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THE BERKELEY TIMES

BERKELEY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL | 6 MARCH 2013 | VOLUME 1

Western Association of School and Colleges

It is Thursday afternoon and groups of teachers are huddled in rooms across the school analyzing Berkeley. Kindergarten, elementary, and middle school teachers are each looking at their individual divisions to see what we are doing well and what we need to do to improve. This is what accreditation work is all about, analyzing all aspects of the school and making a plan for improvement.

Berkeley International School is currently a candidate school for Western Association of School and Colleges (WASC) accreditation. This means that Berkeley has passed the first steps to become a fully accredited school. I would like to take time to clarify what WASC accreditation means. The following information has been adapted from the WASC website (www.acswasc.org) and is a brief description of accreditation and why it is important.

The process of WASC accreditation is about fostering excellence. Accreditation helps schools meaningfully create the highest quality learning for all students. WASC's consistent purpose is to support schools in creating a clear vision of what they desire their students to know and be able to.

The WASC accreditation process enables schools to improve student learning and school performance through analysis of their strengths and limitations. School undergoing the process of accreditation must meet rigorous, research-based standards that reflect the essential elements of a quality and effective school and must also be able to demonstrate engagement in as well as capacity to provide continuous school improvement.

Berkeley is the middle of this process and is on schedule to receive full accreditation. Below is the timeline for earning accreditation.

TURN TO PAGE 2 FOR THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS TIMELINE.

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Berkeley was recently featured in a major nation-wide Thai drama series - the school looked fantastic. Follow this link to see some of the episodes for yourself.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcqJTaVJ0-k

Western Association of School and Colleges

Continued

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The Accreditation Process Timeline

1. Complete initial self-study to become a Candidate School. COMPLETED
2. Analyze school in full self-study and write report- IN PROCESS
3. Complete self-study report with evidence- August 2013
4. Create and complete School Wide Action Plan to guide improvement- Sept 2013
5. Submit self-study and Action Plan to WASC- Dec 2013
6. WASC Visitation team to check Berkeley for final accreditation- March-April 2014
7. Receive accreditation report from WASC- May 2014

Overall, accreditation it is critical for all schools, it-

- Certifies that the school is a trustworthy institution of learning
- Validates the integrity of the program and transcripts
- Fosters improvement to support student learning
- Manages change through regular assessment, planning, implementing, monitoring and reassessment
- Assists schools in improvement as a result of the perpetual accreditation cycle-
  - School self-assessment of the current educational program for students
  - Insight and perspective from the visiting committee
  - Regular school staff assessment of progress through the intervening years between full self-studies.

I have full confidence that Berkeley International School will be fully accredited after the May 2014 visit. If you have any questions regarding accreditation, please do not hesitate to contact me at migohde@berkeley.ac.th.

HELLO FROM THE LIBRARY

Hello from the library at Berkeley! These are exciting times in the world of reading at Berkeley. We're getting ready for our Focus on Reading week from March 4-8. This coincides with Dr. Seuss's birthday which is on March 2. Students have reading logs and keep track of books they are reading. They will be winning prizes to encourage them to read as much as possible. All teachers will be conducting exciting activities to focus on reading. Scholastic Publishers will be visiting our school on March 14 and 15 and will be selling many interesting books at a Book Fair. Friday, March 8 will be "Dress Up As Your Favorite Character Day." All students will come to school dressed up as their favorite literary characters.

I recently visited Kinokuniya Bookstore and took advantage of a 20% discount sale to purchase a number of new titles amounting to 18,000 baht. I bought Dr. Seuss titles such as Sneetches and Other Stories and Yertle the Turtle, Eric Carle titles such as The Honeybee and the Robber and Polar Bear Polar Bear What Do You Hear, The Berenstain Bears, Captain Underpants, Fancy Nancy, The Wind in the Willows, The Call of the Wild, Dork Diaries, The Chronicles of Narnia, Disney Princess Story Collection, and the poetry of Robert Frost.

Please encourage your children to read!

Best,

Mike Brantley
Librarian

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EARCOS Weekend Workshop

by Sharin Tebo and Kim Cofino

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On February 16-17, 2013 Berkeley International School hosted its first EARCOS Weekend Workshop for its teachers and teachers from EARCOS member schools throughout South-East Asia.

Since opening its doors for learning in August 2010, Berkeley has been an EARCOS member school for just over one year. The workshop coordinator, Sharin Tebo, is Berkeley's very own IT Director and Instructor. Sharin invited Ms. Kim Cofino, a recommended and experienced EARCOS workshop presenter, consultant and Technology Integration Coach at Yokohama International School in Japan, to spread her wealth of knowledge to participants about 21st Century Learning and UbD (Understanding by Design).

Teachers returned to the classroom, as learners, in an effort to achieve workshop goals. This includes the ability to engage in conversations, exchange ideas, collaborate with those inside and outside their discipline area from a myriad of international schools, network, and walk away with an authentic project each could implement the following week in their classrooms.

Through a sequence of seven workshop sessions, participants analyzed relevant literature, using the power of Google Docs to connect big ideas about main topics related to 21st Century Learning. Then, some brave, ambitious teachers volunteered to share a technology integration tool or idea they have used in their classrooms with students in a format called 'Speedgeeking'. Participants could learn in a three-minute time frame a rough idea of what tool was used, and how it worked. Time was allocated for teachers to ask questions to the lead geeks before rotating to the next Speedgeek table.

In the afternoon, the SAMR model (an acronym which stands for Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition) was presented in a way for participants to rethink the way they approach a learning project that may be enhanced when a technology tool is introduced as a substitute, leading to new end tasks and products not possible in the earlier project model.

The second day of the Weekend Workshop gave way to a brief interpretation of Understanding by Design, with a framework for a unit plan that teachers could begin using in classrooms. Some teachers used this workshop session to begin planning for their end project to be presented in the final session of the day. Ms. Cofino challenged each participant to create an authentic, practical project teachers could use on Monday or the following week in class. Depending on the participant, there was a choice of four project menu options, ranging from most basic to exemplary. The highlight of the workshop came when the room got quiet, and teachers focused intently, either alone or in a small disciplinary group to prepare their project. The final result was presented in small groups at the end of the day.

Many participants walked away with a sense of accomplishment, feeling confident and inspired, with a new box of ideas and tools to enhance the learning environment in their classrooms. Many felt challenged, and others felt refreshed, being given time to explore new ideas, and revisit others they had been introduced to before. Participant teachers maintained an upbeat and positive attitude, which fueled the learning and collaborative environment for fluid expression, risk-taking and application of their new ideas. The hope is for all teachers to have walked away with at least one valid application enhanced by technology, resulting in an increase of student motivation and engagement.

Sharin Tebo is the Weekend Workshop coordinator, the IT Director and Instructor PK-12 at Berkeley International School in Bangkok, Thailand. For more information or comments about the workshop, please send an e-mail to sltebo@berkeley.ac.th or visit Kim Cofino's Workshop Wiki at http://21stcentury-classroom.wikispaces.com/.

ENDANGERED SNAKES

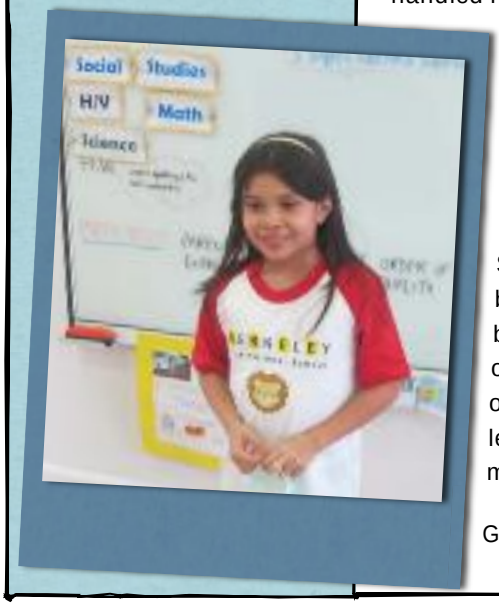
By Jazzy

Most species of snakes that have ever lived are now extinct. Snakes live in many places including wild forests holes. You may even find one in your garden. Many species are endangered such as the San Francisco Garter Snake, the Eastern Indigo Snake, the King Cobra, and the Dumeril's Boa snake.

Snakes are killed to make many unnecessary things like high heeled shoes, party dresses, purses, fancy handbags, and even wallpaper! People eat snakes. Sometimes they use their fangs for tusks on model elephants. Sometimes soldiers use their poison in weapons. Snakes even die in the making of movies!

Please try and help snakes by rejecting unnecessary items made from dead snakes. If you find one, don't kill it. Let it go and have its feedom. Alternatively, give it shelter or take it to the animal home community.

When people think of Endangered Species, they don't think of snakes, but many snakes are seriously endangered. Please help these fascinating animals by saying no to products made from snake, and by treating them kindly when you come across them.



Berkeley Student Council Visits Phayathai Babies' Home

BY STACY SHERMAN

During the 2012 Holiday season, Berkeley students and parents got into the spirit by donating essential items to the Phayathai Babies' Home orphanage. During this charity drive, led by the Berkeley student Council, students donated thousands of Baht in baby formula, diapers, and many other things. A popcorn party was promised to the class which raised the most donations, but because response was so huge, teachers decided to bring popcorn to everyone as a thank you for their generosity.

On Friday, February 1st, members of the Student Council paid a visit to the Phayathai Babies' Home. It was a brand new experience for many of our students, but they handled it with great poise. After unloading a full van + a full taxi of donations, our students spent nearly two hours playing with and feeding the orphans, who were around ages 2-3. The students sang to them, held them, talked to them, and even let them play with their Iphones! It was a moving afternoon, and our Berkeley students were truly responsible citizens on that day. The children at the orphanage grew very fond of our students, even crying when they had to leave!

Several of the members of our student council stated that it was one of the best days they have had at Berkeley, and that they would really love to come back and visit the orphans in the future. Service learning is such a vital part of a well-rounded education, and this was a true, hands-on experience that opened our students' eyes to the lives of those who are less privileged. They learned a lot that day, and in doing so, were able to put a smile on the face of many.

Great job, Berkeley team!

OUR MONTH IN HISTORY

By Tom Lovett

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It has been a busy few weeks in social studies with students traveling far and wide, through time and space.

Grade Five has been tracing key moments in the First American Civil war, more widely known as the War of Independence, whilst tackling the difficult subject of slavery. The class has produced some great work of the highest standards. Special mention must go to Max and Sean who not only created an outstanding presentation, but demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the complex issues.

Grade Six has been traveling through Ancient Greece and understanding the importance of their culture on our world today. After putting on their thinking hats, they pondered questions from the great philosophers, such as - 'Are you a fair and just person?', 'How do you know who your friends are?' and 'What happens to numbers when you are not using them?'. Congratulations for an Olympic effort from the whole class!

As China approaches global economic supremacy, Grade Seven has been exploring its past and linking it to the issues of today - The complexity of living under a communist one-party state within a free-wheeling capitalist economy and possible futures. There have been some very interesting presentations and scholarly insights.

Finally, Grade Eight has been on a journey to the heart of Russia, learning about their people and their history. Bigger than North America and Western Europe combined, the class explored the country from Murmansk in the far north west to Vladivostok. They were able to link the history of Russia to the politics of today and produced some excellent work on President Putin and the oligarchs.

Well done to the Berkeley students who have all improved and shown great focus in class. The questions asked and work produced demonstrates that we have some experts in the making.

Keep up the great work!

GRADE 3 NEWS

Grade three has been having a great semester, so far. We've added a new student (Hi Hector!), participated in some fun activities, and – of course – studied. We have recently learned about the solar system, written folk tales, studied pioneers, and started on everyone's favorite: fractions.

In addition, we have lately become aware that we have one of the most famous classrooms in Thailand. Yes, Channel 3 decided to use our very own classroom as one of the prime locations in their 'lakorn' TV drama miniseries, which aired on the 15th, 16th, and 17th February. We in grade three tend to think that they chose our room because we have the best classroom in the country, rather than because it "had the best light for filming", or whatever they said. If you're interested, it (and some other, less important parts of Berkeley) will be aired on Friday through Sunday at 8:30. Even if your child isn't famous, at least their classroom is!

Finally, we are all looking forward to the rest of the year. We have another field trip coming up before too long, as well as Songkran, International Day, Book Week, and parent-teacher conferences. We'll also find a bit more time for studying too, if we get the chance – we promise!

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- Personality Development
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- DJ (Mixing, Scratching)
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For more information, please contact:

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Field Trip: Siam Discovery Museum

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On Tuesday, February 19th, Grade 7 and Grade 8 were lucky enough to accompany the Grade 1s on an excursion to the Siam Discovery Museum in Bangkok. Students from all grades learned about the history and development of "Thai-ness" through exploration and discovery. For the Middle School students, this was a big change from their usual mode of research – using Google to find information on the Internet. The Middle School students also learned some valuable lessons about responsibility.

Each Grade 7 and 8 student was paired with a younger buddy who they explored the museum with. Responsible Global Citizens were seen all around the museum: older buddies holding younger buddies hands, helping them read exhibits and leading their buddies in the right direction. From the beginning of the excursion, the Middle School students showed genuine care, respect and responsibility. The Grade 1s seemed excited and enthusiastic about all the new information they were learning, as well as their new friendships.

The Siam Discovery Museum explores Thailand's development from the time of the "Golden Land" to recent times. Natasha from Grade 8 shared, "The most interesting part of the museum was learning about wars and the first copper. It was fun to take care of the students, but we didn't have as much time to do our own research." Always the keen student, Natasha had her hands full with her new curious friend Tommy.

Fasai from Grade 7 recounted, "I think the museum was interesting because we learned how Thailand was before and how we had to live. We learned about the houses in the past and how they had to make rice and to farm. There was also information about trading. The kids were really nice and they taught us to be nice and patient." Fasai was seen helping her sweet new friend, Valentina read and interact with the exhibits.

Ms. Mel and I are very proud of all of our students and hope to see more evidence of the budding relationships throughout the school. This field trip brought the Independent Lifelong Learners and Responsible Global Citizens that make Berkeley the tight-knit community that it is.

Berkeley Rocks!

Berkeley collectively decided that we wanted to add volume to our after school program. As a musician, I have been amazed at the preponderance of musically-inclined students floating around the Berkeley campus. With a thriving strings music program already in place, I believed it necessary to take musicality in another direction to grow the considerable student musical talents: the school of rock.

Myself, along with the formidable arts teacher Mr. Joseph Pegram, embarked on a mission to gather Berkeley's stars under a wave of musical ambition and loud decibels. Although a core group of students came together for the rock band, others have been joining, swelling the after school activity to close to 15 students. Although not every student has an instrument, we find complementary projects for the students to work on; students have have designing band logos, conducting recording projects, and exploring the world of audio engineering in addition to performance. We have also given students a chance to use state-of-the-art audio technologies, including midi controllers, audio interfaces, and DAWs like Garageband and PreSonus One.

We hope to continue to grow the program by adding instruments and maybe even introducing band try-outs next year for the band to reach its greatest potential. We are looking forward to Berkeley's first monumental rock concert, Live at the Crown!

Pre-K Happy Hippos Class

by Miss Becky

A big hello from our Pre-K Happy Hippos class. We have all been really busy since we returned from our Christmas break – learning, progressing and having lots and lots of fun as we go along. It's amazing to see how much the children have grown since they first started. They now have heaps of confidence, good relationships with their friends and their use of English is coming along nicely. I love hearing them communicate in English to each other and I am so proud with what they have been able to achieve.

So. What have we been up to? The children always enjoy learning about our new themes and so far this semester we have covered some really enjoyable, interesting themes. Our "Walking through the Jungle" theme was a lot of fun. The children loved looking at photographs of all the animals you can see in the jungle, learning their names and what they like to do. We even made our own "mini" jungle in our class with all the crafts the children had fun making. Our other themes also included learning about Chinese New Year and with it being the Year of the Snake the children got to make and decorate their own snakes. It's amazing what you can do with a cardboard tube!! Talking of Chinese New Year, we all got to experience our own celebrations. The children really enjoyed joining in with the Kindergarten dragon parade and although a little scary at first they soon enjoyed the performance and music from our Chinese acrobats. We also celebrated Valentine's Day and the children got to build on their creative development and fine gross motor skills by lacing hearts and making cards to give to their parents.

Along with all our class adventures we have also enjoyed taking part in some school events. The big one being Sport's Day!! All of Kindergarten had a really fun and exciting day and the children did really well – taking part in all the races and really getting into the team spirit. A BIG thank you to all the parents, who also made it an enjoyable day for all.

Our learning and having fun never stops. We have a lot to look forward to in the coming month. We will be taking part in a variety of school activities to celebrate Book Week and we also have International Day to look forward.

What country will the Happy Hippos be learning about? You will just have to wait and see!

Pan Asia Maths Challenge

Berkeley's top middle school math students had a great time again this year at the "Math Challenge 2013" hosted by Pan Asia International School.

Three of the sharpest mathematical minds were selected from grades 5-8 to represent Berkeley.

The competition consisted of two rounds between twelve different schools. Round one was an elimination round that eliminated all but the top 4 teams in each grade level. The second round was held on stage as a real time competition using Acti-Vote wireless devices to answer their questions. All of our students had a great time in round one but unfortunately only one of our four teams was able to advance.

Our 8th grade team consisted of Kong, Grich, and Namwan. They easily handled round one and quickly found themselves the center of attention on stage. Kong and Grich were part of a team that finished first in this competition last year and felt very confident they could do it again. Sadly, the team fell short by only one question, but still earned the bronze. The three also won a cash prize of 1600 Baht and had a great time competing together.

Our students have seen the competition and are eager to get back out there for another go at the gold.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bread is probably the one food eaten by people of every race, culture, and religion.

Each American consumes, on average, 24 kilograms of bread per year.

Farmers receive approximately 5 cents (or less) from each loaf of bread sold.

One bread superstition is that if you put a piece of bread in a baby's cradle, it will keep away disease.

Murphy's Law dictates that buttered bread will always land buttered-side down.

Scandinavian traditions hold that if a boy and girl eat from the same loaf, they are bound to fall in love.

In Russia, bread (and salt) are symbols of welcome.

Legend has it that whoever eats the last piece of bread has to kiss the cook.

Berkeley's Brilliant Bakers!

K1B BEAVERS ARE BRILLIANT BAKERS!

The children in K1B had a fantastic time starting their new topic 'Food' by baking a strawberry pie! They were all so helpful at adding all the ingredients and mixing and preparing the tasty pie. They also enjoyed eating our first class pie.

HAPPY SNAPS

Grade 1's Wonderful Writers

Grade 1 has been making amazing progress in their writing! They are using a target system to monitor their own writing as they work independently. Students choose a target to work towards, such as "I can use capitals and periods" or "I can use new words in my writing". Once they've completed a piece of writing with their target in mind, they show their work to demonstrate the skill they have developed. After they have proven to reach their target three times, students are ready to choose a new target to focus on.

Students are excited to be tracking their own progress and this process is helping Grade 1 to become proud and thoughtful writers. Great work Grade 1!

THE HOMEMADE WATER FILTER

by Mr. Neal

Second grade has been busy in Science class learning about the importance of natural resources and how we use them in our everyday lives. Although we are very fortunate to have easy access to these resources and the products made from them, this is not the case for everyone around the world. In some areas people do not have access to something as basic as clean drinking water.

The second grade class has learned how people have found innovative ways to collect water such as using screens to catch moisture from the fog, or ways organizations such as UNICEF have gone to remote villages to set up water filtration systems to provide clean drinking water for the residents. We also learned how we might make our own water filters using materials that are easily available.

For this activity we gathered some very dirty water from the pond next to the school. We then used plastic bottles with the tops cut off and filled them with layers of grass, soil and charcoal. Holes were poked into the bottom of the bottles so that the water could filter through the grass, soil and charcoal and hopefully come out a little cleaner. Although the results of our experiment did not turn out exactly as expected, we were able to practical experience following the steps of investigation and experimentation. Students put their critical thinking skills to use and hypothesize that the charcoal might be replaced with cotton the next time. I'm sure there will be no shortage of dirty water available in Bangkok to use for our experiments until we get the filter right.

DANCING DOLPHIN CLASS NEWS BY MISS SARA

Wow, what an amazing couple of months back at school, we started the first week by celebrating children's day in which we had a great day of fun and games including going out to the field and playing with our giant parachute and ended with a great pool party. We then celebrated Wai Kru and Anya was our representative for K1A and presented me with a beautiful arrangement of flowers. We then had a big day out the Car Wash, as our theme was all about Community Helpers and Transport. The children thoroughly enjoyed washing Berkeley Bus, and I would like to say

a huge thank you to Aei's Mum and Dad for allowing us this wonderful trip.

We had two birthdays in January Alvin and Jess both turned 4 years old.

February has started out to be full of fun, we planted some giant sunflower seeds (still no sign of any leaves) but we take care of them everyday. Our fish are doing really well in our tank and the children enjoy cleaning and taking care of them we have even had our first babies. We celebrated valentines day, and the children made a special heart craft to take home, and we had fun playing valentine bingo. Our last celebration was Chinese New Year and we all thoroughly enjoyed our parade with our dragons, snakes, and Chinese drums, we all enjoyed watching the Chinese Lion Dance and acrobats.