

Newsletter RIS Swiss Section 2018 - 19

Ninth Issue

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NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends of RIS Swiss Section –
Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok!

It is our great pleasure to present the ninth issue of the newsletter and
we wish you a pleasant and informative reading,

Simon Dörig, Principal & Hendrik Schuhmacher, Editor

Teachers

German-language subject teaching - DFU

Language acquisition takes time and effort and occasional setbacks are to be expected when learning and working in German. This makes language support so important.

To assist students learning German on an academic level, we immerse students in German language in a variety of subjects. Through this language concept, our students enhance their German skills at the same time as learning Math, Biology, Physics or Arts classes. It is called *Deutschsprachiger Fachunterricht (DFU)* and means that every lesson is a language lesson.

'German-language content teaching' has long been practiced at German Schools Abroad, for which it was developed. Over time, however, the original term 'German-language content teaching' was renamed as 'language-sensitive German-language content teaching', to make it clear that the concept had further evolved. The addition emphasizes that *DFU* entails a sensitive approach to language and language learning. In *DFU* lessons, communication takes place solely in German; not only in Science subjects, but also in subjects like Music, Art and History. A whole range of methodological tools are available for working in the different subjects, the majority of which were developed by Josef Leisen. Teaching German outside of the subject of German is becoming increasingly important at our school. Children are encouraged to constantly apply and practice what they have learned, a requirement for learning a language successfully. Another advantage is that the vocabulary increases tremendously.

From the school year 2018/19 onwards, *DFU* will also play a role in assessing student achievement in our Secondary School, thereby increasing the importance of DFU:

Vocabulary tests on subject-specific vocabulary

All students will write vocabulary tests in every subject and both semesters.

Grading the corrections of exams

Linguistic corrections of exam and quizzes will be done in all relevant subjects.

We also use a standardized language tests to assess the language proficiency of our students. All students participate in the German Language Diploma (*Deutsches Sprachdiplom – DSD*). These competency test results offer valuable information to further enhance teaching strategies and to individualize the language support we offer.

Hendrik Schuhmacher



School Leadership

Self-organized learning at our school



In the current pedagogical debate, the topic of self-organized learning (SOL) is central. This means that students organize their learning independently. This challenging approach is supported by many educational innovations at our school, of which the following remarks offer an impression.

To put SOL into practice, students need very specific competences:

On the one hand there is self-competence. This means that students are ready to get involved in the task. In Biology, for example, on the topic of "the representation of the internal organs of humans," they choose the organs. Students have to bring their own interests to the table; usually this succeeds when they see the relation to their own life.

Furthermore, students need to be prepared to stick to the topic even if problems may arise, there is time pressure is increasing or when the expected results may not materialize. This self-competence is achieved, among other things, by giving students the opportunity to reflect on it regularly. Well-designed self-assessment forms and personal feedback from the teacher help, too.

Another aspect is social skills. Frequently, topics are developed in groups. The topic is divided into sub-topics and at the end each group member contributes the results of their work. For this purpose, the size of the individual contributions should be about the same and each group member must be prepared to meet the highest possible standards. Nevertheless, certain strengths of each group member should also be considered. For example, one person may interpret pictures very well, the other's strength is creating a short film on the subject and someone else is a specialist in organizing the presentation. There must also be a coordinator where the threads converge. Fair dealings with each other as well as clear structures help to succeed.



Self-organized learning

Methodological competence is also an essential element of SOL. The point here is not that the teacher uses as many varied methods as possible in his or her lessons, but that students are able to deal with different content and tasks that they are working on as part of the SOL.

Of course, the competence in this case is to understand and analyze texts.

However, in our example, students must also be able to analyze a graph, evaluate a statistic, make an adequate presentation with a suitable computer program or visually prepare the content of a complex text. Additionally, they must also have learned how to purposefully and seriously do research on the internet, share the results in the group and make a short film or video tutorial. To know how group contributions can be fairly assessed is also useful for the students.

Outside of subject teaching, we have introduced other measures to support SOL. The learning development talks, for example, serve to strengthen the student's personal responsibility - an essential aspect of self-competence. With the help of the teacher present, tutoring lessons allow for repeating certain methods that the student should master in everyday lessons. The homeroom teacher's class, in which the class council can meet, contributes to the development of social skills. The personal coach, who has been assigned to each student at the beginning of this school year, helps to consolidate and individually develop the skills needed for successful SOL.

Here is the chance to support SOL with the planned expansion of our school. Numerous valuable ideas have already contributed to this planning and continue to be added. With our new interior design, we will be able to better implement the sophisticated form of self-organized learning in the near future.

Jens Eggert



SMV

SMV stands for student responsibility



The tasks of the SMV include organizing and supporting events at the school, such as the Christmas Party and Aloha Splash. In addition, we discuss school rules and student behavior in the school building. We also have a say in the design of the school uniform and the school pullover. When difficulties arise between different students or between students and the school, we act as mediators.

The SMV consists of the following members:

Students: Malte Oloffs (SMV President, 10th grade), Cyrill Reding (Deputy SMV President, 11th grade), Franka Lerbs (Treasurer, 11th grade), Sarah Gähwiler (Deputy Treasurer, 9th grade), Sonya Stoffer (Secretary, 6th grade) and Jelena Büchi (Deputy Secretary, 5th grade)

Teachers: Ms. Störzer (liaison teacher) and Ms. Marginean (deputy liaison teacher)

SMV meetings:

The SMV members meet twice a month. The meetings take place during or after class.

Exchange between SMV and students:

All the class representatives of grades 5 to 12 have an SMV meeting every month. They then forward the information from the SMV to other students in their class, who can in turn communicate their concerns and suggestions to the SMV via their class representatives.

School Development Team

We move forward together... motivated and following the GEH method.



The goal of school development should be to take a vision on good education, created and supported by the school community, and further develop, implement and evaluate it. Learning progress and students' success in school should be the focus and drive behind the development. When we respond to the wishes, needs and feedback of students, parents, teachers and supervisors (inspections), we will obtain new impulses to develop our teaching, both on the individual level and as a whole.

In agreement with our countries of origin, we intend to continue to develop in the following areas in the coming years:

- **Promotion of learner autonomy**
- **Strengthening the professionalization and cooperation of teachers**
- **Strengthening the German language**
- **Extension and renovation of the school**
- **Opening up the school**



School development is a long-term process, and there is no real recipe for success that will guarantee the success of projects, but the GEH method has worked well in recent years.

G for gently

Changes in an organization need time and we have patience. People have different ideas of time. Some would like to see the result of the change tomorrow, others swear by continuous processes, in which the change only becomes visible after years. And again others want everything to stay as it is. The time and resources of all involved play a central role, as we do. If we manage to reasonably divide resources and energies, chances are high that projects will stay alive. It is important to proceed gently in the meantime, take a break and look back at the whole thing, to check if the path is right.

E for engagement

School development processes succeed with motivated, committed teachers. When are teachers motivated? Project that enable autonomy, social inclusion and competencies are the ones that motivate. One can likely also relate this statement to one's own lessons or, more generally, to life.

Why not, for example, form «professional learning communities» and engage with the associated experience of the school as a learning organization? Who knows, maybe this opens up new development opportunities and energy sources.

H for humor

It is worthwhile to cultivate a look where «the glass is half full» in the joint process and to make sure that you do not switch to «catch-up mode». With a constructive, positive perception and a corresponding dose of humor, we can succeed in solving difficult issues with a certain ease.

To conclude, we move ahead together, but we strive to keep the overview and carefully guide all stakeholders through school development. It is important for us to involve and encourage everyone to push things forward one step at a time, and sometimes even to slow down school development.

Remo Nyffenegger



News



Authors Peter Simon Altmann and Catalin Dorian Florescu visit RIS Swiss Section - Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok

On 26 November 2018, RIS Swiss Section - Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok hosted two authors: Peter Simon Altmann (Austria) and Catalin Dorian Florescu (Switzerland).

Visiting authors and journalists are not uncommon for our school and are a great opportunity for the students to meet creative and innovative people in person. Both authors read excerpts from their works on migration and integration and then discussed the content and their writing with the young audience. Both authors focused on the life of people looking for the right place to live in this world. They really met the challenge of addressing the students from our grades 7 - 12 successfully and managed to excite them about literature. A great achievement!

RIS Swiss Section - Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok was able to host these interesting guests with the help and support of the Swiss, Austrian and German Embassies in Bangkok.





Loy Krathong Ceremony / Krathong Workshops 2018

On Thursday, 22 November 2018, RIS Swiss Section - Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok celebrated Loy Krathong, one of the most important and beautiful festivals of Thailand. It is an event when the people of Thailand pay respect to the goddess of water by floating Krathongs on any and all waterways around the kingdom. The sight of thousands of Krathongs (floating banana leaf vessels) is a really magical sight, and there are many places in Bangkok and all over Thailand where you can get involved with the festivities.

So every year RIS Swiss Section invites the school community to a special assembly to celebrate Loy Krathong. Students, parents, teachers, administration staff, as well as our special guests H.E. Ivo Sieber, Ambassador of Switzerland, H.E. Georg Schmidt, Ambassador of Germany and H.E. Dr. Eva Hager, Ambassador of Austria were greeted with welcoming words from Principal Simon Dörig. Afterwards, students of grade 7 presented the history and customs of Loy Krathong, and explained the meaning of this festival for Thai people. Then students, parents and teachers performed various colourful Thai cultural presentations, explained the meaning of this festival for the Thai people and performed for their guests traditional interpretations of Loy Krathong dances and songs. Later all students joined the activities in mixed age groups and practiced how to make and decorate the Krathong. At noon all students proudly presented their Krathongs to the guests in the inner school yard. A big thank you to our Thai Language and Culture Department for organising this event and to everyone who contributed.





3. October: Day of German Unity

The Day of German Unity (German: Tag der Deutschen Einheit) is the national day of Germany, celebrated on 3 October as a public holiday. It commemorates the anniversary of German reunification in 1990, when the goal of a united Germany that originated in the middle of the 19th century was finally fulfilled. Therefore, the name addresses neither the re-union nor the union, but the unity of Germany. The Day of German Unity on 3 October has been the German national holiday since 1990, when the reunification was formally completed. It is a public holiday in the Federal Republic of Germany.

On Tuesday, 3rd October 2018, RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok hosted a National Day event for the students of the Secondary school in the music room. The goal of the event was to let all students understand and experience this turning point in German history.

Therefore, students of many different grades captured the stage and provided the audience with interesting performances.

The performances included musical and poetic interpretations and historical slideshows. The student choir sang the famous old song “Die Gedanken sind frei” and students of Grade 11 lead through a discussion with teachers about their youth in East and West Germany during the cold war. Jens Eggert, the Head of Secondary, guided the audience through the program.

The students had not yet even been born when reunification took place! Therefore, the achievement of the students was tremendous.





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