With apologies to purists, we might compare King Rhesus to the characters of Laverne and Shirley in *Happy Days*, who intrigued the audience enough in the original program to warrant a new series. Like Rhesus, who was just another Greek victim in Homer,

Laverne and Shirley were just two more acquaintances of *Happy Days'* Fonze. Also like King Rhesus, they eventually got their own show.

Latin textbook writers, who merit even less comparison with Homer than their colleagues in television, might have seen the potential here. Their narratives tend to present the point of view of one central character, whose adventures around Rome grow only as interesting as his limited grammar will allow. In the *Cambridge Latin Course*, for example, this character is Caecilius, a Pompeian banker who also operates a suspicious but unexamined cleaning and dyeing business. The reader follows Caecilius around Rome as he conducts his daily business, attempting to collect money from various debtors who refuse to pay. The location of Caecilius's bank in the forum lends itself to action and every possible run-in, from cranky barber to shifty slave-dealer to a withdrawn fresco painter named

Celer. In contrast, *Oxford Latin Course* tracks the life of a freedman's son from his father's farm in Apulia to his education in Rome and Athens to his return to the capital, where he is drawn into the civil war that followed Caesar's assassination.

Each of these textbooks presents a rich frame for storytelling. This is particularly true for the *Cambridge Course*, where the central character cannot leave his *domus* without running into trouble. His clients are numerous and colorful in a way that is entertaining, but also reflective of the odd assortment of people walking around first century Rome. Unfortunately, we see them too seldom. They flash across Caecilius' path and disappear into the forum or shipyard. When the mural painter Celer leaves Caecilius' house, for example, we are left wondering, *Where is he going in such a hurry? What does he think of his boss's demanding wife? Does he only do frescoes or paint villas, as well?* Students are invariably drawn to these upstart minor characters and seem disappointed to see them go. A spin-off called, say, *Celer's Studio*, would only whet their appetites for reading Latin.

The series that we use at Nightingale, *Ecce Romani*, shares many of the same virtues and vices as Oxford and Cambridge, just without the posh English names and their suggestions of spires and punting. Our narrative follows a Roman family of five and their staff from a vacation on the Bay of Naples, through a carriage accident on the Appian Way and an experience in a cheap motel, eventually to Rome, where they resume their senatorial lives. It is the usual soap opera about the Roman patrician class. An emotionally unavailable Cornelius reports to the Senate House and seldom returns. One of the boys is expelled from school for sleeping. Aurelia rebukes a hairdresser for her unsteady mirror hand. Uncle Titus drinks so much wine at a dinner party that he collapses mid-toast. Yet for all of the variety of the characters and scenes, the narratives still leave many of the more engaging personalities unexplored: Geta, the runaway slave; Eucleides, the tutor and house intellectual in a dead-end teaching job; Syrus, the coachman who drives quickly because he has a new girlfriend that he must get home to. With these very scenarios, I spent part of this past summer. In twenty supplementary stories, I tried to drive the plot from some new perspectives and expand the central characters in some (I hope) surprising ways.

Here is a sampling of the project. After a summary of the original *Ecce Romani* narrative, I include a summary of the spin-off, or half-chapter.

#### **CHAPTER 5: MARCUS TO THE RESCUE**

*Because it is hot, Cornelia, Flavia, and the gang escape to the woods to relax by a cool stream. Alarmed by the sudden appearance of a wolf, the girls call for help, at which point Sextus ascends a nearby tree. Wielding a tree branch, Marcus chases the wolf and gains the admiration of his sister and her friend.*

#### **CHAPTER 5 ½: EVEN MARCUS GETS THE BLUES**

*When the others leave the woods in fear of more wolves, Marcus stays curiously behind. We learn that he had not approached the stream earlier to cool off as the others had, but because he wanted to meet a slave girl named Syra, who crosses the stream every afternoon on the way from a nearby olive grove. Marcus, who is in love, plans at last to declare his intentions today. But Syra resists his declaration and only swims further to the other shore, leaving Marcus to sulk in the company of his guinea pig.*

#### **CHAPTER 10: DEPARTURE**

*When it is announced that Cornelius's family will leave the country house, a frenzy of work follows. Davus, the farm manager, pulls the other slaves from bed and orders them to prepare the family for the journey. They pile the various trunks into the carriage and watch as it speeds away.*

#### **CHAPTER 10 ½: BAGGAGE**

*As the carriage heads towards the Appian Way, the slaves recount a story of watching the family pack up. Every one of them, claim the slaves, want to bring something ridiculous. Marcus, we learn, tried to take the branch with which he had driven off the wolf. Sextus attempted to smuggle three small eels from the fishpond in the courtyard, killing them in the process.*

*Worst of all, Cornelia tried to fold her friend Flavia into her luggage, even going so far as to poke breathing holes for her. The slaves chuckle as they reflect upon the absurdity of the bourgeoisie and who the real slaves are.*

## **CHAPTER 12: CAPTURE**

*After the Cornelius family has left the villa for Rome, the farm manager notices that a slave named Geta has not reported for duty. A search party of slaves and dogs tracks eventually finds the runaway hiding in a tall tree. They drag him back to the farm and brand FUGITIVUS on his forehead.*

## **CHAPTER 12 ½: GETA'S STORY**

*Back at the farm, the manager asks the other slaves how they should deal with Geta. By a unanimous vote, the group decides to punish him with a sharpened stick and many are eager to go first. Geta speaks out in his own defense, reminding them of their common lot as slaves and the hypocrisy of pulling a rank they do not have. While most remain unconvinced, the farm manager melts with compassion. He dismisses Geta, calls off the meeting, and returns to his room. Here, he lays down his stick and silently weeps.*

## **CHAPTER 19: SETTLING IN**

*When their carriage is run off the Appian Way by an oncoming chariot, the Cornelius family swallows its pride and stays in a roadside inn. Presented with what she deems as a substandard bed, Aurelia insists on a replacement. The request offends the innkeeper, who stands by the cleanliness of his rooms. Eucleides the tutor intervenes and a new bed is carried in. After a sarcastic exchange, the innkeeper leaves a snarling Aurelia to sulk with her daughter in the room.*

## **CHAPTER 19 ½: AFTERSHOCK**

*Outside in the hallway, the innkeeper, who is Greek, complains to Eucleides, his countryman, that he feels betrayed. "Greeks," he reminds a remorseful Eucleides, "do not betray Greeks. It is just not done." The tutor apologizes, explaining that it is his job to tolerate Aurelia's moods as much as to teach the children Homer and Plato. It is, he contends, a matter of survival. The men reconcile over a glass of Greek wine and a bowl of figs.*

In my experience, students take to these new stories for the same reasons they like anecdotes from a teacher's life. It is as if they have received an invitation to step outside of the dry routine and into something almost subversive. They are privy to a secret not offered to students elsewhere. As any teacher knows, it is at these moments that genuine interest trumps duty and the students learn exponentially more. In Latin, where no amount of grammar exercises can replace experience with a continuous text, this is as good as practice can get. In my experience, as students grow closer to the new characters, they forget that they are obeying the laws of grammar or practicing new vocabulary. They are just enjoying a good story. Much like that audience who first tuned in to *The Jeffersons* in the fall of 1975, they are following a curiosity. Yet in time, they are hooked—and gladly so.

# Social Emotional Learning in Class I

Hilary Munson / Lower School Faculty (Class I)

While many question the value of making a paper purse or following a guided meditation, few can argue with the belief that children benefit from understanding their emotions and learning how to handle them. It was based on this idea, and not the promise of savoring individual raisins or curling up on a fleece blanket under a cramped set of desks, that led me to investigate the Nueva School's curriculum for Social and Emotional Learning over the

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summer. Specifically, I sought to answer this question: How can we incorporate Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into the existing Class I curriculum?

Over the course of last year and during our meetings with Janice Toben, the tenets behind SEL struck a chord with me. In today's fast-paced society, where pressures are plenty and opportunities to dig deeper into one's true self are few, SEL offers the chance to step back and ask important questions: Why do I feel the way I do? What makes me angry? How do I handle my sadness? What kind of relationships do I cultivate in my life? The notion that

understanding oneself is a factor in life success—just like academic aptitude or personal connections—resonated with me.

After each session with Janice and her colleagues, I reflected on my own life and the lack of SEL education I had in my youth. Perhaps it was my Puritanical upbringing (and I place no blame on my parents; they were raised

the same way) but, in my culture, suppressing emotion was the norm.

Anger was pushed deep down, sadness was not discussed, and even happiness was tempered. I started to experiment with some of the same lessons Janice offered to our students, using myself as a guinea pig, and was happily surprised when I began to reap the benefits.

It was obvious, however, that incorporating the SEL lesson plans into our existing Class I curriculum would not be so simple. Forgive the sweeping generalization, but Nightingale-Bamford is a highly academic environment with a traditional approach to education and a decidedly New York/East Coast feel. The Nueva School has its own benefits, but

differs in many ways. Part of my challenge this summer was to tweak the Nueva School's lessons to fit into our own school's mission and atmosphere.

My time as a Class I homeroom teacher has shown me that our girls are hungry for quiet moments of reflection. Typically, the five-minute gap from 3:05 to 3:10 p.m. is among the most hectic and rushed of the day as girls busily pack up their belongings and prepare for dismissal. Even if the day has gone smoothly, the whirl and flurry of activity is enough to make your head spin.

One of the Nueva School lessons I have incorporated is to ask the girls to close their eyes and put their heads down on their desks at the end of the day. I ring a bell three times and the girls raise their hands when they can no longer hear the bell's vibrations. The girls look forward to this—our end-of-the-day ritual—and it ushers in a welcome calmness to an otherwise chaotic time.

Another SEL idea we will incorporate in Class I is use of the "I-statement." The I-statement asks an individual to identify an emotion and its trigger. For example, "I feel sad when you say you don't want to play with me..." or "I feel angry when you cut in front of me in line..." The I-statement encourages a student to understand why she feels a certain way and asks her to speak up for herself. The second part of the I-statement is connecting an emotion to future behaviors: "... and I wish you would include me in your group" or "... and I hope you won't cut in front of me in line again." The student takes ownership

of her feelings and is empowered by expressing her own needs and desires.

In essence, over the summer I came to understand that while we need to ensure that our students are academically equipped to succeed in life—to lead fulfilling and rewarding lives and to confidently and ambitiously pursue their passions—it is equally important to provide them with the tools necessary for maintaining a healthy emotional life, as well. These tools help them cultivate friendships, create healthy relationships, express themselves honestly, and live authentic lives. As a Class I teacher, I view it as my job to spend time getting to know the individual needs of my students and to provide them with appropriate and well-suited lessons. I look forward to continued opportunities to apply some of the SEL lessons into the curriculum and to chart my students' own emotional development, as well.

# Keeping it Fresh in the Library

Diane Neary / Head Librarian; Nora Liddell / Librarian; Lois Strell / Lower School Librarian

Over the course of the last ten years or so, library collections have become increasingly diverse. Since libraries are constantly evolving, keeping current is not only important, but also more interesting and complex. Not so many years ago, a school library collection consisted of books, magazines, and newspapers. Eventually, records (remember those vinyl LPs?) and filmstrips were added. These were followed by VHS videos, audio tapes, and magazine and newspaper collections that were delivered on microfiche and, later, on multiple CDs. Formats multiplied and networking allowed us to evaluate, develop, share, and refresh our varied holdings. The Joan S. McMenemy Library at Nightingale includes books, magazines, newspapers, audio books, films, and various kinds of equipment. Our resources are in print, as well as online. Video materials are on film, DVD, or come to us through streaming video. Audio materials make up the smallest part of our collection. The library provides equipment to access our resources, including DVD and video players, computers, and Kindles. We phase out the old and bring in the new throughout the year.

This summer, the librarians reviewed several parts of the collection. We included fiction for adults, as well as young adult fiction, reference books, eBooks, and picture books. No matter the format, we always consider the collection in context, including curriculum, student and faculty interest, and ease of discovery and access. Another important aspect to consider is whether the item is the most current available resource.

These days, the attempt to find the most current available resources requires not only research, but also a fair amount of comparison-shopping and testing of equipment and software. The reference area is a prime candidate for updating with eBooks. As we discover electronic alternatives for many titles, we replace them with electronic copies, though not everything is available online or in an easily accessible format.



Sometimes, we will keep both. Electronic editions can stretch our collection when many students need access to the same title or extend our reach for out-of-school use, and yet they are not for everyone. Some students prefer or rely on books in print. As we work towards a good balance of eBooks, databases, and physical copies, the librarians expect to be providing more instruction in the use of online resources.

## **THE TIMES, THEY ARE A' CHANGING: KEEPING THE COLLECTION CURRENT**

Librarians read quite a bit—that is a given. But perhaps when you hear the word “reading,” books, magazines, newspapers, or even Kindles come to mind. I doubt that shelves do, though. Yet librarians depend on reading the shelves to keep the books in order, to see what has gone missing, and to help highlight any holes in the collection. Just a few years back you could make a librarian cringe by asking if it was time to begin this process because it meant she literally had to manually check every single volume in the library against a printout of the entire collection. It was a tedious process that took a great deal of time.

That was then; this is now. Today we scan the collection with electronic guns that record every book and let you know what is missing and what is misplaced. The scanner is automatically crosschecking each item scanned against the catalog. This is a great improvement and saves many hours of physical labor. It is also more accurate.

Once we have sorted out what we have and do not have in the collection at the time of the scan, we can get to deciding whether to replace missing items, or not. The collection is always changing—just like the technology we use to track it.

Deciding what materials to add to the collection is more involved. The curriculum drives the purchasing decisions for most non-fiction books. We read many professional publications with book reviews; our rule of thumb is to read three reviews for each book we choose to add. We often check the New York Public Library catalogs and the online catalogs of other schools; we also talk with teachers and other librarians when we begin to select books in an academic area that requires building up.

Selecting new fiction titles also requires that we read reviews—but that is just part of the equation. This area calls on our knowledge of the girls and knowing something about their reading habits. Knowing how to match up content with reading levels is important, too. We talk to the girls every day about what they are reading, have read, and want to read. They are often our best reviewers. From time to time, we use faculty to help us review certain books for the collection. Jenna Epstein, for example, just previewed *Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491* for us to see if it would be useful for the Middle School history collection.

Banned Book Week brings our selection choices into sharp focus. Is book selection censorship? If you choose one book and do not choose another, are you censoring; in essence, banning a book before it ever hits the shelves? The answer is yes, of course. There is no area in life where we do not make choices, selecting some things and not others. Do we think of these choices as censoring? Probably not. We think we are making choices. I know this is semantics, but the words we choose are important. Censoring carries very strong emotions and negative connotations. I choose to say we are going through a selection process, and we have guidelines to help us to do so. Fortunately, the girls are encouraged to question

our selection choices and there is always lots of dialogue around this topic, which is healthy and keeps us honest.

#### HOW TO KEEP THE LIBRARY CURRENT

Maintaining a collection is an everyday thing. All libraries need a core collection that most other school libraries have, but an individual library's collection is very subjective and, ultimately, the librarian makes the final decisions. The decision-making process is not random; many tools are used to build a library that suits our needs. Each librarian must know the curriculum of every grade in order to support each with appropriate books, databases, and other materials. To that end, we talk with teachers and students for book suggestions; attend conferences and library groups; and read review journals, newspapers, and online blogs.

We also browse through bookstores, public and museum libraries, read all the "Best Books of the Year" lists, attend author events and comb through the Internet. In addition, we sign up for library list-servs, join book groups, and read everything in sight. And this is only the tip of the book-selection iceberg! We continue to order and process books throughout the year.

But where to put all these new materials? Each summer, on a rotating basis, we need to weed the collection and determine what is no longer used. Is that book on planets from 1998 obsolete? Has anyone written an update of an often-used book? Have any books been lost and need to be replaced? Did someone write another book in a popular series?

Fortunately, times are changing and librarians are hitting the fast track. Not only is the book world we've known changing, but so are the tools to keep up with it. Armed and ready, the laser gun and computer have combined to make shorter work of inventorying and weeding. Today, we brandish our magic barcode-reader-wands and with a click, an item is deleted. Need to reorder? Go online and click—it's done. Need to catalog the book? Click, it's done. This is not to say that hours are not spent looking at each book and deciding if it still deserves a spot on the shelf. The collection needs to be evaluated regularly and so specific areas are targeted each summer for renewal—it's an ongoing, cyclical process, much like gardening. We add new items, we grow the collection, we weed it, and then we grow more. Come to the libraries to see what's new!

# Sixth-Graders: Becoming Human

Betsey Osborne / English Faculty

When people ask me what I like about teaching sixth-graders, I tell them that I feel as though I can actually see the cogs in their heads turn and click into place as they sift through information, pair it up with their own lives, and begin to make intellectual assessments. They are also like cats, focusing with laser-like intensity on the insect invader on the opposite side of the room. Then, in a nanosecond, they screech to a halt, flop on the floor, and attend to their own grooming. Last September, *The Giver* engendered a passionate discussion among the girls in one of my sections of Class VI. They debated about a world without color and argued that it could mean both an absence of racism and diversity. Seconds later, they had settled

lives writ large, and men and women struggling to come to terms with what they share with the gods and what they don't—what, in other words, makes them human.

Somehow, as a student, I missed Greek mythology. I'd like to blame it on the era I grew up in where such seemingly stodgy subjects were discarded with the same fervor that "new math" was embraced, yet in college I know I read (or at least was assigned) *The Iliad*. Still, my vague impression of Patroclus and his friendship with Achilles was about the extent of my knowledge of the Greeks. But the greatest perk of teaching is exploring a subject that is new both to you and to your students. And so, I joined them on their journey.

*Sixth-graders are on the verge of understanding the difference between the significant questions that all humans confront and the mundane ways in which those questions sometimes manifest themselves.*

into an equally fervid discussion about whether or not people in a utopia should be able to decorate their own rooms. Sixth-graders are on the verge of understanding the difference between the significant questions that all humans confront and the mundane ways in which those questions sometimes manifest themselves. I doubt there is a more perfect age for teaching Greek myths, stories of

At the start of the Greek mythology unit, the girls read several news stories about real-life people, who are described as "heroes." The subjects range from Lance Armstrong, the cyclist and cancer survivor, to Abby, a dog who saves a little girl's life, to a man who saves a boy who either falls or jumps in front of a subway. Several of the girls immediately discounted the dog and some dismissed the showboats who got themselves in trouble and then managed to escape. Students make distinctions according to their own moral codes. They learn that the word "hero" is easily corrupted. But

it's a lot harder to corrupt a sixth-grader: one wrestled with whether heroes exist at all.

"Question," a student said another day as we dragged our desks into a circle. We were about to discuss what Olive Coolidge, in her collection *Greek Myths*, titles "The Great Flood." In the myth, which parallels Noah and the Ark,

Zeus destroys all of mankind with the exception of an old couple, Deucalion and Pyrrha, who had lived in "truth and justice." "Why would Zeus do that?" the student asked. "I mean, it's so, it's so..." The room exploded with some girls sympathizing with this student's outrage and others rebutting it. All this before we took our seats.

I found my own enthusiasm and interest growing. My mother-in-law loaned me Ted Hughes's *Tales from Ovid*. In his introduction, Hughes writes about "catastrophic extremes of passion that border on the grotesque." He might, I thought, have been describing my class. He also says that Ovid was interested in passion. "Or rather, in what a passion feels like to the one possessed by it.... Not just ordinary passion either, but human passion *in extremis*—passion where it combusts, or levitates, or mutates into an experience of the supernatural." I developed a reading project of my own, which included *The Iliad* (Achilles and his rage might find kindred spirits in Class VI) and *Metamorphoses*, and pursued it this summer with a Nightingale stipend. The stipend is the practical mate of the joy of teaching something new, and by extension helps to make the curriculum one's own.

One adaptation I'll make is to "Deity Day." Last winter, as they prepared to become gods, goddesses, and the mortals who figure into the myths, I would hear the girls say to each other things like, "Hey, I'm your husband. We have several children together." But Zeus and Hera were in separate sections, as were Psyche and Eros.

Why not put characters that share myths in the same section and let them work together? At the very least, I think it will help the girls place their own characters in a larger context. It should also help them to make connections between the characters.

The second change will be for students to write their own myths based on the elements many myths include. They will write these up, illustrate them, and present them in the oral tradition. I hope to gather these in a class book of modern-day myths. Interestingly, what confirmed for me that sixth-graders are ready to plumb their own lives was a moment in our final spring unit on *The Miracle Worker*, William Gibson's play about Helen Keller. We watched a video of Keller speaking. She did so by placing her fingers on her teacher Annie Sullivan's nose, neck, and—most intrusively—her mouth. I glanced around the room and every girl was unconsciously mimicking Keller. They were, I thought, hoping to understand what it might be like to be Helen Keller.

This summer, as I came to the end of *The Iliad*, which is filled with outsized egos and gore, I read the scene where Priam comes to beg Achilles for his son Hector's body. Priam reminds Achilles that his own father will probably never see him again. It is the moment when Achilles steps outside himself. And so, similarly, the girls take another step on their own journeys.

# Philadelphia, Founding City

Allan Bikk / History Faculty

Philadelphia was the first of our nation's capitals and it is a historical city, at least in some mythical or reinvented way. This is a city on a much smaller scale than New York and, on first walk-about, one that brings to mind the even smaller geographic setting of the founding fathers. Old City, Philadelphia's historic district, is crisply designed to insure an airy and accommodating touristic experience, so argues one of our professors, but this does little to diminish the patriotic connection of being in the framers' space. Old City is actually a national park run by the park service, complete with friendly and informative park rangers with Smoky-the-Bear hats, storytellers dressed up as Ben Franklin (one of whom isn't as corpulent as I might like) or Betsy Ross, and free admission to major sites. There are plaques commemorating some event or the residence of an important personage every few yards.

The National Constitution Center is a new museum dedicated to telling the story of our nation's formative document, in the traditional vein, as a patriotic experience to be glorified. It is also a modern museum—hands-on, multi-media, perfect for kids, and designed for the here-and-now. This is the site of my summer seminar for teachers with the very long title of: "A Revolt in Government: Philadelphia and the Creation of the American Republic." This program is operated under the auspices of the Landmarks of American History program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Our mornings consist of lectures by prominent historians, usually from the University of Pennsylvania; our afternoons consist of walking tours of the city.

The Constitutional Convention took place over four months from May through September 1787. In the main assembly room of Independence Hall, which really looks the part, fifty-five men (with varying attendance records) of wealth, power, privilege and influence came together to write our nation's legalistic and political foundation. This moment is enshrined in textbooks in a theological

manner, as the demi-gods brought forth four parchment pages as though tablets etched in divinity. No doubt, the founding fathers themselves had much to do with their own posthumous apotheosis. Regardless, the finished product, despite whatever flaws, was surely the product of discussion and compromise. The delegates did not come to Philadelphia with fixed positions and were actually willing to listen to each other. Our Constitution was the product of talk and argument.

We would like to think that the founding fathers cherished democracy as a gift. So much scholarship suggests otherwise. Professor Michael Zuckerman offers a compelling account of the framers' motives, one that echoes Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*, a famed historical account written in 1913. There was nothing democratic about the Constitution; on the contrary, it was specifically designed to alienate the masses (or mob) from power. Our founding fathers deliberately and methodically seized power from state legislatures and ensured the construction of an all-powerful federal government with broad economic and military powers. True enough, they were intent on creating a republican-style government; but they were also intent on protecting their own vested economic interests as men of property and power. The Anti-Federalist argument and prophesy that the Constitution written would create a monolithic, all-powerful central government that would continue to become more powerful has played out. Professor Zuckerman suggests we look at the convention pragmatically, brushing aside the patriotic sheen, reconsidering our traditional reverence.

Understood in this context, Philadelphia becomes a bit of a fantasy. Professor Zuckerman's walking tour proves instructive. The broad green mall between the National Constitution Center, our home base, and Independence Hall was purposefully designed to evoke grandeur. The Philadelphia of our founding was ramshackle, in parts.



Hundreds of old buildings were cleared away for urban renewal. The City Tavern was recreated to mimic its predecessor, which had actually been torn down. The tavern that so many of the delegates drank and dined in each night was surrounded by the common people and riff-raff, now nowhere to be seen. Follow the argument. The spaces outside Carpenters' Hall, first meeting site of the First Continental Congress, have been diligently tailored. The Graff House, a private residence where young Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, was razed and later rebuilt, again in period style, with replica rooms and replica furniture. Walk through Franklin Court to see a "ghost structure" on the site of Ben Franklin's last residence in Philadelphia. In this case, this modernist rendition was deemed more interesting than a stage set. Even an ice cream parlor called Franklin Fountain claims to be from 1908, with servers dressing the part. My guidebook says it's only a few years old. The building that houses it might have been from 1908—but not the ice cream parlor. The entire "Old City" of Philadelphia has been landscaped to reinforce a historical fantasy.

Our founding fathers were great men, but they were also elitists, the very best of us, who understood full well the problem with letting ordinary people rule themselves. Their compromise offered a veneer of republicanism. These 55 men have been elevated to an almost unreachable plateau. From the outset, they were all complicit in this hagiography. They made themselves gods. Their constitution is now our Constitution, and there is much to revere in it. But we still need to know these men, within a context, as men of their times, distinctly shaped by ideas and events of their times. There are 42 life-sized statues of them in a room called Signers' Hall at the National Constitution Center. Tourists take snapshots of themselves posing with Alexander Hamilton or George Washington. We try our best to get a little closer to them. We try to forgive their shortcomings. Would they forgive ours? Would they be proud of what their creation, no matter its original intent, has meant to us? We still debate what it means. We still debate the same things they debated. Our civilization is spelled out on four sheets of parchment paper.

# New York: A City of the Future

Paul Burke / Head of Upper School; History Faculty

On Thursday, June 24, seven Nightingale students, Ms. Wang, and I emerged from a subway in Shanghai. We were on the tail end of Nightingale's inaugural China expedition. We explored the countryside. We climbed mountains. We made friends. We studied alongside them. We felt welcomed. We felt like a part of it. We felt like tourists.

After visiting Shanghai Pudong Foreign Language School on the outskirts of town, we took the subway to the center of town. When we reached ground level in the heart of Shanghai, we were thrust into the bustling life of a world capital. One could not help but be inspired by the pace of the city, by the ambition of the architecture, and by the aspirations of its inhabitants. Emily Cummings, Class of 2013, turned to the group and said, "Feels like we are home." Sarah McGowan, Class of 2012, replied, "Our home of the future."

Two weeks later, I found myself in a classroom at Columbia University with the preeminent New York City historian, Professor Kenneth Jackson, considering New York during the Gilded Age. Per Dr. Jackson, the great cities of the world at the turn of the 19th century were Tokyo, London, and Paris. One hundred years later, New York was first among them, rivaled only by London. An informal ranking of major cities, even by a leading scholar, does not necessarily lead to the most important debates, but it is an indication of New York's emergence during this time. Jackson's rationale for this development? Immigration. "New York is constantly reinventing itself. There has never been a time when New York had a majority culture. No other city in the world can make such a claim."

Today, and throughout this nation's history, America's prospering cities have had vibrant and significant immigrant populations. Currently, close to 40% of New Yorkers are foreign born. Because of population growth

in Queens and Brooklyn, New York (along with San Francisco and Los Angeles) is one of three American cities with increasing density. Since 1950, Chicago has lost 25% of its population, Washington 32% and St. Louis close to 60%. Jackson argues that what makes "New York exceptional in the American context is not that people have left the city, as they have, but that others have been ready to take their place."

Our seminar, sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History, was comprised of two parts: a lecture in the morning and a tour in the afternoon. Touring New York is different from touring Charleston, South Carolina, or Jamestown, Virginia. Historic towns are often considered such because of their inability to evolve. Jackson says, "Historians love the towns that lose. New York is not such a town."

Jackson's immigrant thesis was put to the test as we traveled through various neighborhoods, such as the Lower East Side, Little Italy, and DUMBO. We examined factories that had been converted into million dollar flats and tenements that had transformed into homes for trendy, urban professionals. I could understand Jackson's argument from an intellectual perspective, but I could not *feel* it in the streets, and I found that disheartening. That ended when we toured Brighton Beach.

It was there in a Ukrainian grocery store where I saw it, heard it, and felt it. The food, the language, the noises were all alien to me, but the sense of community was inspiring, the drive of the residents apparent. I was reminded of my recent trip to China. I was awed and felt a bit out of step. Like a visitor, a tourist.

Later, I shared my observation with Professor Jackson who said, "Immigrants bring aspiration. They bring the future."

# Teaching Andrew Jackson

L.E. Hartmann-Ting / History Faculty



*Andrew Jackson is, I think, one of the most complicated and confounding figures in American history. His love story is poetic, and his fight against privilege, especially in today's economic climate, inspirational. Yet as much as his name is synonymous with the expansion of democracy and decline of elitist politics, it is hard for modern readers to process the contradictions in Jackson's actions and beliefs. Was he a democrat or an autocrat? Did he want a weak or a strong federal government? Was he a populist or were his actions motivated by personal dislike for Nicholas Biddle and Henry Clay? Were his loyalties regional or national? You cannot cover Jackson without grappling with big issues that are salient throughout the narrative of American history. Jackson speaks not only to his age, but also to a more modern America.*

So began my application to the National Endowment for the Humanities Landmarks of American History and Culture workshop. Hopefully you cannot tell I am trying to hide that I don't like Andrew Jackson. I am not an elitist, but on an emotional level Jackson's rise in American politics has always struck me as base and demagogic. I therefore have not enjoyed teaching Andrew Jackson, but as Nightingale's APUS history teacher I don't have the option of glossing over the man or the events associated

with him—they named a period of American history after him. So I strive to be objective and to contextualize his thoughts and actions to avoid anachronism. But I worry that my dislike of Jackson spills over into the classroom and shades my students' understanding of the material.

Last spring, my colleague Allan Bikk brought the NEH Landmarks in American History workshop series to my attention just as I was beginning a unit on progressivism. In discussion, one of my very thoughtful students surprised me by commenting that she thought Andrew Jackson and Theodore Roosevelt would be great friends. She argued TR's thoughts on trusts were in the same vein as Jackson's antipathy to the Bank. Honestly, it was one of those moments as teacher when you feel the satisfaction of having given your student enough to form meaningful impressions, while at the same time realizing that she is ahead of your thinking. That conversation prompted me to follow the advice we so often give our students: "Take a risk." And that is how I came to spend a week this past July at the Hermitage, Andrew Jackson's home just outside Nashville, TN.

I was one of the few northern women in attendance. The majority of participants were teachers from the south, many of them locals from Tennessee, who brought a passionate, almost hagiographic understanding of Jackson to our discussions. I found the perspectives these educators offered fascinating. It is easy to forget the importance of region in our nation's history and contemporary politics. The workshop drew on the talent of local and national scholars of Jackson and antebellum America. We had sessions on the cotton economy, women in the South, transportation systems, religion in antebellum America, and pedagogy. The material that most challenged my understanding of a topic, however, were our discussions of Jackson's views of and policies toward Native Americans.

Jackson's support for Indian Removal is one of the best-known and most contentious aspects of his presidency. The disputes over land between white settlers and Native Americans that ended in tragedy during the 1830s had their roots in official U.S. policy begun during Jefferson's administration. During the 1790s, Native Americans were encouraged to assimilate or move west of the Mississippi river to Indian Territory. In the South, the Five Civilized Tribes (Cherokees, Chicksaws, Chocktoaws, Creeks, and Seminoles) remained on their ancestral lands into the 1830s. By the time Jackson came into office, however, pressure from the states for all Native Americans to cede their lands to states for white settlement had increased dramatically, reaching fever pitch in 1829 when gold was discovered on Cherokee lands in Georgia. Native American land claims rested on treaties the tribes had negotiated with the federal government beginning in the 1790s, thus raising questions about state sovereignty and the ability of the federal government to exercise its authority when its policies were in conflict with the states.

The crisis reached crescendo in 1830 when Jackson asked Congress to support the Indian Removal Act, which would use federal money to negotiate, and ultimately force, Native Americans from their lands in the south onto land west of the Mississippi. The Act was a disaster for Native Americans. Despite the Supreme Court's ruling in *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) that Georgia law did not have standing in Cherokee territory and could not therefore compel the Cherokee to move, Jackson continued his support of the states' intentions and ignored both previous treaties and the ruling of the court.

Between 1830 and 1838 the majority of Native Americans in southern states were motivated to move west by force or the threat of it. The most tragic episode in this mass eviction became known as the "Trail of Tears," a reference to the sorrows endured by the 16,000 Native American men, women and children who marched to west to Oklahoma under armed guard beginning in 1835, resulting in the death of at least 4,000 of them.

Alan Brinkley, the author of *American History: A Survey*, the textbook we use at Nightingale, opens his treatment of Indian Removal by noting that although Jackson's attitudes toward Native Americans were not exceptional,

"Jackson's antipathy toward the Native Americans had a special intensity because of his own earlier experiences leading military campaigns against tribes along the southern border."<sup>1</sup> Unconsciously in keeping with this "Jackson as bad-guy" interpretation, I assign my students two documents to supplement the textbook reading. The first is an excerpt from Jackson himself commenting on the rightness of Indian Removal. "What good man," Jackson wondered, "would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic...?"<sup>2</sup> Native Americans had failed, in Jackson's appraisal, to civilize and assimilate, thus separating them from their ancestral lands for the sake of white expansion was a necessary and legitimate function of the federal government.

Although Jackson's views were in keeping with those of many whites in the South, there was strong opposition to Indian Removal. I therefore juxtapose Jackson's own words with those of New Jersey's outspoken opponent of the Removal Act, Senator Theodore Frelinghuysen. "I believe," Frelinghuysen insisted, "...it is not now seriously denied that the Indians are men, endowed with kindred faculties and powers...I ask in what code of the law of nations, or by what process of abstract deduction, their rights have been extinguished?"<sup>3</sup> Students are predictably outraged, as I have felt they should be.

I was therefore taken by surprise when Professor Daniel Usner of Vanderbilt University addressed us and suggested that the urge to condemn or justify Andrew Jackson is unusually strong among historians and laypeople. He asked us to resist that temptation and instead contemplate the man and the issues raised by his actions. For example, though Jackson's position on Removal seemed a revision of Jefferson's hopes that Natives Americans could be civilized, Jackson, it turns out, had an adopted Indian son named Lincoyer. Legend has it that Jackson's troops killed the boy's parents when he led attacks on the Creek Indians in 1814, and Jackson decided to take in and raise the orphan child. The boy died as a teen, but all accounts seem to indicate the Jackson treated him as family and planned to send him to West Point. Moreover, Usner reminded us that although the federal government was at fault for failing to protect Native American treaty rights, we need to recognize that it was the states that had taken

the initiative in the assault on Native American lands and their motives were sometimes more complicated than want of gold and land. Sovereign Indian nations could and were making Southerners anxious, for example, by regulating slavery on Native American lands.

In a similar vein, historian Daniel Feller, the current editor of the Jackson papers and one of the workshop co-leaders, asked whether or not we could separate the Trail of Tears from Indian Removal. If Removal had been done with sufficient provisions, and the lands Native Americans had been moved onto preserved, would we now regard this policy as humanitarian rather than tragic? Jackson, Feller argues, truly believed that Removal, done at the expense of the federal government, was charitable. There is probable truth, he maintains, in Jackson's belief that the Cherokees would have been annihilated if they had stayed in Georgia.

If I take the advice of these historians Indian Removal is no longer a simple morality tale. Instead, it is complicated by issues of state versus federal power, the power of the executive vis-à-vis the courts, the construction of race and slavery, and the growing differences between northern and southern interests and opinion. By broadening the perspectives from which I consider and present Indian Removal, I hope to get beyond the predictable discussions that do little more than agree that Removal was indeed awful. I still don't like Jackson, and I am not convinced a compelling humanitarian argument emerges from the material I encountered this summer. But I do know that the issues are more complicated than I realized, and that will help me do a better job teaching him.

<sup>1</sup> Alan Brinkley, *American History: A Survey, Vol. 1* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009) 246-248.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Jackson, "Message to Congress," (1830).

<sup>3</sup> "Senator Frelinghuysen on Indian Removal," April 9, 1830.

# E-mails from Asia

Claire Anderson '95 / Lower School Faculty (Class IV)

It is nearly impossible for me to describe my month-long adventure through Japan, Vietnam, and Cambodia in a few paragraphs, so I decided to select excerpts from e-mails I sent to my family while traveling to share with you.

## **TOKYO, JUNE 18:**

I arrived safely last night and thanks to jetlag, I was able to visit the Tsukiji Fish Market at 4:00 a.m. The market is huge and hundreds of stalls take up several city blocks. It is incredibly busy at Tsukiji, and buyers and sellers come from all over the world to purchase their fish.

As I walked around, I saw fish on ice and in tanks that I had never seen before. There were shrimp almost a foot long and clams the size of my head. The most amazing sight at the market was the tuna. I saw hundreds of frozen tuna, each easily weighing more than 100 pounds being auctioned off before they were hacked down into sellable steaks. The most spectacular part of my morning was the sushi breakfast I had a 7:00 a.m. It was, far and away, the freshest fish I have ever had. The fatty tuna was basically butter.

## **TOKYO, JUNE 19:**

Of the many things I have enjoyed figuring out about Tokyo, one adventure that holds top billing is the public bathrooms. The toilets can range from a simple hole in the ground to the most elaborate do-almost-everything-for-you machine. My latest encounter involved a seat that raised itself, followed by music. A remote attached to the wall allowed for changing the station, should I wish.

Other than the adventures in the bathroom, Tokyo has been reasonably easy to navigate. I have crisscrossed the city a number of times via the subway and on foot to visit various sites. Like I always do while traveling, I am approaching Tokyo with a walk-around-and-figure-it-out kind of attitude.

Today, I wandered around Harajuku, which reminds me of Soho in the 1980s. Teenagers dressed in the latest

fashions line the main drag, hoping to be seen. I was amongst the hippest of the hip today. I also saw women dressed in traditional kimonos doing their daily shopping. In fact, at most of the department stores you can buy kimonos and obis. I will end my time in Tokyo by having dinner in the Roppongi district. Tomorrow, I fly to Hanoi.

## **HANOI, JUNE 21:**

What a day! Lizzie and I spent an exhausting and enjoyable time wandering about the city. Hanoi is like no other place I have ever been. The main theme of our day was not to get killed while crossing the street. There are no traffic rules; you just have to walk and as Lizzie put it, "If we hesitate, we die."

Each intersection brings new challenges and obstacles to overcome, and each street corner is more hazardous than the one before.

We have to dodge the buses, cars, cyclos, and the hundreds of motorbikes that come at you in every direction. Those are the most dangerous. We took to crossing the street when women and children did because we thought, "Would anyone really aim for them?" It turns out the answer is yes! At one point, an old woman took pity on us as we attempted to cross the street and led us across while wielding her cane and swinging at the approaching motorbikes. We made it safely only by her grit and determination.

In addition to dodging the oncoming traffic, it has been quite amazing to see what is carried on the backs of the motorbikes. The favorite sightings so far have been a table, a set of chairs, an air conditioner, a bird in a giant birdcage and an eight-foot long pipe balanced on two men's shoulders. In the coming days, I plan to spend several hours watching the traffic.

Besides wading through the sea of traffic, we took a cooking class in the Old Quarter. We learned how to make Pho (a noodle soup), catfish spring rolls, and chicken with cashews.



We were both pleased with our cooking and walked away from the course with a few recipes to try back at home. We'll see how it goes.

**HA LONG BAY, JUNE 24:**

We drove from Hanoi about three hours to the city of Ha Long and sailed out into the bay aboard a small junk. The landscape is breathtaking and the water is calm and clear. Almost 2,000 limestone formations jut out from the bay to form jagged and steep islands. The islands are covered in thick vines and trees. Except for monkeys and birds, the islands are uninhabitable. Fishermen and their families live in floating villages in some of the more protected areas of the bay. The fishermen make their living by fishing for squid in the Tonkin Gulf and sell their catch each day in the city of Ha Long. The women and children sell soda, candy, shells, and pearls to hordes of tourists.

Today, we got up early, left the busy area of the bay, and went kayaking through a cave where the limestone stalactites came down to only a few feet from our heads. We paddled through the cave into an isolated cove. Lizzie and I kayaked around looking for monkeys; they were nowhere to be found. Apparently, monkeys know much

more about weather patterns than we do because after a mere 10 minutes of paddling, the skies opened up into torrential rain. The rain was a soaking; it came down in sheets so thick that we couldn't see more than a few feet in front of us. We made it back to the boat, happy but drenched, and are now heading off to another area to continue our kayaking adventures. The skies look promising...

**SAPA, JUNE 27:**

Lizzie and I enjoyed three days in the northern-most region of Vietnam. As we boarded the train last night, we looked across the river and saw China.

Sapa is up in the mountains about a mile above sea level. We spent our time hiking through the countryside and visiting the villages of Black H'Moung, Thai, and Zao people. We could distinguish the people based on their clothes. The Thai are quite modern in their dress. The H'Moung dress in dark indigo clothes and wrap red cloth around their heads. The Zao people dress in very bright neon colors. Most of the yarn that they weave is bought in China.



Life is very simple in Sapa. Most people outside of the city center live in one-room huts with a cooking fire in the center of the room. Animals and people (water buffalo, chickens, ducks, dogs, and pigs) seem to share the space equally.

Lizzie and I thought our daily walks were going to be leisurely strolls—basically park loops with more interesting scenery. How wrong we were!

The first day, we started out along the main road of the village, and quickly were spotted by three H'Moung ladies who followed us in the hopes that we would buy the bags and wallets they were selling. The women picked up on the fact that we are American and hoped that we would be the "big fish" of their day. We were not the big spenders they hoped us to be, but we did provide great laughs as they watched us learn how to navigate walking through the rice fields.

We left the main road and began walking through fields and along small paths. The paths were muddy and uneven, and I spent the better part of the afternoon trying to avoid face-planting into rice paddies. I had some very

near misses and brought great delight to the women who were following us.

On our second day of hiking, Lizzie and I found ourselves in the jungle. We went up and down mountains and crossed streams along the way. At one point, the foliage was so thick I couldn't see Lizzie who was, at most, five feet ahead of me. We held onto bamboo trees in a feeble attempt to remain upright as the mud and rocks gave out under way. At one point, I lost my balance and went sliding down the path. I must have skidded about four feet and feel quite lucky that I was able to right myself before I went feet-first through a large water buffalo paddy that was only inches away.

Lizzie, about 20 minutes later, did the same graceful slide, and passed a very large and very surprised water buffalo. Could he be the one who left me the nice surprise back up the mountain?

All and all, our hikes were fantastic. We are a little sore and a bit beat-up, but nothing serious. Over the two days, we walked about 28 km. Take that, park loop!

## ANGKOR WAT, JULY 2:

Lizzie and I loved Siem Reap, even if it did have a Disney World feel to it. The restaurants are all delicious and easily rival the trendy bistros in Tribeca or Soho. For four days, Lizzie and I ate like queens. Of all the local dishes we tried, we took a particular liking to fish amok, a flavorful coconut curry. I got the requisite amok spice souvenir, so I'll try my luck at it when I get home.

Our plan was the same each day: we got up early and toured the temples before it got too hot. The average daily temperature was 105 degrees. In the afternoons, we explored the town by tuk-tuk and read by the pool.

There are over 600 temples in the complex of Angkor Wat, and archeologists believe many more will be discovered. The temples were built between the ninth and eleventh centuries and are celebrations of either the Hindu or Buddhist religions. Most of the temples are now piles of rubble, but the ones that remain are magnificent.

Each temple is different, and of the many we saw, I loved The Bayon with its enormous carved heads the best. There are over 200 heads on the temple and each one has a unique expression. Each head is easily 30 feet tall. Most of the heads are in groups of four, so you can study the profiles of two while standing in front of another.

Banteay Srei is also breathtaking. It is a pink sandstone temple dedicated to teachers. The detailed carvings of the temples are incredibly intricate and depict the Hindu story of creation. Unlike most of the other temples, Banteay Srei was not looted over the years; this is because the temple curses all who try. As a result, this is one of the few temples with a written history. The French, it turns out, are not afraid of Hindu curses because they took many of the original statutes from the Banteay Srei to Paris in 1931 for an Indochina exhibition.

Yesterday, Lizzie and I left Siem Reap and explored the neighboring villages along the Great Lake. Our visit to these villages gave us a much more realistic picture of Cambodia. It is difficult to witness how the years of war and corruption continue to affect the people of the country. It is an impoverished country with limited resources of its own. The international community gives aid and provides resources to the citizens of Siem Reap, but these necessities are not reaching the people outside of the city who are the most in need.

## HOI AN, JULY 10:

I have enjoyed a wonderful few days on my own in central Vietnam. I spent a few days in Hue enjoying the quiet of a smaller city.

A few days ago, I drove from Danang over the Marble Mountains to Hoi An. As we drove up the mountain, we saw many old American bunkers, as well as the airport used by American troops during the war. Today the government leaves the army bunkers intact as a reminder of the war and American aggression.

When I arrived in Hoi An, the trip took a major cultural downside, but a very, very happy one. Hoi An is a small riverside town about three miles from China Beach. In the 1800s, Hoi An was an important trading port, and as a result, the buildings in the town are designed with a mixture of Vietnamese, Japanese, and Chinese architecture.

My days are really simple here. After breakfast, I ride a bike through the countryside and explore the small farms and fishing areas along the way. In the afternoons, I read my book and relax. I had dinner at some of the best restaurants I've been to yet. I think that I favor central cooking to northern. The food here is very light and very fresh. I have enjoyed summer rolls, steamed dumplings, papaya salads, and steamed fish.

A few nights ago, I went to a delicious restaurant named Cafe des Amis for dinner. Mr. Kim, the gregarious owner, tells you to choose seafood, vegetable, or meat. I, of course, selected seafood. My favorite dish was the White Rose, which is a delicate rice dumpling with shrimp and garlic filling. The dumplings are topped with fried onions and are served with a fish sauce. Perfection! I also had a steamed tiger fish with ginger and carrots with a vinegar sauce. At one point, Mr. Kim felt I wasn't eating his food correctly, so he came to my table, took my chopsticks, and made me a few bites to try by placing all the ingredients on top of a rice cracker. He was right; the food was delicious that way.

Today, I return to Hanoi. I spend two more days there before returning home. It has been a glorious trip and I am sad to see it ending, but I am looking forward to seeing you all.

Love, Claire

# The Oxbridge Paris Teachers Seminar 2010: For a Teacher who was Born and Raised in Paris...

Julia Anderson / Modern Languages Faculty

I didn't expect to be the only French person attending the seminar, but I was. To me, it's very important to have a deep understanding of various Parisian sites, as I am originally from there and my students expect me to be knowledgeable. Being a tourist in Paris was an interesting way of learning more information about the city that I come from. It is similar to asking a true New Yorker if he gone to the top of the Empire State Building.

The seminar was a week long, and there were 11 teachers from all over the States: Seattle, LA, Maine... and from St. Bernard's, one block from Nightingale. The group was full of positive energy, as we all loved and wanted to know everything about Paris. We stayed at a simple hotel in a perfect location in the center of the city, and we were privileged to have classes at Notre-Dame de Sion, a beautiful university located across from "Le Jardin du Luxembourg." This is an international university that receives Americans for summer programs; this is how I ran into Juliet Vincente '12, who studied there for one month. It is also where Ms. du Nouy was in charge of the Oxbridge Seminar five years ago. Therefore, Nightingale is well-known, and the staff is friendly when you mention Nightingale.

The seminar started with a formal lecture (by Mr. Lescarret-Vina, who impressed all of us with his endless knowledge of Parisian history and economics) on how Paris was built, the heart of the city, and the various changes throughout centuries. He provided us with a timeline of the history of Paris, emphasizing monuments that are visible today. The earliest evidence of human presence on the site of Paris



dates back to 40,000 BCE. The site was most likely first settled because, as a river valley, it offered enough flora and fauna to sustain Paleolithic people. The lecture was followed by an architectural tour that clarified many aspects of the lecture and gave us a broad outlook on Paris.



On another day, we visited a studio in a suburban area called Montreuil. We met a painter, Mr. Laufer, who makes a living through his art, and he explained to us what it's like to be a recognized artist in France. Another experience that gave me a different perspective on Paris, was a lecture I attended by Mr. Farrelly-Jackson about famous expatriates who have lived in Paris throughout the years. We visited the neighborhood where Picasso, Hemingway, and Gertrude Stein all lived and he recommended interesting readings, such as *A Moveable Feast* (1960), in which E. Hemingway describes Boulevard Montparnasse and its atmosphere in the 1960s.

We had a lively lecture on "French identity," which revealed an evolving picture of French politics and a different France from that which existed when I left nine years ago; for instance, the situation with immigrants has tremendously changed.



On the culinary aspect, we ate in various places that represented the broad selection of cuisines that define France today. We had a wonderful experience with Ms. Coppé, who not only knew France's 365 different cheeses, but also how to savor them with the appropriate wine—the simple fact of being a French citizen does not make you automatically a cheese/wine connoisseur.

Mr. Cruse, director of the Paris Seminar and the program's main guide, has an unconditional love for Parisian architecture and French culture that was delightful to witness. The amount of information he shared with us was a challenge to assimilate, but by the end, I felt I had a better sense of the city. Those seven days gave me greater confidence regarding what I can pass on to the students.

# All Is Well That Ends Well

Marilina Kim / Modern Languages Faculty

After shaving off ounces from my luggage so I could travel as lightly as possible and not check anything (lest I lose my baggage), running through my mental checklist multiple times, and closing up shop at school as neatly as possible, I had done everything I could to ensure that my trip to St. Paul's Girls School went as smoothly as possible, knowing full well that things always happen—and they did.

For starters, my cab took me straight through the Puerto Rican Day Parade and into a complete gridlock. Luckily, I did not have that much to lug around until I caught a second cab, which sped to JFK. As soon as we pulled up to the terminal, I got a text message letting me know that my overnight flight was delayed. Looking on the bright side, I did not miss my flight. Once in London and out of customs, my cash card would not work, despite having called the bank ahead of time. Luckily, my credit cards did, and I was able to get tube tickets. When I finally got to the St. Paul's Boys School, where I would be staying, security, who had my keys, was not there and everything was locked! Eventually, the logistics did get sorted and the initial glitches became history.

My days started with a nice, brisk walk across the Thames and into Hammersmith, where the girls school is located. I bypassed the local Starbucks and got a pastry at what I hoped was a more British shop; then I made my way to SPGS (St. Paul's Girls School). The first day I arrived a bit jetlagged but without papers to grade, assignment sheets to write, and meetings to go to, I felt unfettered and free. SPGS was in a completely different mindset from mine, however; everyone was harried. Despite their busy schedules, the teachers I met were gracious and welcoming. Everyone I encountered offered me tea and biscuits—there seemed to be an endless supply of both. Initially, I took about half the offers to be polite, but not being accustomed to consuming any form of caffeine besides chocolate, I was in a perpetual tizzy. All the teachers did seem frenzied, and upon looking at their schedules, I realized they needed the constant supply of

Earl Grey in order to keep up. The faculty common room had a bustle that coincided with the period transition times. The faculty rush from class to class, take roll of their assigned group multiple times a day (compulsory by law), and rush back to classes again—there was no time for a stroll to Yura's for a cup of coffee and a farm cake. Like at Nightingale, there was a stream of knocks at the door by students looking for specific teachers. The space allotted to faculty is enviable; not only was there the lounge with the perpetual fountain of tea and comfy sofas, but also work-stations and a computer room specifically designated as a quiet space. I had met one of the Spanish teachers there and was duly shushed by another teacher when we were conversing.

Though SPGS offers Spanish, French, German, Italian, Russian, and Mandarin, I only went to the romance language classes, lest I fall asleep due to a combination of jetlag and not understanding a word of what was going on. During one of the first classes I visited, I was wowed by a small class of older girls who were clearly non-native, but were incredibly fluent and reading García Lorca's play *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*. I was further floored when the teacher told me it was only their first year taking Spanish. I knew they were the equivalent of seniors, but, wow, was this school really that amazing? Since the teacher had a free period afterwards, I tried to get the secret to this progress out of her. Surely some students must not fare as well in modern languages; what happened to them? She told me all of them did well, and that the class was not an anomaly. After much discussion, I realized that she and I were talking about two different sets of students. I had presumed that every Paulina had the ability to learn a third language in only one year, but she was referring to those students who *majored* in modern language. In England, students must choose (or qualify for) a major they will follow for the rest of their secondary education and for which they will apply to university early in their high school career.



Given the demographics, I imagined (and was told) that some parents begin to think about this major in the wee years of their daughter's life. Most, of course, choose a major that suits their strengths along with their interests. The students I had seen were not only modern language geniuses, they had been studying and excelling at two other modern languages. As a multilingualist, I am not belittling their achievements, but rather finding an explanation as to how they were able to achieve what they did.

In the end, after visiting a few more classes (and getting over my initial awe of the language majors), I was more struck by the similarities rather than the differences in our schools. It was comforting, reassuring, and reaffirming to know that clear across the Atlantic, the similarly aged girls struggled with similar grammar hurdles as our girls; that some students, no matter how small the classes, just do not speak!; and that regardless of tenure, faculty

are sometimes led astray by classroom changes. Such confusion actually allowed one of the teachers to sit with me and discuss SPGS for an entire period while we waited for her students to arrive. Despite the Smart Boards everywhere, I was surprised at how little technology was used on all the levels. Granted, an isolated visit does not show everything about a teacher but, by and large, the exercises I saw were mostly oral and aural and based on the texts. For the most part, they seemed grammar-based for the younger students: reading, writing, and speaking were the focus of the older students. The grammar drills practiced in the first couple of years of language were much like the ones we practice here at Nightingale. I was delighted when a teacher in one of the middle school classes put up sentences on the board for the students to complete that were strikingly similar to ones I use.

I also learned much about St. Paul's, albeit the boys school, through my "roommates." Though I was visiting the girls school, I stayed in a dorm in the boys school. This dorm housed the modern language interns, all of whom were in their early 20s and from one of the continental European countries. They were all there for one year and provided me with a foreigner's insight to British education, as well as lively company while watching the World Cup games. With Italy, Spain, France, and Germany represented, it was quite lively, indeed. Their perspectives reflected their culture as well as the different learning and teaching styles.

Along with the company of my roommates, I got to spend time with some of the Nightingale community. One afternoon, as I strolled past St. Paul's Cathedral, I ran right into our seventh-grade group, who were visiting the Dragon School. What a delight! They had just arrived the afternoon before and were getting a glimpse of London before heading off to Oxford. I agreed to meet them at the British Museum the next morning and made plans to visit Lois the following weekend in Oxford. At the British Museum, I made sure to pass on Panayotes's message about the Parthenon—and not Elgin—marbles and how they really belong to Greece. It would please Panayotes very much to know what a keen interest they took in Greek history.

# Timeless Meanderings

Annette Rodríguez / Middle and Upper School Learning Specialist; Modern Languages Faculty

As I reached into a closet to find my quilted jacket, swaddled in a bag from the cleaner's, I was transported back to the month I spent in Italy last April. Visions of the borgo at Bastia Creti and the hill towns of Assisi, Perugia, Arezzo, Orvieto, and Montepulciano flashed through my mind as I dashed out into Madison Avenue. The Italian sojourn with my family was not only memorable for the breathtaking landscape, the extraordinary food, and the artistic treasures, but also for the fulfillment of a plan hatched in my 20s. Jorge and I already had two children; he had the benefit of six weeks vacation, and I had the summers off. I had visions of spending a summer on an Italian coast, immersed in the culture, learning to speak Italian, and going to the market for the freshest produce. The plan never quite gelled because life got in the way.

Our parents got sick, the children became teenagers, and schedules grew more demanding. The possibility of a sabbatical gave me the opportunity to go back to my long-forgotten plans. The trip came together magically. We rented a house in Umbria and once the invitation was extended, no one passed up the opportunity, even though Javier and Francesca were expecting, Vanessa and Andrew were still living in Australia, and Jorge was negotiating the purchase of a business. My brother, sister-law, and sister miraculously cleared out their calendars, too. We spent two weeks tracking down the masterpieces once viewed in art history classes. Giotto frescos, Piero della Francesca altarpieces, and Caravaggio paintings came to life outside of classrooms and museums. As we worked our way from the artistic to the prosaic (trying to make sense of the irregular business hours), we had our fill of genuine cappuccinos, full-bodied gelatos, and fresh pastas with a full complement of vino della casa. We walked off what we ate (or so we thought) as we ventured far afield day after day. Some of us continued on to Lake Como in Lombardy,

another charming area full of local flavor. We criss-crossed the lake by ferry to view the villas and gardens in neighboring towns. Villa D'Este and Villa Carlotta get a lot of attention in the guidebooks, but the real gem among them was Villa del Balbianello. The understated villa, originally a monastery, was impeccably restored by the Italian explorer Guido Monzino. We had lost some from our group who were better versed in Italian, so our language skills were tested. I was delighted to see my self-taught Barron's Italian come to the rescue. True to the theme of reconnecting with my past, I found it useful to revert to my maiden name, Totti. All I had to say was: "Totti, comme il giocatore della Roma" (like the soccer player from Club Rome) to get anyone's attention. Our Italian adventure was memorable for many reasons, but mostly because it allowed us to spend time as a family in a place rooted in antiquity and extraordinary beauty.

Once I had fulfilled one of my youthful fantasies, I decided to go on to Barcelona. I had first come across the works of Antonio Gaudi as an architecture major in college, but had never seen any of his masterpieces first-hand. Thirty-five year later, I found myself in Cataluña, in the shadow of La Sagrada Familia. Although I no longer find the design as aesthetically pleasing, every aspect of the concept remains fascinating.

The cathedral is not yet complete, but the mystical and allegorical vision of Gaudi is evident in every sculpted shape and custom-crafted mosaic. In two days, I visited Casa Batlló, Parque Güell, and Casa Milà. Gaudi's organic forms and sinuous designs were meticulously thought out and intuitively engineered. Standing in the Paseo de Gracia, I was transported to the primary sources found in the Architectural Library at Columbia, a lifetime away.



The time spent on sabbatical brought a tremendous sense of freedom. I wasn't tied to the school's schedule. I could travel on weekdays and spent February with my 91-year-old Dad. While in New York, I had the freedom to work out in the morning, go grocery shopping in the middle of the day, and spend time cooking for my family. I had time for the mundane, to catch up on housekeeping, and to put away my clothes every day. I had the luxury of meeting



friends for lunch, lingering over a cup of coffee, and walking through the museums until my back hurt. Life was unhurried and most of my activities were unplanned. I realize how incredibly lucky I was to have been granted a sabbatical, and will always be grateful to Nightingale for providing the opportunity. My quilted jacket is clean and back in action, a reminder of those mellow days last spring.

# Neuroscience and the Classroom: Strategies for Maximizing Students' Engagement, Memory, and Potential

Rosalyn Smith / Lower School Learning Specialist

In August I attended the 2010 Summer Institute "Neuroscience and the Classroom: Strategies for Maximizing Students' Engagement, Memory and Potential," at the University of California in Santa Barbara. This Institute, cosponsored by the *Learning and the Brain* Conference and the Neuroscience Research Institute at UC Santa Barbara, brought together neuroscientists and educators for the purpose of exploring ways to maximize and maintain attention and focus and to increase memory retrieval in our students. The institute was based on cutting-edge findings from affective and social neuroscience, emphasizing the roles of engagement and memory in learning, motivation, creativity, and the culture of schools.

It was led by Dr. Judy Willis, MD, MEd, a board-certified neurologist who is also a full-time classroom teacher, author of *Research-Based Strategies to Ignite Student Learning*, *Teaching the Brain to Read*, and *How Your Child Learns Best*. Through Dr. Willis's presentation and group collaboration, this in-depth program helped participants to develop greater knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to apply neuroscience and cognitive science findings to improve teaching and learning. Combining her background as a neurologist and classroom teacher, Dr. Willis shared her knowledge on how information gets into the brain and strategies to help educators get information admitted through the brain's attention system.

*"Getting into the brain is like getting into an exclusive nightclub where only the glamorous few are selected. Once inside, another gatekeeper, stress, determines what makes the cut to enter the upper VIP lounge in the prefrontal cortex—that valuable 13% of cerebral architecture where our highest cognition and emotional reflection takes place."* — Dr. Judy Willis

## HOW SENSORY INPUT GETS TO THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX AND BECOMES LEARNED INFORMATION

Before information can enter the brain to become learning, an involuntary filter called the *Reticular Activating System* (or RAS) selects which sensory input gets the attention. This primitive network of cells in the lower brainstem, through which all sensory input must pass to reach any higher regions of the brain, is essentially the same in your dog, cat, child, and you. When a threat is perceived, the RAS automatically selects related sensory input and directs it to the lower reactive brain where the involuntary response is not to think, but to react—flight, fight, or freeze. This survival-directed filter is critical for animals in the wild, but it has not changed significantly as man evolved, and the implications for children in the classroom are significant.

When children's brains perceive threat (for example: punishment or embarrassment in front of classmates for not doing homework, fear that they will be criticized by a teacher or classmate) the RAS lets in only what is perceived as relevant to that threat. Unless the perception of threat is reduced, the brain will persist in doing its primary job of protecting the human or animal from harm. This perceived threat inhibits the intake of information and will direct the information to the lower reactive, nonthinking brain. If the change is assessed as nonthreatening, the RAS focuses on sights, sounds, movements, smells, and other changes that provoke curiosity, or are recognized as potential sources of pleasure. The RAS is a virtual editor that grants attention and admission only when it feels the incoming information is nonthreatening. To help our students get information passed through the Reticular Activating System use novelty, surprise, teachable moments, and multisensory instruction to reach the conscious brain via this filter that

alerts the brain to changes and gets it primed to interact with new information and experiences.

When information comes into the senses, it will be sent to the amygdala (the part of the brain involved in emotions and memory) and, depending on the emotional state of the student, the input will be sent to the higher frontal cortex, which governs long-term memories, goal setting, and creative decision-making, or the reactive brain, which we don't control. A classroom that caters to students' strengths and interests is set up for information being processed so students can remember it, use it, and conceptualize it.

This is why learning strategies that reduce children's anxiety are important: they lower the affective (emotional) filter in the amygdala and allow information to reach the thinking centers. When a student is stressed, the amygdala directs information to the reactive, nonthinking brain. When a student is relaxed, comfortable, and interested, the amygdala directs the information to the reflective, thinking brain.

To help our students get information passed through the amygdala and increase long-term memory storage, information should be taught in context of personal relevance with opportunities for students to make meaningful connections between themselves and the key concepts of the lesson. They need to be given opportunities to show how what they are about to study relates to their lives or the world around them. When we, as teachers, understand the functions of these filters, we can use them in positive ways to facilitate our teaching. If learning experiences are associated with pleasure, connected to topics of interest, or related to satisfying goal achievement and other positive experiences, sensory data will be considered valuable and permitted entry into the higher-thinking brain. With well-planned learning activities that sustain attention and interest without producing frustration, confusion, or boredom, these filters can be recruited to help the brain focus on the sensory information of the lesson.

## **DOPAMINE AND HOW IT WORKS TO PRIME OUR STUDENTS' BRAINS**

Dopamine is one of the brain's most important neurotransmitters. This neurotransmitter chemical carries information across the synapses that form when one nerve ending connects with another. The brain releases dopamine when an experience is pleasurable. As a pleasure-seeking organ, the brain also releases dopamine in expectation of rewarding, pleasurable experiences. This has several advantages. Dopamine release increases attentive focus, attention, and executive function in the frontal lobes. When dopamine is released during enjoyable learning activities, it actually increases children's capacities to control attention and store long-term memories.

Teachers can develop memory and motivation with dopamine with pleasurable classroom experiences and expectation of pleasurable experiences. Some activities that increase dopamine levels are prediction, collaboration, humor, optimism, movement, and choice. The wealth of knowledge provided by the Neuroscience and the Classroom conference was the culmination of leading scientists doing cutting-edge research with noted practitioners who led the way in connecting research to practice. Now is an exciting time to be an educator. Brain research, when applied to the classroom, will not only drive the learning process, but also allow teachers to energize and enliven the minds of students. The more we know about the brain's learning centers and brain-based teaching strategies, the more effective we will be in the classroom.

# One Time at Math Camp

Melissa Butler '00 / Lower School Faculty (Class K) and Fernanda Winthrop '00 / Lower School Faculty (Class K)

Last spring we were offered the opportunity to attend the weeklong math workshop that takes place each summer at the Dana Hall school in Wellesley, MA, lovingly referred to by our colleagues as "Math Camp." With the very idea of a summer off still a foreign concept to the both of us, we enthusiastically signed up, apprehensive only about reliving the adventures of dorm life: shared bathrooms and cafeteria food not quite up to par with that of Chef Vasquez. These challenges were short-lived, as a close friend with spare bedrooms was but a 15-minute drive from Dana Hall, and we learned upon arrival that Wellesley boasts both a Brugger's Bagels and The Upper Crust Pizzeria a short walk from the Dana Hall campus. Surmounting these possible obstacles to our contentedness we opened our minds to the vast amount of information offered by our fearless math camp "counselors": Karen Economopoulos and Ellen Boiselle.

The kindergarten-level educators were grouped with the first- and second-grade teachers for the majority of classroom sessions. This was beneficial in that it gave us a useful perspective on where the mathematical concepts we introduced to the youngest students would eventually take them in the next several years. A central theme of the workshop was the development of a student's number sense: how does she begin to understand that a six is more than just a "6," but also "six," a quantity of objects, "5 + 1," the number of people in a family of two parents and four children, and so on and so forth. How can we as teachers of the youngest students evaluate and reinforce this understanding? We learned an impressive number of activities to promote number sense and build the foundation of mathematical literacy, and we could think of no better way to share our Dana Hall experience than to highlight several of the activities and ideas that most resonated with us.

## SPECIAL NUMBERS

One of the first exercises we participated in was a numerical icebreaker called "Special Numbers." This activity allows the group to get to know about one another, while at the same time helping students to rationally assign numbers and quantities to real-life situations. Melissa's special numbers, for example, might look like this:

I live on \_\_\_\_ street.

I once had \_\_\_\_ dog(s).

I was born in the year \_\_\_\_.

I drink \_\_\_\_ cup(s) of coffee a day.

To fill in the blanks, choose from the following numbers: 85, 1, 1982, 3.

This engaging activity is geared towards older students who have experience with, or an understanding of, larger numbers and quantities. Such an activity can be scaled down towards younger students by choosing facts that involve lower numbers or by challenging the students to decide the teacher's special numbers as a group.

## THE COUNTING JAR

A long-term classroom activity that is also useful for assessing the development of number sense is "The Counting Jar," along with an accompanying math journal. This activity provides students experience with number and quantity by allowing them to count, record, and represent different numbers each week. One morning or one math class per week, each student is given a Ziploc bag or other container—the jar—filled with a number of objects. The student's task is to count the objects, represent them on a dated page in her math journal in a way she feels comfortable (through a drawing or with a numeral, or even a written number), and then

physically replicate this number with given manipulatives (pattern blocks, Unifix cubes, chain links, dice, etc.). The “Counting Jar” activity is easily scaffolded as the student becomes more number-savvy. The teacher can increase the number of objects in the jar, ask the children to represent the quantity in bundles of two or five or ten, or sort a miscellaneous collection of objects by attribute to explore other counting strategies. Eventually, the counting jar might become an estimation jar, and the children can write down the quantity they think is inside the jar or bag and then compare their guess to the actual quantity with a count. The estimation jar should only be introduced when the students have a sense of quantity. We look forward to incorporating the counting jar and math journal in our Kindergarten math classes this year.

#### **PROCESS AND ASSESSMENT**

Similar to Nightingale, the importance of open-ended questions and the explanation of strategy was promoted throughout our Dana Hall class sessions. We were encouraged to think aloud with our students, to allow them to hear us puzzle our way to a conclusion. We were also urged not to take the answers a child gives at face value, as either right or wrong, but rather work to understand the process that led the student to her conclusion. Understanding the steps taken to arrive at an answer is sometimes more important than whether or not that answer is correct—this enables the teacher to evaluate a child’s actual progress and become familiar with her learning style. In the most basic example, we discussed a child faced with the task of counting a pile of 14 Unifix cubes. The child records her final count by writing the numeral 12, which marks a misstep somewhere along the way.

We learned to notice each step of a process in order to best assess where the student has difficulty— does the child have one-to-one correspondence and a neat counting strategy, moving one cube to a new pile as she counts? Does she recite her numerals in order? Does she have conservation of number? Does she know how to write her numbers correctly? The answer to each of these questions is crucial to pinpointing where it is this student needs helpful clarification.

Dana Hall provided us with valuable skills and a wealth of information not only about teaching mathematics, but also about being an effective educator in general.

We agree that besides the strategies and activities we learned in the classroom, some of the most valuable parts of our experience were the connections we were able to make with our fellow group members who hailed from schools as close by as the Upper East Side and as far away as Honolulu. Comparing notes and sharing classroom experiences with our colleagues helped us to process much of what we had learned in our first year of teaching. We returned to Nightingale this August equipped with notebooks of ideas and three-inch binders overflowing with activities. We welcome visits from anybody who would like to peruse these materials or pick our brains.

# Don't Just Do Something, Stand There!: Learning to Listen at the Stanley H. King Counseling Institute

Jena Epstein / History Faculty and Nancy Wheeler / English Faculty

You'll cry a lot.

You'll have to share embarrassing stories of your adolescence.

You'll identify and have to admit to the baggage you bring to any conversation.

You'll endure the most intense five days of professional development, ever.

You'll be so glad you did it.

These were the tips given to us by previous attendees of the Stanley H. King Counseling Institute as we shared our summer plans with colleagues and friends. This past summer we both attended the same institute at different times: Nancy in June at Brooks School in North Andover, Massachusetts, and Jena in August at the Fountain Valley School in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Our motivation was simple: learn how to effectively build the relationships we instinctively seek with our students.

The Stanley H. King Counseling Institute offers an intensive five-day seminar for teachers and administrators at independent schools. The goal of the institute "is not to train professional counselors, but to help teachers strengthen and deepen their relationships with students." While the goal is one that most independent school employees share, few teachers know *how* to do so effectively. Our instincts tell us to listen, but also to advise and to fix. Through five days of large group sessions, small group breakout work, role-play, and research and discussion with licensed counselors, attendees learn to resist the temptation to move directly to resolution, and instead to focus first on real listening, building real relationships with students.

At the beginning of the conference, the facilitators asked the participants to pair up with this seemingly simple

suggestion: one person should talk for eight minutes about a problem or situation with which he/she was currently struggling, and the other person should listen—*silently*. This was one of the most difficult and illuminating experiences of the entire conference. As educators we often want to jump in when a student is sharing a difficult situation ("I remember being fourteen and feeling that way," or "I, too, struggled with midterms"). Yet, often the best way to help is to remain silent. So, as we settled into our eight minutes of sharing, we realized that once we put aside our own anxiety about silence, being given the space to simply talk for eight minutes without interruption is liberating. And we quickly found ourselves trusting the otherwise complete stranger sitting across from us, letting us tell a story we didn't even intend to tell. This was the core message of the Stanley King Counseling Institute.

## **MAKING THE SHIFT FROM ADVISING TO COUNSELING**

As teachers, we naturally seek to build relationships with our students that enable the student to grow and learn. Yet, often we unwittingly shut down opportunities for a student to forge a real relationship with a caring adult by utilizing techniques that emphasize advising rather than counseling. The difference is important. As advisors, we are task-oriented. We seek to sympathize and reassure; to solve the problem; to share information; and, naturally, to advise. On first glance, those tasks are reasonable, and indeed important. However, the Stanley H. King institute requires you to reflect on this practice and to consider an alternative – to counsel and to *listen* rather than to advise.

As teacher-counselors the emphasis shifts from sympathy to empathy (providing support rather than reassurance), from short-term solutions to long-term growth; from sharing and telling to asking and listening; and, finally, to encouraging self-discovery rather than simply providing prescriptive advice.

To see the difference, consider the following scenario:

Allison goes to her advisor to talk about her unhappiness at school. She is new to Nightingale, and she admits to her advisor that she doesn't feel she can hack it here. Her parents keep telling her to give it a chance, that it will grow on her, and that she can make it work. But Allison feels she has to work twice as hard as everyone, and that she's missing something that everyone else seems to just get. She doesn't get Nightingale at all.

As an advisor, we might respond to Allison's dilemma by listening and by asking some questions. Then, quite quickly, we'd likely shift to *fixing*. We'd ask Allison if we could meet with her teachers to discuss her work. We'd suggest a tutor if she were struggling in a particular class. We'd ask if we could check in with her parents. We'd encourage her to join a club, and to reach out and find ways to connect with the community. We'd email her teachers and ask them to keep an eye on Allison and to keep us informed of any change in behavior. We might even pull aside another student to ask her to make a concerted effort to help welcome Allison to Nightingale. These tasks are reasonable and may help Allison. However, often our intention to sympathize and fix can close down the student's emotional healing and growth. Unintentionally, we might invalidate ("No, you don't hate it here... It's still early, give it time!"), outdo ("I understand. When I started at my new high school, I not only was new to the school, but also new to the city. That was rough."), or guilt ("I know this is tough, but you're also lucky. Your parents are supportive, your older sister is here, and you made the volleyball team as a freshman!"). By shifting the conversation away from empathy and exploration to a *solution*, we miss the opportunity to build a lasting, open-ended relationship with Allison.

#### **REAL LISTENING**

As the week continued at the institute, the facilitators gave us tools—real listening skills—to shift from advising to counseling. In small groups, we role-played as students and advisors using techniques such as summarizing, paraphrasing, identifying feelings, asking clarifying questions and joining.

Thus, returning to Allison's scenario, an alternate way for the advisor above to respond using listening techniques would be:

**1. Summarizing (suggests to student "I've got the main idea"):**

"It's been challenging to be new to Nightingale."

**2. Paraphrasing (suggests to student "I'm listening closely" or "Let me see if I understand"):**

"Your parents think you can succeed here, but you feel you have to work so hard to do so."

**3. Feeling and Source (suggests to student "Stay with your feelings. It's okay"):**

"It sounds like you're really worried about how you can fit in here."

**4. Clarifying Questions (helps the student further understand her feelings):**

"What do you feel you have to work so hard at?"

"Tell me more about what you don't get about Nightingale."

**5. Joining (conveys a sense of shared connection with the feelings of the student):**

"It's hard to be new to a community."

"It's really tough when you feel you have to work twice as hard as everyone else."

By shifting away from an immediate solution and focusing instead on real listening, we keep Allison talking and telling her story, which accomplishes two main goals: we focus on the *feelings* the student shares instead of the situation, and we limit our advisorly inclination to solve the student's problems for her. And in so doing, we learn more about her. She becomes more self-reflective; she takes ownership of the problem and how she might help resolve it; and, most importantly, we build a relationship in which her needs, both evident and hidden, are shared. This is not to say that aspects of advising are not appropriate. Often our instincts are correct. What the institute suggests, however, is that we "don't just do something [but] stand there [instead]."

*For more information about the Stanley H. King Counseling Institute, visit [www.shkingcounseling.org](http://www.shkingcounseling.org)*

# Studying Dance in Maine

Allison Trotta / Physical Education Faculty

This summer, I had the pleasure of attending the Bates Dance Festival. While at Bates, I became a part of an international community of choreographers, performers, and educators living and studying together. I was able to see a dance performance almost every night and I had access to rehearsal space so that I could create a new work. I was also able to participate in a few contact improvisation jams.

For three weeks, each morning began with a modern dance class. My own movement practice had not been this regimented since graduate school. It was remarkable to be able to commit three whole weeks to dance. I truly appreciated the intenseness of the experience. When I wasn't dancing, I was speaking with dancers and viewing informal showings or films about dance. Lunch was a nonstop exchange of creative ideas. I was able to allow dance to consume my days and thoughts.

My modern dance class was taught by Natalie Desch, a dancer in the Doug Varone Company. Natalie is interested in investigating movement as a means of effective communication. The class progressed from a simple, universal movement vocabulary to more voluminous and dynamic dance phrases. I also took ballet every day from Rachel List, the head of the Hofstra Dance Department. Her class focused on correct alignment and ease of movement. We began with exercises at the barre and moved on to more complicated combinations in the center.

While at Bates, I was especially interested in exploring the effect of the creative process on student choreographers. I attended two forums with faculty from high schools and colleges all over the country to discuss what makes a successful dance program. I had prepared a few questions for the group, such as: how do you help a student to overcome the challenge of arriving at something new? How can being a choreographer help them to improve

their interpersonal skills? And how can I help them develop their teaching skills?

My colleagues responded to my questions with numerous ideas. One thought was to have students keep journals as a way to help them create new ideas. In this journal, they would write stories of previous experiences and track what they were learning throughout the project. Students often have many ideas, but have difficulty developing them into complete choreographic thoughts. A student could use a theme from her journal such as oppression, media, or sexuality as an inspiration for developing movement phrases. Another suggestion was to have students work with each other to help vary the material choreographically. These are a few ways a teacher could help students who feel daunted by the prospect of a whole choreographic project. Instead of focusing on a final project or performance, we all agreed we would rather the student concentrate on communicating an idea or story through movement.

Much of what was discussed at these meetings had to do with the use of technology. There are computer software programs such as COMPOSE and Life Forms that are being used to teach choreography. Life Forms provides an interactive environment in which the user can reduce the complexity of the task by flexibly switching between different views of the composition. Realistic animation of the final result is also available. I have not been able to use Life Forms at Nightingale because it was developed for Macintosh computers, but it has proven to be a useful tool in dance composition. Many teachers were interested in finding ways of using online communication to challenge students' understandings of choreography. One project that was conceived involved students forming an online dance community, sharing their choreographic ideas via video and text, and ultimately developing an original dance work. I think this method of communication would encourage students to reflect on their choreographic



decisions. The need to explain their creative processes to their peers would help them to develop their own personal understanding of their choreography. In order to communicate clearly via text and video, the students would need to build and use a dance-based vocabulary. This project would also encourage discussion about different choreographic approaches.

It was incredibly interesting to be able to discuss these issues with this group. I learned a lot about the interrelationship of artistic and social processes that occur between student choreographers and dancers within differing dance-making approaches. I am very grateful for the experience and have high praise this festival.

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