



DIS Hosts an EARCOS (East Asia Regional Council of Schools) Professional Learning Weekend—September 27 and 28



From left to right: Mr Reeves Rodrigues (Presenter), Ms Alisa Simeral (Keynote Speaker), Sr Socorro Teofilo O.P. (Vice-principal), Sr Zenaida Ancheta, O.P. (Principal), Mr Josh Myers (Presenter), Dr Mercia de Souza (Presenter), Ms Rebecka Owens (Presenter), Dr Stephen Redillas (Presenter) and Fr. Jeff Aytona, O.P. (Pre-Conference Keynote Speaker).

Keynote Speaker– Alisa Simeral by Elliott Wakeling

Alisa Simeral is a veteran educator who has guided school-based reform efforts as teacher, dean, instructional coach, professional developer, and mentor of coaches.

Her focus is, and always has been, understanding what sets apart the excellent from the mediocre and weaving ‘reflection’ throughout the fabric of all professional growth.

She has turned her commitment to helping schools develop Systems of Reflective Practice into a major focus of her research, writing, speaking, and teaching. Since 2008, she has co-authored several best-selling books related to cultivating reflective teaching practices and professional development in schools.

Now, she is a consultant to schools around the world. Her aim is to encourage teachers, coaches, and principals to shift from cultures of compliance to cultures of commitment. Our keynote speaker believes, if how we think drives what we do, then developing and refining strong habits of thought is at the heart of all capacity-building work, and ultimately, both teacher and student success.

We were honoured and privileged to listen to her during the conference and she also addressed the parents.

The September Conference



Sr Ma. Zenaida Ancheta, O.P., Principal and Directress of DIS, opening the Conference



Mr Bill Wolfe did a great job as the Master of Ceremonies.

It was a marvelous professional development opportunity for the DIS teachers, and teachers who came from other schools in Taiwan and abroad.

Instead of sending everyone away to week-end workshops or conferences, Sr Ma. Zenaida Ancheta, O.P, Principal of DIS, Taipei initiated the idea to host a conference that gave every teacher the opportunity to attend. They were joined by the entire faculty of Dominican International School, Kaohsiung, our sister school, from September 26 to September 28. The DIS and DISK teachers and staff attended the pre-conference (see p. 3 for the full report) on Thursday, September 26. This provided the teachers with an opportunity for spiritual development and reflection. On September 27, teachers and Dominican Sisters from the Philippines, and teachers from Taiwan, Thailand and China joined the two Dominican international schools for professional development. Ms Alisa Simeral, the key note speaker who was flown in from the United States, was dynamic and inspirational. Teachers came away from the three sessions with her during the week-end with new enthusiasm, new ideas and new techniques to improve the students' learning process.

Other speakers were Mr Reeves Rodrigues from India, Mr Josh Myers from Taichung, Dr Mercia de Souza from DIS Taipei, Ms Rebecka Owens from Taichung and Dr Stephen Redillas from the Philippines. All of them are on the forefront of new trends in education and they shared their knowledge with the delegates during three break-out sessions.

Conference delegates said that they came away from the weekend with tremendous new ideas. It boosted their eagerness and passion for making learning better when they listened to these speakers who were able to share so much with them.



The Lower School Orchestra performed for the first time on Saturday, September 28. Everyone was truly impressed by their performance. Ms Zoe and Ms Ismari worked extremely hard to get them to this stage. Congratulations to them and all the members of the orchestra.

Teachers' Pre-Conference

by John Erick Moje

Rev. Fr. Jeff Aytona, O.P. heralded the Holy Eucharist as the sacrament of God's love during the Pre-Conference Spiritual Retreat 2018

"I love you and you are mine. Do not be afraid I am with you..." These words of Jesus encapsulated the entire spiritual input of Rev. Fr. Christopher Jeffrey Aytona, O.P. as he shed light about the very significance of the Holy Mass that preceded the Teachers' Conference on 28th of September 2018. Fr. Jeff takes the helm of the Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas' Communications Bureau. He has also been the National Adviser of the Dominican Network (DOMNET) from November 1995 up to the present. The Holy Mass is the source and summit of Christian life. It is truly a sacrament of God's love telling us "I Love you and you are mine..." , a sign of love and a bond of charity encouraging us, saying "do not be afraid I am with you..." With all faculty members from DIS Taipei and DIS Kaohsiung present at the pre-conference, Fr. Jeff gradually further unfolded the significance of the different parts of the Holy Eucharist (meaning *Thanksgiving*). His spiritual sharing culminated with the video showing the most recent Eucharistic Miracle of the host that took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1996.

Father Jeff Aytona, a good friend of the school, who without hesitation is prepared to give his time to DIS. It is always with much appreciation that the school welcomes Fr. Jeff, and each time he has something profound and worth-while to share with students and teachers.



Student Leaders' Conference with Father Jeff

by John Erick Moje

Fr. Jeff also facilitated the Conference for the DIS Student Leaders to intensify the Dominican Identity of the Student Council Members , the D'TORCH Youth Ministry leaders, DOMNET (Dominican Network), and Homeroom officers. Student Leaders were able to reinvigorate the call of Jesus to them through the examples of St. Dominic----to be one in faith, hope, and love. This event happened on the 26th of September 2018, in the Audio Visual Room. A Parents' Conference followed the next day from 9:00 am to 10:00 am in the auditorium. Parents commented how blessed they were to have heard such an enlightening and encouraging spiritual

sharing from a Dominican priest. Indeed, they were called to be Dominican parents who are actively involved in the whole learning process. Thankfully, each year, DIS offers not only professional development opportunities but also a spiritual retreat to truly create a culture of reflective practice among teachers and staff. This is a trademark of Dominican quality education.



Special Faculty and Staff Awards



THE DOMINICAN TORCH

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief :

Dr Mercia de Souza

The MIT Team (Photography)

Editorial Committee:

Ms Janice Doyle, Sr. Socorro Teofilo O.P., Mr John Erick Moje

From Left to right: Ms Zhu Yu Chen with the Dominican Star Service Award for her 28 years of service in the Convent at DIS, Mr Tim Sampson who was awarded Teacher of the Year, Ms Agosh Librea, who shared the Dominican Star Service Award, Sr Zenaida Ancheta O.P., the Principal, Sr Socorro Teofilo O.P, Vice-principal, and Mr Joe Schoeman, who was given the TORCH Award. Congratulations to the recipients of the awards.



Thank You, VIP!

Teachers' Day gifts from the VIP were much appreciated. Every year our Very Involved Parents give the teachers and staff generous gifts to thank them for their hard work and dedication. Gifts were geared towards the coming winter so that the teachers could stay warm and happy.

Our Taiwan Experience

Jackson Simeral Reports

I was never more excited than when my mom told my brother and I that we could join her on a work trip and visit the country of Taiwan. It was going to be my first international trip. We spent two days touring around and learning about the country. Then my mom had to work and we got to spend some time at the school. I first noticed how large and beautiful the Dominican International School is. It's more beautiful than any school I've seen here in America. When I first arrived, I felt nervous not knowing what people would think of me. I was introduced to several kids and we immediately hit it off. For the rest of the day we played all sorts of sports and laughed a lot. I realized that kids in Taiwan and kids in America have a lot in common- we all love to have fun! I was so impressed with the school band performances that we got to see. I am in the band at my school and wish that our bands could play together. The band teacher looked like a lot of fun.

After we returned home to the United States, my teacher asked what three things resonated with me the most about my trip. Here they are:

The people in Taiwan are very warm-hearted and friendly. After meeting them, I felt like we were family and I had known them my whole life.

Taiwan is a very beautiful and diverse place. From the clean city to the lush, green mountains, to the sandy coast, you can enjoy the best of everything within a few-hours drive.

The food is amazing. My favorite meal was the last night we were there. We went to a traditional Taiwanese restaurant. They served 12 courses. My favorite dishes were the shrimp and fish. There were more good dishes, but I don't know what they are called. Looking back, I realized that I didn't eat two of the same foods the entire trip. There are so many different things to eat in Taiwan.

I will never forget the amazing time I had on that trip. I made both memories and friends for life.

Jackson is Ms Alisa Simeral's son aged 13 (Grade 8) - Editor



Ms Susan Wu (left) with Owen, Ms Alisa Simeral and Jackson in front of the National Palace Museum



Jackson (left) and Owen (center) with Breanne Oling

Our Taiwan Experience

Owen Simeral Reports

My trip to Taiwan was one of the most amazing experiences I've ever had. I learned so much about the culture and people in the world. The first people that I met were Sister Zenaida and Sister Socorro. They were the kindest and most generous people I've ever met. They made me feel comfortable right away. (I felt like they were my grandmothers.) One of my most favorite memories was meeting my friend Breanne. He is a 5th grader at the school; and is super cool. We played badminton with him and some other kids while our parents were in the conference. We laughed so hard!! We got to spend one day with a woman named Susan who showed us around and took us to the museum. She is a teacher in the school and taught us all about Taiwan history and culture. She answered all of our questions and started to teach us some Mandarin. I wish I could have her as my teacher all of the time. When I got back to the United States, I started to think about how friendly people in Taiwan are compared to people in America. There is a big difference. It makes me want to reach out to new kids in my school and make them feel welcome. Thank you Sister Zenaida, Sister Socorro, Dr. Mercia, Ms. Agosh, Miss Susan, and everyone else who made my first international trip such an amazing one that I will always remember. I can't wait to come back and visit!

Owen is Ms Alisa Simeral's son (Grade 6) - Editor



From left to right Ryan Hao, Owen Simeral, Ren Liu, Josh Tsen, Jackson Simeral, and Rianna Hao

A Teacher's Reflection on Professional Development

By Jofil Collado

"Invention is the product of necessity, curiosity, creativity and desire," - j eco

Teaching and learning skills are continuous and should always be our constant necessity as a teacher or an educator, if desire is insufficient.

As constant as time-space, these evolving and mutating professional challenges have to be responded to accordingly. Our quantum efforts as both learners and teachers to respond to these constants are integral to educational justice and in a proper representation of our professional mission.

The ability to learn is a gift and a skill that we must recognize.

In our recent professional development opportunity, we had extended further space to absorb an unquantifiable input derived from uncommon experiences and calibrated maturity from individuals with a substantial amount of engagement in their craft.

"When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." - Buddha Siddhartha Guatama Shakyamuni.

He said professional development opportunity was presented in a complexity that may be a reflection of our tone; however, it is for us to make sense of its real function.

We may be looking at the same sky, but it's up to us on how to see the stars;

We may be seeing stars through different lenses, yet we are looking through the same cosmos.

The 2-day period may be short, yet it abbreviates decades of diverse maturity.

There is no amount of learning without spending. A certain amount of energy, monetary commitment, space and time are requirements.

Certainly, something is learned. From teaching strategies, understanding differences across cultural diversity, to the wisdom of experience.

These are immense, and by no means reducible to hours or holidays.

Our attitudes should always be accommodating learning. Our ears should always be willing to listen, our eyes should always be focused on things that matter more to a greater degree, if it is free.

"It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble; it's what you know for sure that just ain't so." - Mark Twain

Our constant quest for escalating the context of our professional efficiency must be a predicate to time-space and change constantly.

No form of education is desirable however useful, until a willingness to learn it, is realized.



Alisa Simeral in action (top) and teachers reflecting on their teaching during a discussion session (bottom)



Conference Speakers at the Forefront of 21st Century Education

Ms Rebeckah Owens

Rebekah has served in an array of educational positions for over 15 years. She has taught elementary, middle, and high school students, over her 15 years in public and private education both internationally and in the United States. Currently, Rebekah is a Professional Learning Coach for Morrison Academy and has a passion for assisting educators and seeing student motivation increase while providing resources and support for educators in their endeavors. Before joining Morrison Academy, Rebekah served as a curriculum developer for a bilingual school and currently hosts Framingham State University's International Education program in Taiwan.



Mr Reeves Rodrigues

Reeves is a Director at the Poveda Foundation-Pune, India. He has a vocation in the development sector since 1996, spanning fields of youth formation, women growth projects, urban slum community enhancement, vocational training, adolescent and teenager holistic development, in education - formal and non-formal and teacher professional development projects.



Conference Speakers at the Forefront of 21st Century Education

Mr Josh Myers

Josh Myers graduated from “The Method Actors’ Training Centre” in Pretoria in 1994 with a major in Method Acting and in 2006 with a Masters in TESOL from the University of Northern Virginia. He’s currently the International Department’s drama teacher at his school (WES) and an ESL teacher with the English Department. He frequently serves as the guest director for the National Taichung University’s graduation play. He leads independent Improvisation and Drama, Train the Trainer and sponsored Teacher Training workshops by organizations like the Taichung Bureau of Education, Taichung Improvisation and Toastmaster’s International. He’s an award winning public speaker who has represented Taiwan in 2014 at the semi-finals of the World Championships of Public Speaking in Malaysia. He is a member of Toastmasters International and the Applied International Improvisation Network. He has attended and performed at Improvisation festivals and conferences in Germany, Hong Kong, the Philippines, South Africa and Taiwan.



Conference Speakers at the Forefront of 21st Century Education

Dr Mercia de Souza

Mercia de Souza holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, and Master's degrees in Applied Linguistics and Marketing Management. In South Africa, her country of origin, she started as a High School teacher, later became Head of the Education Division at the South African Institute of Marketing Management, and in 1995 she was offered a position as Head of Education at the Institute of Administration and Commerce of Southern Africa.

In 2000 she was recruited by Samsung Corporation for their elite Globalization Team, but after three years in the corporate world, she became International Relations and Marketing Manager at a Korean university.

Mercia relocated to Taiwan in 2007 where she is Dominican International School's Professional Development Coordinator, Head of the Communication Arts Department, and the Chairperson of the school's Recruitment, and Steering Committees. She is an AP instructor for Macroeconomics and English Literature and Composition, and her Grade 12 project-based Entrepreneurship course is her great pleasure.

She has published texts books, study notes, and numerous education-related articles in newsletters, magazines and journals. She also wrote prospectuses and website materials for academic institutions.

Dr Stephen Redillas who explored the values and skills that can contribute to successful management of a diverse and multicultural classroom.



Dr Mercia talking about 21st Century Project Based Learning



Dr Stephen Redillas, OP

Dr Redillas is a Dominican cleric. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy at the Philippine Dominican Center for Institutional Studies and in Theology at the University of Santo Tomas. After obtaining his Master's degree in Philippine Studies at the University of the Philippines, he proceeded to acquire his Ph.D. at the University of South Australia.

Aside from occupying various administrative and academic positions, he lectured, both locally and internationally, on Philosophy of Education, Social Philosophy, Scholastic Philosophy, Cultural Studies, Education Research and Education, Change and Society. His research interests include Filipino teachers' community engagements, cultural studies, teachers' role and citizenship education, 21st century competency. Currently, he lectures at University of Santo Tomas' Graduate School of Law and Faculty of Philosophy.

Grade 12 Entrepreneurs at the Conference



Nelson Lo, Alec Shen and Joseph Lai hard at work preparing coffee for their customers

The Grade 12 Entrepreneurs launched their coffee business at the September Conference.

They are in the 21st Century Project Based Learning class for Grade 12 students. The four student groups in the class plan, launch and run their own businesses. The coffee business calls itself Cofbee because they add honey to their coffee. During the one and a half days that they were running their coffee stand, they sold enough cups of coffee to go home with a modest profit. They also showcased the progressive 21st century education at DIS where students are not only prepared for advancing their education, but taught life skills that could be of value to them far beyond their years of education.

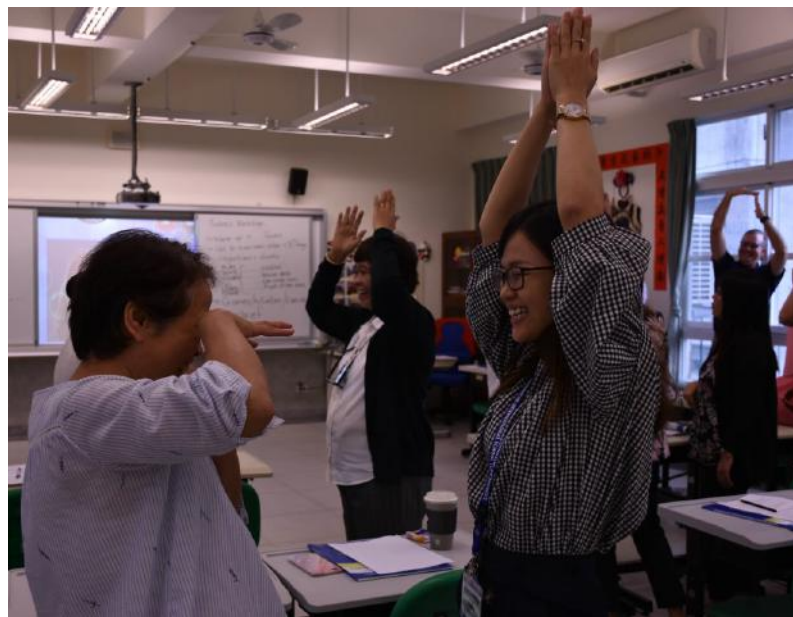
On 16 October these entrepreneurs presented their business at the Taiwan Dragon's Chamber competition.



Conference Fun



Amusement during the Improvisation Drama presentation. Josh Myers really managed to let the teachers enjoy themselves while learning new techniques that will make students' classes great fun while they are learning new things.



The Cofbee team from left to right Nelson Lo, Joseph Lai, Kevin Yeh, Alec Shen and Connor Cheng

Sport Snippets

Lower and Middle School Swimmers in Japan

Our DIS Lower School Swimming Team with Coach Kelly, Ms. Sydney and other DIS VIP parents went to Tokyo, Japan for the 2018 BUCCANEER INVITATIONAL SWIM MEET with the 22 School Participants. We had 6 dedicated swimmers representing DIS at the International Swim Meet in Tokyo, Japan.



From left to right: Brennan Yeh, Morrison Tseng, Ken Miao, Josh Tsen, Quinten Chen and Andrew Huang and their parents



Varsity Football

On Saturday, October 27, the Varsity Football team accompanied by their coach, Mr. Charles and Team Manager Ms. Janice, participated in TISA's football season-ending tournament in Taichung. Morrison Academy did an outstanding job hosting a one-day tournament with nine teams, and we were able to compete in three matches. Though it was quite exhausting, it was certainly a good experience. The outcomes weren't in our favor, but the team represented DIS and the D'Torch values in outstanding fashion. I was proud of them, and especially proud of the seniors who led the underclassmen with poise and virtue. Well done Wolves!

– Coach Charles

