



Hong Kong: Home to the *Star Ferry*, the *Peak Tram* and @*ShuyuanClassics*!

by Anastasia Christou

‘Classics in Hong Kong’ is not a phrase one comes across on a regular basis, so when I was asked to write this article on my experiences of teaching Classics in Hong Kong specifically and my perspective on Classics in Asia generally, I was delighted at the opportunity. I joined The Independent Schools Foundation Academy (The ISF Academy, Hong Kong) just over two years ago, having studied, trained and taught Classics in London previously. When the prospect arose of teaching the subject I love on the other side of the globe, it was an offer I could not refuse, out of curiosity if nothing else! Although my teaching experiences on my Asian adventure thus far have been quite different and often unfamiliar, I still passionately believe that Classics is equally important everywhere: appreciating the achievements of the ancients; questioning human nature and the world we live in; and learning from heroes and villains, mortals and immortals. After all, the Ancient Greeks and Romans played an important role both in the West and the East, with interaction between the civilisations across the ages; Alexander the Great’s empire is of course one such example of the mutual intellectual, political and economic exchange between the western and eastern worlds.

First, I will introduce my school and the programme I am involved with in order to put my teaching experience here in a more meaningful context. The ISF Academy is an independent,

co-educational, bilingual school, based in Pokfulam, offering a Chinese and English immersion education. It was established in 2000 and includes Foundation Year to Grade 12, now totalling around 1400 students, who aim to graduate from the school with a bilingual International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma (DP) in English and Putonghua. In addition to the school’s usual curriculum, the Shuyuan Program was set up, ‘based on the classical Chinese learning sanctuary and the Platonic Academy, the goal of which is independent study and enquiry under the guidance of a master’ (ISF Academy, 2017a). In essence, it is a programme offering extension courses, projects involving higher education institutions and opportunities for student-led, academic research. Within the auspices of the *Shuyuan* Program are the following specialist subject areas: Science and Discovery; Global Politics; and Classics; all offering selected students the chance to pursue interests beyond the usual curriculum, which challenge them and complement their other studies.

Now to focus on the Classics provision at my school. Within the Classics department, there is a Chinese Classics team and a Western Classics team, the latter of which I am privileged enough to be leading. There is much collaboration between our two teams and we both aim for our students to be able to connect with and appreciate the foundations of Chinese and Western culture through the study of classical artefacts, texts and languages in

our respective courses. With this aim in mind, students can choose to study classical Chinese outside their formal timetable as a co-curricular activity from Grades 5 to 9, studying a selection of classical Chinese texts that cover literature, history and philosophy. The Chinese Classics team consists of two members of staff, who work tirelessly and energetically to create tailor-made courses for their students, happily resulting in a steady rise in student uptake: thirty-four Grade 5 students; twenty Grade 6 students; twenty-two Grade 7 students; eight Grade 8 students; and eleven Grade 9 students for 2017/18. As with all courses that run during students’ own time, the challenge is to ensure that the students are able to maintain their commitment to the subject whilst competing commitments arise and whilst maintaining a healthy school/life balance, especially in the very competitive and highly demanding climate of Hong Kong schools.

I always find it deeply fruitful and fascinating to speak with my Chinese Classics colleagues about their courses and practice, learning much from them in every discussion and as we try to link our subjects, investigate possible collaboration and ensure consistency across our teams. This is an experience that I feel is unique to my school and one which I am very grateful for. In considering the bilingual setting of The ISF Academy and its constant aim to bridge Chinese and English, I feel that embracing and connecting Chinese and Western Classics

is one way of achieving this, a belief which the school's management holds also. As a result, our whole-school initiatives have been met with positive support. For example, the school bases itself on core values, referred to as 'The Eight Virtues + One' (ISF Academy, 2017b), which aim to provide a moral compass for the whole school community and are grounded in Chinese culture, but also have modern-day relevance and importance. Over the course of the approaching academic year, we will be circulating presentations on these embedded virtues, with each virtue given in English, Chinese, Latin and Ancient Greek, thus aiming to connect ancient and modern, east and west.

fresh ideas to the team. Similar to my mentoring trainee Classics teachers back in the U.K., I have found it greatly refreshing and energising to work with these colleagues, relishing the opportunity to reflect on my own practice and on what we are doing and trying to achieve with our Western Classics programme. Our first teaching fellow was a Romanist, who led scansion workshops for our Latinists; helped in team resource development; and designed a whistle-stop tour of Greek and Roman history, literature and philosophy for some Grade 9 students during their private study time. Our second teaching fellow was a Hellenist, who impressively completed her PhD, entitled *The Greek Reception of Alexander the*

and running some whole-school Classics events.

In terms of our courses, we now offer a Western Classics course to Grade 6 students as a year-long, co-curricular activity, which aims to provide students with an introduction to the Ancient Greeks and the Romans, covering the usual audience-capturing and gory topics, such as gladiators, mythology and the Olympics. As Grade 6 is the first year of secondary school, we felt it was important to give keen Grade 6s some weekly exposure to Western Classics in the hope that they would develop a healthy obsession with the ancients and continue with at least one of our classical courses at secondary school! We also run a Western Classics course for Grade 7 and 8 students during their weekly 'Big Learning Afternoon' (BLA) time, covering aspects of Ancient Greek and Roman daily life, from slavery to society, from entertainment to education and from military to meals. The two courses are complementary to each other and have entry requirements based on students' prior reporting data, specifically their 'Commitment to Learning' (CTL) scores, which are scores given by teachers to reflect each student's effort in their subject. For both courses, we use purpose-made booklets, consisting of varied tasks, glossaries and fun activities. We focus on collaborative work, independent research and interactive presentations, with lots of peer and self-assessment opportunities as the students' work is not formally assessed or reported on. This is in the hope that the courses will have more enjoyment and less stress associated with them, thus attracting a wider audience, especially with the courses being outside the students' usual timetable.

Initially, we started the Western Classics course as a joint Grades 6, 7 and 8 course. However, we found that the age gap was too large to cater for and challenge all the students appropriately, but we also found that the high demand for the course from Grade 6 parents and students meant that we could create a separate Grade 6 course. For 2017/18, we have nineteen Grade 6 students, and seven Grade 7 and 8 students. As these are 'extra courses', we have found that communication and promotion are more important than ever in ensuring that students and their parents are aware of the



In the Western Classics team, we have two permanent members of staff and one teaching fellow who is with us for a six-month or one-year placement. Thus far, we have been privileged enough to have three such fellows, who brought their own classical expertise, interests and

Great, during her time with us, conducted two mock archaeological digs on ISF Academy soil and implemented our new Primary School initiatives. Our current teaching fellow is a philosopher, who is continuing our Primary Classics campaign, aiding in course development

courses and their content, but also know about the deadlines and requirements for signing up to them.

Despite covering the Romans and the Ancient Greeks in their IB Middle-Years Program (MYP) Individuals and Societies (I&S) (International Baccalaureate, 2017) lessons in Grade 6, we have found that our students generally have less of an initial idea about or instinctive interest in the Ancient Greeks and Romans when compared to their U.K. counterparts. Nevertheless, we have capitalised on this opportunity for some cross-curricular collaboration by delivering Latin and Ancient Greek tasters and a Classics competition with the whole grade via these I&S units. On pondering this observation further however, we thought that this may perhaps be due to our Hong Kong students having less exposure to Western history around them; being further from Europe and its languages; and there being a slimmer chance of them stumbling over a Roman road in Britain on the weekend or exploring an Ancient Greek site whilst on their summer holiday, being about a four-hour flight away. On the other hand, some of our students have a keen interest in all things classical from the outset, as one Grade 11 student enthusiastically puts: 'I study Classics for the same reason why we study Shakespeare, and guess what Shakespeare studied? That's right, the Classics! Ancient Greek and Latin are languages that shed light on two of the greatest civilisations in human history. Although they are languages and cultures of the past, we still encounter them every day in Romance languages, literature and high art.'

Furthermore, whilst the *Percy Jackson* and *Harry Potter* series are popular among our students, not many of them have watched Classics-related films, seen Ancient Greek or Roman artefacts up close or visited ancient sites in the West. As a result, we have a monthly Classics Film Club, featuring some of the usual epics on rotation with popcorn provided, from Disney's *Hercules* to *Clash of the Titans* (2010), which all Secondary students and staff are welcome to attend. Furthermore, we run overseas trips annually, alternating between Rome and Athens, for Grade 9 to 12 Classicists, bringing the Roman Colosseum and Athenian Acropolis to life for them. We have also been lucky enough to have had

Ancient Rome and Egypt come to Hong Kong's shores! Some local field trips include the Hong Kong Museum of History's 'Mare Nostrum: Roman Navy and Pompeii Exhibition' (Hong Kong History Museum, 2017) in August 2016 and the Hong Kong Science Museum's 'Eternal Life: Exploring Ancient Egypt Exhibition' (Hong Kong Science Museum, 2017) in October 2017. Excitingly, another potential trip of ours may be to Beijing's China Museum of Science and Technology to visit the upcoming 'EUREKA. Science, Art and Technology of the Ancient Greeks Exhibition' (China Museum of Science and Technology, 2017).

For the first time, the Chinese and Western Classics teams have joined forces to teach a timetabled 'Comparative Classics' course to five Grade 9 students, who have bravely (but wisely!) chosen to be our mega-classicists/guinea pigs alongside their formal MYP subjects. With this course, we aim to bring together the cultures and literary works of the great ancient civilisations of the Greeks, the Romans and the Chinese in translation. Comparative units to be covered in the two-year course are Ancient Historiography, Ancient Art, Ancient Philosophy and Ancient Poetry. Classical texts will include: the epic poetry of Homer and Vergil, as well as the *Shijing* poetry compilation; the histories of Herodotus, Suetonius and Zuo Zhuan; and the philosophies of Plato and Confucius. Through studying the various literary and visual sources, we hope that our students will explore the intricate relations between culture, literature and thought in the ancient Western and Eastern worlds. Both Classics teams are very excited to be co-planning and co-teaching this course, as well as learning from each other along the way, so watch this space for more Sino-Greek-Roman relations and comparative work ahead!

In the same vein, we have run other comparative and collaborative Classics initiatives, which have been met with keen interest and received positive feedback from students and staff alike. Every month, we have brought together two classical events or related topics, based around an international celebration or a Western and/or Chinese classical anniversary occurring in that respective

month, which is then shared with the whole school and promoted on the school's learning platform, *Moodle*. Monthly *Shuyuan* Classics Calendar presentations thus far have included: Ancient Sport; Classical Clashes (comparing the epic battles at Zama and Red Cliffs); International Mother Language Day; Ancient Technology (comparing the Antikythera Mechanism with the Chinese seismoscope); International Philosophy Day; Fun Festivals (comparing the Roman *Saturnalia* with the Chinese Winter Solstice); International Poetry Day; Great Empires (comparing Alexander the Great and Emperor Qin); International Democracy Day; and New Beginnings (comparing the Western and Chinese traditional calendars).

Moreover, we have presented some *Shuyuan* Classics sessions for staff on professional development days, explaining our courses and initiatives to our colleagues. These sessions proved to be worthwhile not only for advertising our subjects, but also for reaching out for any cross-curricular, collaborative opportunities with other faculties. For example, the English Faculty invited me into their Grade 11 and 12 English Literature lessons to give workshops on Euripides' *Medea*, one of their chosen set texts. Likewise, being included in the Mathematics Faculty's *Pi Night* was excellent fun; we had Greek alphabet Sudoku and Ancient Greek mathematician games in our corner! We have also tried to be pro-active in sharing Western Classics resources and news with colleagues, wherever relevant. In addition, by arranging speakers to come in to give talks on various topics, we have been able to build contacts for colleagues in other subjects. For example, we asked Lingnan University's Professor Nado to present a lecture on 'An Introduction to Philosophy' to interested ISF Academy staff, parents and students, after which she was invited back to give a talk to the Grade 11 Theory of Knowledge students. Other talks we have organised have been 'Classics at Cambridge: A Hong Konger's Perspective' to encourage more students to study Classics at university level, and 'It's All Greek to Me!' to introduce the value of Ancient Greek before launching it as a new subject at The ISF Academy last year.



Now to elaborate on the place of Latin and Ancient Greek at my school and our provision for both. The continual justification of classical languages in schools is universal, Hong Kong being no different. In response to any doubter or opposer of Classics at The ISF Academy or elsewhere, I would say that whilst they may think that Latin and Ancient Greek are ‘dead’ languages, they are in fact immortal and live around us, not only in the languages we speak, but also in a variety of professions and disciplines. Likewise, I would say that if the sheer enjoyment and satisfaction of studying these languages do not suffice, their value also lies in a host of skills that the study of Latin and Greek develops and the deep insight it gives into English language and Western culture and history in general. The appeal of impressing universities is a very popular motivation for studying Classics among ISF Academy parents and students.

Latin is the most established of our course offerings, having produced its first set of IB DP results in the summer of 2016. Happily, student numbers for Latin are sharply rising, likely due to an increasing ISF Academy student body and on the back of a barrage of initiatives and a forceful promotional campaign by our team! When I started at The ISF Academy, we had eight Latin beginners, whilst for 2017/18, we have thirty-eight. Students can begin Latin in Grade 7 as a bi-weekly, co-curricular activity, using Books I and II of the *Cambridge Latin Course (CLC)* and with two hours of lesson time per week. Students can then choose to continue with Latin in Grade 8, again as a bi-weekly, co-curricular activity, using Books II and III of the *CLC* and

with two hours of lesson time per week. For 2017/18, we have nine Grade 8 students. As always, the hope of these Latin courses is that the students will develop an appreciation for the contributions of the Romans to the modern world and expand their English vocabulary via derivation work, whilst improving their understanding of English grammar. Unlike the Western Classics courses, Latin is always reported on and has all the expected vocabulary tests, written translations and comprehension assignments per stage.

Latin in Grades 7 and 8, occurring twice a week plus homework, is a considerable extra-curricular commitment, which parents and students have queried and which we have explained is indeed appropriate and necessary for language learning and in order to reach the required standard for the Latin examinations to come. In fact, Latin at The ISF Academy used to begin in Grade 8, but I moved the beginners’ class down a year to Grade 7, so that students would have more years of Latin leading up to the challenging Cambridge IGCSE in Grade 10; a decision which I feel has paid dividends on student confidence and results. Another change to Latin teaching and learning at my school was the switch to using the *CLC* rather than the *Oxford Latin Course (OLC)*. This was because I found that the students were not very enthused or engaged with the *OLC*, but also that the interactive Cambridge School Classics Project (CSCP) website (Cambridge School Classics Project, 2017) and *CLC* e-learning software are resources that are too good not to utilise. We have also introduced a requirement to starting Latin, namely high average CTL

score across all subjects on a student’s last report. This is mainly as a necessary differentiator due to the high demand for the subject, but also because a high commitment is certainly needed when students are learning Latin in their own time.

Students can continue Latin in Grade 9, but on timetable, to eventually sit the Cambridge IGCSE Latin examination (Cambridge International Examinations, 2017) in Grade 10. Students therefore study Latin alongside their formal MYP subjects, receiving four hours and fifty-five minutes of lesson time per fortnight in Grade 9 and four hours and thirty minutes in Grade 10. For 2017/18, we have six Grade 9s and five Grade 10s. Over the two years, students finish the *CLC* and cover the Cambridge IGCSE syllabus. For the language paper (1hr 30mins, 50%), students translate an unseen prose passage of around 120 words and complete a comprehension on some more Latin prose, with some derivation questions asked also. For the literature paper (1hr 30mins, 50%), until June 2019 at least, students study Vergil’s *Aeneid* and a selection of Cicero’s works, examining the content of the written texts and considering the authors’ styles and the social, political and historical context, with one ten-mark, opinion-based question asked for each author.

I have found that the Cambridge IGCSE is a sound precursor of IB DP Latin as it is rigorous and demanding. The expected quality of IGCSE students’ Latin is high and the required syntax, morphology and vocabulary lists are substantial, especially after four short years of Latin and when English might be a second or third language, after Cantonese and/or Putonghua in the case of ISF Academy students. With little to no formal training available for Cambridge IGCSE Latin in Asia, restricted online access due to my school not being an international school and very few schools offering Latin at this level or at all in Hong Kong, I found that it was an enjoyable, manageable yet slightly arduous experience to acquaint myself with the nuances and expectations of this examination. However, we have been able to make an arrangement with the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority to sit the examination every year thus far. The establishment of the Association of South-East Asian Classics

Teachers (ASEACT) and subsequent collaborative sharing between its members has done a lot to aid us IGCSE Latin teachers and our students.

In contrast, when preparing to teach IB DP Latin, I gratefully attended the *Category 1* and 2 Classical Languages workshop at Wellington College (UK) in October 2015. I found this professional development opportunity extremely useful and beneficial, especially for networking; becoming familiar with the assessment criteria; discussing approaches to teaching the syllabus; seeing sample work; and as an introduction to the IB generally and the Latin course specifically.

In Grades 11 and 12 at The ISF Academy, students can study Latin as a Group 2 IB DP option at Standard Level (SL), receiving five hours and fifty minutes of lesson time per fortnight in both grades. For 2017/18, we have two Grade 11 students and one Grade 12 student. In DP Latin, students are expected to apply their linguistic skills and grammatical knowledge to translating an unseen passage from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for Paper One (1hr 15mins, 35%). For Paper Two (1hr 30mins, 45%), students are expected to respond to selections from their Vergil (*The Aeneid*) and Tacitus (*The Annals*) set texts until May 2018, and Vergil (*The Aeneid*) and Caesar (*The Gallic Wars*) thereafter until 2021, answering comprehension, translation, scansion and literary analysis-style questions. The final component of DP Latin is the Research Dossier (20%), which is the internal assessment, whereby students select relevant primary sources and produce detailed annotations on their sources in response to their chosen inquiry question. Research Dossiers completed by ISF Academy students include: 'To what extent was Nero's legislation beneficial to the common Roman people?'; 'How did Augustus consolidate his power through exercising religious traditions in the early years of his rule?'; and 'What does the Second Pompeian Style of mural art tell us about middle-class Roman tastes in the early Roman Empire?'

In terms of IB DP Latin at Higher Level (HL) versus SL, there is more unseen translation; more lines of literature with a long, personal response question; the Research Dossier is longer with more sources required; and supplementary reading is expected. Thus, more time is also needed on timetable for

HL Latin compared to SL. In addition, as students are only allowed to choose three HL and three SL subjects, the competition is even greater between students' subject choices, with HL subjects being subjects that students would most likely pursue at university level. As a school, we are not quite there yet in terms of the demand to offer both SL and HL Latin.

Happily, we also have our second Latin DP Extended Essay this year. The first essay was on 'How does Cicero attempt to overcome xenophobia in *the Pro Archia?*' and the current essay is on 'How does Book I of Ovid's *Amores* criticise the exploitation of women inherent in amatory relations at that time?'. The process of researching and essay writing for each student was very different, yet equally interesting and valuable to be a part of. It was highly rewarding to witness the individual learning journeys of the students, from deciding on their areas of interest to drawing their conclusions based on their own literary analysis and academic research. The whole Extended Essay process is certainly excellent preparation for students for university study.

All ISF Academy Latinists sit the annual American National Latin Examination (NLE) (National Latin Exam, 2017a) at various levels, depending on their stage of Latin. The NLE is well-received by all relevant parties: the students enjoy the multiple-choice, online, quiz-like approach to Latin testing; the parents feel pride over their children achieving ribbons, medals and certificates in Latin; and the school management welcome the opportunity for healthy competition and achievement, both among our Latin scholars and between schools on an international level. However, for each level there is extra reading and learning for the students to do. Although the NLE has a document that roughly aligns each examination level's syllabus with the relevant *CLC* stages (National Latin Exam, 2017b), we must 'fill in the gaps' and race forward somewhat when approaching the examinations in March, which is only two-thirds into the academic year and any Latin course at The ISF Academy. Teaching some of the catch-up grammar in isolation does feel very against the intended inductive *CLC* approach. Nevertheless, students manage fine, still

enjoy Latin and achieve well. Furthermore, the NLE means that all our Latinists have something tangible when finishing their Latin careers, if only a year or two long.

Ancient Greek is only a year old at The ISF Academy, but has already seen a pleasing set of American National Greek Examination (NGE) (National Greek Exam, 2017) results. Not as advanced as the NLE, this examination is not online, but is still multiple-choice, has the same sense of achievement and the rewards associated with it and is just as well-received by the relevant parties. The first examination level is very doable with only a slight amount of extra reading and learning for the students to do. As with the NLE, some gap-filling and a brisk pace are still needed, especially as the NGE usually takes place even earlier than the NLE, in February.

Students can begin Ancient Greek in Grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 as a weekly, co-curricular activity, using Part One of John Taylor's *Greek to GCSE*, with an hour of lesson time per week. For 2017/18, we have six beginners, only one of which already studies Latin. If students wish to continue with Ancient Greek and sit the next level of the NGE, they then attend twice a week in order to cover the increased content and difficulty, finishing Part One and also covering Part Two of John Taylor's textbooks. I do feel however, that there is a considerable jump between the first and second NGE levels. For 2017/18, we have five intermediates, only two of which do not already study Latin. As with Latin, Ancient Greek is also always reported on and has all the expected vocabulary and translation tests per chapter.

Initially, the beginner Ancient Greek course was open to Grade 8 students and above. However, I found that the challenge of a completely new language and alphabet was too much for Grade 8s and their busy Middle School lives, hence raising the grade requirement to Grade 9 upwards. Nevertheless, it has been gratifying to see older students taking up a classical course despite not doing so earlier on their Secondary School journeys. As a completely new subject, the challenge for us is still to advertise it and its value as much as possible and make clear that Ancient Greek is both a stand-alone course, but also one that complements Latin and/or Western Classics.

As mentioned previously, we have directed considerable efforts to infiltrating the Primary School, which has been more doable as the Primary and Secondary Schools share the same campus and both management teams are very supportive of any Classics collaboration. One initiative has been *Shuyuan* Storytelling, by which all Grade 3, 4 and 5 students have a monthly session with our teaching fellow during their allocated library time. During these sessions, students listen to and interact with various audio clips from the University of Cambridge Classical Tales (Lister, 2017). Last year, all three grades listened to stories from the *Metamorphoses: Tales of Change* selection, including: *Creation*, whereby students completed storyboards and made their own Pandora's boxes; *King Midas*, whereby students participated in a quiz; and *Arachne*, whereby students held a debate between Athena and Arachne. Students enjoyed listening to the animated professional storytellers and learning about Greek myths: 'I really liked the fantasy element and that it was something out of the ordinary.' Teachers also approved of their students' learning beyond the usual curriculum: 'It's great to expose the kids to these classic stories.' Going forward, only Grades 3 and 4 will receive these sessions, mainly due to the curriculum pressures in Grade 5, not wanting to spread our teaching fellow too thinly and prioritising other Classics initiatives for Grade 5.

With our weekly Grade 5 Western Classics Club, we aim to get students engaged and interested in the classical world in the hope that they will take up a classical course in the Secondary School, seeing as Grade 5 is the final year of the Primary School. Club activities have included: arts and crafts, such as making mosaics and paper Parthenons; films and quizzes; and storytelling. The club has been so popular that we will be running it twice next year to be able to accommodate more students, with twenty-five students in each club and hoping to include some *Lego*, armour and jewellery-making too! Moreover, we have tried to make as many guest appearances in the Primary School as possible. For example, I was excited to be a guest reader to a Foundation Year class during the 'Primary Love of Reading Week' and went along with some *Aesop's Fables* and matching visual aids! Similarly, my colleague was keen to dress up as a centurion to promote the Western Classics Club!

As well as 'getting the classical word out' early among the students, ISF Academy parents have been instrumental in raising the profile of Western Classics at the school and helping our course numbers grow from strength to strength. Thus, we have run an annual programme of sessions for any interested parents to introduce them to Latin and Ancient Greek; showcase our lesson materials, including the *CLC's* e-learning software; and outline our courses and initiatives. The sessions have been well-attended by Primary and Secondary parents alike, with the highest turnout being thirty-one. We have also appeared at some of the Head of School's Parent Coffee Mornings to promote our subject and explain our Classics provision. In considering some parents' perception of the place of Classics in Asia, two ISF Academy parents supportively affirm that studying a Western Classics course 'helps children who are raised in Eastern families become more familiar with Western culture and thus become educated, global citizens!' and it 'broadens the learning of our children in Asia, so that they are not just familiar with Chinese culture, but that their minds are extended to appreciate Western culture and history too, hence enhancing the diversification of our children's thinking.'

On reflecting on the jam-packed two years it has been and the exciting times ahead, it would be apt to mention the ASEACT in more detail, which we founded on the back of a successful FOBISIA Job Alike Workshop on 'Teaching Classics in Asia' at Tanglin Trust School in February 2016. At this workshop, the first of its kind, we shared our experiences of teaching Classics in Asia thus far and also discussed key issues, such as: examinations; use of ICT; how to promote our subject; and how to design and implement dynamic programmes and engaging lessons. Since then, I was honoured to host the first ASEACT conference in February 2017; I have circulated termly CPD bulletins, compiled from best teaching practice and model student work shared by ASEACT members; I have visited member schools to observe Latin lessons; and we have arranged *Skype* Symposia, where IGCSE students from Kellett School and The ISF Academy each prepared and shared literature paper ten-markers, which very much benefitted the students in terms of articulating their ideas, sharing their knowledge and realizing that they were not alone in their IGCSE Latin endeavours!





Twitter has been another facilitator for networking and sharing with other schools and the international Classics family. We were very happy when Villanova University (Pennsylvania) contacted us via *Twitter* to arrange a *Skype* meeting between their Classics undergraduates and our students; once again, showing our ISF Academy students that the Classics world is bigger than they may think, which our use of *Massolit* (Massolit, 2017) with its online lectures has also helped with.

state of affairs without reference to the past: it has shaped every aspect of our existence, materially, intellectually, philosophically and spiritually.'

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ASEACT member schools include: Tanglin Trust School, Singapore; Kellett School, Hong Kong; The French International School, Hong Kong; The French International School, Bangkok; The French International School, Singapore; The Taipei European School, Taiwan; North London Collegiate School, Jeju; and The ISF Academy, Hong Kong. Some recent detrimental news affecting some ASEACT member schools has been the withdrawal of Oxford Cambridge and RSA's (OCR) approval for international schools to sit the newly reformed GCSE and A Level qualifications. However, some better news is the introduction of IB MYP Classical Languages, whose guide was published in April 2017 and which should lead nicely into IB DP Classical Languages. Time will tell how these developments will impact Classics in our schools, but we will find strength in numbers; look forward to more conferences and further collaboration, such as some more inter-school competitions; and hope to keep the ASEACT empire expanding!

With the exciting establishment of the Ancient Civilisations Forum (Hellenic Republic, 2017) and the Advocating Classics Education (ACE) (Advocating Classical Education, 2017) project this year, I hope that the championing of the classical world, both in schools and on a world stage, will only get bigger and stronger... *per aspera ad astra*. We are certainly trying to do our bit and our best for Classics teaching and learning here in Asia, at both The ISF Academy and at all ASEACT member schools, to educate, engage and enthuse the next generation of Classicists!

To conclude with the fitting words of the Head of School at The ISF Academy, Dr Malcolm Pritchard, who sums up the value of Classics in schools, in Hong Kong and beyond: 'As education is a process of progressive change that takes us from infancy to maturity, retaining the collective experience and wisdom of humanity must sit at the heart of what and how we learn. The very roots of our philosophies, laws, culture, even our language, are to be found in the Classics. In fact, we cannot understand our present

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