Features
Christmas Around the World
Interview: Dr. Higgitt
Mistletoe

Theory of Knowledge
A Brief Introduction

School News
IB at the School Fete

Creativity, Action, Service
Introduction
Reflections: Coastal Cleanup
JAPAN

Could you believe that Japan doesn’t have an official holiday for Christmas? Schools and businesses are normally open on December 25th. In Japan, Christmas is known as more of a time to spread happiness rather than a religious celebration. The Japanese have actually twisted it into a Valentine’s Day! Christmas eve is often celebrated more than Christmas Day. Christmas eve is thought of as a romantic day, in which couples spend together and exchange presents. Japanese have a custom of giving gifts at the end of the year. Stores include business of putting the gift in a beautiful paper, making a card and delivering to the recipient.

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia would probably be a good place for the Grinch to evade Christmas celebration. In the most conservative Muslim country of the world the birth of baby Jesus is not celebrated, and sometimes persecute those who try to do it. The religious police periodically confiscates thematic holiday greeting cards from stores and Christmas ornaments from the airport. The denial of any other religions in the country comes to the point that even aircraft are prohibited from flying over Mecca. For the simple reason that the shadow of the liner has a cross shape and fell to Kabbah, which is seen to be defiling it.
Isn’t it great to have Christmas celebration in Hong Kong? We have a ‘Winterfest’ here every year. It’s a huge winter party that involves the shops, theme parks and other attractions in Hong Kong. In 2008 Winterfest is from 28th November to the 4th January and will include a giant Christmas tree in Statue Square, a sparkling castle at Disneyland Hong Kong and a forest of 200 Christmas trees and an ice skating extravaganza at Ocean Park! Come on, let’s have fun heartily this Christmas!

References
http://www.theholidayspot.com/christmas/worldxmas/
http://whychristmas.com/

NEPAL

While in neighbouring India, tourists are celebrating Christmas with glittering garlands and shops are decorating their windows with tiny Christmas trees, there’s nothing to remind people about Christmas here in Nepal. At 12 o’clock at night on Christmas the city will be as dark and quiet as nowhere else in the world, and local residents will sleep, not even knowing that in many countries at this very time, street lights are burning and there is a flowing crowd of thousands upon thousands of people in every city. The country’s inhabitants even travel to the neighbouring countries to take part in glamorous Christmas parties.

NORTH KOREA

In North Korea, policy is stronger than religion and everything that is happening in that country is all controlled by the police. People can only celebrate Christmas in secrecy because the only permissible holiday is the birthday of Kim Il Sung. The calendar here does not even mark the birth of Christ in Christmas, but the birth of Kim Il Sung (Kim-mas?).

References
http://www.theholidayspot.com/christmas/worldxmas/
http://whychristmas.com/
M: Interviewer DH: Dr. Higgitt

M: How long have you been involved in teaching or organising IB?
DH: I have been teaching in IB 9 years and my first job as a teacher is in England.

M: What makes IB different from other curriculums?
DH: Nothing special by subject base. The overall package is more suitable. I am a great believer because all the alumni I’ve spoken to said that IB students are the best prepared. To be an IB student, you better be prepared for everything.

M: What motivates you to come to HK to coordinate the IB program in DBS?
DH: I used to teach in Hong Kong before for 12 half year and I was happy to have the opportunity to organise the IB in DBS.

M: What is special about DBS IB?
DH: DBS very unique (M: in what way?) It is a very brave and very traditional school.

M: This is the first year of IB diploma in DBS, are you confident about it?
DH: I am very proud of what the teachers did in the Pre–IB last year.
M: Learning from last year’s experience, do you think there is any improvement in this year’s pre IB?
DH: I think what we need the most is a unit plans and continue evolving process.

M: Some materialistic factors, to what extent do you think studying IB will benefit our future careers generally?
DH: Not necessarily, just believe that you will be better-prepared for university studies.

M: Will you recommend students from grade 7 to 9 to take the IB program and why?
DH: IB is not for everybody. On individual basis, seriously ask yourself to consider whether the IB is better for them. And they should have some basic knowledge about the IB before making any decisions.

M: Are there any particular factor to be a better IB student?
DH: Time management; Bilingual (be good in 2 languages); Highly organised.

M: For the IB 1, we are facing the open exam in a year. Do you have any tips for us briefly?
DH: Meet deadlines in the Internal Assessments. Have good revision schedule. Never cram all the work in the night before deadline.

M: Ranking from 1 to 10, how would you rate the quality of DBS IB?
DH: Generally I think we are doing a pretty good job. But there is always room for improvement so I'll rank as 8.
With Christmas just round the corner, and a lot of you guys must be pushing yourself beyond your limits at the gym, and most likely this isn’t a coincidence... at all. A bigger chest means more surface area for your girlfriend, or even possibly your crush, to lay down her gorgeous head. With exams over and love floating in the air, you will undoubtedly grasp this opportunity to ask her out, and in vain attempts, try to locate a hanging of mistletoe. Unfortunately, studies have shown that breakups are actually more frequent during the romantic season of Christmas. Most of this is probably due to the nature of us men, as we can never be just friends. Obviously, girls do not appreciate your poorly concealed intentions, further provoked by the festive atmosphere, and choose to end the relationship before they find themselves at the your deserted home. You should learn from others’ painful mistakes, and dedicate a little more of your savings to your girlfriend’s Christmas present for insurance.

But if you are still single or an antisocial hermit, this is actually good news. It indicates you have a better opportunity to make history by acquainting yourself with a female of a homogenous species and age group. With the right tips from this love guide, you just might find yourself doing something out of your wildest dreams.

Let’s assume you attend our school’s Christmas ball without a partner, and you see this girl. She seems classy, fun and most importantly – really pretty. You find yourself stealing furtive glances towards her direction, constantly running your hand over your hair, and you can’t hear a word what your geeky friend is babbling on about. After a while, there’s no doubt about it. She is the girl of your

The mistletoe is a plant with evergreen leaves and waxy white berries. It is hung as a festive decoration for Christmas. But despite its poisonous nature, it has a beautiful tradition. When two people meet under the mistletoe, they are obliged to kiss.
dreams. You can’t just let her slip away, or get ‘courted’ by that snobby prick, unintentionally mirroring every one of your unwitting behaviours. The problem is, you have no idea how to approach her, she’s so far away, and she seems so absorbed… Or so you tell yourself. What should you do?

Girls have very good memory for anything bad, so it is very important you make a positive first impression on her. Also, girls will never take the initiative – unless they’re asking for an autograph. They think if you’re worth going out with, you’ve got to have the guts to ask them.

Even so, rookies in this crazy game will inevitably chicken out a few times. But everybody has a first time! If you’re afraid that she will turn you down, try to search for or provoke signs showing that she needs some company.

If she hasn’t noticed you yet, make yourself noticeable – but only to her. It usually works with striking out with that part of your body most girls melt for… Ahem, and no. It’s not what you have in mind right now, and it definitely isn’t anywhere down there.

If you give her a firm, strong gaze, at least she’ll be interested in you. Don’t leer, but make full eye contact, and perhaps give her a polite smile too. Remember, no matter how dazzling that stud on your ear is, or how ‘g’ your gold chain is, a smile is your best accessory. Try to smile with your eyes. Many people are troubled by the meaning of this, but it basically means raising your eyebrows and cheekbones gently while smiling. This gives you more confidence and charisma. Remember, charisma isn’t necessarily inborn. This tells her she’s under scrutiny, and she will probably react one way or another.

Now for a friendly reminder. Unless you’re Johnny Depp or Robert Pattinson, DO NOT look where you’re probably most interested in. Trust me, I know where it is, and I know that nice Hong Kong girls despise perverts – even if they look like Justin Bieber. Also, never put on that ‘rich, contemptuous and cool’ look. To her, you’re probably just a snobby prick, like the aforementioned one you want to beat up badly. Trust me; she shares your urge.

Preening signs are quite obvious to spot. If she plays with her hair, adjusts her clothing, or breathes in (to show how slim she is), this means she’s nervous and trying to look her best in front of you, so don’t miss the chance to chat her up. Walk straight up, ignore her cluster of giggling friends and your geeky friend tagging along, and introduce yourself.

Here’s a real test of guts. The more attractive a girl is, the more likely she is going to appreciate firm eye contact, as few boys would dare to look into those heavenly orbs. So if she is the girl you’re always dreaming about, pinch yourself first, to make sure you’re awake, then strike out. After all, what do you have to lose?

If you happen to succeed in starting a conversation with the girl, remember to… well, I can write another book on everything that follows, but it won’t work for everybody. There are millions of these books, and not one is guaranteed to work. Bear in mind that there are no rules in this crazy game. Just be yourself, and let fate decide. I hope this Christmas, you all will taste the delicacy of love under the mistletoe.

Once you’ve made eye-contact with her, observe her immediate reactions. If she’s a confident girl she’ll looks straight back, and perhaps smile, which gives you a green light to pass. If she holds your gaze for a split second, then turns away quickly, that just means she’s shy, but nevertheless, something’s clicked. Only when she fixes you with a venomous gaze, you should back down and maybe ask yourself a few questions. ‘Is she currently occupied by her friends or even male company?’, ‘Is she too arrogant?’ or even ‘Am I being an arrogant prick who needs to be beaten up?’

The IB Building, to be finished in 2011, will contain another chapel, another library and more laboratories.
Think of something you know for sure. How do you know it? Alright, now think of a 'what if' clause that will dispute your claim. Do you still know for sure? You might know that...

1+1=2.
You love school.
The earth orbits around the sun.
Lemons are sour.
You have been born on a certain date.
You will die someday.

But what if...

A heap of sand is piled onto another heap of sand? It is still a heap of sand, isn't it?
You are simply brainwashed in kindergarten at the age of 5?
You lived in the 15th century and were told that the earth is the center of the universe?
Lemon farmers inject lemon with vinegar just so they taste sour?
Your parents had lied about your age or the doctor had a typo on your birth certificate?
You are not a living organism but a computer program designated to run for 90 years?

You have just briefly experienced the theory of knowledge, a 100-hour course in the IB Diploma Program, in less than 5 minutes.

Before we get any deeper, the theory of knowledge (also known as epistemology) deals with issues and questions regarding knowledge.

What is knowledge?

Knowledge, as defined by the famous Greek philosopher Plato (428–347 BC), is a justified, true belief. To know something, we must believe it to be true. A belief (to believe something) may be true or false but knowledge (to know something) must be true. For instance, I claim that I know the sun orbits around the earth. However since the sun does not, I cannot say that I know it orbits around the earth. I have to believe and justify it as well for me to know that the sun orbits around the earth. Nonetheless I can still claim that I believe the earth orbits around the sun regardless of its falseness. This example also shows that knowledge is ever-evolving. What is true today may not be true 500 years before or in the future.

How do we acquire knowledge?

The theory of knowledge suggests 4 main ways of knowing: Sense perception, emotion, language and reason.

Sense perception– We know certain things because we can perceive them with our five senses, namely sight, auditory, smell, taste, touch. Empiricists believe that all knowledge is acquired through senses perception.

Emotion– We know certain things by feeling them with emotion. For example, I can know I like swimming because I feel happy when I swim. Through emotion, we also distinguish what is ethically right from what is unjust (e.g. I know that murder is wrong).

Language– We know certain things because someone in authority has told us or we find out through the form of language (e.g. textbooks). We also make knowledge claims using language.

Reason– We know certain things by applying reasoning and logic. Mathematics is an example of such application. We can know that since 1+1=2 and 2+2=4, 1+1+1+1=4. We can also know that if A is bigger than B and B is bigger than C then A is bigger than C.
Cogito ergo sum.

So is there really anything we can know for sure?

René Descartes (1596–1650), a French philosopher claimed that the only thing one can know for sure is one’s own existence. The Latin phrase 'cogito ergo sum' is directly translated as 'I think, therefore I am'. Descartes proposed that the doubt of one's own existence justifies that one exists. Therefore, one must always exist regardless of one's age, gender, even in being a living organism or a program. Good enough?

However, even the argument of 'cogito ergo sum' faces criticism. Beginning with a 'what if' clause, what if one is unconscious? Does that mean that just because one does not think, one does not exist? Another criticism is that Descartes can only justify the existence of thoughts i.e. thinking. Yet the connection between thinking and a thinker remains unjustified. Just because some thinking exists does not mean a thinker must exist. The third criticism is that the premise I think has already assumed that 'I' exists in order to propose 'I': think. The premise is merely developing the content of the concept. In other words, I assume that I exist so I can say that I think in order to justify that I exist.

Food for thought

A: B, can you lend me $100?
B: Sure.
A: Alright, but give me $50 first.
B: Why?
A: That way I'll owe you $50 and you'll owe me the other $50. So we'll be even.
B: …

You know it's not true but why?

Next issue on Fallacies.

Did you know

The IB Diploma Programme was started in Switzerland in 1968, as a pre-university programme for internationally mobile students.
The School Fete was held, as you probably know, on the 7th of November. One of the greatest annual events of the school year, the School Fete is organized to “raising funds to subsidize students in need and to make available extra amenities which are not provided by government grants”, as the official school statement says.

The School Fete was first held on 17th December, 1955, when Rev. George She was Headmaster. All proceeds from the fete went directly to the Welfare and Amenities Fund to help less well-off students in various ways, including providing low-cost lunches and to fund school amenities. Did you know that the first School Fete was held jointly by DBS and DGS?

This year both the Grade 10 Pre-IB and Grade 11 IB DP participated in the School Fete. The IB staff and students manned an IB Information Stall that provided information and pamphlets about the IB and Pre-IB programme, and also displayed textbooks from IB. The IB Information Stall also hosted the Indian Food Stall, which was administered by Naveen Parwani and Pranav Melwaney, with sponsorship from Old Boys.

The Pre-IB Games Stall was located on the field, and named “All-Rounded Finger Bowling”. The idea of the eponymous game is that the player uses his/her finger to ‘flick’ the marble from a playing area across the alley into tenpins that represented the ten principles for IB students, which are located in every classroom on the IB floor, but we’ll list out for you anyways.

- Inquirers
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Risk-takers
- Knowledgeable
- Reflective
- Well-balanced
- Open-minded
- Caring
- Principled
The game instilled within players with knowledge of what the IB Programme strives to mold students into. The Pre–IB Games Stall made $4800 by the end of the day with this game. Congratulations are in order for their making this contribution to those who will make use of the much-needed money.

In our second year at DBS, the IB Programme has gone far in establishing our niche in the school, and our promotions and participation in the Garden Fete symbolizes our future destiny in DBS. Thanks and congratulations to all who made the Garden Fete and the IB & Pre–IB participation in it such a success.

Citations:


Did you know:
The Pre-IB and IB students take their exams in the week of the 29th of November, and finish their exams that same week.
CAS – Creativity, Action and Service. They are the pillars that make the IB the distinctive program that is. These three aspects do not seek for academic improvement, but for personal betterment. Creativity represents originality and innovation your thoughts and actions. Action represents the realization of your thoughts and dreams. And finally, service represents the compassion you show through your actions. Throughout the IB experience, CAS becomes an incentive for students to participate in group efforts, participate in their communities, participate in society, and ultimately, develop themselves as a whole – as a person compassionate and true to the IB goals of peace and acceptance. It is encouraging to see DBS taking its first strides to fulfilling this core concept. The IB System has now arranged over 5 CAS activities, in addition to numerous collaborative efforts within the student body to seek out activities themselves. We see students taking initiative. We see students showing genuine concern as they knit sweaters for the orphaned, as they take their bicycles in an endeavor to raise funding for the deprived. Above all, we see our students steadily advancing towards the goals for which CAS was originally set.

CAS does not measure your brain capacity.

It measures your willingness to do your part in society, your willingness to take initiative and your willingness to be a balanced and compassionate person.

Our school had taken part in the Coastal Cleanup Campaign and our students arrived to Hoi Ha Wan. The objective is simple: picking up the rubbish. Under the agony of the heat, students bent over and observed the shore, running along the coastline, drill through the trees in search for the tiniest bit of garbage.
First thing to say in here:

Picking up rubbish is a tough job. Do not only look at the grins and smiles that appeared on our faces. Hardship was hidden beneath the smiles, and if you would like to get a closer look at our face, you will observe sweat from our foreheads. Definitely, dumping rubbish is easy, but picking them up is not what you think.

Hoi Ha Wan is the destination. Searching for rubbish and picking them up on the beach is not easy, but skimming upon streams and skip on the muddy field until we arrived the destination will take up even more energy. What's the point of jumping over rocks and climb up boulders to the beach? It is not until that I sit up on my bed and start reflecting upon the day that I found this is all for a better day, a better environment.

Looking all those junks, garbage, rubbish, and whatever you describe of these extraordinary items found on the beach may be hilarious. Ruins of a boat were found and that reminds me of the broken canoe being found stranded in the abyss created between the rocks. This is not the worst thing that we all have found. I walked towards the river with a bamboo found strayed on the beach. I poked the bamboo down towards the river bed for a several times until I strike something hard. I poked it hard, confirming that it is an “it”. Using the pole, I started to poke it hard by the side until it was removed from the river bed. Dust and black soil swirled under the running water as the circular material was finally removed from the river bed. Obviously the batteries were buried long inside the soil. We finally helped the plants beside the river to regain health and experience no more of polluted minerals.

It was absolutely stunning to find chemical waste in the natural environment. It is out of expectation to find these kinds of wastes will be a long way from the urban zone and arrive at the natural habitat of aquatic creatures. You may count a list of materials from plastic to metallic. Our findings will definitely satisfy your list.

Chemical wastes, plastics, shipwrecks, count them. Let us all put these things into the bin. If no one is willing to clean up these pieces of trash, our school will be the first one to do it, telling the world that we bear the responsibility of what we have done to the environment. We leave the place, carrying the junks, of course. Or else this activity will be so paradoxical. I’m sure that everyone who participated in this activity will gain another principle in their lives: Never litter.
thank you

for supporting the development of the IB newsletter

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