



*The International School of Yangon is a community that is committed to excellence. We inspire students with a challenging, international education, based on an American curriculum, in a nurturing learning environment that promotes responsibility and respect. We aim to develop socially engaged, self-motivated, creative, compassionate individuals who will be a force for positive change in their communities and the world.*

### **From the Desk of Director**

Over the past two decades, huge advances in technology have permitted researchers to learn more about the workings of the human brain than probably all of history to date. Last year, Newsweek magazine began to publish an annual guide describing the latest research in neurobiology and cognitive science. One stand out discovery that was validated in 2011 is that “IQ, long thought to be largely unchangeable after early childhood, can in fact be raised,” and raised significantly. The human body can create new brain neurons, and the dendrites which connect them, pretty much throughout one’s life. This “neuroplasticity”, the ability of the brain to physically change in response to what it is exposed to and what it is required to do is no longer theory. It is fact.

For example: Cathy Price and her research colleagues at the University College of London have shown that subjects engaged in naming, reading, and speaking over a period of time, not only raised their verbal IQ scores, but also demonstrated a corresponding increase in the density and volume of brain gray matter in the left motor cortex, the area of the brain which is activated by such activities.

Sharon Begley’s article in the January 9<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> double issue of Newsweek describes scientific advances which “offer proven ways to enhance your gray matter.” Here are few of the “31 ways to get smarter in 2012” that she highlights in the article.

- Sleep a lot. “Harvard research has shown that your brain continues to process memories even after you’ve gone to sleep, so you can recall them better later.”
- Exercise. Engage in activities which raise your heart rate.
- Mind what you eat. The probiotics in yogurt improves the brains ability to handle emotions, memory and anxiety. Tumeric, a spice common to Indian and Thai curries may reduce the risk of dementia. Stay hydrated. Dehydration causes the brain to work harder and may dampen it’s planning ability. Modest amounts of coffee have been shown to enhance short term memory and help alleviate depression. Dark chocolate has memory-improving flavonoids.
- Playing word game and puzzles can help reduce the risk of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.
- Studying a second language engages the prefrontal cortex the part of the brain which also affects decision making and emotions.
- Learning to play an instrument boosts IQ and increases activity in the parts of the brain controlling memory and coordination.
- Write by hand. Brain scans show that handwriting engages more sections of the brain than typing. It’s also easier to remember something once you’ve written it on paper.
- Allow your mind to wander. Turn off your smartphone, tv, music player.....This allows your brain to better engage in “big picture” thinking.
- Keep learning. Using iTunes? Yes. Several top-tier schools put their lectures online at iTunes U. TED (technology, entertainment, design) conference sessions are available for downloading.

These are just a few of what must be nearly unlimited possibilities for getting smarter. Notably absent, however, is the act of being a “couch potato”.

*Stephen E. Plisinski*, Director  
International School Yangon

# Counselor's Corner

Dear Parents,

Today we will continue our conversation on how to raise your children being prepared for the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of the most important life skills that they need to learn and develop is how to cooperate and work collaboratively with others. We teach these skills in school every day and it is very important to reinforce them at home.

Cooperation—working in harmony with others to achieve a goal—is vital not only to a happy, successful life but also to a more peaceful and harmonious world. Cooperation requires children to solve conflicts and exercise a certain amount of self-control and empathy—often letting go of something they want for the good of the group. Building this kind of team spirit begins in the family, where kids learn how good it feels when everyone works together. As the classic children's song puts it: "The more we get together, the happier we'll be." Following, are some things you can do at home with your children to help them develop cooperation skills.

## **Tune In to Your Child**

The seeds of cooperation are planted very early, when parents tune in and respond to their young child's needs. Try mirroring exercises: When you smile into your child's eyes or synchronize your movements to his/her, it creates a harmonious rhythm that says to the child, "Mom and Dad understand me." As kids get older, listening empathetically to them—even as you make demands or enforce rules—continues to foster the good feeling of reciprocity, the give-and-take that underlies cooperation.

## **Share and Share Alike**

Why is sharing so hard to do? Because initially children think their toys might disappear permanently if someone takes them away—and their drive to be separate makes "No" the word of choice. Still, it's important that kids begin the process of learning to share even though it may take a few years to sink in. Why? Sharing some of their possessions is an early precursor to sharing thoughts and ideas. It also strengthens the bond between friends and makes people feel closer and happier, a strong basis for cooperation.

## **Set a Few Good Rules**

Cooperation starts with learning to follow the rules that make a family—or any group—run more smoothly. But if parents don't set any guidelines, kids never get used to having limitations on their behavior. (On the other hand, too many rules make home a stern, forbidding place.) Having a few simple rules in the context of loving family relationships gives kids a strong foundation for working together with others. Rules can range from "no muddy shoes in the house" to "no name-calling." These convey the sense that children are part of something larger than themselves and that the world does not revolve around them.

## **Teach Problem-Solving Basics**

When kids get into a dispute, parents often want to jump in and solve the problem. But kids learn more by solving disagreements themselves than when you take over. Help them control their impulses by having them take a few breaths before they say or do anything. Encourage verbal problem-solving, pointing out, "How do you think that makes her(him) feel?" and "Can you think of some ways to work this out?" Show children how to use "I messages" to tell their friends what's bothering them. Instead of "You're stupid," they could say, "I feel mad when you take my toy." Use "I messages" yourself as a way to express your feelings without blaming or attacking.

## **Kindle Family Spirit**

The family is the first group to which children belong. It's important to help them see their family as a team that benefits as a whole when each person does his or her part. Give age-appropriate chores to foster a spirit of helpfulness at home. Since kids are more cooperative when they have some choice in the matter, you might offer choices for jobs they can do, geared to their various likes and dislikes. Fun traditions like making up a song with every family member's name or taking turns talking about their day at the dinner table also contribute to the growth of cooperation.

## **Encourage Group Projects**

When kids engage in projects with friends—building something, cooking, putting on a play or musical, or pretending together—they strengthen the social skills that underlie cooperation. Encourage children to collaborate on creating a pretend environment (such as a farm or a restaurant), and suggest they decide together what animals or food they want to make. The point is that they are learning to be flexible, to use language for mutual understanding, to work out decisions—the basic ingredients of cooperation. Throughout their school years, doing projects with classmates allows kids to see first-hand that when people come together to cooperate, great things can be achieved.

## **Talk About Peer Pressure**

There are times when cooperation *isn't* a virtue, such as when peer pressure pushes kids to go along with things they shouldn't. Teach them to be aware of their alternatives and to have a strong enough individual sense to know what's really good for the group and what's not. Talk about the difference between going along with the crowd in negative ways, like harassing another child or shoplifting—and true cooperation toward a positive goal.

## Join the Team

Playing team sports is a time-honored way of giving kids the opportunity to practice cooperation. Not only do they see how rules work for the common good, they learn to put off immediate gratification for long-term gain. A child may want to play a certain position, but if the coach needs him/her in another spot, they'll have to sacrifice their personal desire for the good of the team. If your child doesn't love sports, joining another kind of team--a band, a debating team, a drama club--can offer the same kind of experiences. All of us have individual strengths and weaknesses, and teamwork enables us to maximize our strengths and compensate for our weaknesses in order to make a contribution. These lessons serve children well in later life.

## Do Community Service

Lots of schools encourage students to participate in community service, but it's also great to volunteer as a family. Not only will you be helping your community—you'll be showing kids how banding together can have an effect on the larger world, not just on their own immediate lives. Check out the needs of your community and how much time you have available. You could commit to a regular weekly spot somewhere, or participate in a short-term project, like spring cleanup at a recreation area. Through volunteering, kids learn to work together, to take on different roles, and to set goals. But the most lasting benefit is the closeness you'll feel as a family joined in a cooperative effort.

Let's join our efforts in raising your children being prepared to meet life challenges by working together.

*Luba Borisova,*

Elementary School Counselor

## Acknowledgement

Thanks to your big contribution on International Day for helping the victims of the huge earthquake in Eastern Japan on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2011, the charity amount comes to \$380. JPA will donate it through Japanese Red Cross Society via the Embassy of Japan to the suffering people and send your cheering words to rehabilitate the survival area.  
\*\*\* Your support might help them.

Japanese Parents Association

## Thank You!

Dear Parents,

On behalf of ISY staff, I would like to say thank you to all our ISY parents and helpers for all of your help and enthusiasm on Field Day, Friday Jan 20. I really appreciated it and I hope you and your child/ren had a great time. If you have any suggestions on how the Field Day could be improved, please let me know: [tomatisy@gmail.com](mailto:tomatisy@gmail.com) or [tnguyen@isyedu.org](mailto:tnguyen@isyedu.org). We are looking forward to 2013 Field Day!

Many thanks

Tom Nguyen  
ISY PE Teacher

## Range and Target Club

Right now, ISY is exploring the possibility of supporting a club, in sponsorship with the PTA, on target practice and range shooting. This club would be sponsored by the Myanmar Sports Shooting Federation, which has an ISY parent as its president. The range, located a little east of the city, has been used in past ASEAN games competition and is a clean, secure and safe facility. Dr. Gerhard and an ISY student, who is an accomplished pistol shooter in her home country, recently visited the range and found that this activity would provide an excellent outlet for students who seek engaging and adventurous outdoors activities that provide concentration, hand and eye-coordination and the pursuit of a fun lifelong activity, similar to our other clubs and sports. The club has all high-quality equipment to use and the pellets used are small and not dangerous. Please contact the HS office if you might be able to help or volunteer and talk to your Secondary School student if they might want to be involved.



# SCHOLASTIC

## Scholastic Book Sale

Tues. January 31 & Wed. February 1, 2012  
in the ISY Art Gallery

*Hosted by*



## Myanmar Book Centre

New paperbacks from Scholastic will be on sale to students.  
Average book prices range from 5,000–15,000 kyat.



**Elementary students will visit the book sale with their classroom teacher. Parents are welcome to stop by at any time.**

*MBC will donate 15% of all profits to the ISY Author Visit to be held at the end of February. Get ready for a wild time with author/illustrator Timothy Basil Ering!*

For more information contact ISY Librarian:  
Michelle Rinker [mrinker@isyedu.org](mailto:mrinker@isyedu.org)

### **SLAM POETRY!**

That was the topic covered in a film previewed on the ISY campus on Thursday. John Siskel, well known as a family member of the American film-critic duo Siskel & Ebert, made a personal visit to ISY to present the film and talk to our students and community members about its production. 'Louder than a Bomb' was an engaging look at four Chicago High Schools and their poetry competitions that use rhythmic and powerful means to deliver messages about student lives. We were very fortunate to see such talent and we thank Mr. Siskel for including us in this prestigious run. Thanks also to Adam Fraser who put the time and effort in to the show in the Black Box theater and to Parent Ms. Susanne Todd, who was the person who was able to bring Mr. Siskel and this great film to ISY. It was well received.

# Summer School 2012 International School Yangon June 4 to June 29, 2012

This year our Summer School 2012 program begins Monday, June 4. It is a four-week program for students in Pre-K through High School. Academic courses that meet the special interests and needs of our students are offered. The program encompasses enrichment and remedial lessons that reinforce and review skills in writing, math, and reading. Intensive ESL is provided as well. Specials integrated into the program include music and dance, computer, physical education, art and crafts, and cooking.

## General Information

**Summer School Dates:** Monday, June 4 to Friday, June 29.

**School Hours:** 8:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

**Recess:** A twenty minute recess is given, and students should bring a snack. The school cafeteria will remain open, selling light snacks and drinks.

**Attendance and Conduct:** All school rules and conduct codes for the regular school are in effect during the summer school hours. Punctuality and regular attendance is encouraged.

## Registration and Payments:

- Tuition Fees \$ 500
- Students must register at their current grade level (2011-2012).
- Completed registration form/s should be returned to the school office or to the classroom teacher by May 18th.
- Tuition fees will not be refunded once student begins classes.
- Classes will be filled on a first come first served basis.
- Students are encouraged to make payment at the time of registration.
- Newly admitted students and those seeking admission are recommended for the summer classes.

Please contact the school office or the summer school coordinator, for any additional information, during school hours.

Phone: 951- 512795 E-mail: [roza@isyedu.org](mailto:roza@isyedu.org)

**Please fill in the form and return to office or Homeroom teacher.**

## Summer School Registration Form 2012

Child's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Current School Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

### EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

Persons authorized to pick up child (other than parent) OR to contact in case of emergency: These numbers should not be the same as those listed above.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have any allergies or special needs that we should know about?

\_\_\_\_\_



# International School Yangan

## SCHOOL CALENDAR (2012-2013)

### Schedule of Events

- August 3 - First all Faculty Orientation Day
- August 8 - School Opens
- October 8-12 - October Break
- October 30 - Full Moon Day of Thidingyut (No School)
- November 17 - International Day
- November 22-23 - Thanksgiving Holiday
- December 17-January 4 - Christmas Break
- February 18 - President's Day (No School)
- March 28-29 - EARCOS (No School)
- April 12-19 - Thingyan Holiday
- May 31 - Last Day of School
- June 3-28 - Summer School

**July**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**August**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**September**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

**October**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**November**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

**December**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**January**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**February**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

**March**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**April**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

**May**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**June**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

- ◉ = Vacation or no school for designated students
- = Early Dismissal - Teacher Inservice
- [ ] = Parent/Teacher Conferences-Early Dismissal
- = Teacher Conference or Teacher Workday
- △ = Term BEGIN and END
- ◇ = Special Occasions