



# LEARN

ISSUE-1 June 2019





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## Message from the Director

Welcome to the June 2019 edition of our new magazine, 'Learn'. At Memorial International School of Tirana, we take a student-centred approach to teaching and learning. We believe the key to education is providing experiences to children that enhance their critical thinking skills; allow them to connect the curriculum to real life situations; and permit them the freedom to unlock their own ideas and creativity. At MIST we provide an array of different learning opportunities for students. In-class projects, clubs, excursions, and special event days are examples of activities our students are involved in, which heightens their learning experience and prepares them for their entrance into the global world. Here, our teaching staff report on such interesting learning opportunities they have had with their students this year. Inside you will find information regarding a variety of extra-curricular efforts, where students give their own perspective, and reflect upon those learning experiences in their own words. We hope you enjoy reading this eclectic issue which demonstrates how, here at MIST, 'students come first'.

Bilal Dogruyol

Director

LEARN 

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ASEF



# 2019







**Mustafa Gezen**  
Academic Coordinator

**A**lbanian Science and Engineering Fair (ASEF) is an international project competition for students aged 10 to 18. It started with less than 10 projects to display in a corridor of Turgut Ozal School in 2007. It has developed year by year and has become an important project contest in Albania. In 2019, more than 1000 projects were entered to compete in ASEF. The competition aims to reveal and improve learning skills and handicrafts of students, teach basic research methodology and scientific method, and create awareness on current social, environmental, educational and scientific issues. Students compete under 4 categories; Computer Science, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Visual Arts.

ASEF Social Sciences Category encourages learners to engage in investigating the social issues by asking essential questions, recognizing patterns of behaviour, thinking critically, creating solutions, predicting outcomes and drawing conclusions to solve social problems.

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The Category of Social Sciences aims to:

- Develop the ability of applying scientific method in investigations of social studies.
- Challenge students to think creatively.
- Encourage students to observe and to reveal what others know about social issues.
- Teach students to interpret cultural, social, political, geographical and economical motives of historical and current issues.
- Encourage students to practice their communication skills, thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Provide a platform for students where they can improve their public speaking skills.
- Generate a public interest and awareness for global, economical and civil issues.



- *Mishel Erebara, year 7*

For ASEF I did a project for Social Sciences. I did it with Hera, and the name of the project was 'Health and Disease'. I really liked this project because I want to be a doctor. Five judges came and asked me about our project and I felt nervous but I talked about it. I really liked the experience, I learned how to present better as well as learning about the 10 most common diseases in the world, the symptoms, the cure, and the diet we should keep to be healthy.



- Klara Koldashi & Anna Maria Prenga, year 9

This was our first time participating in ASEF, we found it to be a unique experience - presenting our project and competing with lots of other students.

As partners for Social Sciences, our chosen topic was 'Education for All'. It was a great learning experience for us. The project took us a lot of time but despite that, we finished it on its due date and tried to do our best. This project aimed to send an important message and was explained in details by us. We wanted to put all of our effort in to by trying to make the project colourful, persuasive and understandable.

On the day of the competition, many experienced teachers came and evaluated us. Throughout the competition day we had goose bumps and emotions which seemed to not go away. However, we wanted to give our maximum on this project, so we learned how to present by leaving our emotions aside.

In the end, for one project we didn't get awarded any prize. However, this competition taught us a valuable lesson. Even though you might put a lot of effort into something, sometimes it might not get appreciated in the way you expected. Despite that, one should not get upset or give up - because your effort is worth it. These types of challenges will make you stronger, teach you how to appreciate little things in life, and prepare you to not give up!



- Ismail Topal, year 7

I went to ASEF at 9:00 o'clock and met my project partner Akif. I took my laptop because we had a power point and they gave us a cable. The first judge came and we were nervous. I presented the power point and Akif presented the poster. But Akif was struggling to talk about the poster so I helped him. The second judge came and the same thing happened, so after she left we practised our lines so much we memorized them.

When the third and fourth judges came we explained why we chose our topic and presented our poster and power point in different ways. We were still so nervous, but we were getting better and more confident each time. It was very exhausting but we got through it. We went to the ceremony and I was excited at first but then we didn't win. We had fun though, and next year I think we can get a medal.







## ASEF: Albanian as a Second Language

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**Nurisa Xhelili**  
Albanian Language Teacher

Teaching is one of those professions that one does only if they have it close to heart. During my days as a teacher of Albanian language and literature, there have been students that expressed interest in learning Albanian as a second language. When Dorian expressed his willingness to work with me for ASEF on the topic of Learning Albanian as a Foreigner, I was delighted, over all because a foreign student was interested in Albanian language.

To be a teacher you need a degree, determination and love for your profession. However, being a mentor is completely different. Not only do you need a degree of dedication, but you also need a huge amount of desire to help others. With that in mind I jumped in the deep water of mentoring a student. First and foremost, I made sure that he had all the necessary sources and equipment he needed, therefore I gave him books and provided him with useful websites and essential materials. I also took the liberty to advise him to interview some of his teachers, friends, and even a few locals in order to deepen his knowledge.

Co-operation was our strong point, even though my aim was for the student to work on his own and take his own decisions for the topic he picked. Listen carefully first, then ask and advise. Following these words I led my student into creating the poster in which he expressed his ideas. It should not be forgotten to urge the student to have confidence in himself at the moment of the poster's presentation, also to nourish him with the idea that participation is more important than winning.

- Dorian Spitz, year 12

ASEF is short for Albanian Science and Engineering Fair. I would've never thought about participating in such a challenging competition, especially abroad. Winning a gold medal later on was just the icing on the cake. But what exactly made this contest so different from everything else I'd ever attended?

When the thought of entering ASEF first sprang to mind, I had no idea about what was actually awaiting me. All the information I initially had was that I'd work with a mentor who would prepare me for the competition itself and with whom I'd have to work on a poster summing our work up. As the day of the fair loomed closer and closer, after the long weeks of hard work and preparation, my heart was pounding fast and the compulsion to succeed invaded and muddled my mind to an extreme degree. Nevertheless, once there, standing in between the hundreds of eager pairs of eyes, my initial excitement and the ever so natural nervousness accompanying it quickly turned into a congenial yet never-before-felt hotchpotch of feelings, with an intense desire to become one with the thrilled and ambitious crowd of compassionate students.

For me, it wasn't a competition. For me, it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to not only obtain an international experience but also to interact with people from all over the world who share the same mindset and interest in order to introduce their very own ideas and opinions. Call it a competition, but children weren't competing against each other; rather they were learning from one another, which is a million times more important than any kind of award or acknowledgement.

Furthermore, not only did students get closer to their peers, but had the chance to also create a tighter bond with their mentor who led them along this path. The key was not success but rather co-operation between teacher and student, learner and educator. And if there's a more beautiful and noble act than the professional and wise passing on their expertise to their pupil, full of thirst for knowledge, then it's the path they took and left behind during the process which, although might sometimes come with failures and fiascos, is significantly instructive and educative. I couldn't be more thankful.







## ASEF Industrial Design and Installation Art

**Blerta Meta**  
Secondary Art Teacher

Industrial Design and Installation Art are two new fields that have recently joined the ASEF competition. Installation art is an artistic genre of three-dimensional work that emerges out of environment. It is a term generally used to describe artwork located in three-dimensional interior space as the word 'install' means putting something inside of something else.

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The main idea behind the industrial design category is to use natural and synthetic materials to design objects that serve a useful purpose. Objects we use every day can be both fun and useful with the power of design. This type of design differs from art in that the outcome is not solely a beautiful object or artwork, but rather the product has some useful purpose.

This year, students came to me with some very interesting ideas for each of these categories, and I had a lot of fun in helping to guide them through to the completion and presentation of their projects.

*- Luca Sguazzardo, year 8*

Hello, I am Luca. I joined in two categories in Asef (science and installation art). For installation art, I made cubes and made mind games to allow people to be active in the real world and less active in virtual reality. The colours of the cubes I chose were red and white because I don't usually mix red and white so I thought why not give it a shot.

I got the idea for my project from Minecraft, which is a sandbox video game. Some activities in the game include mining for ore, fighting hostile mobs, and crafting new blocks and tools by gathering various resources found in the game. But in them you can also build anything you want. I managed to get a medal which made me and my family happy.



- Malda Frangu & Hera Bushati, year 7

On the 13<sup>th</sup> April, we had to do a project. It was called ASEF. The project was done by Hera, Mishel and Malda. We thought of doing Industrial Art. Ms Blerta, our art teacher, was our supervisor. We thought to do 'Moving Art' by using recycled materials. We made three different dresses out of CDs, straws and bottle tops. Malda had the CD dress, Mishel had the bottle top dress, and Hera had the dress made with straws.

For the CD dress we got some CDs and then we cut the CDs in different shapes and used a glue gun to stick them to the dress. Then, for Mishel's dress we decided to try doing a dress with a bin bag. We measured her and after that we got the 180 bottle tops and glued some glitter paper to the inside of them so it would be more colourful. For Hera's dress, we got different colored straws and we stuck them to the dress in a nice pattern.

When we went to the competition, we presented our project. We were really nervous but we got through it together. At around 2pm, they announced the winners. We won 3rd place and we were really happy.



- Saadet Yilmaz & Reyhan Tokçelik

Reyhan and I entered ASEF with two projects, one of which was a 3D tree painting on glass. When we first heard about ASEF this year, Reyhan had some good ideas and she offered me to join ASEF together. She wanted to do some paintings on glass inspired by Dustin Yellin. It seemed too difficult at first but after some weeks Reyhan's parents provided us with recycled glass and a tree trunk. We had all the materials that we needed so we first made some rough drafts, we decided on what to do and after a while working on this project we finished it one week before ASEF. When I saw the finished project I was so impressed and relieved.

We showed the project to a teacher in ASEF and she said we could easily win a gold medal but I was still a little worried. I wasn't excited or nervous while representing the project but when we went to the award ceremony, it was all the opposite. The announcer announced our names and we won the gold medal! I definitely advise people to participate in such fairs.







ASEF

Klodiana Kaso  
Secondary French Teacher

# Linguistics

For the Junior ASEF Category in 2019, year 9 students were involved in a linguistics project as their first participation with a presentation in both a second and third language (French and English). The project focused on the school system in France and Nigeria. Through contributing to such a project these students developed their learning skills beyond classroom teaching. The improvement consists not only in the digital skills acquired, but also in the analysis of how to use and transmit information to the public, which will be of great benefit to them in their future.



*- Ajla Shehu & Ana Bamllari, year 9*

Junior Asef was one of the most thrilling experiences we have ever had. Having about 300 students with amazing projects around us made us feel as if we were part of educational elite. There were posters for any problem you could think of. Turn left and you saw solutions for gender inequality. To your right the students' bright minds had invented their own biological hand cream.

For this competition we participated by developing and finding a solution to two challenging phenomena. One of them was from our Global Perspectives class, where we deeply constructed the solution to the racial wealth gap. And the other was from our French class. The last mentioned was assigned to us by Ms Klodiana with the idea of pointing out the drastic differences of two countries that were under the same influence, but now stand in different positions around the world. Nigeria and France were our chosen countries. Later on we researched about their cultures, education and general background. What we found out gave us a new perspective of looking at simple things. Although they were both under the French Revolution influence, France now stands as one of the best life quality countries in the world and Nigeria as one of the worst.

After all this being said, we came to the conclusion that even though you start with the same step, like the French revolution in our case, your path can vary in different directions where one is successful and the other is not. It isn't your first step which indicates your future but the way you develop through it. Overall, Asef was a great opportunity for us to analyse a big problem with a good message. Creativity beyond the borders, Asef beyond creativity.







## ASEF Short Movie and Robotics

**Rexhina Dervishi**  
**Secondary ICT Teacher**

ASEF is an annual project based competition organized by Turgut Ozal Education. It provides challenges and opportunities for secondary and high school students to develop good study habits, explore different fields of science, and build a project from scratch. ASEF Computer Sciences Category is a student-centered category which is divided into Web Design, Programming, Robotics, Poster Design, Short Movie, Hardware Control, and Networking subcategories. In this category students develop analytical skills, problem solving abilities, creativity, and critical thinking skills.

My students this year participated on two main categories: short movie and robotics. The short movie category at ASEF is where students have to make a movie which motivates and provides viewers with information towards local, global, environmental, social or educational issues. The robotics category is where students design, build, test and control their robot. When doing their projects students learn to edit and record their own video. I was fortunate to work with some talented students this year who showed that in group work you can develop communication, teamwork and decision making skills.

- Abdullah Simsek, year 8

My group was with Mustafa and Cemal. Our topic was about how technology affects children. At ASEF, first we watched our short movie with teachers and then we presented.

We were lucky because our topic is so important for nowadays. When we finished presenting we waited a long time for our award. First, we were not in Bronze part. After, we were not in Silver part too. We were excited because just Gold part was left. When they said our names we were so happy because we got Gold medal!



- Mustafa Ciplak, year 8

I joined the ASEF competition with Cemal and Abdullah. We joined for the short movie category. I went to Abdullah's house with Cemal to do our project. We used my phone as a camera, so we were ready to begin.

Firstly, we recorded the first scene. We had to do it many times because of our laughter. Secondly, we had to go outside for another scene. Finally, we had a rest.

Our topic was about children spending too much time on technology. We chose this topic because nowadays it's like a disease that is spreading. It is a really big problem and even we know it. As a result, we got a gold medal.



- Lorina Elezi, year 9

I have always wanted to make a movie where the best students in my class were the Movie Stars. The best opportunity was ASEF. Everyone contributed and worked very hard, they had a thirst in working hard. I am very thankful of them and also proud, because they did the best they could.





- Hikmet Kapusuz, year 9

While I was doing the ASEF video with Lorina and the other participants, I had a lot of fun and learned a lot. While actually taking the video, it felt a bit frustrating and nervous in front of the camera, but I still managed to do my part perfectly. I was very happy to know that I would help a friend, and I am even happier that she got a silver medal.



- Anna Maria Prenga, year 9

Helping my friend and participating in ASEF was great pleasure. Although we had funny moments, we didn't get distracted from the work we were given. I am happy that with my participation and the others' too, we helped Lorina win a prize!



- Grejsi Cela & Stefania Natsi, year 9

I (Grejsi) and Stefania worked very hard to help our friend Lorina make her ASEF movie. It was hard work, but we made it. We are proud of ourselves and Lorina that we got a Silver medal!



- Ajla Shehu, year 9

A great experience, where Lorina's project made me feel like I was in the marvelous country of Iceland, meeting the unseen melting pot of cultures. I was a character whose expertise was wide when talking about Iceland, and this gave me the privilege to actually know a lot about it.



- Merve Topal, year 9

I was asked to say a few sentences about Iceland for Lorina's project. It was fun to learn the lines, because you would know more about other people's perspectives of nature. It was a very nice experience.



- Orion Plloqi, year 8

In April it was ASEF and my subject was robotics. I brought my robot that was in my home. While we were doing our project, I learned a lot more about my robot. My robot was called Cozmo and it had a lot of different animations.

When the day for ASEF came, we set up our project and after some minutes a judge came. We explained what the robot could do and its feelings. The judge was really interested and wanted to know more about the robot.

When we finished, we went to see what medal we won. There were a lot of people, so we waited until our names got called. Then, I heard my name and my friend's name. We got bronze medal and I was really excited. My parents were really proud and happy.



- Brian Metaj, year 8

This year, I participated in ASEF. It was my first time so I was very excited. ASEF was held in Turgut Ozal primary school. The category that I participated was in Robotics. My partner was Orion and he brought his own robot and we programmed it. We made the robot do so many cool animations like sneezing. We also programmed it to lift cubes and turn 90 degrees.

On the day of ASEF, me and Orion showed the robot to the judges. They really liked it and they congratulated us. When the participants who got prizes were called, I heard our names and told Orion to go to the stage with me. We won a bronze medal and we were really happy for this. I hope that this experience will be repeated next year.





ALBANIAN DAY:

# LEARNING THROUGH CELEBRATION

Mia Lusha  
Primary Albanian Language Teacher



Albanian national day is a big celebration in our school that the students enjoy very much. This year we created a variety of displays. In one of these displays foreign teachers and students wrote a short paragraph to express their impressions of Albania; a lot of them mentioned some of the most traditional things that we as Albanians identify as originating from our country.

As well as the displays, we held many different performances which required a lot of preparation. Some of the students decided by themselves what they would like to do for the national day. In Year 5, Panajoti, Melek, Joseph, and Graidid decided to do a drama showing traditional Albanian welcome. The play was about two tourists accompanied by local Albanians visiting the north of Albania. The main structure of the performance was made by the students themselves, and they took effort in preparing for the portrayal of the characters they were playing. Their performance was a huge success and had lots of positive feedback from the audience. Here is how the students felt about the experience:

- Melek Bagatir, year 5

I was feeling so exciting and happy. I think it was the best day I ever had. I am from Turkey but I like to celebrate the Albanian day. I was the tourist character in the drama we did. For 2 or 3 seconds I felt like I was a tourist for real. I was so scared but after I got on stage I felt like Shakira.



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- Anamaria Gjermeni, year 5

When they chose me for one of the characters of the drama I felt very lucky because I wanted to be there. When we practised we did mistakes, but that day of the performance was really good.



- Panajoti Rapo, year 5

For Albanian National Day I was feeling extraordinarily happy to be there and to be picked for the role.

My role was a shepherd and I had to speak in a funny way and I love being funny. When I was picked I felt really excited!





- *Graidi Resuli, year 5*

I was part of the Albanian Day drama. I was a local tour person and I had to explain all the things on the tour. We had a lot of fun doing the performances, as much as our parents had fun watching them. So Albanian day was really fun and important to us.



- *Merve Berda Dogan, year 5*

It was a really exciting day but I was a bit nervous. Our parents came and it was so fun. First we performed, and there were a lot of audience. Some of us were even dancing.



- *Summeye Kose, year 5*

I felt very excited in Albanian National Day because I was going to be in front of so many parents. At the beginning I was so scared because I felt like I forgot every move but at the end that day went well.



- *Suheyra Kose, year 5*

It was so exciting but I was so scared. I was wearing the Albanian costume. It was so fun. My sister was eating but I couldn't eat anything, I was so jealous. I danced with my friend and it was fun.



- *Nesibe Erbas, year 5*

It was a really exciting day but in the same time it was a really, really stressful day. I was excited for the show but also I was nervous because there were so many people, waiting for us and taking photos and videos of us. Our costumes were so good and after we were dressed we waited for our turn. I was like a nervous bunny, it was really bad and exciting at the same time. Then when the curtain opened everyone was clapping us - I was so scared but then we started to dance and everyone was smiling.



# Football Club

**Klajdi Aruci**  
**Physical Education Teacher**

Our primary football team takes part in football tournaments against other International schools. MIST has two representative teams, a boys team and a girls team. We played against four schools, and our teams showed great resilience and determination.

Even though we didn't win, we can surely say that we enjoyed that day and had too much fun. It is to be emphasized that not only winning is important, but even losing - if we learn from the mistakes and how to improve them! Working and playing in a group is another benefit, because this is how a real team is built. We also had a team discussion over our weak points during the games and agreed to work harder to improve the team in the near future.

In football practice we work towards every objective with the purpose to make our dream come true, and to be the next champions of the tournament!



# CHESS CLUB

**Luljeta Dalipi**  
**Head of Enrichment**



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Chess is one of the most known strategy board games worldwide, and it is believed to have originated 1500 years ago from Eastern India. The benefits of this game are many, from imagination and creativity to logical thinking and problem solving; from patience and concentration to memory improvement and decision making.

At MIST, chess is strongly considered as an educational and interactive beneficial activity which helps students develop their intellect and social quality. Chess club is one of our most popular clubs and is led by Mr Sotir Pasku, a national chess champion in Albania.

*- Mehmet Akif Bagatir, year 7*

Our chess teacher is a funny person. For example he says '1 move white, 1 move white', and he says 'bishop, bishop'. He shows me different ways to do checkmate. I went to a chess tournament. I used the ways which our teacher taught us, but I could not win the tournament as I need to learn more. If you know how to play chess it will be helpful for your life because in chess you have to be focused on the game or you will lose the game. And you have to know what the other player will do. In real life it is the same, I mean when you want to do something and when you think forward and plan ahead, it helps a lot. If you don't know chess you should learn it!





*- Bjorn Shehu, year 7*

Personally I really like playing and practising strategies in chess. Our chess teacher is a professional and he teaches us mostly how to end a chess game really fast in only 2 moves by check mating your opponent. Playing chess helps us because it shows us how to think ahead and plan. You always have to think before playing a piece in chess because you may think that it is a really good move but that's just your opinion - the fact is that it is a really wrong move to move that chess piece in that specific place. To be a professional chess player you need to learn strategies and play in your free time.

Chess is a strategic game so you directly see or understand that you always have to think hard for what you move, and chess needs a lot of attention and concentration and good thinking. In chess club when we enter the room we listen to the instructions of the teacher and his plans for this hour. We first start by our teacher giving us the chess pieces so we can place them in the correct spot on the chess board. We play one on one games with another person in the club and our chess teacher helps to guide our moves, he also explains where we went wrong, if we did, and how we should move forward.







# School Choir

**Elda Rako**  
**Music Teacher**

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On April 16<sup>th</sup>, our school choir participated in the Annual Elementary Choir Festival organized by Tirana Association of International Schools (TAIS). This festival was established two years ago with the aim of international schools to collaborate and make music together. For children, singing in a choir is a fantastic creative outlet and a great social activity. MIST students from years 5, 6 and 7 joined 80 other young singers coming from other international schools in Tirana for a day of practice and presented a beautiful combined concert in the evening.

This year, for the concert were selected four interesting choral songs: Whisper! by Greg Gilpen; Mary Had a Little Blues by Charles A. Collins; In the Name of Music by Victor C Johnson; and Charlotte town by Emily Crocker. Part of the programme were also individual performances from all participating ensembles (choirs). Our school, for its performance, had chosen the song I am the earth. This song was written in 2008 (The International Year of Planet Earth), and is divided into two parts – sopranos and altos. The sopranos represented the voice of planet Earth and the altos sang on behalf of the children of the world. The song ended in a positive affirmation of the future with the sopranos and altos singing in unison. The Earth and its people coming together.

This festival offered an unforgettable experience for both singers and the audience.

*- Enya Eden, year 5*

When I first came to choir club I felt like joining in because you can sing to the audience in schools and you can explore there and meet new people. In the choir festival we sang together and it was very nice and clear. When I started to sing the song it was amazing and there were a lot of people. When I was singing I felt kind of nervous but happy at the same time.



- Malda Frangu, year 7

On the 16th of April, we went to a choir festival in Tirana International School. Our supervisor was Ms Elda, our music teacher. We had to sing 5 songs called: Charlotte's Town, In the Name of Music, I am the Earth, Whisper, and Mary had a Little Blues. There were 5 more schools participating. We first went to school in the morning and after all the students came, we hopped on the bus and went to TIS. It was such a big school. We left our bags at the MIST representing table.

After we left our bags, we did a small mini game. It was a spider web mini game. We sang for 8 hours but we had small breaks between them. It was a very nice day. We practiced the songs in the gym area. It was very big. There were a lot of chairs there in the gym area.

We finished practicing at 6 o'clock. Our parents came shortly after and we finished our songs. We thought we did a pretty good job. We were so happy that we successfully finished the choir performance.



- Mishel Erebara, year 7

On the 16th of April, primary and secondary students of international schools participated in a Choir Festival in the school TIS including MIST. Our supervisor was Ms. Elda, our music teacher, which took us during breaks and lessons to practice the songs that were on the list and which we were going to sing. Our school's song was 'I am the Earth' including 4 others which we were going to sing with the other schools participating.

At the festival we had to wear black leggings or jeans and the TIS school had customized a shirt which was white with an Earth drawn on it and writing. We went to the TIS school with a mini-bus, we got into colour groups, introduced ourselves, and started practicing the songs, changing them a little. We sang the whole day, however we had breaks, and then we had lunch which we had to take from home or eat sandwiches which the school had brought. For our performance, they got a lot of chairs and put them in front of the stage. Our performance finished at 6 o'clock.







# Developing **English** **Speaking** Lessons

**Anisa Sauli**  
**Secondary ESL Teacher**

“All the great speakers were bad speakers at first.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Our world is being globalized more and more and English language has become the language of global communication. In order to master this language it is necessary to study and improve the four skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. All the four skills have their importance and their obstacles for a non-native speaker, but the speaking skill has some particular difficulties, especially if the learner is an adolescent.

When you are a child you are eager to speak and tell other people everything you have learnt and explored without thinking or paying attention to grammar rules or sentence structures, therefore

learning a language and mastering its skills at this age is easy, among other factors.

For adolescents, however, this skill can be difficult despite the fact that the learner might be good at grammar, listening and reading. One of the main reasons of this difficulty are anxiety and unwillingness to speak in English fearing the mistakes they might make and other people's reaction. Another reason, related to the previous one, is shyness. Most of the people who refuse to speak in a foreign language are shy. Taking into consideration these factors, here in secondary school at MIST we assess our students' language level and character, and include them in speaking classes where they are encouraged to speak freely without worrying about mistakes or insecurities.

We provide a warm class atmosphere to make them feel confident and comfortable during the lesson, and choose a broad and interesting range of topics so they can start a discussion or share their opinions, such as: are zoos a good thing?; climate change; are we losing the art of conversation because of technology? Students are first introduced to these topics through a short video or conversation and a vocabulary exercise, to make it easier for them start speaking.

Speaking classes offer the opportunity of small group conversation so each student has time to speak more, while his classmates listen carefully (another important skill of speaking), and then give their opinions about the topic, supporting or contradicting each other during the discussion. Only the teacher corrects mistakes (usually grammar mistakes) after the student has finished speaking, to avoid interruption. Having such classes therefore supports student learning in all other lessons by building confidence and enhancing communicative skills.

- Efe Turan, year 9

In MIST secondary school there is a class where we make some topics like speaking. In the speaking room we talk and discuss in English. We are trying to learn better English to understand more in other lessons. We talk about things like animals, objects, and people who want to be teachers. This class has helped me to talk and improve my English. Now, I feel better and I can understand more in lessons.



- Ahmet Yasir Aydin, year 9

I went to the extra-curricular lessons of English speaking. These lessons were for students who had English speaking problems, for example shyness or incorrect pronunciation of words. In a small group of three students we had discussions about different themes, like should animals be caged or free; or the increasing usage of technology. These lessons helped me a lot and I am very grateful to have had the chance to properly speak English.







# Field trip to Durres

**Gino Moio**  
**Year 4 Form Teacher**

Field trips play a large role in student motivation. It is great to be able to weave curricula objectives into field trips and even better to go on them! This year, we went on two field trips. One to Tirana National Park, and one to Durres to explore the old ruins. On our trip to Durres, we learned a lot about Albanian history and got a great look into the past. This tied into our theme in humanities with the ancient Romans and was a fantastic learning experience.

After touring the amphitheatre and the archaeological museum, looking at where gladiators fought and at archaic artefacts, students had quite a bit to draw and write about in their culminating project, in which they had to illustrate and explain the most interesting parts of their trip.



- *Daris Pesha, year 4*

I liked Durres because it had many walls and old buildings. My favourite part was the amphitheatre because it looked like the Colosseum in Rome, and I liked the big wall in the beginning, too.



- *Rejan Shehi, year 4*

The part I like about Durres field trip is the museum. I found it really attractive and interesting. My favourite part about the museum was the Ancient Necropolis.



- *Emili Likollari, year 4*

I liked the Durres field trip because it had lots of ancient histories behind the walls. My favourite part was the archaeological museum. There I saw a real, live skeleton! It was the best trip ever.







# Visiting **Korça**

**Nurisa Xhelili**  
**Albanian History and Geography Teacher**

**T**ravel is important to a child's education because it provides countless opportunities to allow them to see the world and learn through experiencing, exploring and socializing. Combining Art and Albanian History, we went on an excursion with Year 9 students to visit Korça - in order to learn about the culture, architecture, history and the essence of the city. Our aim was for the students to experience from a closer view what they learn during classes and from textbooks. Korça is well known for offering the possibility to visit a range of museums and cultural locations, from which we selected the city centre, the First Albanian School, and the renewed National Museum of Medieval Art. The students left the city both amazed and inspired!



- Nizea Halili & Stefania Natsi, year 9

On Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, Year 9 went on an excursion which we will forever hold in our memories. We visited the alluring city of Korçë, which provided many activities and amusing learning opportunities for us. After a bus journey of four hours filled with music, laughter, games and snacks, we arrived. Four hours had never gone by so quick!

The bus dropped us off in the famous boulevard of the city, which even has songs dedicated to it! It was filled with elegant buildings, highlighted by representations of ladybirds, which 'split' the boulevard in two. Eventually, after many pictures taken for our in-class competition, we arrived at the First Albanian School called "Mësonjëtorja" which also served as a Museum of Education. The museum taught us a lot about Albanian history and heritage through remains and preserved books, letters, furniture etc. Every one of us, including the teachers, was left gripped, wanting to learn more.

Half an hour later, we walked to the glorious Orthodox Cathedral. The building resembled The Vatican Museum, with sublime paintings of religious figures. From them, the big devotion to religion, cultural value and overall aristocracy of the city was obvious. Peace and solitude filled the atmosphere as we tried to take in all the majestic things our eyes met.

Religion dominated in the National Museum of Medieval Art as well, which was our following stop. It started off with a 'Golden room' which had walls filled with portraits and other paintings dating back from many centuries ago. We saw a couple more rooms, from which we learned many new things about medieval artists, their art work, history and unbelievable preservation. A very skilled cicerone made the understanding of each time period very easy, which was delightful!

With a growling stomach from a long day, we headed to a traditional restaurant. Each one of us ordered what we found most appealing from the menu. There was a variety of choices, mostly names we hadn't heard before, but were keen to try. We were quick to finish our meals from the unbearable hunger. Overall, the reviews were positive and everyone was happy.

On our way home, we stopped in Elbasan for a refreshing drink and more sightseeing. The drive back was just as fun as when we went and felt like only a few minutes. We were all entertained and learned something, not only from the city but from our wonderful teachers, Ms Nurisa and Ms Blerta as well. This experience was a true bonding opportunity for our class and brought everyone closer!









# International Fair

**Luljeta Dalipi**  
**Head of Enrichment**

The International Fair is one of the most important spring events at MIST, and has been running for many years. This activity is achieved through the contribution of all our school community; staff, parents and students.

The International Fair is a celebration of the cultural diversity of our staff and students. It is a wonderful way for all of us to share our own culture, as well as learn more about the cultures of the MIST community.

This year it was held on 6th April on the school grounds, bringing together cultural and traditional features from 22 countries through music, dance, diverse costumes, and national cuisines. Our students from Year 1 to 11 displayed this wonderful and peculiar diversity through an eclectic performance with traditional and popular songs and dances representing different countries - taking us on a journey from one country to another.

Families, staff and students also prepared stands where they represented their culture and tradition through food, activities, costumes, and games. As the International Fair is also a fund raising activity, money raised by the stands was sent to a charitable organisation chosen by the students themselves.

Not only is our International Fair a fun and entertaining way to showcase our community's diversity, it teaches the importance of global cooperation, social responsibility, diversity and equality to all our students here at MIST.

*- Emily Cook, year 2*

I decided to represent Denmark in the International Fair because I had heard that it is the happiest country in the world. Then I started to look more on the internet about it. My dad helped me prepare the stand to represent this country for the fair, and my mum has promised to visit this country in summer.





- Grejsi Cela, year 9

This year the International Fair was amazing and it was organized in a really neat way. Stands were everywhere and they were done really beautifully. This year, I was on the Greek stand for the first time with Ana, and we really enjoyed this new experience. We set our table, food, and everything else we needed for our stand and it turned out really amazing.

Our school gave each class a traditional dance from another country so we could represent them, and also show our parents and the people who were invited more about these really fascinating countries. It was a marvellous way to learn more about a country you are interested in since there were stands with foods of these specific countries also.

Our class had a traditional Albanian dance which everyone loved and enjoyed doing. I was really happy and excited for the dance. Some girls from our class also sang in French, English, and Spanish. The International Fair lasted for four and a half hours, but it went by so fast because I really enjoyed the time there. I can't wait for next year!



- Jera Cenalia & Merve Topal, year 9

The International Fair is a school holiday that we celebrate here at MIST. Every year we celebrate and represent countries from all around the world. The fair gets better every year, and this was our first year helping with a stand.

The night before the fair we prepared snacks to put on the stand. When we first got to the stand we started decorating. We put up Irish flags and other traditional pieces and decorations. Our friends also helped to set up the games and other riddles. After setting up the stand we started practicing our lines that we were supposed to say.

When the fair started, I was ecstatic. There were many people coming by asking about the stand. We told them different legends and stories from Ireland. Everyone that went by enjoyed the activities and stories.

This was our experience from one of the many stands, but the rest of the international fair was equally thrilling. There was a variety of different foods and cultures, and at the fair there were many dances each representing a country in the world.





# Primary Art

**Ina Elezi**  
**Primary Art Teacher**

If we want children to value art, we must give them access to it early in life. Children are naturally free and creative, theatrical and artful, they don't need us as adults to teach them to be free and creative. One of the first concepts we use in our classroom is the 'no judgement zone'. The second is not to set up competition between children. In art, everyone has to say something, and every child has their own art skills to express themselves through colour. In our art classroom everyone comes to learn positive habits, to enjoy themselves, to learn new things, behaviours and attitudes. Creating a painting teaches that by taking small steps, practising to improve, being persistent and being patient are important for children's growth and improvement. Above all, art enables children to grow in confidence, to learn how to think positively about themselves, and helps children to develop their character.

# Worthy **Victors**

**Jola Gjini**  
Primary ICT Teacher

As a teacher of 'digital natives', I am always seeking opportunities to inspire and ignite their passion for technology. The Albanian Science and Engineering Fair is a fantastic means of engaging digital natives by enabling them to access, extend, transform and share ideas and information in multi-modal communication styles and format. The importance of different categories in the competition is huge because they express themselves with different tools that they can feel comfortable with, but also they are very open to compete with tools that are not familiar with.

This year, the Poster Design and Short Movie categories were our target. A target that was achievable and rewarded with a Gold Medal only through my students' dedication and hard work. In the Short Movie Category Sara and Rama created a short film that took viewers into a scene which created emotional changes and provided them with information towards social issues such as bullying.

In my opinion, Selman's poster was the epitome of the saying 'A picture is worth a thousand words'. It led people to think differently and inspired a behavioral change to every person who saw his poster. Despite the fact that ICT is a rising trend in our country, we as a school have integrated such activities into our school curriculum, which helps our near future to be more competitive and project-based. As Donald Knuth says: Beware of bugs in the programming code that I have written; I have only proved it correct, not tried it.

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- Selman Inaltekin, year 6

In ASEF 2019 I had a lot of fun. On Friday we went with a bus to register for ASEF and I was number 719. The next day it was ASEF and I was very excited to test something new, like a competition. Everything was going great until I saw my group (poster design). I saw their projects and I was shocked. I thought I would lose, but in my mind I had great ideas. Later I had 3 judges come to me and I told them about my project. They told me I did great. It was the medals time. I saw I wasn't on bronze medals, I was neither on silver and I thought I would not win anything until I saw my name pop out on the huge screen. I was like crazy. That day I learned never under estimate yourself! I think MIST is a great school. Thank you to my teacher Ms Jola for helping me!



- Sara Elezi, year 6

Participating in ASEF for the first time was a great challenge, and I recommend it to everyone who would like to boost their abilities to the farthest limits. I was part of the Little Scientists, in year 6. I managed to do two projects, both with the topic of bullying, still a problem in our society. During the judgment day, I was very excited and a bit scared. After such a hard work, my friend Rama Alsafarti and I luckily won two Gold Medals. We were very happy for ourselves. The most important thing I learned in ASEF, was to keep moving forward. The competition was hard enough to make you question yourself to your deepest thoughts, but you must believe that you can do it!



- Rama Alsafarti, year 6

I had participated at ASEF competition and it was a really nice chance. Sara and I choose to do a short film about Bullying. We wrote the script then our friends helped us in recording the film. Also we made a poster, then we went to Turgut Ozal for the big day, the day of the competition where the jury saw our work. It was a very big surprise to win not only one medal but two. Both were golden medals, one for the short movie and the other for poster design. I had a lovely time in this competition with my best friend Sara.





# Project **Macbeth**

**Richard Eden**  
Secondary English Teacher

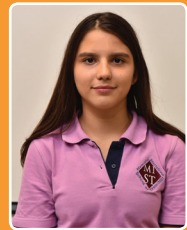
During term 1 and the beginning of term 2, Year 10 first language students' were studying Macbeth by William Shakespeare. As a fun activity and wonderful project they rewrote the words of the 'Ghost Scene' using contemporary English. The reasons behind translating the script into more contemporary language, is that the students' will relate and understand the themes of the play. The class then performed and filmed the scene and made it into a video clip. This taught them many useful computer and organizational skills too.

*- Megan Resuli, year 10*

What we did and learned from Macbeth? Macbeth is one of the most famous plays by one of the world's most legendary authors, William Shakespeare. It is a Shakespearean tragedy. It is a literary work that portrays the downfall of a heroic individual. Macbeth tells us about a man who goes to downfall only because of his ambition. His wife convinces him to do bad stuff, as in get power through killing the king, Duncan. He later on thinks of himself as too powerful to defeat and underestimates others. Macbeth gets killed by Macduff. After that, Scotland falls in peace, law and order are back.

We read the script of the Macbeth play in class. After every part we answered questions in class the teacher asked us to do. Besides that, we also made a play for Act 3 Scene 4. It turned out to be an amazing experience, because the whole class was participating into making the play work. We had good teamwork and learned useful things as in making every part into one whole play. We worked on our acting skills and practised to perform well in the end. What was important is that we got to learn and perform Act 3 Scene 4. It was fun, but also educational for us.

I think the message of Macbeth is that the deeds you do come back to you, you start being scared if you do something you regret. If you get somewhere by the wrong means, it will have consequences in the end. So everyone should do good and make unforgettable moments, not do something they regret after. Focus on you, on what you think, and trust yourself more than anyone else, because all you have in the end is yourself!





# Robotic Hand Project

**Besjana Hysa**  
**Year 4 Teacher**

“Project Based Learning, is an instructional approach built upon learning activities and real tasks that have brought challenges for students to solve. PBL is generally done by groups of students working together toward a common goal.” Brandon Goodman, 2010.

Through projects, students do not learn only content of the subject but they learn many skills that are demanded nowadays in any work environment. Such skills might include; good communication skills, creativity, time management, respect for others ideas, teamwork and decision making. Furthermore, school projects affect student's motivation and attitude toward school which are both fundamental factors that influence student's academic achievement at school. Project based learning is related to constructivist theory, which states that the learning will be deep, meaningful and lifelong if students are constructing their own learning. Knowledge is uncertain but it should be applied, so the learning process occurs.

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This academic year, year 4 students were involved in many projects in all subjects. We found one of the most exciting projects to be the ‘robotic hand’ science project. This project was not only a school assignment for the students, but it was also an opportunity for them to construct their own learning. For us teachers, it was an opportunity to be in the role of facilitator, give advice to students, observe and assess at the same time students’ performance while their brains were building millions of neuronal networks.

The ‘robotic hand’ science project was done with the aim to help students understand, apply and retain information that they learned about the human skeleton and muscle system. While working on the project students showed a great interest and engagement, good collaboration and presentation skills. Students worked with a partner or in groups of three. It was amazing to see them behaving like adults, while they split the work load, responsibilities and duties among each other. Students were completely focused on their task, following the given instructions, and curious to see how the robotic hand will really work. This project lasted about 4 classes in total, and students prepared and presented their findings.

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- Safiye Gokalp, year 4

To do a robotic hand you need straw (bones), string (muscles), red marks (joints) and your own paper hand. It's fun to do a robotic hand and it's not hard to do it. I like it because you can make the fingers move and even try to make the robotic hand hold something. The project teaches you how to work with somebody. Working with a partner is even more fun than working alone.



- Emili Likollari, year 4

I liked the robotic hand because it was a creative thing to make and it was also very fun. I learned about how hand works. The straws represent bones, the string represents muscles and the red lines represent the joints. When you pull the string which is the muscle, it contracts and the finger moves. When you let it free it relaxes. This is how the robotic hand works. I loved it. It was my most favorite project in the whole year.



# Në prag të provimeve të lirimit

## A stone's throw away from standard state examinations

**Roza Pali**  
**Secondary Albanian Language Teacher**

*“Language is the purest reflection of a nation and its culture” - Eqerem Çabej*

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With the school year coming to an end, grade 9 (year 10) students are busier than ever, overemotional and loaded with responsibilities. Completing their secondary education according to the Albanian System of Education, they are obliged to apply their knowledge by taking standardized tests organized by the National Examination Agency: ‘Provimi i Lirimit’.

The level of knowledge and achievement that students reflect, regarding Albanian Language is a key element which also directly affects lessons of the Languages and Communication field, as well as every other subject taught in school. Furthermore, Albanian Language, as a school subject, really enhances the students capacity to communicate, strengthens their ability to satisfy society’s demands for the workforce, and helps them accomplish their own personal goals. With respect to the last point, a firm and organized work-effort from the teacher is a must, but certainly this should be accompanied by systematic collaboration, preparation and commitment of the students. In addition, the teacher introduces his/her lectures based on ‘The Orientational Program for the State Examinations of Foundational Secondary Education’.

The orientation program is fully supported by the curriculum of Albanian Language (grades 6-9) and consists of a number of concepts such as, comprehension, skills and efficient usage of the spoken language that the students should be able to apply. At MIST, preparations start from October, followed by the allocation of additional materials (other than school books) and provision of additional lesson hours relating to the state exams. The teacher and student both cooperate, according to the program, in order for the student to be fully prepared and confident for The State Exams. Firstly, the students are introduced to the test structure and then constantly go through practice tests from which they are evaluated regarding the knowledge they possess.



My main principle is that, in order for a student to succeed in having proficient knowledge in Albanian Language, he/she should be able to express it in various formal or informal written work and more importantly in real-life situations. Based on this principle, I seek and select the most beneficial varieties of formal and informal texts, grammar exercises, and diverse question models meeting the demands for a logical and coherent phraseology of the language. Furthermore, I also often carry out writing hours for personal and functional aims (each specific competence is prioritized based on the percentage it covers on the exam, reading comprehension 45%, structural and functional writing 15%, adequate usage of the language 40%).

The students are continually encouraged to carry out systematic work, so they are prepared for full evaluation in mock (practice) exams, which are planned by the school's principal alongside the teacher in charge of the particular subject. The mock exam is conducted identically as the real one would be, strictly following the principles corresponding to the state policy. MIST students time and again have proven that they are devoted and motivated, achieving some excellent results in these exams. We hope that this determination and conscientious study will continue until the end of the academic year resulting in the grades the students have aimed to achieve!

- Megan Resuli, year 10

The school year is almost finished and our grade 9 is experiencing the most emotional and busiest time of the year. We have been preparing for this moment long enough and we are waiting for it to come by working harder every day. We are taking our Albanian State Exams in June. There are three exams we will take: English, Maths and Albanian. At school, we have been preparing for the Albanian exam mostly by taking mock exams these past two semesters. The exams are from the past years, and they create an idea of how the exam is going to be this year for us. By taking them, we overcome our fears and challenge ourselves into putting more effort into studying.

Our teacher has given us lots of homework from which we write essays, we read several texts, and we also have been working on Albanian grammar. Outside of school we read books and do the assigned homework. These exams are stressful, however, it's good for us to beat our fears and stress, it teaches us for future exams and it summarizes our work put in these past few years at school. I hope our hard work shows in the exam and in the future.



- Elin Bedo, year 10

Grade 9 is one of the busiest years of education for a student in Albania because students finish their middle school, according to the Albanian system of education. This year also we are writing the state exams that do not only evaluate us in Mathematics and English language but also Albanian language. We have been preparing for this moment for a long time and it's finally here. Having the pressure of writing the state exam at the end of the year is pretty stressful.

The state exam Albanian language is mostly based on grammar but there's also a little bit of literature. We do not only use the textbook but also a workbook type of textbook that enables us to practice grammar in an easier way. The teacher organised and alternated the lessons so that we could use the textbook and the workbook at the same time. She also gave us a lot of homework writing essays, therefore we could practice our writing since there is a writing section in the state exam. Besides homework, we have also written some past exams for the state exam as a form of practising. We wrote the 2016, 2017 and 2018 past exams. As we practised throughout the year, when it came to writing the mock exams, every time I sat down at a desk to write it I became more and more confident about my results at the end.

I am very glad we have worked the way we have, to prepare for this important exam. I am sure that all the sweat and tears will be rewarded at the end with great results.





# GCSE Physics Preparation

**Taulant Kackini**  
Physics Teacher

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No one likes surprises, when it comes to exams. That's why the most important method to support your preparations for IGCSE and A Level exams is using past papers.

Here, in Albania when you are in grade 9 or grade 12, you enter 'matura' state exams, and only some of the students study for their state exams using past exam papers. When it comes to IGCSE and A Level exams, using past papers becomes very important - because when you use a past paper, it is easy for you to realize what you already know; what you are not so good at; and also, what you don't know at all. However, this is not the only benefit of past papers - there are many more benefits. It was only after one of my extended A Level training courses that I realized the importance of past papers, because usage of past papers was a part of that course.

## **Benefits of Past Exam Papers**

The most important benefits of past paper use that I have experienced during my years of teaching Cambridge International Examinations are:

1. Past papers give students the chance to be focused on important parts of the subject, rather than trying to cope with the whole subject, which has a broad range of associated topics.
2. It is very efficient and productive to practice using exam style questions. This allows the teacher to ensure that students are recognizing the required topic in the question, and



answering questions in the best possible way to gain maximum marks.

3. It is very important for my students, most of whom don't have English as their first language, to get used to the terminology and vocabulary which frequently appear in the Cambridge examinations.
4. Past papers help students to learn and become more familiar with the three different question types that they are going to face. (multiple choice, theory and practical).
5. Past papers help students with time management in two different ways. Firstly, to understand the length of each paper and the corresponding time which needs to be spent per question. Secondly, students sit more than one paper, which need to be approached in different ways with regards to managing time. Efficiency in time management and allocation are very important to achieving a good mark in such examinations.
6. Students learn to identify the number of questions for each paper.
7. Student can practice different exam techniques and find the one that fits them the best.
8. Past papers can help students' revision, as they are able to identify the areas that they need to focus on during revision time.

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### The Marking Scheme

Although physics is an exact science, as a physics teacher, I am aware that there can be more than one way of explaining a topic. So, two teachers can explain the same question in two different ways, and both can be right. However, in Cambridge exams you don't have two right answers, there is only one from which you can get full marks. Here comes the importance of marking scheme. Students using marking schemes are not only able to check their answers, but also have the chance to see how an ideal answer would be. They also learn the way they should answer the questions to get a good evaluation, and what key words can get them to maximum marks.

Also, students who have experience using marking schemes learn that the answer is not at all about quantity, but about quality. It is common for students to write a lot in an effort to prove all their knowledge. However, this is one of the biggest mistakes that only usage of marking schemes can correct. Students need to understand that if they write more than one answer both answers will be discounted, even if one is correct. Therefore, through past paper use, students learn to be precise and short in the right answers.

In my experience, students appreciate the honesty of past papers: they want to understand what it is they will be doing, and how to achieve the best possible results. It is our job as teachers, to relate to our students and work with them to build their confidence, and to ensure that they feel fully prepared by the time they take their official exams.

- *Bruklin Noka, year 11*

My name is Bruklin Noka and I have been studying for my IGCSEs this year. IGCSEs are a crucial part of the British education system. I believe that past papers, especially for combined science are the most smart and strategic way to prepare. You get to explore a diverse variation of questions that makes you more familiar with the format, and you notice that the more you papers you practice – the more confident you feel, and less scared and more ready to ace your exams. The best way to minimize pressure is doing past papers every day, it only takes 30 minutes to an hour revision time. After all, 'Practice makes perfect!'



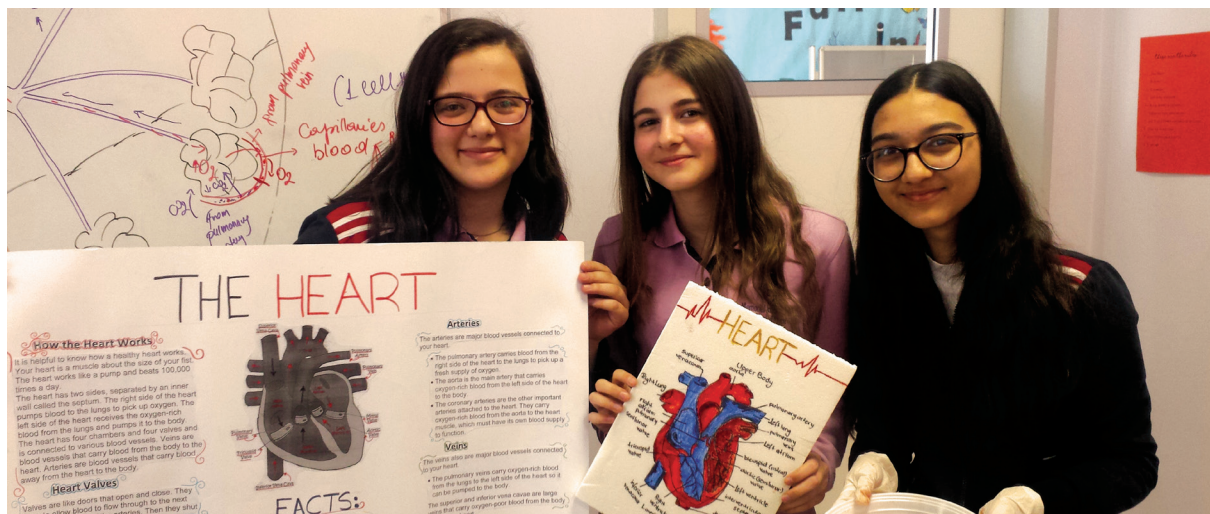
- *Sarah Xholi, year 11*

IGCSE are some of the most important exams that we will take throughout our years of high school, which is why we try to choose the best way to revise. It should be clear in our mind that these exams are not a memory test. In my point of view those who spout facts will get average results. On the other hand the ones who apply what they have learned will land the top marks. An early start with revision gives IGCSE students a huge advantage. Past Papers are exam questions organised by topics. I found them really helpful because they faced me with a range of questions that have already been tested on students, and are thus a clear example of what is required for a student to know on the day of the exam. Getting to see the questions firsthand and test my abilities in answering them allowed me to experience what the exam would feel like, and also helped me understand the areas where I needed to study more.

Due to the past papers having been formerly tested on other students, it is important for students to understand that every topic covered in a past paper is important to be understood, known, and taught well. Therefore, there is no question in a past paper that is unimportant, or that we can pass, which is why past papers are much better than simply revising from a textbook, where certain information can be classified by the human mind as unimportant, or considered as a topic that could not be tested. Making that simple derivation from the textbook, where many topics could be left over to be studied later, to the past papers, where every topic is important because it is clear that it was tested before, trains the student's minds into further learning the content.

It is due to the latter and every reason mentioned, that past papers have helped me the most as a revision tool. I am certain that due to knowing firsthand what the exam looks like and having tested myself bound by the time of the paper, I will do much better on my IGCSE exams.





# A Mind Full of Questions...

**Klaudia Piroli**  
Biology Teacher

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Since the moment when a child is born and during all his/her life, they want to explore the new things that they can see or imagine. Science is the study of facts. With science you can discover the world, ask questions and have new and wonderful ideas. It is against this very definition of science that most educators believe that scientific learning which takes place in classroom alone is not true learning. Science lab experiments promote the development of scientific thinking in students. Rather than making the children memorize facts, they are made to think and understand things and the world around them. Science activities and investigations are also a great way to build oral vocabulary, develop reading readiness, and fuel literacy development.

In science laboratories children get time, space, and resources to exercise their curiosity. They are given the freedom to engage in new explorations, experimentations, and explanations.

During and after an experiment, it can be biology, chemistry, physics, math etc, students learn and benefit in different areas such as:

1. Learning to use laboratory equipment safely and correctly.
2. Learning how to ask questions and hypothesise.
3. Talking about what they see, hear, smell and discover.
4. Children have the opportunity to develop their observational skills.
5. Reading extra books and exploring in internet.
6. Children have the opportunity to discuss and predict what will happen during and in the end of the experiment.



7. Ask questions to the teacher and other students.
8. Exploring cause and effect through various materials and techniques.
9. Developing an exploratory mind.

In my biology classes this year we have done many experiments, which have encouraged both student participation and the development of an inquiry mindset.

- Sueda Guleker, year 10

Early on in the year, we conducted a small-scale and simple experiment involving yeast, sugar and water at two different temperature points, one that was hot and one that was cold. We put a packet of yeast, sugar and water into each of the two beakers and then we covered them with plastic wrap. After some minutes we measured the foam produced in two beakers and at the one with hot water we saw the change in the film that was doming (CO<sub>2</sub> produced).

The purpose of this experiment was to observe the process of respiration in yeast. It was important for us to do this experiment and others like it because it helped us really understand the effect external and internal factors had on the respiration process; and the role of temperature+ enzymes, which happened to be a topic our class had a hard time visualizing.



- Dilara Gonul, Reyhan Tokcelik, Betul Yusufi, year 10

For our biology project we decided to explain the heart. One of our group members decided to bring a real heart to the class. The heart she brought to the class was a goat heart. Our biology teacher helped us with cutting (dissecting) the heart. By cutting (dissecting) the heart and looking inside it, it helped us understand the lesson better – the chambers and the valve positions – the way chambers are connected to the aorta, vena cava, pulmonary artery and pulmonary vein.

Our class mates were more focused and interested to the process. The concepts that we learned and reviewed that day helped us remember the information for the exam. During the whole process we asked a lot of questions and we enjoyed a lot the lesson.



# Speech Competition

**Robert Cook**  
Head of English

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 MIST convened a public speaking competition. Six students from years 11-13 spoke in front of fellow students and a jury of three teachers on topics of their choice and were judged according to their clarity, originality, and presentation skills. Issues and subjects ranging from bullying to photography were covered and the students spoke lucidly and impressively. 2nd prize went to Arlind Bytyci (year 11) and the overall winner was Sibora Cenelia (year 12), who shares her experience in an article below.

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- Sibora Cenalia, year 12

One of the many things that I have learned through public speaking is that to perform and spread a message confidently, the speaker should find a way in which they can create a connection with the audience. From past experiences, I've realized that the best way for me to create this connection with the listener is by being able to share a personal story, a story to which the audience does not necessarily completely have to relate, but it that should get them thinking. Coupled with this, the ability to show vulnerability just makes one's speech even more powerful.

In my speech, "Do grades really matter?" I wanted to speak on a sensitive topic that could be considered "borderline-controversial" because of the different opinions on it. I aimed to make the audience and jury get thinking: Is all the stress an average student have to go through worth it at the end? The main point that I wanted to make clear was that, in my personal belief, a student is worth more than just a scale from 4 to 10. Their abilities, talents, and intellects are rarely fully captured through scholar capability testing. The harsh truth is that in adulthood you do not need to know endless information by heart, but more so to be able to use this information and putting it into work.

As a year 12 student I have had my fair share of ups and downs when spoken of grades. As an initially-referred-to "gifted child", having to face failure was simply unacceptable. The first thing that came to mind was whether I really was smart at any point in my life or that something must be wrong with me. Events always occur in people's lives that can lead onto them not performing as well, but that doesn't mean they are suddenly unintelligent. The truth is grades are important, but they are not the most important thing. Our educational experiences are not the only thing we should put all our cares on. If you study, good grades will come themselves and lower than expected grades shouldn't be a reason for discouragement.

As for the speech competition as an experience of itself, I would say I had the best of times. It felt amazing being heard, and hearing other people and what they had to say. It was nice learning new things from our own peers and getting to know them better. I am very thankful our school provides us a chance to speak for ourselves.





# Sports Day

**Klajdi Aruci**  
**Physical Education Teacher**



Sport is a good opportunity and a great way to have fun. Of course, we are not talking about the competitive sport of Olympics where you have to give 100% to win, but we are talking about team games that everybody is able to play and enjoy. It doesn't matter if you have great abilities and skills in physical activity or not; the importance is to get involved in the game and to have fun. This is what we did at MIST on our Sports Day.

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In primary, we played a variety of games with students separated into their House teams: Brown Bear/Balkan Lynx/Red Fox/Wolves. In secondary teams of Blue/Red/Gold and White competed in games like Tic-Tac-Toe: This game was not played on paper but on the court, where students had to think and run quickly for giving to gain victory for their teams. We also had a Sack Race, and it was very fun to watch students enthusiastically jumping with their legs inside the sack. The balloon race, where players hold a balloon between their foreheads as they run, made all students give their maximum effort and concentration to their team mates. We also had a tug of war, as well athletic races and games which tested throwing accuracy.

Everyone enjoyed the experience of Sports Day, both students and teachers. Perhaps not everyone likes physical activity and we have to admit that, but everybody loves to be part of Sports Day activities!

*- Nergis Budak, year 5*

This year sports day was in our school field and it was so beautiful. I loved it. We were in our teams, we all had turns to try every game. The games were so much fun. Our sports teacher and our class teachers explained us what are we going to play and the rules. It was the best sports day ever.



- Juri Islamaj, year 7

This sports day was the best day ever. For all the times we have done a sports day, I enjoyed this one the most. There were 4 teams: red, blue, white, and gold. On each team there were students from all classes. I was on the white team with Malda and Hera.

There were many games including tic-tac-toe, ring toss, and balloon buddy racing. My team only lost at the sack race and we won overall. I really liked my team and we had a lot of fun competing together.



- Melek Bagatir, year 5

It was the best sports day I ever had and the best day ever. I am in the Red fox team and our team had almost all best players. We won 4 games, drew 1, and lost 1. Thank you to Mr Klajdi.



- Jashi Erebara, year 9

On Wednesday, the 15th of May, our school held the annual "Sports Day". On this day, every year, the students of the school are part of different, fun sport activities.

In total we had five different games: The Sack Race, Tic Tac Toe, The Balloon Race, Tug of War and Ring Toss. Students were divided into four different teams: Red, Blue, White and Gold. Each team was given a ribbon the color of the team they were in. All four teams had eight to nine members. This year, I was part of the red team so I got a red ribbon. The different teams competed against each other and the one with the most points, won. This year the White team was in the first place.

Usually, we develop Sports Day outside of our school in other fields, but this year was special as we enjoyed the new spaces and courts of our school. Everyone participated and appreciated the organized activities, we always feel positive about such events organized by the school.





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# Learning Through Failure

**Brett Russell**  
Secondary Science Teacher

*“Failure is the key to success, each mistake teaches us something.”*

*– Moriher Ueshiba.*

When you fall, get back up, dust yourself off and try again. This is a saying my father told me over and over as a child. At the time, I did not realize how much it pertained to life. Now completing my 5th year of being an educator, I realize how much it pertains to learning. Students are afraid of failure. They see it as a demoralizing performance that they cannot recover from. As educators, we should be teaching our students that they must fail to be truly successful.

I run a S.T.E.M club at Memorial International School of Tirana. For those that may not know S.T.E.M stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. In our club, we focus mostly on real world problems with hands on solutions. The first activity I start with each semester is a tower building challenge. Students are given just a few materials (mainly paper) and have only 15 minutes to build the tallest tower possible. The catch is that the tower must be able to support a tennis ball for at least 10 seconds. The only way to succeed in this challenge



is through failure. Come up with an idea, test it, assess it, and fix it! Students rush to build the tallest structure, but it soon fails once they test it with the tennis ball. It is amazing to watch the students' different types of thinking, and their learning styles. With each collapse of the tower, the student brainstorms and develops a new idea. These new ideas would never occur if it were not for the previous failure.

I try to look at my daily classroom lessons, as the tower challenge. How can I help my students be more successful? What new ideas can students develop to solve these problems? The answer is Failure. Let individuals learn from their mistakes and come up with a way to fix the problem using hands on solutions. This strategy is a sure way to challenge your class and utilize different learning styles.

- Arbiona Metaj, year 7

This trimester I am going to STEM club. It is so fun and the teacher is really nice. We do STEM in the science room. We watch films and answer some questions about them. These last 2 times we were in STEM we played a game with cups and ping pong balls. It was so much fun. The winner was Ismail, but even second place, which was Megan, won something. I would recommend this club!



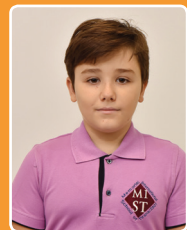
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- Enea Virjani, year 8

Stem club is about science, technology, maths and more. We actually do activities and test things, like if a tall paper tower can hold a tennis ball or how far can a normal paper plane fly. Really, really fun! It is actually surprising how good the club is, so I really recommended it.

Stem club is actually unique compared to others because of the many activities in it. In Stem we learn like in a regular lesson, but in a special way and with really nice attention. Most of the time we watch videos but there is a type of detailed lesson too. Mr Russell (our Stem teacher) gives out papers which have questions or missing words for a specific part of the video. One of the videos we watched was about jungles and we had to fill in the blanks. Fun and educational at the same time!

Imagining what stem club has taught me is like a great thing. It's surprising how Mr Russell teaches this extra fun and awesome lesson throughout his long and tiring day, but I think that he actually has fun too because everybody who is in stem club enjoys it. This is a great club I like it a lot!



# Primary and Secondary **Student Council**

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**Sarah Ballaman**  
**Year 3 Form Teacher**



The Student Council at MIST provides an opportunity for students to engage in a structured partnership with teachers and school managers. The Student Council can create a sense of ownership of the school and its activities among the student population, as well as giving students an opportunity to acquire the sort of communication, planning and organisational skills which will be of benefit to them in their future lives.

Here at MIST, we have two student Councils; one for KS1-2 and one for KS3-5. In the younger years, the Student Council is a fantastic platform for students to share their ideas and opinions about how to improve their learning environment. They vote on a wide range of topics like outdoor equipment, which charities to fund raise for, and what posters we need to encourage respectful behaviour throughout the school buildings.

In the upper years, students meet regularly to discuss school events and projects. By enabling students to take responsibility for projects, they are able to demonstrate that they can manage and bring such projects to a successful conclusion.

Student council representatives are elected by their peers. Each class has two representatives that speak for the class, bringing points that have been discussed to the council meetings. These meetings take place once a month. The main points on the agenda are then presented to the head of school by the President, Vice- President and Secretary.

*- Jera Cenalia, year 9*

When I first joined student council I was not expecting to learn much from it, but I was pleasantly surprised. The meetings brought a fun time with a group of people as well as serious discussions and many lessons. We had a meeting every Thursday during lunch period. We talked about many different things like school events, charities or fun parties that we had to plan and prepare. Student council also taught me group work and being ready to help or cover for others when they need you. When being in student council you make decisions and give your opinion in important matters.



As a part of student council we also help raise funds for school-wide activities, including social events, community projects, helping people in need and school reform. We plan and organize school events for special school holidays and events. Being in student council teaches you responsibility and having a job to focus and work on. It is important to give it your all because being part of student council gives you opportunities in the future, but not only that, it gives you knowledge that a regular school class would not. Student council is an amazing opportunity which I cherish and would suggest that everyone tries at least once.

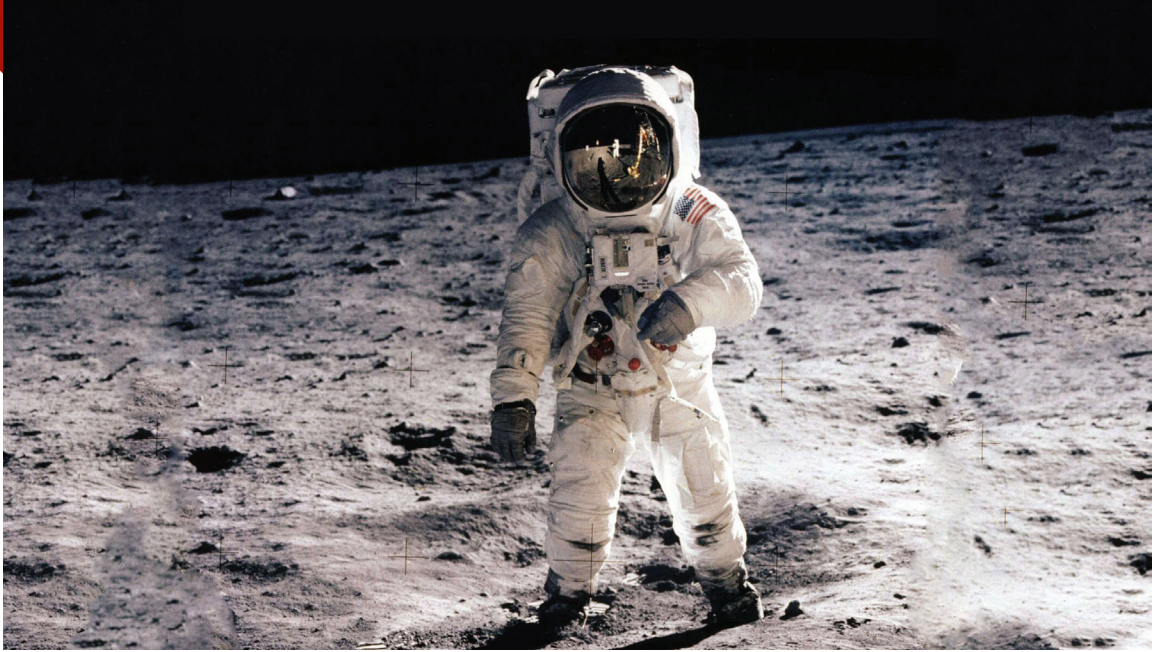
*- Megi Paja, year 9*

Student council is an organisation that decides what activities the school might do. To be a part of student council is a very hard responsibility. You need to keep some secrets until the teacher of it tells you to tell it to others. It also needs a great effort in negotiating and agreeing. The student council for me is a great experience. It taught me so many things. Student council is a great team. Thanks a lot MIST.





## Sample Student Work



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# Apollo 11

## Did it actually happen?

Mustafa Bilgin  
year 12



On 20 July, 1969, American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin were the first people to walk on the moon. However, there are some conspiracy theories which suggest that the moon landing was actually faked. I think that the moon landing was real, and there are several reasons for that.

Firstly, the astronauts came back with samples of the moon to Earth, and these rocks were clearly unfindable on the Earth’s crust. During the six different

Apollo missions, NASA astronauts brought around 382 kilograms of moon rocks, ranging from 200 million to 4.5 billion years old (compared with the Earth's oldest rocks. Investigations have shown that these rocks were not geological materials that were collectible on Earth. For instance, they are very volatile. They have low boiling points, and they can react easily with the molecules/gases in the atmosphere (nitrogen, carbon dioxide etc.). These rocks wouldn't exist naturally in the Earth itself.

Secondly, there is a theory which tells that the stars do not appear in the pictures. However, the stars were still around. The argument is that: if the moon has no atmosphere, we should be able to see the sky lit up with stars. That is not the case when we include technological photographing details on the moon. In a very dark background with objects so brightly lit by the sun, the opening of the camera must be kept small to photograph the astronauts and the land sharp and clear, rather than taking blurry images. As a result, this leaves the camera unable to take light in the background (sky).

Another argument is the movement of the flag. Pictures and videos show that the flag was moving, however there is no wind on the moon, so how is that possible? Actually, the flag was not moving. The movement of the flag was caused due to its disturbance when it was embedded by the astronaut. Hence, these disturbances caused ripples to form throughout the flag.

The final argument is: how did the deadly radiation (Van Allen belt) not affect the astronauts? Firstly, Van Allen radiation belt is a zone of energetic charged particles, that are captured and held by the Earth's magnetic field. The Van Allen radiation belt does not exist in the moon. Thus, this radiation would only affect them while they exited and entered the Earth. During the journey, the hull of the spacecraft was shielded, and the electrons would be absorbed by aluminium. However, the penetration of protons was irresistible. In order to be protected from the radiation, the spacecraft flew around the Van Allen radiation belt. Also, a short time of exposure to this radiation could be recovered.

There are several conspiracy theories that argue whether the Apollo 11 happened. I believe that this mission took place. The facts are that astronauts brought samples to Earth, used professional photographing technology. Thereby most of the conspiracy theories can actually be successfully countered so we can be sure that the Apollo 11 mission did actually take place.

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