



Creative School Action Plan 2019-2020

Action Plan for Creative School ISGR

Background

The International School of the Gothenburg Region (ISGR) is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school for years K- 12. The school is divided into two campuses: Guldheden (years K-5) and Götaberg (years 6-12).

ISGR is one of few schools in the world that offers an international school program covering all the stages of elementary education: Primary Years Programs (PYP), Middle Years Program (MYP) and Diploma Program (DP), authorized by the IB organization.

The school also offers instruction following the Swedish National Curriculum Lgr11, divided into Lgr Primary program (LGRP) and Lgr Middle program (LGRM).

This action plan applies to the entire school, years K-9. Within the framework of Creative School, the school wishes to increase the focus on creativity, culture of, by and for children, an area that is prioritized by both campuses and all sections. In the encounter between ideas and planning, important developments can occur.

Previous years' themes for Creative School at ISGR have been: the international school culture, how students, through creative activities, prepare for adult life, the importance of creativity for increasing integration.

This year, we want to focus on aesthetic processes' significance for well-being and mindfulness. This because students have written in their evaluations that they appreciate the training in communicative and emotional skills through Creative School. We would like to develop by taking this one step further to see where it leads.

If students are to get the most from their school experience, we at ISGR believe that it is good to expand students' aesthetic learning opportunities as much as possible, so that students through culture develop relevant, useful and important tools for dealing with, expressing and communicating their emotions. Creative School is a complement to existing cultural projects and aesthetic activities at school. This is especially important since ISGR does not have a cultural guarantee, that is, students are not guaranteed a certain number of cultural experiences per year.

However, the school's international direction provides a larger awareness of different cultures anyway and there are exchanges with other countries, for example Uganda, Spain and France. There is also an ongoing internal, cultural exchange at the school.



Creative work methods are utilized also, both incorporated into and outside of regular teaching. We encourage, in connection with the latter, an open and experimental method, building on sharing of knowledge and collaboration between sections and campuses. Last year, a Creative School Committee was formed in order to support this work. This year, Creative School has expanded and yet another Creative School Committee has been formed. Documentation of Creative School is published this year on two separate blogs, one for Years K-5 and one for 6-9.

What is Creative School?

Creative School is a project funded by the Swedish Arts Council. Students are given opportunities to meet professional culture practitioners and participate in aesthetic learning processes. The objective is to strengthen the relationship between school and cultural life. Creative School is in accordance with a number of important control documents. Here are a few examples:

In the UN Children's Convention, article 31, one can for example read that: "States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity."

Source: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx> [2019-02-05].

In the national cultural policy goals, one can also read that: "In order to achieve the cultural policy goals, cultural policy must: "[---] pay special attention to children's and young people's right to culture."

Source: <https://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/kultur/mal-for-kultur> [2019-01-02].

The Swedish Library Association's recommendations for youth and children's activities in libraries: "The library shall be an oasis and meeting place for children and youth, where they are met with respect by involved and knowledgeable adults. 'The library shall be a fun place where things happen.' [---] The library shall be a part of society's network for children and youth regarding language development, cultural heritage, cultural experiences and their own creativity."

Source: <https://www.biblioteksforeningen.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/barnrek.pdf>

Creative School also aids students in increasing their academic achievement, since the project is in line with the goals for the school. For example:

"The international baccalaureate aims to develop curious, knowledgeable and compassionate young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. (...) These programs encourage student the world over to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right."

Source: <https://www.ibo.org/about-the-ib/mission/> (2019-01-02)

"Students shall get to experience various expressions of knowledge. They shall get to try out and develop different forms of expression and experience emotions and ambiances. Drama, rhythm,



dance, music and visual crating shall be elements in their school experience. Harmonious development and the educational experience entail opportunities to test, research, attain and act out various skills and experiences. The ability to create is something that students shall strive for.”

Source:<https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/grundskolan/laroplan-och-kursplaner-for-grundskolan/laroplan-lgr11-for-grundskolan-samt-for-forskoleklassen-och-fritidshemmet> (2019-01-02)

This year, ISGR has chosen to focus on each grade in the school. Creative School has contributed to bettering students’ self-confidence, and self-reliance and has helped them to take their place more confidently. The project has also support from personnel working within both the national and international sections of our school, which contributes to increased collaboration at school and better interaction between students in both sections.

What is being done today?

The school’s emphasis is international and therefore there is a lot of involvement in different cultures, languages and global issues such as children’s rights.

Each year, the school arranges a series of events. Then students from both sections collaborate to delve into different themes and questions.

Here are some examples: Love Weeks, Literature Festival, Gender equality day, International women’s day, Cultural week, International literacy day, UN-day, cultural activities and cross-team collaboration. Values are examined to strengthen the international school culture.

Here are some examples: love weeks, literature festival, gender equality day, international women's day, cultural week, international literacy day, UN day, cultural days and more. Dialogues, creating and other cultural activities and cross-border collaborations then take place. Values are raised to strengthen the international school culture.

Besides this, there is Lucia celebration, Spring show, exhibitions in the library etc. These are activities that support students’ aesthetic learning processes, cultural interests and experiences. A way to celebrate both students’ creativity and goal attainments.

Our school also works to reinforce contacts with professional cultural workers. During the culture days at the end of the school year, students visit museums and institutions. Teachers also take students on field trips to museums (Social studies, Art, Technology etcetera). Students also receive visits from actors, from the theater and cinema. They participate in workshops and more.



We also pay particular attention to minority languages/Nordic languages. For example, for two years in a row, students have seen the film “Sameblod”, about the Sami folk in the Northern Scandinavia. Have visited an exhibition about the Romani people at the City museum etc.

Aim

The aim is to create a long-term integration of cultural, artistic and aesthetic experiences with the school’s everyday activities. Here there are questions that are relevant for everyone at school, such as freely flowing processes, how to use “natural” attitudes like curiosity, to work investigative in all subjects. Through an increased consciousness of the emotional side of the aesthetic learning process, such as joy, students can increase their self-awareness and their skills. They can do it by developing their talents in artistic areas, by learning from each other’s cultural heritages and by learning about creativity and culture.

Here are some examples of what could happen during the 2019-20 school year and its theme – the significance of the aesthetic process for wellbeing and mindfulness.

This helps students to:

- Interpret experiences*
- Reflect on their feelings*
- Acquire perspective*
- Transfer emotions*
- Communicate ideas and concepts*
- Become aware of fantasies*
- Establish visions*
- Experiment*
- Cross boundaries*
- Openness to the possibilities that are within us*
- Encounter differences*

This would lead to a higher perception of security, to access more tools to express emotions, experiences that are constantly present but are seldom given a place in formal contexts. Stress and tension would be reduced and students become more open to learning new things more deeply, which would lead to increased attainment of goals and personal development.

More voices would also be heard, through access to several modes of expression, which would cause more discussion and interaction among students. In this way, it would be easier for them to empathize with others and in a broader sense, develop into democratic minded citizens.



Increased focus on the emotional aspects of the creative process would lead to more openness. Daring to speak of how it can feel in certain situations, because they are staying in a safe and creative environment. It would prepare students for the future. Give greater understanding and empathy.

Creating together, in different fashions and with different content, increases the spirit of community. Language and other barriers are overcome. Students' creativity, identity, self-confidence and independence is reinforced and set free, simultaneously as students become seen in a new way for what they accomplish. They are encouraged also indirectly to solve problems because they need to take hold of dilemmas that crop up during the creative process.

In other words, students get to practice their creative abilities in order to better be able to solve complex problems which they may meet later on in life and they become enriched. In the meeting with professional cultural workers, students make contact with the world outside of school and participate in it. Also makes it easier to relate school subjects to what they meet in real life. Which are the prerequisites for better integration, community and a "better" society.

Creative School also increases student influence. Contributes to higher democratic values. Students' experiences and discussions are made visible. Students also get the chance to imagine different extracurricular interests, careers and professions connected to their talents and interests in creative areas. Students also learn about society's need for aesthetic subjects: that artists can be important people in supporting change in society. They can create conditions for and reinforce a way to live creatively, sustainably and non-violently etc.

Goals

Our focus for this year's Creative School is to investigate: well-being, curiosity and self-knowledge. How does culture enrich us as individuals? How can we use our curiosity to investigate the world around us? Use our emotions as a motor for projects? And get to know our inner resources better? We feel that increased consciousness will lead to deeper learning, that students become more open to trying new things.

An important goal in this context is also to include all students and that they have an effect on the outcome of Creative School. We think that it's important for students during their education to try out different modes of communication and expression. To reflect on different ways to create, interpret, analyze and present. And that it occurs in different ways depending upon their age. We wish to give younger students the same opportunities to participate in Creative School events and to discuss with them what creativity means. Older students receive freer options to participate and discuss new modes of expression and themselves – combining critical and creative thinking.

At ISGR students come from many different countries. That's why it's extra important that they get the chance to try out modes of expression from different cultures and countries, in order to develop on a



personal as well as professional level. It would then be easier to acquire and identify with the school's international culture and succeed with one's studies.

Action

All work with Creative School revolves around students' thoughts and initiatives. The application procedure is done in collaboration with both campuses and school leaders are given the opportunity to give their opinions and approval. All preparation, execution and evaluation has been adapted to the students' age groups and to the specific conditions prevailing at the two campuses.

Guldheden, years K-5

Preparation: Librarian, teachers and students hold discussions revolving around the theme of creativity. Students look at pictures and discuss what kinds of workshops they would like to have. Then the cultural workers are presented to the students.

Execution: Since the kids are still rather young here, we think it is important to give everyone the same chance to participate and try out new methods of expression. The application is for all our students. Creative School activities are mainly concentrated into two festivals that happen yearly: The Reading Festival and the Culture Week. Reading Festival emphasizes the art of telling a story, through words and illustrations. It inspires and supports students in creating their own stories in their own way. Students investigate many different ways to tell a story. Culture Week lets the students do creative workshops, differing greatly from what usually happens during the school year. They are an excellent complement to both PYP and LgrP curricula. Culture Week has a new theme each year and cultural activities are chosen with the help of student input.

Evaluation: Younger students show what they have learned through verbal and visual means. Older students fill in a Google form where they are encouraged to grade the various activities they have done, plus suggest activities for next year. Participating adults are encouraged to write one or two anecdotes on how the students have reacted to the activities.

Göteborg, years 6-9

Preparation: Students have time with their mentors to think and suggest what kinds of creative workshops they would like. The suggestions are then collected and taken into consideration. The school also goes through requests that are turned in in evaluations of earlier Creative School activities in order to get a larger base to work with. Librarian and teachers discuss together and agree on activities based on students' requests. After that, students are welcome to hand in names of cultural workers who they want to meet. Teachers may also suggest artists, if according to student wishes. After that, all the students take a vote. After students have received a short presentation, so they can make informed decisions.



Execution: We think it is important that all the children get access to author visits since literature is essential for language development, empathy and the ability to sympathize. Regarding other aesthetic modes of expression, we let students choose if they want to participate, to increase their motivation. We take into consideration for each year level, what they have requested, so that students feel their influence on the process.

Students are given presentations by librarian and/or mentors in preparation for Creative School workshops. They work with the themes that Creative School project address, read books by the authors they will meet and more. Creative School activities are spread throughout the school year so that they can be incorporated with the teaching.

Evaluation: Students evaluate during their mentor time. They discuss, write their thoughts and questions regarding their experiences, their understanding, what they learned and how they want to proceed. Teachers reflect in the same manner, make connections to the curriculum etc. Discussions are followed up. The library also buys books by certain authors and themes or about cultural workers that students wish to learn more about.

Equality Perspective

Our school creates security with a focus on rights and accessibility. We take responsibility for the needs of different students and adapt to a children's perspective. The objective is an inclusive stance. The school uses methods to address equality, which norms are noticeable and not noticed in society, to reflect on which words we use, how we represent men/women/CIS- and trans persons etc. This is done in relationship to literature, talks about social media, in connection with "Love Weeks", and also continuously.

We would like to invite an equal portion men and women and let an equal number of boys/girls participate. However, it is impossible to dictate since we also take the students' voting results seriously. In any case, we have a norm-critical perspective. We want our students to affirm themselves, each other's similarities and differences. To realize that everyone is unique but still equal, regardless of origin, sex, religion, sexual preference and that they will meet positive role models. Also learn that different parts of one's identity can change depending on context.

Students shall feel free to participate according to their interests, abilities and background. Discover new sides of themselves and affirm each other's differences in line with the school's motto: "Embrace diversity, explore the world!"

A global context is always discernable. Many students at our school have given a lot of thought to their cultural identity, mother tongue, what it's like being able to speak another language better than your mother tongue. Therefore, students meet representatives of different languages and local, national

and international role models. Many students at the school study Swedish as beginners. From an equality viewpoint, it is important that the school invite artists who speak both Swedish and English. Students are also able to read books that are translated to various languages. They got access to audio books, easy-to-read books, etc, so that as many as possible will be included in reading experiences. Anyone who wants to should be able to participate and discuss.

Planned projects. Guldheden years K-5

Invite the following:

- 3 authors (YK-5). To encourage and support students' reading and language development. Reinforce students' cultural identity and feeling for language. Development of empathy and to learn about various environments and situations, that otherwise wouldn't have been possible. The authors will be invited from different geographical areas.
- 1 artist, origami (YK-5). By meeting an origami artist, students share part of the old, Japanese arts- and crafts tradition of folding paper. Students are stimulated and develop in their own creativity, thinking and problem-solving via a material that they see daily. Paper.
- 1 artist, comics (Y3-4. All students in YK-5 will read comics simultaneously.) By meeting a comics artist students get insight into how picture and text can collaborate. They increase their knowledge in both visual art and storytelling, which often happens in a humorist tradition.
- 1 actor/drama group (Y K-5). Meeting actors or a drama group helps students develop social and communication skills. Access several modes of expression, release for thoughts, feelings and ideas.

Planned projects. Göteborg, years 6-9

Invite the following:

- 4 authors (Y6-9). The school will work simultaneously with themes while preparing for the author visits. These themes are: fantasy (Y6-7), blogging (Y8-9), WWII (Y9), and women in literature, who have other backgrounds or gender perspectives than "the usual" (Y8).
- 1 artist, drawing or painting (Y6). Art experience in their individual ways, strengthens imagination. Focus on own creativity, thought processes and relationship to the world. Finding their personal expression and communicating it.
- 1 animator (Y7). Students want to create computer-animated film. Workshop gives them practice in story telling technique with the help of pictures and digital tools.
- 1 actor/drama group (Y8). Students train their empathy and increased knowledge of different emotional colors and situations they may meet. They also practice empathy, what it means to be someone else.
- 1 film showing (Y8-9) Project Liyana enables students to see the movie with the same name, made by Shofela Coker and Philip Miller. It takes place in Africa and show us some positive



values. After that, students work with the film in different ways: storytelling and discussion in lessons: <https://www.liyanathemovie.com/getinvolved/>

- 1 rap musician (Y9) Students have requested workshop in rap and choir singing. To learn to communicate via raps. Taking musical initiative and practicing rhythmic skills. Using both words and voice to communicate with wit and reach out to an audience.

Documentation

Workshops and Skype sessions will be documented thus:

- Exhibition in the library
- The library blogs: <https://lmcgotaberg.wordpress.com/>
<https://isgrguldlibrary.wordpress.com/>
- ISGR's Facebook page
- ISGR's Instagram account
- Newsletters to parents

Cooperation

We work with cultural workers who have finished at least three years of artistic schooling or have earned their living doing art the past few years. These cultural workers also have experience working as educators with our age groups.

When booking artists, we use for example:

- Författarcentrum
- Illustratörscentrum
- Kulturkatalogen Väst
- Kulturterminen
- Drums for peace network
- Talarforum
- Contact with the children's cultural consultant.

This is to secure professional quality.

Swedish Arts Council has also approved us for booking foreign authors for Skype-meets.

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