



Contents:

INTRODUCTION

1. Founder's message

SINGAPORE & JAPAN

2. The Learning Environment

3. The Hundred Languages in Dialogue with the Natural Environment

Reggio Children's Conference
in South Africa

4. Developing 21st Century Skills in our Children

5. Respectful Environments: Demonstrating Our Valuing of Children

Environments Which Connect to Nature

6. Environment and Relationships

Environment as the Third Teacher

7. Children are Invited to Engage Through Carefully Considered Spaces and Materials

Environment where Collaborations and Partnerships are Valued and Supported

The Democratic Learning Environment

INDIA & INDONESIA

8. Interacting with the Natural Environment

The Natural Learning Environment

CHINA

9. Promoting Real Student Dialogue

School Culture

KOREA

10. Building a Professional Learning Community

Teaching as Inquiry -
Dongtan and Bundang

Founder's message

Children are the true connoisseurs. What's precious to them has no price – only value.

Bel Kaufman

A very profound and insightful thought by Bel Kaufman, a well known American teacher and author helps us understand how children perceive the world around them. A world they see through their eyes and their minds, through their observation and analysis of people, places, emotions and feelings. To respond to a child in a way that is meaningful is a significant aspect of providing quality programmes in schools.

Each one of us has an 'image of child', one that is developed out of our experiences, our cultural context and our prior understanding of children. It is this image that determines how we interact with children and also the relationships and environments we create for them in which to learn and develop. The environment is therefore a reflection and reinforcement of the relationship we have with children. This powerful thought was shared by Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia Project of Northern Italy, now renowned the world over for its revolutionary thought and practice.

At EtonHouse, we strongly believe in the environment of relationships. We carefully design learning environments based on our image of the child and the relationships we develop with children. Our learning environments are therefore a reflection of our philosophy and pedagogy-aesthetic, carefully planned and engaging environments that initiate curiosity and wonder. Our pedagogists dedicate a significant amount of time and effort to develop and design environments that respect and engage children. This edition of the newsletter is dedicated to the learning environment and its significance at EtonHouse.

During my recent travels this summer, I had the

opportunity to visit some pre-school settings in South Africa. It broke my heart to see the conditions in one of the pre-schools that had less privileged children. We are indeed fortunate to be able to offer such beautiful environments for our children at EtonHouse. However, we must not forget to share some of what we have with the less fortunate. At EtonHouse we continuously work towards initiatives that help children in settings that need assistance. As part of our outreach and service training programmes, our schools have engaged in rehabilitation efforts during the Chengdu and Japan earthquakes as well as worked with schools in Singapore that need help with their

environment, resources and teaching efforts. Apart from organizing charity drives within the school community, the children and teachers at EtonHouse have also personally visited these schools and countries to develop a hands-on understanding of community services.

I am also happy to share with you that my daughter, who was the inspiration behind EtonHouse, was

married this summer in Boston. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D from Yale. It is a touching moment for a parent to see their children happy and successful in life. It did bring back memories of her growing up years and how we as parents do everything we can to give our children the best environment to grow and flourish in. At EtonHouse, this is our utmost priority as well. To build a strong foundation for our learners that develops in them a strong sense of justice, empathy, care and belonging to their social context, happy confident and secure individuals ready to make significant contributions to the world and to the future.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the corporate newsletter.

Ng Gim Choo

*Group Managing Director,
EtonHouse International Education Group*



**An Education forum on
Creating Positive
Learning Environments
for Children**

**6th, 7th, 8th October 2011
Fort Canning Hotel,
Singapore**

**By Wendy Shepherd &
Janet Robertson**

*Institute of Early Childhood
Mia Mia Child and Family Study Centre
Macquarie University, Australia*

*For more details, email:
Masters@etonhouse.edu.sg*

The Learning Environment

By John Cooley, Executive Principal-EtonHouse Singapore

Education issues always make for a fascinating exchange of ideas. As we have all been to school (or at least those fortunate enough to be reading this article), we all harbour firmly held beliefs from our own very real experiences in the classroom about what good education and alternatively, not so good education, looks and feels like.

We know that the experience of a good education is uplifting, confidence building, curiosity-stimulating and life-affirming. And the flipside - disengaging, dispiriting and relentlessly unrewarding.

How then do we create a learning environment that promotes the former rather than the latter?

The learning environment can be considered in two parts - firstly the physical and secondly, the human environment.

In reality there have not been huge changes over the centuries in the model of classroom learning. Children continue to sit in separate classrooms, with individual teachers, dedicated to their learning and welfare. A teacher transported from a 19th century school would immediately recognize a modern classroom, albeit without familiarity with the electronic advancements. However, the room would still be filled with an educator, children, tables and chairs, a board (of some description), pens, pencils and books.

Modern classrooms admittedly will be more aesthetically pleasing and child-friendly with their purpose-built furniture, neutral colour schemes, air-conditioning/heating, artifacts relating to children's interests and the orderly display/documentation of children's work. It is determined to be to every learner's advantage to have such a welcoming, comfortable, aesthetic classroom



studio space for improved learning experiences. And this is absolutely true. What we must not be carried away with is the overstatement of this significance. The reason for this is that all of us, children and adults, are sufficiently different that what suits one learner may be very different to what suits another.

So as much as a modern studio learning environment with a pleasing aesthetic is a sound argument for every school to have, what makes the absolute difference is not the physical but the human environment.

What every child should ideally experience every day in his/her learning environment is the support from, and interaction with, teachers who have two immediate goals - to make each individual feel an absolute sense of belonging - and for that individual to be challenged by rich, stimulating learning experiences that extend one's thinking and perspectives.

Even in an ultra-technological learning environment, with the sophistication of the latest in cyber communication, the

human dimension is still the most critical element. This is because the guidance towards greater wisdom, maturity and compassion is still within the human domain, only to be fully realised by the mentoring, questioning, challenging, prodding and synthesizing of a reflective teacher.

As we know, all teachers are different and bring with them an enormous variety of skill sets, but intuitively humans recognize a person who cares, listens to what they are saying (frequently by their non-verbal as much as their verbal cues) and responds with compassion. Children, perhaps even more intuitively than adults, will identify the character within

their teacher's heart and know whether their own particular place in the classroom environment is special - or otherwise.

Great teachers can be both born and nurtured. That is good news! There are many, many wonderful teachers in all education settings, with EtonHouse privileged to have a lion's share of such educators.

What the human dimension does highlight is the expectations that are upon a teacher of excellence - and what dedication and commitment are necessary as a tenet

for the profession. There can be no short cuts.

This is why the teaching profession is such a challenging and beautifully rewarding profession. Its demands are enormous but the rewards are even greater.

Therefore, the learning environment's dominant influence continues to be the human educator - for which we should be eternally grateful.



The Hundred Languages in Dialogue with the Natural Environment

Ligonchio, Italy

2nd – 9th July 2011

by Heather Conroy, Executive Director of Pedagogy, EtonHouse Preschools

Several of the EtonHouse preschools reference their practice to the preschools and infant toddler centres of Reggio Emilia, Northern Italy.

The early childhood centres in Reggio Emilia are re-known world-wide for their high quality environments with great emphasis placed on relationships (light; transparency; openness) and aesthetics.

Charlotte Choy, Supervisor of EtonHouse 717 Mountbatten Preschool and myself were privileged to participate in the recent study group to Ligonchio, 68 kilometres outside of Reggio Emilia, where we spent a week with 85 participants from all over the world and a large team of Atelieristas (the artists who work in the preschools and infant toddler centres of Reggio Emilia) researching the natural environment of the National Park of the Tuscan-Emilian Appennin (the streams; the meadows and mountains; the flora and fauna) exploring the relationships that exist between science and the arts/aesthetics.



As researchers, we had previous experience in collecting field notes (photographs; sketches, examples of leaves and flowers to be pressed carefully to support our sketches; we charted the course of water as it rushed down the rocky stream and made hypotheses about energy and water flow). These undertakings fitted well with earlier experiences of natural 'science'.

We were then challenged to consider different ways of thinking in relation to the natural world – to consider the qualities of sound (and silence) to be heard in a rushing stream; to problem solve ways to both diversity and amplify 'sound'. We were invited to consider how to record our findings; our questions and curiosities as a memory both for ourselves as well as to share with others. We might have arrived as 'scientists' .. however the experience like so many others of the week to come, helped us to find ourselves as artists, poets, dancers, architects and philosophers.

The river environment: the riddle of sound

We listened to the roar of the river as we walked to the river edge .. We were invited to explore a range of listening devices, some familiar (audio equipment; a funnel connected to plastic



tubing) some new, inviting experimentation (long Perspex rods, which we placed into the water to discover they magnified the water sound to produce eerie electric sounds) ... how (many ways) could we find to represent these ideas and share our discoveries with others .. supported by the Atelieristas, we found words which became poetry; graphic representations which made reference to science, art and building design; movements which became dance ... Our river visit was at first glance a science experience about water flow and energy .. we were however supported to see so much more .. to think deeply about our personal experience with nature; impacting on both mind and body ... and the cognitive challenges it required of us in doing so.



Reggio Children's Conference in South Africa

Reggio Children's first Asia Pacific Conference was convened in partnership with AECES (Association for Early Childhood Educators - Singapore) and EtonHouse Education Centre. This conference was held in Singapore in March 2010. A similar conference was held in Argentina in October 2010, facilitated by Red Solare the South American Reggio Emilia network. The purpose of both conferences was to assist in the establishment of networks aimed at strengthening practice and pedagogy; at enhancing quality for children.



The third Reggio Children conference convened in Johannesburg in June 2011, with participation from Singapore and Red Solare (South America). Whilst the contexts differ greatly from each other, the key purpose in maintaining connections is to work towards quality outcomes for children and families.

Heather Conroy, Executive Director of Pedagogy at EtonHouse Singapore spoke at the conference. She spoke about how we in Singapore make reference to the principles of teaching and learning offered to us from colleagues in Reggio Emilia.

Respectful Environments: Demonstrating Our Valuing of Children

by Anne van Dam, EtonHouse International Pre-School, Orchard

“We hold in our hands the destiny of the child’s disposition of wonder and questioning.”

The educational practice at EtonHouse is inspired by the educational project in Reggio Emilia. The early childhood educational settings in Reggio Emilia ooze with notions of hope, freedom and the valuing of time. In Reggio Emilia, children, educators and parents alike are free to, and furthermore are encouraged to share ideas, ask questions, be different, take risks, be wrong, engage in debate, explore their surrounding world in-depth and revisit work. As a result, rich learning occurs.

The educators of Reggio Emilia have helped us understand in a deeper sense, that in order to truly experience the fullness of life and the richness of exploration, time is necessary. It is not the fact that we are disallowed time, or that we have very little time, but rather that in our hearts, in the business of our lives, we often do not give appropriate value to time.



The core responsibility as an educator is to give value, true value, to what children do. A way of thinking and being when working alongside children can as easily betray the rights of the child, as they can uphold them, and this is a very serious matter. We do after all, and as Carla Rinaldi suggests “hold

in our hands the destiny of the child’s disposition of wonder and questioning.”

We need to hold a profound respect for each and every child. We need to give visibility to children and their culture, by testifying to their competencies, giving value to their ideas and proposals, capturing and giving force to the child’s imagination and maintaining the desire, that wonderful desire, to ask ‘why?’ We might only achieve all of this, through the act of listening

and by allowing time.

The spirit of Reggio Emilia seems to permeate, through all who catch a glimpse, even the tiniest, of what it means for this culture, to know and to work alongside children. The beliefs, values, and the ways of thinking and being in this place somehow act as a type of vessel which ultimately brings forth change in the hearts of those elsewhere, who also have the pleasure of working alongside many wonderful children.

We need to listen in order to enrich the lives of the children we encounter, in order to offer hope, time and the delight that comes with freedom of expression. But to simply know, or understand or believe in something is not enough. We must act.



Environments Which Connect to Nature

EtonHouse @ 764

At EtonHouse 764 Mountbatten Road, we were invited to participate in the 2011 Green Wave exercise where we collaborated with NParks Singapore to plant a tree in our preschool garden on 20 May 2011. The Green Wave is an annual global campaign that seeks to educate children about biodiversity.



In conjunction with the event, our Kindergarten 2 children also participated in a nature trail adventure at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve while some of

our Kindergarten 1 students started their project about trees.

Apart from discussing the ecological importance of trees, some of the learning experiences included taking a closer look at our trees by investigating the different types and textures of bark and the different types of root systems.

To further enhance the children’s connectedness to nature, the Kindergarten 1 and Kindergarten 2 children and their parents went on a green

adventure to Katong Park. Here the children further reinforced their learning and understanding of the different types of trees, made comparisons to find out their similarities and differences, and last but not least, to spend some time together as a community.



Environment and Relationships

EtonHouse @ Vanda

The community of learners at EtonHouse Vanda chose to interpret 'environment' as a way of examining our values and beliefs about relationships. The existence of reciprocal dialogue, transparency, and active participation between individuals should be apparent in order to allow our differences to permeate into a collective decision. Transparency is seen as a deliberated choice of words, thought, and actions based on mutual respect and openness. According to Rinaldi (2001), motivation and competence of learning can be nurtured or muted depending on the awareness and the openness of the place where we grow.



Through ongoing reflection we realize that if we want to be producers of our own cultures, values, and rights, we need to be clear in defining our roles and responsibilities in order to create a thoughtful environment. Thoughtful in a sense of being sensitive in welcoming or exalting differences as well as being appreciative of a hundred possibilities of expressions.

In this way, the environment is emulated to value relationships between others and us. That means when we organize the environment, we are also thinking about a way of living, the quantity and quality of relationships and possibilities (Rinaldi cited in Gandini and Edwards, 2001).

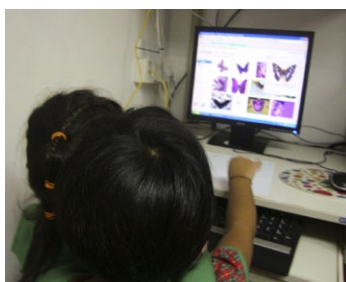
Environment as the Third Teacher

EtonHouse @ Outram



The children in our Nursery 2 class showed interest in the various insects that were to be found around our preschool. Based on their prior knowledge about exploring, they requested magnifying glasses to take a closer look at the insects. In response to their enthusiasm, we invited the children into the outdoor play area to further search for insects. This supported them in engaging their senses to explore, investigate and discover more about their world.

Naviya was invited to visually represent an ant, one of the insects discovered by the children. She initially drew an oval shape and started using various colours of her choice. Unsure of the next step, she asked "Miss Serena, how to



draw ant? I don't know how". Instead of answering her question directly, the teacher attempted to facilitate her thinking, by breaking her task into smaller, less complex parts; asking her open-ended questions. Naviya, continued with the support offered to draw her ants. "Ants

got two feelers and six legs!"-

This observation shows Naviya developing her ability to manage

her own learning (asking for support when necessary) and with guidance, she was able to plan/ design her own work process.



Children are Invited to Engage Through Carefully Considered Spaces and Materials

EtonHouse @ 718 Mountbatten Road



Our indoor environment considers relationships and the co-construction of knowledge with people and things. Vygotsky (1978) reminds us that “learning is a co-constructed process of social interactions with people and things” (cited in Aldwinckle and Nixon (2003) p. 23).

This theory influences our reflections as we plan and consider the indoor learning

environment at 718. We look for opportunities to establish meaningful provocations which support children's relationships, discovery and learning.

Children's curiosities in exploring colour were supported with the provocation of colour screens and transparent coloured disks on a mirror table.

Spaces are carefully designed to invite small groups to investigate ideas, thoughts and feelings with materials and one another.

Spaces are created with the intention to invite relationships considering what ‘makes sense to children’.

In the block corner of this classroom, transport featured with the blocks supported the children's interest in constructing roads and systems for vehicles to travel.



A large carpet invites small groups to explore and the careful placement of fabric invites the idea of roads and travel. Books about vehicles and travel were placed next to vehicles to build a relationship and further understandings between the children and the things there. The blocks invite ongoing development and construction of ideas where children can build and influence one another's thinking.

Opportunities to revisit our relationships with others and things in the environment is privileged through ongoing documentation at the centre.



Environments where Collaborations and Partnerships are Valued and Supported

EtonHouse @ Newton

During the course of a year there are many times that we celebrate the achievements of the students in our care. With the support of our parent body these times are greatly enriched. As a learning community all significant people in the lives of the children come together to offer support, guidance, encouragement and congratulations. There are



many ways in which this can happen, some of which are parents participating in: sporting events, assemblies, excursions, personal national day presentations, student led and 3-way conferences, graduations and classroom projects. The environments in which these engagements take place are many and varied and



this very simple fact is significant when we talk about learning partnerships and learning environments. Wherever we are and whatever we are doing provides us with real life learning experiences.

Significant research has been done on the positive impact that parental involvement has on the development of children. In the ERRE (Sylva et al

1999) report it was stated that programmes which directly promote activities for parents and children to engage in together are likely to be most beneficial for young children. Children look to their parents to reassure them and as

role models they are perceived by the child as competent and powerful, possessing skills and abilities that they value and that are similar to themselves.

For our part parents are encouraged to engage in their children's learning and through



strong communication between the school and the school community these partnerships are nurtured and strengthened.



Developing 21st Century Skills in our Children

by Ellen Fielder, Vice Principal, PYP Curriculum, EtonHouse International School, Broadrick

I would like to take the opportunity to spread the message contained in an insightful book entitled "The 7 Habits of Happy Kids by Sean Covey." Some of you will no doubt be familiar with "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" written by Stephen Covey, father of Sean. We all have in common our love for our children and wanting the very best for them – but how often have we heard or said, "My child is not as happy as he/she should be at school?" The IB PYP learner profile teaches children about the power of living according to principles and so does this book. The principles of responsibility, respect, teamwork and balance are timeless, universal and self-evident. They are needed in a world that is constantly changing at an ever-increasing pace.

The 7 Habits outlined in this book which enrich the Learner Profile are:

1. Be Proactive – You're in charge. Next time your child tells you they are bored, ask them what



THEY are going to do about it. Kids need to take responsibility for their own lives and this is a good starting point.

2. Begin with the end in mind – Have a plan. Planning how to save/spend our pocket money, when to do our homework and so on. Write it down to give it more meaning and substance.

3. Put first things first – Work First then Play. Don't put things off and leave them for the last minute. Remember the Scout/Guide Motto "Be Prepared."

4. Think Win-Win – Everyone can win. Thinking about others as well as yourself. How we all can benefit.

5. Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood – Listen Before You Talk. We need to teach children how to listen. To face the person they are listening to, to use positive body language, to ignore our hand phones, to sit still and to ask considered questions.

6. Synergize – Together is Better. Valuing

differences and then cooperating to create a better solution than a single person could do alone.

7. Sharpen the Saw – Balance Feels Best. We all need to renew the four parts of our being – our body, heart, mind and soul. Just as a car has four tyres so we too have four parts. We may need to go to bed earlier, or think on happy events, or eat some "Comfort" food, or read quietly or play with our pet dog.

One of the best ways to instill these positive habits is to model these behaviours and emulate people who do. Sound character building, the development of integrity and moral courage are ideals that will stand us in good stead for the rest of our lives.



The Democratic Learning Environment EtonHouse @ Japan

As early childhood educators we can plan learning experiences that respond to different learning styles of our children. These experiences can also be substantive and convey important concepts. We can also provide thoughtfully designed, aesthetically appointed, well-resourced classrooms and spaces that reflect society and are comfortable. However, children also learn informally through the messages that we send to them about our beliefs and values.



One of the many ways that we attempt to create an atmosphere at EtonHouse International Pre-School Tokyo that represents the knowledge, behaviours and values we are trying to convey to children is through democratic classrooms that have a spirit of community, where collaboration and shared learning takes

place. This would not be possible if the classroom teachers are making all the decisions. We began the process of creating these democratic classrooms by holding regular conferences and classroom meetings where children are given the responsibility of making classroom rules and decisions, where their questions, thoughts and views are shared and respected, and together problems and issues are solved. This strengthens positive self-concepts in children and enhances their confidence in their abilities and well as instills in them a sense of ownership and responsibility towards their own learning as they see themselves as competent and capable members and contributors to their school.

Interacting with the Natural Environment EtonHouse @ India

"Each child is unique and the protagonist of his or her own growth. Children desire to acquire knowledge, have much capacity for curiosity and amazement, and yearn to create relationships with others and communicate."

- Lorris Mallaguzzi

In India, the Vivero and Serra International Pre-schools offer fantastic opportunities for young children to explore, learn and grow by creating environments that are rich with provocations. Learning is not confined to the indoor classrooms; it spans all available resources, including the natural environment outdoors and the local community.

The teachers at Serra International Pre-school in Aundh, Pune followed the children's interests in other living beings in the world by bringing in an aquarium, a bird house and rabbits. The children were provided the opportunity to closely



interact with animals and birds in the pre-school. Children investigated the food habits, habitats, physical features and needs of their new found friends. During snack time, the children never failed to ask the teacher if the animals and birds had eaten their snack for the day. Once the children knew what the rabbits loved to eat they would often bring food from home as well, inculcating the habit of sharing and caring.

The interactions with animals and birds aroused a need to explore the plant life amongst children. They wanted to plant seeds of their choice. They worked together, talking with each other about the seeds they chose, counting the number of spades, the sizes and colours of the scoops, sharing and taking turns with the help of the teachers. They displayed care and affection for the newly planted seeds, waited in anticipation for the first



signs of growth and watched their plants grow.

These interactions enhanced the children's numeracy, literacy and scientific knowledge and skills and most importantly inculcated values of respect, care and concern for the plant and animal life on earth.

Vivero International and Serra International Pre-schools are now open in over 24 locations across India and aim to provide quality early childhood education through environments that inspire.

The Natural Learning Environment EtonHouse @ Jakarta

Children learn through meaningful experiences whether planned or incidental. A well planned child responsive environment supports children to explore, experiment, solve problems and actively engage their minds and bodies. Here at EtonHouse Jakarta, we are fortunate to have a lovely natural environment where young children learn in the midst of nature, in the immense beauty of the gardens. Young children are given ample opportunities with hands-on experiences



in and with nature by playing with water and sand, planting, watching the plants grow, taking care of the young plants, smelling, touching, seeing and feeling the flowers, plants, stones, seeds, bark of trees, etc; harvesting and tasting fruit, looking at and observing the animals and insects that live in the garden and being physically active, growing healthy and strong bodies. Children learn to look at shapes in the garden, observe rainfall and weather patterns, feel the wind, listen to the rustling of leaves, watch the clouds move and change

shapes, observe the shadows formed on the ground or the walls, etc., so much to do and see and to ask questions about the rich learning environment that the garden provides.



Promoting Real Student Dialogue

EtonHouse @ Suzhou

by Peter Wadsworth, PYP Coordinator EtonHouse International School, Suzhou

How do we as teachers facilitate discussion and encourage better thinking, discussion and quality of student responses in our classrooms?

Teachers regularly question students to elicit responses to check on their understandings, develop dialogue and enhance classroom discussions. However there can be a flip side to questioning. Questioning without thought and planning can lead to students viewing public questioning as a test placing great emotional strain on some students. This can inhibit and delimit their thinking and verbal responses. Given these points, how might teachers facilitate discussion and encourage thinking without asking lots of questions?

An alternative to asking a question can be to begin the discussion with a statement and then allow the students to respond in the affirmative or negative. In the ebb and flow of comments, teachers guide, students react and interact. Statements can be more ambiguous and less clearly defined



in terms of their direction and length. Students can then use their personal information and experiences they process, judging either to accept or reject the statement.

Instead of asking an open-ended question the teacher can make a broad enough statement for different points of view to be expressed. A teacher might say, "Humans migrate to and from all parts of the world. Some countries are flexible in accepting migrants whilst other countries have more restrictive policies".

The statement approach encourages students to ask their own questions, contribute interpretations and elaborations. It can also encourage students to ask both teachers and other pupils their own questions increasing the chances for extended discussions and greater student participation.



The promotion of real dialogue is also dependent on the students' perception of the teacher having a sincere interest in and appreciation of themselves and their ideas - a relationship built on trust and mutual respect.

If as educators we expect our students to be highly motivated learners, we as teachers must exhibit our eagerness to learn about their ideas. Only from this point can we then develop a culture of rich exchange of information and the flow of stimulating discussions within our classrooms.

School Culture

EtonHouse @ Yiwu

Cooperation is one of the core values that define EtonHouse International School at Yiwu. It is something we feel permeates our school culture and the school community. All members of the community reinforce this important concept every day in our balanced approach to education of the whole child at home and school.



The EtonHouse, Yiwu community works together to develop critical thinking - asking questions,

thinking creatively and understanding why things happen. We guide students to reflect on what and how they learn and help develop a positive attitude toward learning.

Cultivating a strong connection between the school and home is another top priority at EtonHouse. Administrators and teachers must maintain

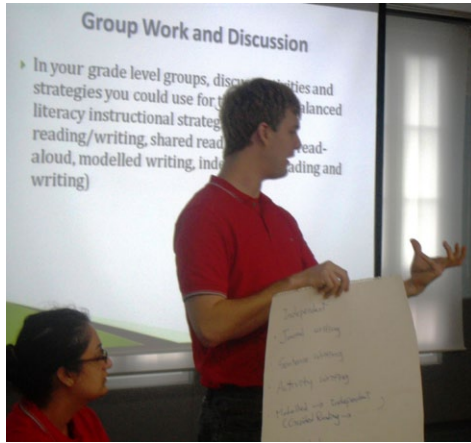
a close relationship with parents to ensure that expectations for each student are the same at

home and school. Parents at EtonHouse Yiwu participate in classes, afterschool clubs and special events throughout the year.

We are proud of our community of learners and leaders at EtonHouse Yiwu. We believe that our school culture not only moves students forward academically, but helps build character. When students leave EtonHouse, we want them to not merely engage in their new environment, but to be able to be successful as citizens in an increasingly global community.

Building a Professional Learning Community

EtonHouse @ Korea



In February 2011 EtonHouse Korea Pre-Schools, based in Bundang and Dongtan, welcomed a large influx of new teaching personnel.

The EtonHouse Korea leadership team agreed that they wanted to develop a positive organisational culture within and across the schools.

The goal: to become a professional learning community, rich in support systems for teaching staff.

The outcome: to enhance positive learning outcomes for



children through increased teachers' understanding of developmentally appropriate early years' pedagogy.

We introduced the Big Ideas that are the foundation of the EtonHouse preschool philosophy and then reflected on how we each view children, and developed image of child statements for each school. Each school chose to present these differently. These strong belief statements underpin our daily interactions with children.

We carefully considered how to ensure our goal would be met. Systemically we made decisions to enable the cross fertilisation of ideas between educators to facilitate healthy professional dialogue. To this end we planned for the following:

- Director, Principals and Lead Teachers to actively participate in year level planning meetings with all teachers in both schools;
- Principals and educational leaders to meet within and across schools; and



- Lead Teachers from each preschool to attend senior leadership meetings once a month.

All meetings focus on aspects of developmentally appropriate early years practice. A strong team ethos and collegial school environment is evolving which will support the ongoing professional growth of staff.

Classroom teachers and educational leaders in EtonHouse Korea continue to investigate ways to demonstrate their commitment to ongoing organizational improvement.



'All of life is education and everybody is a teacher and everybody is forever a pupil'

Abraham Maslow

Teaching as inquiry - Dongtan and Bundang

A collaborative approach has been taken by staff to develop shared understandings in teaching as inquiry. Teachers from both Dongtan and Bundang pre-schools recently shared their experiences of how pedagogy has impacted on teaching through presentations and workshops. Staff enjoyed participating in these and were motivated to discuss how theory



demonstrate some of the learner profile attributes and become risk takers as they facilitated workshops for the first time.

related to their daily teaching practice. As a teaching community we understand that it is important to make time to reflect and inquire into our own learning, this parallels our approach in classrooms. It was exciting to see teachers

'Teachers - like children and everyone else - feel the need to grow in their competences; they want to transform experiences into thoughts, thoughts into reflections, and reflections into new thoughts and new actions. They also feel a need to make predictions, to try things out, and to interpret them...

Teachers must learn to interpret ongoing processes rather than wait to evaluate results.'

Loris Malaguzzi

