

Educational excellence at ISZL



First, and perhaps most important, schools are about people and relationships; so hiring and retaining outstanding teachers and administrators is important. Teachers must be able to differentiate effectively for a variety of abilities in the classroom, integrate the teaching of IT into student learning experiences, use a variety of delivery modes and assessment strategies, be enthusiastic, caring and supportive, know and understand the children they teach, and offer child-centred lessons where students feel both empowered and challenged.

These teachers must be lifelong learners – regularly engaged in effective professional development to stay up-to-date with modern practice, capable of planning curriculum that is demanding, engaging, age appropriate and effective preparation for next steps. Teachers should use assessment as a key tool to gauge student learning, plan for future lessons, communicate with parents and administration, benchmark against school expectations and to reflect on the effectiveness of their own practice. They should also be effective communicators who encourage a clear development of home-school partnerships in support of student learning, growth and development.

And finally they should understand that education does not take place only in the context of the classroom, or academics. We are educating the whole child to be a critical and aware individual, capable of free thought and able to play an active role in shaping the world of tomorrow. Administrators should understand all of this, and be able to effectively ensure that it is happening through regular monitoring and support of classroom practice, teachers and students alike.

Second, we should be sure to adopt and run effective educational programmes – designed to challenge our students and

expose them to culture, creativity, competition, health issues, social responsibility and beauty – as well as academic excellence. The school should promote high behavioural and academic standards by recognising achievement, inclusion, growth, development, courage, participation, good manners, humility and respect.

Such programmes and experiences should take place in a school that encourages students to take risks, think critically, support each other and feel supported, celebrate difference and diversity, develop relationships based on trust, and grow in self confidence.

Part of the International School of Zug and Luzern's development towards excellence should take account of parent education too. Whether that comes in the form of a talk on adolescence, third-culture kids, early childhood or brain growth to promote greater understanding of development; an introduction to German, art history, or other such activities that place the school at the centre of a mutually supportive community, where parents are actively encouraged to be in and around our various campuses – offering of their diverse talents and expertise and opinions in return.

In the future we should develop an intern programme to assist and promote new teachers entering the profession – who can bring energy, enthusiasm, time commitment to our school to the benefit of the students in all of our divisions.



Dominic Curren, director

Of course appropriate facilities to house such programmes are important. Ones in which students have outstanding access to IT, sports facilities, arts resources and areas, science laboratories, recreational areas, libraries and spacious general purpose classrooms where student work can be encouraged, displayed, extended, supported and valued; Ones in which teachers can deliver effective programmes, interact with students, plan collaboratively for learning, and inspire future generations; Ones in which parents feel engaged, welcomed and partners in their children's growth, learning and development.

Finally links with the Zug community are central to our pursuit of excellence. Our school should not be an isolated expatriate island for children of foreign families. Our doors should be open to links with the community – through the use of facilities, community service programmes, adult education, teacher education and inter-cultural exchange.

Dominic Curren, director of the International School of Zug and Luzern