

Global Connections Chronology

1995

US Heads of School meet. Review of Secondary School international education initiatives

1996

Workshop on Global Education at NAIS annual conference

1997

First International School Leaders Seminar on Global Connections. Co-hosted by St. Stithins College (South Africa) and Maru A Pula (Botswana)

1998

Global Connections website initiated: www.globalconnection.org. Global Connections II co-hosted by Geelong Grammar School and SCEGCS/Redlands (Australia)

1999

Incorporation of The Global Connections Foundation, Inc. Global Connections III at Wellington College (England)

2000

Foundation granted 501(c)(3) status. Presentation at NAIS annual conference. Global Connections IV at Deerfield Academy (US)

2001

Grant from The Esther A. and Joseph Klingenstein Fund to develop Teachers Exchange Registry for website. Presentation at NAIS annual conference. Global Connections V at Starehe Boys' Centre and School (Kenya)

2002

Presentation at NAIS annual conference. Global Connections VI at No. 1 Middle School attached to Central China Normal University (PRC). Implement online Teachers Exchange Registry

2002 International School Leaders Seminar Review

THE YEAR OF THE HORSE IS OFF AND RUNNING



By Hilary Matthews

Wuhan, China:

The Global Connections Seminar – Teaching and Learning Styles: Creativity and Innovation in the Classroom

One of the significant components in all the Global Connections seminars is that all who attend have to undertake journeys -- physical journeys at least -- to be able to attend.

We all leave the comfort of our knowns, to journey into the unknown...a new town, a new country, a new continent and, for most, a new culture.

In Global Connections, we are travelers all: that is part of the magic of the experience.

But neither the seminar organizers nor the President of the Global Connection Foundation could envision the power of the journey undertaken by all who attended GCVI in Wuhan, China.

Principal Li Shuisheng of the No 1 Middle School attached to Central China Normal University, had journeyed far to attend GCIV in the United States and even further in both physical and experiential terms to attend GCV in Kenya.

Yes, even our host was familiar with traveling.

But few had traveled in Central China and none had been on the Yangtze before! Certainly none had been engaged in the business of a seminar on "The River at the Center of the Earth."

It was a remarkable opportunity; an extraordinary journey in learning.

At No 1 Middle School attached to Central China Normal University:

Wuhan, in Eastern Central China, is actually three cities on the Yangtze: Hankou, Hanyang and Wuchang. They make up, what Simon Winchester in his wonderful book describes as "the gigantic conurbation of Wuhan." Historians describe it as the most significant city in an historical sense, in modern China.

7 million people live in Wuhan, midstream junction point of the 3,940-mile long Yangtze River. It is described as the city of the new China's heart, beating between two symbols of the new China's history -- "the strictness and conformity" of the old China, and the "half free, open-mindedness" of the new.

No 1 Middle School is in Wuchang and is emblematic of the new China's heart.

Some 1,200 students attend, of whom 50 percent are boarders from Hubei Province of which Wuhan is the capitol. Teachers and pupils enjoy productive and yet relaxed relationships. The atmosphere is one of purposeful and focused efficiency. Clearly, everyone knows how the system works and supports the school's mission and values. The campus is busy and ordered. The traditional Hubei dance and traditional musical instruments and orchestration, live alongside computers and science labs.

Hubei fare is prepared along traditional lines and served in modern, functionally efficient cafeterias, one "economy" and "the other more expensive." (The term "class" is not applied.) Teachers and pupils alike buy their three daily meals and consume them together there.

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Mark Your Calendar:

L'Ermitage, France, Hosts GCVII

July 8 – 12, 2003

Post-Seminar in Paris: July 12 - 14

The theme is "Crossing Frontiers:

Culture, Language, and Bilingualism."

Visit our website:

www.globalconnection.org

HOW CONNECTED ARE WE?

Participants at the Wuhan seminar represented:

- 37 schools
- 5 educational organizations
- 17 different countries

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Basketballs clang on hoops alongside elegant silent groups performing T'ai Chi. The old traditional China lives comfortably with the new outward-looking China seeking to be part of the global community.

An interest among the pupils to be part of "the outside world" is palpable. But self and group discipline, respect for the current order and structure is everywhere evident. There is order in an outwardly chaotic world: traffic on the streets of Wuhan is appalling both in amount and variety but is totally well orchestrated. The school, itself, is a powerful influence for order, structure and discipline for students and staff.

Two other schools were visited during the seminar. At each there was the feeling that schools provide a sense of

community, purpose and meaning for thousands of bright, confident and hopeful students attending.

The Seminar

This was spread over 6 days, the first two in the formal setting of the No. 1 Middle School's conference room, the next three on the Yangtze, and the last day back at the host school's campus.

There were four presentations by Chinese Principals from Shanghai, Beijing and Wuhan and six by other Principals, two from Australia and one each from England, France, Turkey and the United States. Papers had been prepared in advance and translated into Chinese and English by the English Faculty at the No 1 Middle School; a heroic feat. They also provided simultaneous translation during the entire seminar.

A spirit of inclusivity was the key feature of the program and the process. All questions were translated and clarified; each discussion group had a translator. The language negotiations became in themselves humbling exercises in cultural discipline: Westerners had to

curb their impatience for action and result; all had to endure hiatuses in thought and argument development while translation, clarification, and modification of translation ensued; the Chinese had to exercise huge patience in dealing with Western digressions from the prescribed format; for free opinion, and individualism.

It was a learning curve for all. The whole process was directed toward the creation of the Wuhan Declaration and focus was sustained throughout as a result. As the Declaration notes:

The experiential nature of the Wuhan encounter brought about a major shift in positions and behaviors in all the delegates. The culturally diverse composition of the delegates; the need to accommodate each other's different ways of learning and understanding; the sharing of meals; the patience needed when conversing in more than one language; listening to one another and being playful together -- it all released an energy

Final Thoughts

The only postscript needed is the

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The Foundation Welcomes Two New Directors

The Global Connections Foundation would like to welcome Stella Lau and Hilary Matthews as new additions to the Board of Directors.

Mrs. Stella Lau is Headmistress of the Diocesan Girls School, one of the leading schools in Hong Kong, with over 1,000 students.

Appointed in 1999, Mrs. Lau received her undergraduate degree in Canada and her Masters of Education degree



Mrs. Stella Lau

from the Chinese University in Hong Kong. She holds a Diploma in French from the University of Geneva.

Mrs. Lau is a highly regarded linguist and educator. She is married and has one child.

Mrs. Hilary Matthews, whose photograph appears on the front page of this issue of *News & Notes*, has participated in three

GC Seminars as a representative of The Tiger Kloof Educational Centre in South Africa. While at Tiger Kloof, Mrs. Matthews was the Director of Development. She is the wife of David Matthews, Rector at Tiger Kloof.

Following Global Connection V in Kenya, Mrs. Matthews was elected to the Foundation's board of directors.

For the coming academic year, Mrs. Matthews and her husband will be Bicentennial Fellows at Deerfield Academy (USA). The Headmaster of Deerfield, Mr. Eric Widmer, is also a Director of the Foundation.

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reflection made by Chris Hunter, Headmaster, L'Ermitage School in France:

"At first it seemed as if the flight out of Hong Kong to Paris was going to take us over Wuhan. I had plenty of time to recall our days together there in that noisy, bustling town. But then the plane banked westwards and we started to make for the western area of China. As we progressed on our path, Wuhan slowly moved to the map's edge. Finally, it was gone. But not my visions of our time there. Somehow, what had started as a most intimidating environment, reinforced on the first day by the strangeness of the language and the heaviness of the conference room, had become magical.

Global Connections VI succeeded: people from around the globe had connected, deeply, with great sensitivity, to each other, to the world around them, to the world awaiting them upon their return. I wonder: is it truly a conference, a seminar or something else? Coming together as we do, letting go of so much and pursuing so much, aren't we

indulging ourselves in a great release of energy and hope? While most come thinking that the presentations will be the principle activity, the true justification for our coming together is the declaration: it becomes the goal. The group labors together towards a common objective.

The Value of GC Seminars

The inclusive spirit of GC VI in particular was a powerful dynamic.

Chris Hunter also observes, "the desire to be inclusive was a summons to all of us to master our egos and desires and to bring them together into one beam of light. We listened to each other."

Each GC seminar works its own peculiar and special alchemy. Each causes me to marvel and savor anew, the delight and the stimulation and the energy and the remarkable intelligence that is loosed every time the GC network gets together to work on another global education issue and challenge.

Why does GC attract the top educators and school leaders from every

corner of the globe? I think its uniqueness lies in the fact that it is not institution-alized. It comprises voluntary members who pay no membership fee to belong to a Club; who are governed by no constitution. They pay to get there. They want to be there.



M. Chris Hunter

In Wuhan, I overheard a respected school head from Montreal, ask a "repeater" of three seminars, "So, how would you rate GC, as conferences go?" The repeater replied, "If you can make only one a year, make it this one. The others you can live without, both professionally and personally."

President's Column

Thanks to our hosts!

All who participated in Global Connections VI are indebted to the teachers, administrators, and Principal of the No. 1 Middle School attached to the Central China Normal University and to their Chinese colleagues.

You provided not only hospitality but also insight into the need for further collaborative educational initiatives. You demonstrated that we can learn from each other regardless of linguistic, cultural, political, and educational differences. In 2002 and the Year of the Horse, these are important criteria for the world's well-being.

China and GC VI were enlightening. One's educational, cultural, and linguistic

landscapes were re-arranged, wonderfully and positively. We focused on a common objective: a declaration on the Seminar's theme of Teaching and Learning Styles: Creativity and Innovation in the Classroom. We were

Global Connections exists to enlighten and encourage Heads of Schools worldwide to exhibit leadership in teaching and learning and global understanding.

successful and in the process we learned considerably about and from each other.

Remain connected!

Connections are the reality of your actions. To remain connected, use the website at www.globalconnection.org. More important: Share your experience

with your teachers and students. Talk with your academic staff about the Teacher Exchange Registry which is available to all schools in the Global Connections network at no cost, thanks to The Esther A. & Joseph Klingenstein Fund of New York.

Your use of this Registry to further professional opportunities for your academic staff and administrative colleagues is critically important. As heads of schools, as participants in Global Connections, we are counting on you to take the initiative in this means to a greater educational end.

Connect your school with others!

There are sample exchange programs online. Please review them and then post your own program.

Letters from Participants at the Wuhan, China Seminar

From Australia

"I cannot easily express the number of ways in which I found China and the conference mind changing, life changing and am so grateful for the opportunity to have made the connections you had the forethought to envisage. Thank you. I hope you have time to settle and absorb all that you engineered. Look after yourselves, you are obviously well loved and greatly cared about around the world."

Ronda Beck, Deputy Principal, St. Mary's Anglican Girls' School

From Turkey

"I am still digesting the experience in China and in many ways wish it were not over. I was totally unprepared for the progress that the country has made over the past decade and a half. The conference was also very exciting, the discussions were interesting, and the company was unsurpassed. Thank you for all you did to get me involved in this adventure."

Livingston Merchant, Head, Robert College of Istanbul

From South Africa

"Only one word can summarize the whole China experience -- Stunning! The experience on the Yangtze River, the 3 gorges

will remain with me forever. As a head teacher, I felt inspired by the topic of the seminar, and be the input of the delegates. I have given my staff a report back and also copies some of the documents for them to read.

Meeting Andrew, Marion and Lesley from Australia was exciting because we were able to review, evaluate, and to take our partnership forward. The declaration was simple and straight forward -- congratulations to Mrs. Matthews and her team. Thanks very much for this extraordinary opportunity and the diverse cultural experience. Your support will always be appreciated!"

Ellen Kondowe, Principal, Letsibogo Girls High School

From Romania

"It is difficult to put into words the world of feelings and emotions, of confidence and joy, of intellectual brainstorming and professional satisfaction which I experienced during the VIth seminar of Global Connections. For me, it will always be a very special memory with very positive consequences for my school and the community of teachers in Romania.

I found it very moving that I received a message from a Chinese girl whom I had never met but who had read through the textbook I gave to one of her friends (who accompanied me on our visit to her school). She wanted to know more about the way we teach in Romania and she even had some questions connected with lesson activities. What a catalyzing factor could Global

Connections be! You must be very proud of that."

Veronica Focseneanu, Headmistress, Ion Luca Caragiale National College

From England

"Can I just say what a great experience it was for me to take part in Global Connections VI and to feel instantly part of such a dynamic and friendly group. I have been to a fair number of conferences over the past years, but I have never experienced the company of such a stimulating yet diverse group of people. What united all of those present was a tremendous feeling of optimism for the future of education and for young people across the globe if we can but share our cultures in mutual understanding."

Ken Walsh, Head Teacher, King Edward VII School

From South Africa

"Looking back over the Global Connections seminars that I have attended and thinking of the first one, I am struck by how much they have evolved yet how carefully you have kept the essence of what we set out to do. We can still make real connections in a stimulating environment, and are given time for deep conversations in an atmosphere conducive to genuine interaction between educators. The spinoff in partnerships either real or electronic for both teachers and pupils benefits so many schools."

Anne van Zyl, Head, Stanford College



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