

‘East Meets West’ Research Project – Update Summary

William Levick School is involved in an international comparative primary education project ‘**East Meets West**’. This initiative is largely funded by the Xiehe Education Group, China’s largest private schools’ organisation. The Project benefits both the teachers and pupils of William Levick.

Benefits to the Teachers:

Two of the school’s teachers are part of a Project Team of fifteen teachers (eight Chinese and seven English) led by myself and Cathy Wang, a Chinese Headteacher.

The Team have observed almost 42 hours of teaching across both countries in seven schools (three English and four Chinese). The main conclusions from their classroom observations are as follows:

CHINESE TEACHERS CAN LEARN FROM ENGLISH TEACHERS WITH REGARD TO:

- The development of ‘co-operation’ as a value.
- Cross curriculum development of the school’s ‘core’ values.
- At times, establishing a more informal classroom culture to allow for e.g. problem solving, critical thinking, and value clarification. This particularly within group and paired work.
- Developing more ‘interactive’ learning environments which both challenge and support pupils.
- Paying more attention to the specific learning needs of boys and girls.

UK TEACHERS CAN LEARN FROM CHINESE TEACHERS WITH REGARD TO:

- The development of ‘competition’ as a value.
- Designing whole class teaching activities with ‘Chinese’ characteristics, as summarised in this Report.
- Structuring lessons to ensure learning targets are fully understood by pupils.
- At times, developing a more ‘formal’ classroom culture.
- Reviewing whether or not the pace of learning could be enhanced, as found in the Chinese classroom.

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY, TEACHERS IN BOTH COUNTRIES CAN TACKLE THE PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES OF:

- Ensuring that the individual educational needs of their pupils are met effectively, for example with more emphasis on gender issues in the classroom.
- Developing more structured activities, in pre-determined pairs and groups, which provide the pupils with a clearly established framework for learning.
- Comparing classroom 'cultures', for example as individual teachers, as subject/curriculum theme specialists and as colleagues from different ethnic backgrounds.

The above changes are now influencing the teaching and learning at William Levick.

Benefits to the Pupils:

The above changes in teaching and learning will help support individual pupil progress and attainment. Also the Year 5 Class at William Levick is being linked via the internet, with a class in a Project school in Shanghai.

Already, research has been undertaken by the University of Oxford with regard to the pupils' perceptions, knowledge and understanding of China prior to the linking. A post-linking survey will be undertaken.

This linking will play an important role in developing the pupils as global learners. It will also help them to learn much about China, a country which is likely to play an important part in their future lives.

The Project wishes to acknowledge the considerable support it has received from William Levick School and in particular its Headteacher, Matthew Winson, and teachers Sarah Astley and Jo Marshall.

An Action Research Report on the Project, produced collaboratively by the Institute of Education, University of London and the Chinese Government's Shanghai Research Institute is available from the school.

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