

Intelligent News

7 April 2008 Vol. 4



News from Multiple Intelligence Centre

This is the inter-term newsletter of MIC. We have figured out that the best time to publish our Centre news is once during term, and once during the break. Remember that you also get a 'Pod-newsletter' twice a term. Oh Boy do we have lots to catch up on!

Quick Roundup

- Of course the main news is that we've successfully completed Term 1. We can't quite believe it ourselves that we've already completed a term.
- Our numbers went up at one point to 24 pupils but 6 have left over the course of Term 1. This is due to the children moving with their families away from Fiji, not because we did anything 'bad'.
- MIC had it's first 'party' on the premises with the joint Birthday party of Kautea Smith & Ella Chang. We've subsequently had a number of other parties - birthday and leaving parties.
- MIC is very fortunate to have Reiko come once a week to show us some interesting origami pieces. Reiko a Japanese mother of one of our principal's pupils from the last school, understands the MIC underlying philosophy and has been gracious enough to loan her expertise. We all look forward to her weekly visits.
- Sadly, we had to say goodbye to our first Administrative Officer, Piri Manueli. This was nothing to do with us, Piri has personal commitments that she has to attend to. We look forward to the time when she might come back to us.
- We have though taken on for a short term basis (probably until June or July), Eleazar O'Connor who is actually Anika Taylor's uncle. Eli is just finishing his masters write up and so this is a perfect fit for him and us.
- Our Project Wednesdays started in the second half of Term 1.
- Our Centre shop finally opened with the children in Pods 3-5 acting as shop keepers.
- The children have spontaneously started clubs of their own.

First Term, Year 1 ends

We have definitely come to the 'end' of a significant chapter of MIC, namely that we completed term 1. That

may not sound like much but given that it was about this time last year that the 'hint' of a suggestion of starting MIC was born, we're all simply amazed at how far we've come along, not just in getting the Centre up and running but also in getting to know your amazing children. Of course as the parents of your children you know they are 'wonderful'. But from the bottom of our hearts, we at MIC do genuinely believe that we've been blessed with 'easy' children. We don't mean that they are a push-over, we mean that all the children are

MIC Library

We have a library now of our own. It's very small but we've already bought some fantastic books from the world acclaimed 'Dorling Kindersly' publishers (now part of Pearson publishing group).

These books though are not focussed on stories but are more reference books, such as 'Making Musical Instruments' or 'Coconut: Plant or Fruit'. We do have story books but for the moment they are part of the actual classroom.

If you have any books that you would like to donate to MIC we would of course very much appreciate them. We don't mind the occasional 'dog-ear', but if we need to completely re-stitch a book it will cost almost the same for us as to buy a new one.

We are also on the look out for second hand sofas or bean bags that we can put into our library for the children to be able to read in relative comfort. This we can afford to recover or repair.

In addition if you know of any book shelves or display cases that can display books with their covers facing forward, that are either waiting to be donated, or are available for a very cheap price, we would be very interested to hear from you.

genuine characters who all have their hearts in the right place. It makes teaching a zillion times easier when they are as positive as this. Of course as parents you may have had something to do with their great personalities as well!

What are Project Wednesdays?

Project Wednesdays, are after lunch activities that run from 1.45-4.00pm for the older Pods (Classes 3-6). Pods 1 & 2 of course do a project too but it still finishes at 3pm.

The idea behind this is to provide an environment which is more 'real' and provides a context for children to use their learnt skills.

Gosh, now if that sounded like a load of academic-ese then let's try it again in English.

Each Pod embarks on projects which tend to combine many skills or intelligences that are required to do the project well. Typically the projects reflect something that seems to reflect what happens in the 'real' world and children can therefore see the relevance of using 'maths' or 'social skills', or 'good spelling'.

You may as a parent have noticed that our projects have for the moment been quite small scale, or you may not have noticed any project work at all. That is deliberate, as we are getting to know our children to know what we can tackle realistically.

Starting in Week 7 we started our first 'major' projects.

Examples of our current projects are:

- Establishing a Pot Plant Business (Pod 4)
- Putting a 'sound-effect' choir together for a future performance (Pod 1)
- Doing an animal survey around the school and possible habitat construction for indigenous species. (Pods 2&3)

- Putting a presentation together for a social marketing campaign for the school to undertake (Pod 5).

These bigger projects are likely to continue on into second term at least part of the way.

You may though ask how do projects realistically help children in a learning environment? You may hear of 'integrated learning', or 'holistic learning', or 'embedded tuition', and even if these are truisms, they do sound a lot like a techno-speak. The kind that normally keen sales people use to present an authoritative version of what is going on.

Swimming as a Survival Skill

We have now had 7 weeks of swimming instruction and as time has gone on, we've had the opportunity to reflect more on what we are trying to achieve.

Most schools understand the value of swimming but typically they think this should result in an end of year programme as a swim gala where they race against other schools.

We realise though that this is not teaching swimming for survival skills, but teaching for swim meeting and swimming racing. Not that there's anything wrong with this but we would encourage children who want to do this, to join a swimming club.

Q&A with MIC's new teacher, Mr. Tomasi Koroi

Q. Tomasi, you joined in week 3. How come you didn't start in Term 1

A. To be honest I wanted to start right from then but when the management were putting this all together, they did not count on the Centre growing so quickly at the beginning. Because the funding comes only from the fees, we could not afford to have many teachers.

Q. So because there were more children at the beginning than was originally thought would come, you came on later?

A. Yes, that's right. I knew that I'd come to MIC eventually but I thought it would be probably in Term 2. Everything happened faster than any of us expected.

Q. What is your impression then of MIC compared to the last school you were at?

A. Well, that's a bit of an unfair question, because the two schools are really quite different. MIC is brand new and there's that excitement of starting something brand new; TLC [The Learning Centre] has been established longer, so somethings have a more established rhythm and organisation. One thing that is common to both schools though is of course the wonderful children in both places. I definitely miss some fantastic characters who are

at TLC, but on the other hand I'm meeting these wonderful children at MIC. They accepted me pretty much within hours of my first day.

Q. You're quite the guitar player. Does that help in your teaching?

A. Absolutely, obviously for music lessons it's great to be able to provide accompanying music with some guitar chords. However, I can use the guitar for many other teaching activities just to provide impact, or to underscore a point.

Q. Do you have any unusual hobbies?

A. Well apart from visiting family & friends, & listening to variety of different music (classical, and reggae), I tend to play guitar at people's weddings and I've recently taken up Tae Kwando which I'm really enjoying; they are a bit unusual for many.

Q. Anything surprised you at MIC?



Our emphasis is on 'survival'. One could ask 'survival from what?' and our answers are: survival from being sucked under by a strong current at the beach; or survival a strong river current; or surviving a capsized boat.

Specifically then we want to teach the children how to not panic, how to orientate themselves when under water, how to swim with maximum efficiency, how to stay afloat for as long as possible.

So we don't teach that many strokes. We concentrate on breast stroke and a back 'scull'. We teach shallow water entry, we roll them around underwater.

Eventually, when the time is right, our end of year swim graduation is to take them to the ocean where they will be hit by waves, swallow water and get salt in their eyes. Of course all the time we will be there to ensure that they remain totally safe, but we believe this is the only way that we can train them to be confident and safe in and around water.

Incidentally our teachers have noticed that in contrast to previous schools in which they've taught, the children's attendance and willingness to come swimming is still very high. In previous schools about 40% of the class start to make excuses to opt out. That would suggest that the children really enjoy what we are doing.

Equipment for Swimming Classes

These are not absolutely necessary but we feel that your child will enjoy their swimming classes far more if they have the following equipment for their lessons.

- Swim goggles. Whilst we teach children without goggle, to have to do this for the whole lesson makes them all red eyed like you see in flash photographs.
- Aqua-ear - get this from the chemist, especially if your child cannot clear their ears of water easily. This is a bottle which delivers ear drops that help dry out the ear of water. If water remains in the ear for long the chances of ear infection are dramatically increased.
- Especially for the girls, a one piece swimsuit, especially ones that have straps that cross at the back (or are joined in the middle) to prevent the inevitable strap slippage.
- Consider a 50-60+ PF long sleeved top, this is a snug fitting top that effectively keeps the sun at bay. Saves on sunscreen!
- Closed heeled fins, it builds up confidence for beginning swimmers as well as helps more advanced swimmers concentrate on their arm strokes. These do not need to be 'divers' fins but quite small fins such as those found for 'boogie boarders'.
- Mask and snorkel. For the more advanced swimmers when we get to that part in the curriculum towards the end of the year.



Taniela Smith who is being propelled by Robin (underwater) the width of the pool. This encourages good body form and minimising of drag whilst in the water.

Our Future Programmes

By the end of the year the stronger swimmers will have done some basic lifesaving skills such as removing clothes whilst in the water. Reconfiguring objects to act as floatation devices (eg trousers, or plastic containers) and providing aid to those in the water in trouble whilst they are on the side (such as throwing a rope).

We also want to teach good fin and snorkel techniques for our more advanced swimmers.

What is the Centre Stationary & Tuck Shop?

Our experience in previous schools suggest that regardless of home many times it is said, children inevitably forget to bring their own pencils, erasers, sharpeners and rulers etc. Everything that should be in their pencil case. We of course can lend them our Classroom equipment but we would like to turn this into an educational opportunity.

Namely we would like children to go and purchase a missing 'pencil' or whatever they've inevitably forgotten during one of the assigned morning breaks. That will hopefully make them remember for next time. However, we also want the children to take turns 'running the shop'. That means adding up items, and giving change. We're talking cents and single dollars, not tens to hundreds. It will be supervised by Piri our able minded Administration Officer.

We have also started a trial with Coca Cola who have put a fridge in the school and we've bought 'sensible' drinks such as 'Frubu' and 'Orange Box' as well as Fiji Water. We will not purchase sugared drinks, or their de-sugared equivalents (Coke, or Fanta or Sprite) etc. They cost between 80 cents to \$1.20. We will also offer health 'brain foods' rather than sweets. So yes to muesli-bars

but *no* to Cadbury's bars. Again we want this to be run by the children themselves.



Talei, pushing Kautea to guide Zion to instruct Pio the storekeeper to deduct the correct amount at the Centre's shop whilst Sean oversees whilst enjoying his drink.

In the last few weeks we gave each child a 'credit' of \$3 each for them to spend on either a stationary item or a drink. The teachers drew up a roster of partnering a

younger child from Pod 2, with an older child from Pod 4 or 5. Occasionally though we partnered 'strong maths skills' with 'weaker maths skills'. The two shop keepers were over seen by Eleazar the Office Administrator. The shop keepers had to not only calculate the credit balance but also to do a daily stock take. The shop was open from 11.15-11.30 during the Centre's second morning break.

We are proposing the following scheme. You as the parent would give us \$25 per term as your child's credit allowance for the shop. This does not have to be used up during the term, the balance will be returned at the end of term. You may indicated whether we give it directly to your child, or whether we return it to you. However, the allowance can **NOT** be topped up during the term. We think this is good training for children to learn to budget themselves.

We think that this arrangement (instead of dealing with cash) avoids inevitable loss of or missing money problems. We also set up this arrangement really as an educational opportunity for the 'storekeepers' rather than the children buying. If you have a strong objection to this arrangement please talk to us.

Parent's Involvement

Calling all parents who would like to be involved in teaching at MIC.

Like swimming? Have an art or a craft you feel quite competent in? Would you like to talk about your favourite piece of music that you enjoy listening to (and then listening to it)? Enjoy reading stories? Feel you could direct small plays or mini drama exercises? Have a totally new idea of your own? Why not talk to us. We would love to get you involved in anyway that we can reasonably do it.

ITS ALL USEFUL JUNK!

Thank you parents for sending us your junk! No seriously, we have organised our toilet rolls, spare cardboard boxes and plastic containers all for the purposes of re-cycling these materials in our building and craft projects.

We've also got a recycle paper bin with the recycle company coming to pick up our spare papers etc. If you have paper (eg old newspapers) that you would like to get rid of, why not give them to your child to bring to school and they can place them in the paper recycle bins.

Term 2

We start again on the 14th of April. Remember that we start with your children on Monday. Our 'teachers' day(s) will have occurred the week before where we will have finished a two day workshop in drama and music exercises.

Please remember we also start at 8am. We're looking forward to seeing everyone again.

Staying in Contact

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If you would like to write to us other than electronically, please write to
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More information on the Web Pages

Our web pages (in 'pdf' format) now include:

- [MIC Parents Brochure](#)
- [Enrolment Form](#)
- [MIC curriculum](#) (final version for this year)
- [A school promotional leaflet](#)
- [Intelligent News Vol 1.](#)
- [Intelligent News Vol. 2](#)
- [Intelligent News Vol. 3](#)
- [Intelligent News Vol. 4 \(this newsletter\)](#)