

Learning at JIS – from Cath Wan, Deputy Principal/ PYP Coordinator

A Year of Learning and The Benefits of Some Holiday Boredom!

What a year it has been! But throughout the challenges the pandemic has brought to our community, it has been a joy to see the resilience, unwavering commitment and enthusiasm of our JIS students.

Way back in August, I asked our parent community “what matters most for this year?” Just to remind you, here were the responses:

What we value most, now, educationally, for our children

- Overall wellbeing and being active
- Mental and physical health
- Resilience to facing obstacles in life
- Happiness
- Social interaction
- Self-regulation, emotional regulation, self-learning skills
- Understanding the world and establishing meaningful connections with peers and the environment
- Remembering that school is fun and enjoyable.
- Keeping them engaged and motivated
- Hope
- Thinking for themselves

When I look at the list, I can think of multiple examples of how these values have fed into student learning throughout the year. Things that really stand out as having addressed everything on this list have included:

- **Emphasis on outdoor learning:** the joy, interaction, engagement and motivation during this has been outstanding.
- **Emphasis on inquiry based learning:** children being active participants in their own learning and following their own questions rather than being ‘spoon fed’ - this has nurtured our self-motivated, curious learners.
- **Emphasis on agency and action:** empowering children to take ownership of their learning, lead with their passions and take action where they see fit has been very powerful this year



So, despite everything, we have had a great year of learning at JIS. But, along with many parents in Hong Kong at the moment, you may be feeling a little trepidation at the thought of 6 weeks with your child, hot weather and no travel plans. If you are feeling this, you are certainly not alone and so, the last bit of learning advice from me for this year is:

It's fine for your kids to be bored

In fact, many studies have linked boredom with enhanced creativity and self-management skills.

There is a lot of pressure nowadays to 'parent' and to keep your children entertained the whole time (or to hand them the iPad when you can't, lest they complain!) Yet growing up yourself, you may have been told to "entertain yourself and don't disturb me until dinner time". There was value in this: laying on your back, gazing at the clouds, you may have imagined the cloud shapes forming into different animals or characters; outside with nothing but mud and sticks, you may have created the most wonderful mud creations!

I know it's easier said than done to hold out during the "I'm bored" chorus. It can be really hard, but it can also be worth it. I still remember one time with my own children, when they were in primary school, I'd told them they had to entertain themselves without electronics and not to disturb me unless there was blood or vomit! I walked into the room an hour or so hours later to find they had constructed their own TV out of packaging and were busy

creating their own TV programmes. I managed to find the photo below. No parent attention needed - apart from to ensure that they tidy up and help me mop the floor at the end of the day!



Here are a few articles on both the benefits of boredom and some activities and everyday resources that encourage children to be self-sufficient, so that hopefully you can have some well-deserved rest time in the school holidays too. Happy holidays!

<https://childmind.org/article/the-benefits-of-boredom/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/shouldstorm/201812/boredomtunity-why-boredom-is-the-best-thing-our-kids>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/dealing-with-boredom/zdbbsk7>

<https://www.todayparent.com/family/little-kid-boredom-busters/>