

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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1 Aaron: ...Catholic schools, so they make sure kids have the prayer, they have Religious  
2 Studies, there was like... and all of that, it wasn't going to be a traditional Chinese  
3 school...because parents wanted...parents...there are lots of parents who want traditional  
4 Chinese schools, but they were...quite a lot of parents who want a traditional Chinese  
5 schools that offer a little bit more, and actually the DSS schools which came about in  
6 1991, that's what they are all about. They're all about traditional schools that are trying to  
7 re-brand themselves, having that traditions of a classical Chinese school, but that are  
8 offering a 21<sup>st</sup> century education.

9

10 Tracey: Anthony, is this culture...I'm gonna record, okay...just for notes..

11

12 Bill: Just for my own interest, is there a Jewish population here to speak of?

13

14 Aaron: Indeed there is. I call them...I call them the Israeli Mafia because they  
15 really...there are...there are a couple of temples here, but the one in Robinson Road is...  
16 (Tracey: Yea, mid-levels) very very orthodox Jewish community. (Bill: Right.) A lot of  
17 people working in the jewelry industry...and um...every...a handful of times for  
18 high...holiday...and it's really...you gotta go through the interrogation by people of  
19 'why are you here', 'what are you doing', dah dah dah dah...(Bill: Interesting.) and the  
20 usual Jewish question I used to get when I was abroad were 'how much do you earn'.  
21 Okay...this is a...

22

23 Bill: How much do you earn?

24

25 Aaron: How much do you earn? How much do you earn? That must came into a  
26 conversation but here, but here it's less about that and more about you know  
27 uhm...where are you from...you know...tell me about your family, tell me about where  
28 you went to synagogue...dah dah dah...It's almost like you need a CV. And years ago I  
29 go to the Jewish festival...and it was very very funny (Bill: that was cool that there is  
30 one)...there was one lady at the front counter she said...'wah...Anthony, one year I

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31 haven't seen you,' and I said 'what do you mean you haven't seen me,' 'I haven't seen  
32 you in synagogue. Yea...and JCC, have you been to JCC?(Bill: I go in my heart)

33

34 Tracey: No. No, I know the one in Robinson Road. One of my former students. (Aaron:  
35 Sure.) Her family used to go there.

36

37 Aaron: Well, the one in JCC, which is the Jewish Cultural Centre in Robinson Road right  
38 next to the synagogue, it is a fortress. And I understand it means to be...it is a fortress.  
39 And uh...you know...it's not a very friendly place to go to I have to say...I mean,  
40 security wise that I have to be careful, I know. But as a general rule... (Tracey: Wow)  
41 Yea...so...let's get back on task. Ladies and gentlemen...

42

43 Tracey: Thank you for your lunch....thank you so much. Okay, um...well, everyone, feel  
44 free to join in, but I bugged you today over email because um...Bill, Darren and I are  
45 thinking about um...proposing...we are proposing a study that looks at global education.  
46 (Aaron: Sure.) And I'm sure you've heard the term. So, we just want to find out what  
47 global education is all about in your school, (Aaron: Sure.) how it came about, (Aaron:  
48 Sure.) and um...how it's...I guess enacted...understanding enacted by teachers, and  
49 people like you who might be in administration or involve in curriculum. So if you can  
50 just speak about those points.

51

52 Aaron: No problem. And if you want a clear recording, you may want to close the door.  
53 (Tracey: Okay, I'll do that.) then you can have...Sun Jeh not coming in all the time and  
54 ask do you want more water and your rubbish bin to be emptied.

55

56 Bill: And I'm gonna have to leave in about 45 minutes. I can get a cab over there....to  
57 Admiralty or whatever...

58

59 Aaron: So alright, so,uhm in our school, we of course constrained some respects by the  
60 Hong Kong education system and curriculum. Okay. And the focus on particularly in  
61 Social Sciences and Humanities subjects is really looking at Hong Kong and Hong

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62 Kong's place in the world, but not the role of the world in Hong Kong's society, okay. So  
63 we look at Economics, we look at History, Geography, all of these things are really very  
64 much localized in Hong Kong. There may be some case studies of Greater China.  
65 Occasionally they make it a little bit further, over Japan, but basically the curriculum is  
66 very very localized. Okay. Language instruction too, we don't look very much even in  
67 English, world English for example, we don't look at global Englishes for example, we  
68 look at British English as a colonial consequence here. So, for example, most going for a  
69 system spelling in British in nature(BILL: The king's English)...yes, we never look at the  
70 English...the English languages that are spoken on dialects, of the minority students in  
71 our school, (noises), so we don't worry about these things. At St Margaret's though, we  
72 recognize that if we wanted to be a school that stood out when we became a DSS co-  
73 educational school, okay, then we had to do something which was going to be different.  
74 Now, I was employed here in 2005, because basically at the time, school wanted to offer  
75 French, language, as an option for students who are non-Chinese and weren't studying  
76 Chinese. This was before the government mandated that all students must learn Chinese.  
77 So, French was originally put as a...a way in which we could encourage non-Chinese  
78 students to come to our school and uh...encourage them to be um...given the same  
79 opportunities to attend universities as the Chinese students. Why did we want to attract  
80 non-Chinese students? Because the school has always traditionally only attracted Chinese  
81 students. Uh...the chairman of the school board is actually English educator, and he  
82 prides himself on the value of English and the correct use of English. And there was a  
83 recognition that if our school was 100% among the culture in Chinese-speaking, the need  
84 for students to speak English outside of the classroom would be that much smaller than if  
85 they have non-Chinese students in which they could interact...so...uh...that was a  
86 practical way of raising English standard there. But when I arrived, they actually just  
87 expected someone who was just going to teach French, but I've led a bigger life...okay,  
88 my mother is a native Italian speaker, my father is a native French speaker, and so, I grow  
89 up in a multi-lingual household. So when I arrive at the school, I was teaching one class  
90 English, and the rest of the classes were French or non-Chinese students. Okay. I  
91 was...pissed off...I was pissed off like you can't imagine with my Secondary 6 class in  
92 the first 2 months when I was at the school, because they would openly discuss with me

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93 and openly criticize with me very stereo typically racial um...preconceptions that they  
94 had of my other students, because all my other students were non-Chinese. They would  
95 ask me whether I thought they were lazy, whether they, you know, whether their religion  
96 was... they would ask all kinds of these...because I open...I encourage very open  
97 dialogue in my class. And I realized that it was all based on the fact that they had never  
98 ever sat down and spoken to these students even though they were co-existing in the  
99 same school. And they never had an opportunity really to find out about. And every year,  
100 we had an English drama competition, and they would, could not understand...for  
101 example, the South-Asian students actually have different languages and different  
102 cultures. They thought they only have one. So, for our English drama competition, every  
103 year, every class must do something. And so, I decided my S6 English class should do a  
104 Bollywood. (Tracey: Nice.) Okay, so I spoke to the dance teacher, because we have a  
105 very famous program in dance, and so we agreed that we would get them to do a  
106 Bollywood, and she would have to teach them four dances. So, we...I got some members  
107 of the community to outline and I chose uh... three Indian dancers and one um...dance  
108 from Pakistan, it's actually a Pashtun dance, okay. So, I got members of the community  
109 to come up and teach our dance teacher how to do those dances, and then we wrote the  
110 script, I wrote the script with the students and it was actually a cultural conflict between  
111 a...a typical Muslim girl who wanted to go to school but her family believed that priority  
112 should be given to her brothers...blahblahblah...so they could see that there was a  
113 conflict, and that this conflict was very similar to traditional Chinese families where boys  
114 always went to school, and if there's enough money for a girl to go to school, they would  
115 be education, but otherwise, not. And I gave my students in the English lesson a lot of  
116 texts on this so that they would have a better understanding. And then, I went to Pakistan  
117 on our school trip because I've never been there and I felt that I was letting my students  
118 down by not understanding the culture that I was pushing, it's part of our drama, so I  
119 went. And at the same time, I spent HKD2000 which was not a small sum back then, and  
120 I bought 20 saris and 20... and 24 white kaftans for the drama, because the minute that I  
121 came back with the costumes, the kids were suddenly very very motivated. They really  
122 wanted to be involved, they wanted to perform, and all of that. And we performed in... I  
123 remember in April of my first year, and the whole school population was absolutely

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124 stumped, okay. And they did a very very good job and...but they only came second in the  
125 competition. Okay, which is already good. But what was unusual was that the chairman  
126 of the school board decided that he wanted this to be performed at graduation. Now, you  
127 know, graduation at our school, it's a very somber, very traditional thing, so for him to  
128 suggest that, he wanted this, was giving a massive amount of value to what I was doing.  
129 And at the same time, the school said to me, we want you to lead modern languages. And  
130 I said, okay, at the time I was only...the only French teacher and we needed to hire  
131 more...and I said, okay, I'm willing to do it, and I'm willing to even expand the  
132 department, because I taught Indonesian, I taught Japanese, I taught German, and I taught  
133 French and Australian, so, I said I had a bit of language experience there. And I said, I'm  
134 willing to do it, but there's a few conditions. And so, we talked about, we need to have  
135 exchanges, we need the kids to go abroad, we need to have the kids to come here,  
136 otherwise the language doesn't live and the kids just tend...they may be multi-lingual but  
137 they're still mono-cultural. The second thing that I said to them is that... we have a lot of  
138 postures...at that time, the school is very different now, but at that time, I would say,  
139 70% of the students or 80% of our students were in the lower third economically in the  
140 city. And so I said, we would need to raise, we would need to raise money for them. We  
141 should have a policy that no student is left behind. If we run this trip, it should be opened  
142 to everyone irrespective to their ability to pay. And they agreed on that, so off we went.  
143 So knowing that the first overseas tour was going to be a big break, and also wanting  
144 once again, to emphasize cultural diversity, I decided to take the kids to Morocco first,  
145 and then to France. So they could see French in a context that wasn't France first, in a  
146 country that's majority Muslim. Okay, and then they would stay with host families. And  
147 so, I called upon a network from, because I worked in France uh...8 years earlier. So I  
148 called upon a network and I found a colleague who was working in Morocco, and  
149 uh...um... you know, French subverted local school, that means it's actually, the salaries  
150 of the teachers are paid for by the French agencies for international development, but it's  
151 actually a local curriculum school. And so, our students went there for eight days, and  
152 stayed with host families and went to school and explored, and then they went to France  
153 for another week and we went back to my old sister school where I worked as a teaching  
154 assistant 20 years ago. That was before we had a sister school in France, and of course,

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155 everyone loved it. We took a billion photographs which then became the advertising for  
156 the school. You know, we realized that showing that we have these adventures, showing  
157 that we engaged kids culturally and all of that, really is very advertising to...to Hong  
158 Kong society who wants their kids to have an international style education without  
159 having to pay for international school fees, and valuing all the positive things about local  
160 education, for example, international school has a lot of criticism in Hong Kong, children  
161 who go there learn Chinese can't put 10 sentences together, so they can't read and write.  
162 Certainly cannot join the civil service, certainly cannot work in discipline services,  
163 certainly cannot interact with the mainland if they go to international school. This is a  
164 perception, okay? I'll leave you in your various research to decide whether or not that's  
165 reality or not. I can just tell you from my own belief that um...there are exceptional  
166 Chinese speakers who speak no Chinese at all when they went to international schools  
167 but graduate, there are equally terrible kids...kids in local schools who speak terrible  
168 Chinese...who have the same background. Okay, so, it's more than the school system.  
169 But anyway, parents wanted their kids to have a sense...the strong sense of discipline,  
170 and the strong sense of Chinese language in culture being taught, but they want their kids  
171 to have everything else to be international. They want them to speak fluent English. And  
172 in Hong Kong, English comes before Chinese, parents are willing to sacrifice their kids'  
173 Chinese if their kids have better standards of English, which is something that the  
174 government has to fight against all the time because the government wants people to have  
175 a very good proficiency in Chinese first, and then good English second. So, basically, this  
176 was my in. So, I was given let's say...a little bit of room to start up more than languages  
177 now. I was allowed to, and this is important in change I guess, I was given room with  
178 low-stake classes. Okay, I was allowed to open Secondary 4 and Secondary 5 French  
179 classes.(Tracey: right...) And I was allowed to start teaching French in the primary  
180 school, okay, to Chinese students...to Chinese students is the most important part.  
181 Knowing that university matriculation at that point was S7, so I still had time to prove  
182 myself. I was very very lucky, the next year our school had a ESR full school inspection.  
183 We had 11 inspectors come to our school for 10 days to...to watch us and view our  
184 teaching quality with the view of um...evaluating school. Okay. Uh...only the chief  
185 inspector spoke French. Okay. And she was fascinated that we had French. Okay. So,

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186 unfortunately, you could look at it this way, I became her focus inspection. Okay. So  
187 wherever other teachers only had one inspection, I had to have three because she had to  
188 see every subject combination that I was teaching. I had a P1, P2 composite parts.  
189 Number 1 she couldn't understand how P1 and P2 could ever be taught as a composite,  
190 because in Hong Kong, we tend to teach you know, single classes, and the co-concept of  
191 differentiated learning was not very um...so...I got a very good appraisal, so the school  
192 then got a...it seemed to got a very good recognition for French. About that stage,  
193 Japanese was at its first year, and my Japanese class was coming along seemingly. Okay.  
194 So, we had some validation to the school managers that modern languages were heading  
195 in the right direction. Okay. So then the school started really advertising teaching modern  
196 languages. And because there's no curriculum in Hong Kong for ML at all, even to this  
197 point, there is no curriculum in Hong Kong for the teaching in foreign languages, if the  
198 ninth...ninth KLA, of the old KLA system, okay, so I was able to write all of the  
199 programs that I wanted to write. Next question.

200

201 Tracey: Anthony, um...just the comment, an observation. Um...you seem to have...you  
202 seem to have uh...altruistic reasons (Aaron: Sure.) for having your students learn more  
203 about sensitivity towards (Aaron: Sure.) their classmates. (Aaron: Sure.) But seems like  
204 the administration and the school itself has I don't know...co-opted or...reiterated the  
205 purpose of um... teaching another culture or even about the world. What's your take on  
206 that? (Aaron: I think...) They still maintain that kind of cultural sensitivity in the program  
207 as supposed to make it something like a brand that gives the school a good  
208 reputation?

209

210 Aaron: I think in the beginning, because you need to understand that once again, the  
211 school has a very long history, 50 years, okay. Um...up until we open as a co-educational  
212 English school in 2003, the school simply didn't admit non-Chinese students. It wasn't  
213 a...a...it wasn't...it wasn't a conscientious decision. I personally think it was a conscious  
214 decision in that, they didn't...as a private school, they simply didn't have the funds to run  
215 English-medium of instruction, we were Chinese-medium instruction, and in...you can  
216 say we were English-medium instruction but many classes were taught in Chinese

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217 because the cohort was universally Chinese, so it was...it was possible to do so. The  
218 minute you admit non-Chinese students in the school, and if you have teachers who don't  
219 speak fluent English, how did they communicate? So, therefore, they may be some  
220 discipline issues that come out. And everything is always preemptive. So if they think  
221 there's going to be discipline problems, they will do whatever they can to avoid  
222 discipline problems. (Tracey: Okay.) Okay. And because the school leaders at that time,  
223 themselves, were not culturally equipped to deal with a culturally diverse school.(Tracey:  
224 Uhu) Okay. They needed some support, let's say. When I arrived, I was that support  
225 person. (Tracey: Okay.) I was the person who had come from a very culturally diverse  
226 country, who'd come from a very culturally diverse background, and so I could give them  
227 the tools and the advice. One thing I will always praise my principal about was she  
228 always gave me the space, not only to develop the curriculum, but also to teach  
229 them(Tracey: Ok) what they needed to do. Sometimes it was like a...a teenage girl when  
230 we we ever had...when we had delegation coming from France or from Japan. She come  
231 in, what do I do, what do I say, what's the order, how do I give it...tell me...but she  
232 wanted to know...but she wanted to know. Whenever we needed money to do something,  
233 she would find the way. We sent some Chinese teachers to France to teach Chinese as a  
234 second language in our sister school, so that they would also become more culturally  
235 aware and culturally sensitive. And when they came back, of course they passed the word  
236 to the...they decided hiring native speakers. I mean before that, Mrs Tam used to  
237 say...even now, she says, I'm her best Chinese Guai-lo on staff, because she thinks that  
238 in some way I have the Chinese thinking, if you know what I mean. So, I can say that  
239 they have changed over the last 12 years with the school...with the school. And Mrs Tam  
240 now is not frightened to deal...well, I don't use the word frightened...but she has no  
241 problem dealing with the non-Chinese teachers, the non-Chinese teachers and students in  
242 our school. And I want to say that we even have non-Chinese members of the school  
243 board, which is amazing in itself because I can tell you it's a family run business. Well, I  
244 can say that there is a lot of close relationship...not necessarily blood relationship...but  
245 remember the founders were three schoolmates, okay. And then in some respects, some  
246 of their children have...as they get older, have taken on the functions in the school board.  
247 (Tracey: Okay.) So, it's not...the...it's not like many many many many school

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248 um...management community in Hong Kong, there's a clear link to the organizing school  
249 board...you know, even the church ones, they're all priests and nuns, and members of the  
250 other lay community on the school board. Well, you can say well this one is their old  
251 alumni or the founders or the founders' descendants. But even here, I have a photo here,  
252 this is our school director, she just got her doctorate in law, she's the first non-Chinese  
253 student to study in our school.(Tracey: Oh wow!) Okay. Her name's Nisha Mahhamad,  
254 she's a Muslim. But because she spoke Chinese, she blended in. So, she came to the  
255 school at the time when the school didn't make any provision for non-Chinese.

256

257 Tracey: So, would you safely say that this global...okay first of all, how would you  
258 define global education, the way you understand it?

259

260 Aaron: Okay, for me that global education is teaching...is allowing students to study in  
261 an environment that...that is out...that allows them to move outside of their culture and  
262 to be able to sit in the culture of somebody else, for them to learn the skills, to be able to  
263 deal with people from other cultures, and most importantly, to have...to learn and respect  
264 the values of other people's cultures, and to take them on and be able to compare and  
265 contrast with their own culture. The most important thing...for me...I...I...for me global  
266 education is about...I...I find it difficult sometimes to define the difference between  
267 global education and multi-cultural education,(Tracey: Same here about that) because for  
268 me, and...but I do see one distinction in that, when we look at a culture can be present in  
269 several places around the world, okay, which is a global dimension, okay. And it can be  
270 different, and a culture, and a particularly defined culture can be different, can have  
271 different practices in different contexts. But for me, the most important part is that people  
272 can...can see life outside their...their sight. They can conceptualize why people do things  
273 differently, how people do things differently, how systems run differently. And we try to  
274 manifest that through the learning of languages. Then we have lots and lots of program to  
275 try, persuade them to try and persuade them provide students to experience life outside of  
276 their context.

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278 Tracey: So, for you languages is one of the... (Aaron: Tools.) one of the tools to  
279 expanding their consciousness of inter-connectedness.

280

281 Aaron: Absolutely, absolutely. And IT is another one, which is why our school now big  
282 push into using information technology for teaching and learning.

283

284 Tracey: Anthony, the way you've defined your understanding of global education, how  
285 close it does mirror the school's mission of global education?

286

287 Aaron: I think it's...I think it's uh...very very close to the way the school...the school  
288 sees that, for us, we perceive that... previously, I can say, even five years ago, the school  
289 always thought that the dream would be to provide students for local universities. So,  
290 their idea of educating students was that their in point would be Hong Kong if we were  
291 successful. If we were unsuccessful, then students may need to study somewhere else.  
292 Now, the school sees that...students...um...going and working abroad, or living abroad,  
293 studying abroad, is equally successful, if not, at times, demonstrating great levels of  
294 success, okay. So, now it's important for the school that we provide all the tools  
295 necessary to give as broader choice as possible for students to be able to go anywhere,  
296 work or study, anywhere on the globe, and for them to have the skills necessary to make  
297 a swift integration abroad. So, part of that, for example, I'll quickly tell you, part of that  
298 is language certification. In our school, we don't just have...um...I'm just looking at this  
299 one actually, this is for Spanish. But in our school, we don't just teach them local  
300 curriculum, our students will sit all the international public examinations for the countries  
301 that they are studying. So, for example, uh...I have an example, Yoyo in S6, she just  
302 finished her studies here. She did a B2 examination in French. So she's matriculated  
303 directly into a French university. She doesn't need to do any language proficiency exams.  
304 She doesn't need to do anything because already she has a language standard necessary to  
305 gain undergraduate level. Similar to HKIED needs IELTS 6.0. So, our students have it  
306 already. I'm a little bit embarrassed to say that we just hired a primary school German  
307 teacher to take a couple of classes as an emergency because one of our native speakers  
308 mother is very ill and she had to resign. My Secondary 4 students have the same level of

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309 proficiency as she does. And she is a HKU major in German graduate. Because our  
310 students have 12 years of language learning, if they learn French, for example, we will  
311 send them to France for five months, and we have students come to our school for five  
312 months. So, our students, we talk about manifesting global education, when you have a  
313 French kid sitting next to you in a Chinese history class, then you have to learn not only  
314 Chinese History, and you may be an Indian, or a Filipino, but you also to...the French  
315 student is going to be asking so why did this happen...because you know, we were in  
316 French history...and so, they see education, global education in action and also to, when  
317 we talk about Tiananmen Square in Liberal Studies, and then they will talk about the  
318 French revolution or...so we have this schemes to...so for us, we are preparing students  
319 for...for a life outside of Hong Kong, if they so...choose. Next question.

320

321 Tracey: Do you guys want to ask any questions or...

322

323 Bill: I'm curious if the um...if the school overtime...I mean you're tracking down before  
324 how it's changed, how do you envision it changing in terms of the population, and  
325 therefore, maybe the language changes or the cultural orientation.

326

327 Aaron: For us, now, we are really become a school that attracts a lot of mixed families  
328 where both parents do not share the same ethnicity nor share the same language. And so,  
329 actually um...we are really becoming a school that where parents feel comfortable that  
330 their...they don't need to send their kids to international school, because they can get all  
331 the um...perceived stereo-typical international school benefits plus uh...strong  
332 understanding of Chinese language and culture. Um...another thing that I think parents  
333 particularly, the way I think the school would change to is that, our international program  
334 are only gonna become more and more deep. Now, for example, foreign languages pretty  
335 much have led the overseas tours. But now, there's a lot of pressure on us to...to have  
336 more study visits, study tours...um...outdoor education, all of these kinds of activities  
337 being opened to students who are studying other subjects other than languages, or cross-  
338 curricular trips. We have some very unique program too, I think. We have military school  
339 for Secondary 2. We sent them to China to a military training camp for eight days of

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340 suffering, suffering for everyone who goes because the food is awful, the accommodation  
341 is awful, and that's part of the culture. It really is part of...and you know, only in  
342 Mandarin. So, um...I see that the direction of the school is changing, and in some  
343 respects, the management is already preparing for it. The two vice-principals and the  
344 principal have placed these in the right time anyway. They will retire in the next few  
345 years. Okay. And so they are already preparing our school for the next step forward. So, a  
346 lot of um... a lot of progress has been made, and hence, my title changed also, I was uh...  
347 vice-principal, modern languages up until just before the holiday. I am now vice-principal,  
348 school development, with the view of developing not just the physical infrastructure of  
349 the school, but the academic side as well. And also the overall vision of the school. It's  
350 very very interesting to know that the chairman of the school board wants one of the  
351 banners to be for our school 50 years of global education, because this is for me, the very  
352 very big fundamental change is going on, it's the fact that the school no longer sees that  
353 following our tradition of education is the way forward. It's about cherry-picking the few  
354 things out of our tradition which we highly value and must be maintained, but continuing  
355 to make a metamorphosis towards uh...much more multi-cultural, multi-lingual  
356 curriculum, also to not...our entire curriculum, not just relying on the local curriculum.  
357 So, we're looking at whether we will go with IGCSE, GCE. We can't manage IB because  
358 the population is too small and the cost of IB is too high. Okay. Unless some way we can  
359 combine with another two or three network schools, but then IB has a way of sucking life  
360 out of everyone, right? Once again don't quote but...you...you know what I mean. So,  
361 for us, the way I perceive it now is that we're going to start to have a bit more of global  
362 campus too. We're going to create that large network of network schools, our students are  
363 going to spend more time abroad, okay. Even those students who go to France for five  
364 months, we use technology for them to still study the four major...the four core subjects  
365 here that they need. And then, but they do that in their own time, and they attend regular  
366 French school...in French.

367

368 Bill: So, in doing...in doing this kind of work in a population that, you know forgive me  
369 I'm an outsider, (Aaron: Sure.) the sense I have of people from mainland China is they

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370 tend to be very nationalistic, (Aaron: Sure.) like Americans, you know, like the world  
371 begins and ends within those borders.

372

373 Aaron: Hong Kong people are not at all nationalistic. Why? Because they've never ever  
374 belonged to...they're Hong Kong people. If you ask people, where're you from? '我係香  
375 港人,' I'm Hong Kong people. What's your nationality? Hong Kong. No, no...Hong  
376 Kong is not a nationality, I'm Chinese. '我係香港中國人,' I'm Hong Kong Chinese. Oh,  
377 okay, alright. So, um...and then won't talk about family, because family inevitably they  
378 won't come from Hong Kong. Many of them came from the mainland. So, you won't,  
379 you really have to ask the question, where was your mother or your father born, and  
380 they...they will either say, Hong Kong, or China. So, there's no nationalism in here. But  
381 there's a pride of being part of the city, and I would compare directly to New York.  
382 You're American, or you're New Yorker. But in New York, there are no Americans, they  
383 are New Yorkers, okay. (Laughter) (Bill: Nice comparison) And...and in this way,  
384 so...for Hong Kong people, they're willing to take up other nationalities, hence you see  
385 the number of Hong Kong people who have foreign passports is really quite impressive,  
386 okay. And then they would say, I'm Canadian, or I'm Australian, because  
387 they...people...in Hong Kong, people struggle all the time to distinguish themselves  
388 from everyone else, to say why I'm special. This is why where you went to school is so  
389 important because it creates, because Hong...if you look at the...oh...from  
390 Holland...what's its name...the...one who did the studying culture. (Bill: Oh, Hofstede.)  
391 Hofstede, if you look at Hofstede, you should know that Hong Kong really really enjoys  
392 a great power-distance...relationship. If Hao-jeung says then it must be that way. And  
393 people simply won't question openly what the people above them are saying. But for  
394 people in Hong Kong, they like to escape it by escaping to another culture. (Bill: So they  
395 become Canadian...) So they become Canadian and then that justifies why they may  
396 open the way they see things...or I studies abroad, that's why I...I...I...can  
397 question...I've come from another context, that's why I'm allowed to go against my own  
398 traditions. So, as a...and for schools, that's why they don't like hiring a lot of foreign  
399 teachers, because foreign teachers, quite often, the NET teachers for example, they come  
400 from countries like Australia, New Zealand, UK, where the power-distance is much less.

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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401 (A & Bill: Yes.) And so they're willing to question the age old traditions which everyone  
402 universally know it doesn't work, but...even my boss, she was like, how would I explain  
403 to the school management board that I want to do. So, I'm the convenient person...Mr.  
404 Dames said, Mr. Dame asked. And I don't mind that, because I see myself has been the  
405 change agent in the school, (Bill: Right.) even not with me directly doing something.

406

407 Bill: So it's in a way that the teachers of one's national or...even though the ones that are  
408 local...or yea...

409

410 Aaron: Absolutely, which is why a lot of the schools, I don't understand that why schools  
411 will constantly re-employ, particularly schools that they are in trouble, why they would  
412 constantly re-employ graduates, because their own graduates frequently have great  
413 difficulty in changing traditions for them in schools, because they themselves question  
414 why should I change the tradition that works so well for me. And the sense of gratitude  
415 for your school, your mother school, is unbelievable here. And that's why, famous  
416 schools in Hong Kong, they continue to do so very very well because their graduates will  
417 go off, for example, join the civil service, and they will actively be working for their alma  
418 maters, in a way that I've never seen before. I've never seen it in such a way that people  
419 will be providing advice...even down to...maybe there's 5 million dollars in funding for  
420 duh-duh-duh...that schools can apply for? These schools will know about it first.

421

422 Bill: And it's so different in that I mean, generally about the west, the west is keen on  
423 undoing everything constantly and redoing it. Even if they said that its something they  
424 are not aware thats done before, but it seems new to the...so it's an interesting contrast.

425

426 Aaron: So, let's look at Pearson now. Let's look at Pearson. Okay, now, we can look at  
427 South Korea, of course, we can look at Shanghai, we can look at Hong Kong, look at  
428 Singapore, one thing that Shanghai that most recently, certainly Hong Kong and  
429 Singapore, has been traditional value, the value of education, the need to work hard, the  
430 need to work constantly, the need to obey ones teachers, the need to follow, combine that  
431 with the western way of presenting education, now, in primary schools in Hong Kong,

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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432 they are taught like secondary schools, right from day one. You know how in American  
433 schools, for example, when you are in an elementary school, you have your elementary  
434 school teacher and they're like a second mum or second dad, you know. They really take  
435 care of you. They follow you all the way up. There's a great sense of...ahh.. following  
436 individual progress of a kid across the whole range of schooling, not just focusing on  
437 Math, not just focusing on your strengths, and certain not focusing on your weaknesses,  
438 okay. It's a general education, and I want to use the word general education in a negative  
439 sense. It means as long as you're making satisfactory progress across the subjects without  
440 looking specifically at a subject, then, you're doing okay, then you can move up. In Hong  
441 Kong, and in Singapore, and also now, most in Shanghai, okay, and definitely in South  
442 Korea, we see this focus...we have a high school style teaching, where teachers only  
443 focus on and care about their subject, and the kids' performance in that subject, and the  
444 kids' behavior in that subject, and there's not very much regard for the overall  
445 student...that would be restricted to one or two people per form, and they are usually the  
446 class teachers, you know, the homeroom teachers. And their role is the discipline  
447 guardian making sure everything is okay, making sure the kids are not turning into a  
448 suicide bomber, whatever you know. That's their row. And so, as a result, we can see  
449 academic progress of kids shining because they don't...they don't have the weakness  
450 of...maybe the elementary school teacher for example, is great in Math but not very good  
451 at teaching English because they have subject textbooks. Ok. But, where the problem  
452 comes is we don't have this whole child education. But what does it also mean? It means  
453 as a general rule, the kid is being pulled in lots of different areas because instead of  
454 having one teacher with a few specific specialties, every teacher has a specialty and it can  
455 be diverse, okay. So, in some ways, I think in our school in particular, it also opens up the  
456 attitude of kids to become more global in a way they look at things because rarely are  
457 they shocked, rarely are they surprised by something...learning something new, or  
458 dealing with someone with a different culture because inevitably in our school, our  
459 foreign language teachers are not locals. Okay. So, they have to develop these tolerances  
460 for um...cultural difference... They have...for linguistic difference. Also too for the way  
461 things are done, they would have less time to be complacent and become adapted to the  
462 way someone teaches. And then something else, I introduced three...I introduced sorry,

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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463 not three, I introduced eight years ago, is that I don't allow students to be taught by the  
464 same teacher for more than three years in a row. Once again, it produces competitiveness  
465 because um...if you used to hear the same accent everytime when you go to the oral  
466 exam, your oral examiner will inevitably not be your teacher because it's a public  
467 examination, and so they need to be prepared that someone may ask them in a different  
468 way, may use a different tone or voice, etc. right? So, it...it helps them become more  
469 competitive. And then, of course, with our raising of public examinations, every 18  
470 months basically, they will sit an international examination run by an external  
471 organization, not by our staff. So, once again, they face all of these things. So,  
472 it...nothing really stresses thing. Well, that's not true, as they get older, less stress is then  
473 because they have more experience. Of course, I can honestly tell you quake for the first  
474 set of public examinations, they were quaking little less in the second one, and then the  
475 third one they are a little casual so we have to yell at them. Okay. So, so...in terms of the  
476 future, I think, based on the style of teaching now that we have in our primary school,  
477 based on the fact that the kids can follow the same curriculum for 12 years, based on the  
478 fact that right from P1, they're used to seeing foreigners walking around, and when I say  
479 foreigners, I mean exchange students and all of these. For them, having 20 foreign  
480 teachers teaching in their school, this concept of being taught by a foreigner just doesn't  
481 exist in our school, because I think we really created a very globally uh...orientated  
482 context for them where they...it's not a surprise, and then taking every kid,  
483 Japanese...you can see this thing here... that was our visits to Japan. It was amazing,  
484 when we took the kids to the secondary school, um...our Secondary 3 students, okay,  
485 they had a radio interview, with Japanese radio, in Japanese. So, of course it starts off  
486 very very simple, why you're here...blah-blah-blah...first question: what do you think  
487 about the...the territorial claim by China? (Laughter) In Japanese, you know what it  
488 means?

489

490 Tracey: How old...6 years...Primary 6?

491

492 Aaron: 15...15...15...

493

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

---

494 Bill: And they were responding in Japanese?

495

496 Aaron: They were responding in Japanese.(Bill: Holy Smokes!) But we knew that this  
497 may be a topic that may come up when we are in Japan, so we make sure the Liberal  
498 Studies teachers thoroughly went through the pros and the cons at each issue, (Tracey:  
499 Right.) then make sure that in Japanese class, they learn all the polite forms, polite  
500 negation, you know, for example, how to politely disagree with someone, how to  
501 politely...so actually they had all of this preparation as a natural...piece of preparation  
502 before they went. Now, they would never have done this if they weren't going...going to  
503 a global context, if they were never going abroad. (Tracey: Right.) They would have no  
504 reason to.

505

506 Bill: And it would be low-stakes if they had.

507

508 Aaron: Absolutely. So...

509

510 Bill: The radio live in Japan (inaudible).

511

512 Aaron: So, can you imagine...can you imagine then the smiles on everyone's faces  
513 including the two people 'cause we did it in a library of the school, they actually came  
514 with a mobile track, and we did it in a...the smiles on everyone's face that these kids can  
515 answer this kind of questions in Japanese. And I played it at the briefing session every  
516 year to the parents. We had it subtitled now, and I played to show them what our kids are  
517 learning. May I say one more thing? Very very fast, P5, P6 sorry, she went our sister  
518 school in France, as an exchange, and she enjoyed it very very much, okay, only child,  
519 father works in IT, okay, he basically just connects to the internet and that's his work.  
520 Alright. So, after her experience in France, father came to me and said, "I want my  
521 daughter to be fluent in French." I said 'good'. 'Do you think you can organize with our  
522 sister school that she can go and study there, two years? And then we can come back to  
523 St. Margaret's? I can work anywhere in the world, so there's no problem for me.  
524 Um...just need your help". So, that's exactly what she did, and she went into S1 last year,

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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525 so she went the year before, like she was with us a year before, this last academic year  
526 was her first year. You know what, she topped S1 in France including in French, (Bill:  
527 Wow, that's amazing.) including in French.

528

529 Bill: I'm sorry that I have to run, but thank you so much this was a lovely afternoon and  
530 hope you come to see me in New York. That'll be great.

531

532 Aaron: No problem. I do find my way there sometimes.

533

534 Bill: Can I get a taxi to Admiralty you think?

535

536 Aaron: Do you want a taxi or do you wanna train?

537

538 Bill: I don't know.

539

540 Tracey: This is my suggestion: take the taxi to Tsim Sha Tsui, and then take the red train,  
541 red line to Central, and Admiralty is the next stop on the train. But if you're  
542 gonna look for a cross-harbour tunnel taxi, it might take awhile.

543

544 Bill: Oh, hard time to get one?

545

546 Aaron: At this time, because the taxies are changing shift.

547

548 Bill: Oh, changing shift...

549

550 Aaron: But what I wanna advise you to do it, not even take a taxi to Tsim Sha Tsui is that  
551 if you go to Nam Cheong station, it will take you to East Tsim Sha Tsui, and then you  
552 just walk...

553

554 Tracey: Inside the tunnel to Tsim Sha Tsui station.

555

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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556 Aaron: Or, or the option, if you can bear, say six...the same distance that we walk to the  
557 thing, (Bill: Yes, that's fine.) just Fat Tseung Street West, which is I just show you here.  
558 You keep walking...walking to the corners and...  
559  
560 Bill: Sorry guys, I'll see you in the morning.  
561  
562 Tracey: See you, see you. Thank you.  
563  
564 Bill: See you in the morning. Oh we have to take a photo.  
565  
566 Tracey: Yea, let's take a photo.  
567 (Laughter)  
568  
569 Tracey: We'll make it quick.  
570 (Inaudible)  
571  
572 Aaron: Maybe inside. And maybe with the map as the background because nothing says  
573 global more...  
574  
575 Bill: Oh, there you go...  
576 (Inaudible)  
577  
578 Aaron: Come on everyone.  
579  
580 Tracey: Okay, and I will take a picture then.  
581  
582 Bill: Yea, in the middle.  
583  
584 Aaron: Exactly.  
585 (Inaudible)  
586

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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587 Aaron: Maybe try one more. Okay, that should be alright.  
588  
589 Tracey: Alright guys, do you want a picture...  
590 (Inaudible)  
591  
592 Tracey: One, two, three. Ok.... Great!  
593  
594 Aaron: How about you?  
595  
596 Tracey: I know you have to go...  
597 (Inaudible)  
598  
599 Darren: I was just thinking of...I just wanna follow-up on what you've just talked about  
600 because he was just sort of showing how the language spins of into another subject, there  
601 is.  
602  
603 Tracey: Yea.  
604  
605 Darren: Right? Like Liberal Studies in that case. I'm curious more...Anthony mentioned  
606 earlier that he thought he could see there are many other subjects that he thought he could  
607 see other subjects...  
608  
609 Tracey: I really wanted to...  
610  
611 Darren: I think it's something...  
612  
613 Tracey: How does it become an institution...  
614  
615 Darren: Yea...  
616  
617 Tracey: Cross subjects...

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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618 (Inaudible)

619

620 (52:10-53:25 Conversation not related to the study & pause)

621

622 Tracey: It's also amazing how...it's actually a unique situation where he becomes  
623 because of his language background and his concern for the cultural sensitivity. He  
624 becomes the...and more like, what would be unacceptable given the tight hierarchy and  
625 power structure for the administration, they actually say, yea let's do this.

626

627 Darren: Exactly.

628

629 Tracey: He's the front man.

630

631 Darren: Yea, it's interesting how... I mean the school principal and the... people have  
632 said, yea let's run this...like they've taken a vote, right? (Tracey: Yea, yea.) I mean,  
633 so...if not...it probably wouldn't have happened...coming into a situation. It does show a  
634 kind of leadership on him...to say...to recognize that this is valuable, and let's recourse  
635 it...

636

637 Tracey: Really, I think it's a tool because it's going to make them more competitive.  
638 They ... out at their own age to compete against the more established schools, like the old  
639 boys' school. It's great.

640

641 Darren: Exactly.

642

643 Tracey: I think they put up their own network schools now, different countries.

644

645 Darren: Yea, so that's the thing like...I don't think a school like it needs the IB (Tracey:  
646 No.) when they've got the sort of...they've got more flexibility and freedom without it  
647 probably.

648

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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649 Tracey: Oh I agree.

650

651 Darren: You know, like I...and the cost...the fees you have to put it to train all the  
652 teachers, and then all students have to pay fees, you know, and the school has to pay a fee,  
653 it goes on and on. (Inaudible) Yes, I was...gosh... (Inaudible) Even I was in Singapore,  
654 you know, IB...in the downtown area, whereas...most expensive...like why does it need  
655 to be there.

656

657 Tracey: Branding.

658

659 Darren: Yea. But I mean...you could cherish (inaudible)...it could be half...half the cost  
660 of downtown. You know.

661

662 Tracey: I see what you mean.

663

664 Darren: Discount all the things and past the savings on to schools...it just...I don't...they  
665 seem to think in a more inappropriate perspective than anything else.

666

667 Tracey: Oh definitely.

668

669 Darren: You know...

670

671 Tracey: Hey, but they funded your project...so...

672

673 Darren: They funded my project...(laughter) well, to the others...funded much more than  
674 they funded. They underfund the projects, okay, just talking to this...I told you...pay  
675 them 40,000 that they spent 100,000. (Tracey: Wow.) ...pay them 50...I'm sure Alan,  
676 that 50,000 probably didn't even cover...that salary...uh...never minds our flights and all  
677 of these sorts of things...hotel accommodation...like they don't so...you know, it's just  
678 how you get the data...

679

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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680 (57:42-58:22 Conversation not related to the study & pause)

681

682 Darren: I just have one question actually, you've just given me the example of Japan,  
683 right? That was really a concrete example of how language teaching...and the  
684 international exposure has to stand off into another subject area, Liberal Studies. And  
685 earlier, you've mentioned that you see going forward...more as a... (Aaron: Cross-  
686 curricular) cross-curricular...if you see that's developing or how you see that as  
687 becoming about?

688

689 Aaron: We've actually now employed a system vice-principal post, and one of her roles  
690 is about trying to integrate the curriculum more, and integrating the core areas with  
691 foreign languages so that we can actually see more cooperation going on, because as I  
692 mentioned, one of the strengths of the school is the fact that we do have subject  
693 specialists who can teach with great deal of expertise, you can say, individual subject  
694 there is. But the downside of that is there is a lack of coordination from the students' side  
695 of matching all of these standard learning subjects together. So, this AVP with the  
696 primary head teacher uh...academic, their task with coming-up with these um...specific  
697 units which are of course um...cross-curricula in nature. And the second thing, the  
698 second big innovation that the school is doing is uh...SLR...um...sorry, SRL, student  
699 regulated learning or student-centered learning. So, this is another big push by the school.  
700 At the moment, I can say that we have a pedagogical push, okay, and then we have  
701 different outcomes which are coming from that. So from the pedagogical push, we are  
702 really focusing heavily on student-centered learning, and having classes which are  
703 delivering curriculum and pedagogies to students at the time that they needed, in a way  
704 that they can absorb it and allowing them to become...playing a great role in their  
705 learning. In order to do that, we need to have a lot of tools. We need to have teachers who  
706 are aware of the way they are teaching, if they are teaching teacher-centered uh...lessons,  
707 then of course the opportunities for students to be able to choose that...their learning  
708 pathways and all of that is significantly reduced. Okay. Second, if we don't have the  
709 technology for them to be able to access information when they need, and go beyond...go  
710 beyond the classroom, in a time sensitive manner, then it won't work either. So this year,

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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711 also under my area of responsibility, we are introducing one-to-one. So, P6 and S1 this  
712 year, we'll have um...their own iPads, next year, P5 and S2 will join. And then  
713 eventually in the third year, the rest of senior secondary will join, so actually, from P5 to  
714 Secondary 6, everyone will have their own device. P1 to P4, they will use school's  
715 devices. So, we will basic...so we're also teaching them to become more information  
716 savvy...okay...and in order to do that, we need to change the pedagogical underpinning  
717 of the staff, because many of our staff are still very teacher-centered...so, fourth thing  
718 that you will be interested to know, you particularly will be interested, our appraisal  
719 system has have to change. So, appraisal has to change in two ways. Number one, the  
720 focus of inspections, now focuses on use of this pedagogy so use of student-centered  
721 learning pedagogy, focus on less teacher-centered instruction, focus on students using  
722 technology or teachers using technology on um...open-ended projects, for example, that  
723 where students find questions rather than teachers working backwards and saying...these  
724 are the information, I want you to present, now these are the questions I'm going to give  
725 you .

726

727 Darren: This is interesting, because one of the framework of global education that  
728 uh...that Tracey sort of drawing on...and developing but also...I forget who  
729 the...(Tracey: Pike.) Pike.(Aaron: Send me the article please?) One of his appealers is  
730 institutional cultures. And all the things he'd been describing are about changing the  
731 culture of language and culture of the school...

732

733 Aaron: Oh, it's not just in language because we've also deconstructed the way our seniors  
734 uhm...understanding that in any school, senior secondary will be the...basically this is  
735 the high-stakes in the...point in the stake right. So, when you make changes to the senior  
736 curriculum and the way the senior curriculum is offered, then your...the school is  
737 demonstrating a seriousness to reform. We totally deconstructed the way subjects are  
738 selected, so that students are less able to specialize in such an early age. Previously in  
739 Hong Kong, you did Science stream, Arts stream, Business stream, and it was impossible  
740 for students to do History, Geography and Physics, (Darren: Yea.) or, Business Studies,  
741 Chemistry, and English Literature. For us, this is not the way we...we operate that

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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742 students are encouraged to choose outside of traditional streams because we recognize  
743 that strengths...just because you're good at Chemistry doesn't mean that you're good at  
744 Physics, just because you're good at Biology doesn't mean you can't be good at English  
745 Literature. And to further emphasize this uh...giving students a wide choice, we actually  
746 give them a mini year in Secondary 3 where we teach all of the subjects that they will be  
747 able to choose when they are in Secondary 4 as one term tasters. So they already have an  
748 orientation towards what they are interested in learning, try before you buy. And that's  
749 how they do it.

750

751 Darren: So, you're talking before like a new way the...I mean your school, in my opinion,  
752 isn't the school needs the IB program. You're doing all these sorts of things. Anyway,  
753 and you're developing your own networks for your own purposes.

754

755 Aaron: But our students are a little constrained and I'll tell you why, because if tomorrow,  
756 if we were an IB school, or we are an A-level school, we would not a HKDSE school,  
757 then it wouldn't matter if a student wasn't excellent in Math, it wouldn't matter if a  
758 student was great in Math, great in English, great in Chinese, but sucked in Liberal  
759 Studies, or very very good in English but not very good in Chinese but excellent in  
760 Japanese, it wouldn't matter, because they could apply the non-Jupas path, let their  
761 quality show and we don't need to worry about their deficiencies. (DARREN:  
762 agree....(inaudible))But, we...I need to tell you I have a kid who got fives in three of the  
763 four core subjects, got a one in Chinese, and then I as a very very creative vice-principal,  
764 have to really pull out all the stops to get them in. Inevitably I ain't successful every year  
765 in getting these. But the point is there's total lack of clarity, there's a total...it's almost  
766 underhand the way it's done. You know, you go through this(Darren: University  
767 selection)...yea...in a way they select university to make exceptions you know what I  
768 mean and I'm never sure that they've declared their exceptions to the EDB because the  
769 EDB is constantly hounding them not to make exception and all of that.

770

771 Darren: I thought you would have like three fours to get into a university, or is it just sort  
772 of a minimum requirement.

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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773

774 Aaron: Now, the minimum requirement is supposedly, supposedly, 3322, and a two in an  
775 elective.

776

777 Darren: 3322.

778

779 Aaron: No university will ever let you in with 3322.

780

781 Darren: Right.

782

783 Aaron: And then we play the game... foreign languages. You get an A in French, you get  
784 7 marks. 7 marks is the equivalent of a 5 double star in anyone of the traditional subjects.  
785 7 double star is top 10% of all the students who got an A.

786

787 Darren: Wow.

788

789 Aaron: And because our students are exceptional in languages, suddenly parents are  
790 saying, not only are my kids learning about another cultures, getting another language,  
791 have the ability to study abroad, but my god, the chances of them going to university in  
792 Hong Kong has just...and this year I have kids who I think are just incredible, going to  
793 Secondary 4, one boy's doing English, Math, Chinese, Liberal Studies, French, German,  
794 Physics, another one is doing French, German, English Literature, another one is doing  
795 French, German, Business Studies, another one is doing French, German, Biology,  
796 because already can you believe, already they're in Secondary 4 this year, a HKU  
797 graduate major in German would have a B1, okay, would have a B1. These kids, either in  
798 Secondary 3, or Secondary 2 passed their B1. A-level is halfway between B1 and B2.  
799 And they still have 3 years to go. And two of the German kids are in Germany now  
800 because being a parish school, we have two free scholarships to study in Germany every  
801 year for them. (Darren: Oh my...) Three-week language camp, air fare, accommodation,  
802 all the transport plus pocket money (Tracey: Nice.) (Darren: Wonderful.) because we're a  
803 parish school. So that's why...in our school, kids can tangibly see that being...having a

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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804 multi-cultural education, having a...I wanna use the global education in a sense that the  
805 education does not restrict them from ever interacting with the rest of the world,(Tracey:  
806 I like that) because they can literally and study in German university, just like a German  
807 student. You know, our students, as I said, I have a student going to the university of  
808 Strasbourg to study Economics and Political Science in French. She's a Hong Kong SAR  
809 passport holder. The moment her little feet arrive in France, she's entitled in housing  
810 allowance, she's entitled to full social security insurance just like any French citizen  
811 because in France, overseas students are considered like local students. Her tuition fee is  
812 500 euros per year. (Laughter)

813

814 Tracey: That's amazing.

815

816 Darren: So that actually opens up huge opportunities for students...

817

818 Aaron: On the other hand, see the boy here, see the boy in the middle photo next to  
819 Teresa Lam, with glasses.

820

821 Darren: This one?

822

823 Aaron: Yes, he was the first student who came out on those...the first who came out from  
824 the 5-year exchange, 5-month exchange, sorry. Now, the boy at the bottom right hand  
825 corner, the boy on the left, he got into Medicine in France. The girl on the right got into  
826 Business uh...you know, Economic Business school, and he wants to study Medicine at  
827 Chinese University of Hong Kong. So, he's actually applied to CUHK. So, it's reversed.  
828 Now, I don't know whether their own culture...can I brag?

829

830 Tracey: I think uh...Darren explained to me well. Tell me about this.

831

832 Aaron: Uh...this is on the night of the academic palms...so, this is...was given to for  
833 twenty years of teaching languages and cultures, so that's how...so...(Tracey: Wow.) So,  
834 yes...so...there are a lot of tangible benefits, for doing...for teaching...

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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835

836 Tracey: It's wonderful...it's wonderful they recognize your effort.

837

838 Aaron: It is a miracle actually. But the main reason that they did it because of all of  
839 these exchanges particularly with France...because it really makes a difference. And  
840 the... and the deputy council chairman at the time, Christian Remage started this program.  
841 He was a poor, very very very poor boy when he was uh...when he was going to school.  
842 And our sister school...it's a bit like uh...DSS school, on the contract...you know, kids  
843 have to pay fees but they only have, they can only pay as many...yea as much as they can  
844 afford. And he was given a full scholarship to go with that school all the way from Grade  
845 1 to the end of school. And he has never forgotten the school. So, when I came into his  
846 office one day, and said, I really want to have exchange with school, I wanted to be an  
847 exchange that anyone can afford to go, like for example our 5-month exchange, the deal  
848 with the 5-month exchange is this, the kids should only have to pay their air fare, and  
849 insurance. They should not have to pay anything else, because the host family should  
850 treat them like their own children. And their parents, in return, should treat their host  
851 students like their own child. So, when parents say 'how much does it cost?' If there's a  
852 school excursion, who pays? Host family pays. If lunch boxes who pays? Host family  
853 pays. School fees? The host families pay the school fees for their kid. (Tracey: Right.) So,  
854 if their kid is in France, they pay the school fees to the Hong Kong school. For the French  
855 school, for the French kids, they pay. You know, so we work on this, and it works  
856 beautifully, because for parents, you're not saving money, you're not spending more  
857 money because you're spending the same amount you would have to pay. Okay. And we  
858 have a charity concert every Christmas, you'll have to come sometimes, (Darren: Ok...I  
859 will...) okay, and we normally raise about 700,000 dollars, and we use all of this money  
860 for scholarship, for sending kids abroad, and things like...they can't pay. But I have a bit  
861 of a thing about this because in Hong Kong, we have a tendency sometimes to find  
862 parents who say, 'I don't have any money,' but actually they do. But they think that if  
863 someone else is paying for them, then they've won something, like they've won the  
864 lottery, you know what it means. So, I have to screen...screen this out. But I'm genuinely  
865 prep...with a girl who are living in public rental housing...you know what I mean?

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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866 Whose parents don't have 5 dollars to run together, who would send off for 5 months,  
867 and you know, we help out...and I'm not gonna describe how we help out, but  
868 we...because I think that's a very case sensitive thing...but the school...we have also our  
869 own registered charity, so legally, we are not allowed to give money out of school funds.  
870 (Tracey: Right.) We can do that charitable St. Margaret's organization. (Tracey: Great.)  
871 We can give direct help, we can buy suitcases, we can buy winter coats...

872

873 Tracey: Oh Anthony...

874

875 Aaron: We can buy lots of things...

876

877 Tracey: If we were to um...I don't know if Darren, if this is what uh...part of the  
878 question you were asking, but this is the major thrust of global education...seems to be in  
879 modern languages but in other areas as well. So, do you think that global education is a  
880 whole school endeavor that permeates other subjects as well?

881

882 Aaron: Now, I want to say that the ideal of global education, I think it's a whole school  
883 approach. When it comes to applying global education, I think that our teachers, some of  
884 our teachers may lack the skills to be able to enact themselves, but they are willing to  
885 support other actors who are able to initiate it. And in particular, they are willing to  
886 engage in learning that will enable them to become better teacher. I...I'll give you an  
887 example. I would say that the most...see the things there, there's a Math teacher, Chinese  
888 teacher, Math teacher. She's been to...on our primary study tour for the last two years.  
889 Okay. This year...uh...one of...one of my French teachers was ill...was unable to travel,  
890 okay. And so, basically, there were two of us that took up this duty of going to France  
891 with Peggy and the kids. But each one of us could only stay a week. So, in fact, I said to  
892 Peggy, 'Peggy, you're in charge of the trip, you're the one who's gonna be there the  
893 whole time,' Peggy doesn't speak French. Okay. But for Peggy, she was very very  
894 willing to take on this role. She was very very willing and understood the value that the  
895 kids get and everyone gets from these...from theses tours, right? And so, she is a role  
896 model. Now, she is a native Chinese speaker, okay. But my role when we go abroad is

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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897 the kids are not allowed to speak Chinese...in an...exclusionary way. That means, if I  
898 have a conversation with you in Russian, but you don't speak Russian, then you're  
899 excluded. Okay. That goes against the goal of global education, which is inclusive, which  
900 is encouraging people to learn more about you, your culture and all of that. But if we  
901 teach you some Russian, and we practice it, and we...and we do that...and that's how we  
902 use our Russian. Then we are being include...we are being inclusive, and we're also  
903 sharing with you our language, sharing with you a little bit of our culture. You may value  
904 our language a little bit more now, you may value our culture a little bit more, so...you  
905 know, there's a mutual understanding. And so, for Peggy, she used to say, "Please don't  
906 speak Chinese". Even when they were speaking to her...because the people around can  
907 then understand what you're saying. We don't need to speak in secrets. And some of the  
908 activities we did with the kids this year, I thought was extraordinary. Think of the...can  
909 you think of the context that would be the most alien for a Hong Kong kid?

910

911 Tracey: Yea...I guess...a French train station...

912 (Laughter)

913

914 Aaron: We went to a farm...

915

916 Tracey: A what?

917

918 Aaron: We went and lived on a farm.

919

920 Tracey: Oh my...

921

922 Aaron: Did I tell you this?

923

924 Darren: No you didn't.

925

926 Aaron: And the kids learnt how to milk cows. (Laughter) They then took the milk, learnt  
927 how to make butter, learnt how to make yoghurt, learnt how to make cheese. They

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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928 uh...they went horse-riding...all of that. I have two boys who picked on another one of  
929 our boys and made him cry. So, what would be an appropriate punishment? Clean out the  
930 stalls of the calves, with shovels. And when I came back and I told the parents that, the  
931 parents... 'perfect.' I...I...forever impressed by the fact that when our kids, when the  
932 French kids come, our kids want to organize the itinerary for our German study tour,  
933 which is here. The project is this, and the kids'and the responsibility is this: alright, we're  
934 going on a German study tour, you 10 to 15 kids are going. Alright. Mr. Adames and  
935 Miss Ho, we will buy the plane tickets. Your parents have paid...dollars. Okay. We'll  
936 buy the plane tickets. We'll book the hotel accommodation. You must plan the itinerary.

937

938 Tracey: That's wonderful.

939

940 Aaron: You must come up with the budget, every day. You have to factor everything, we  
941 can't spend a million dollars every day. Okay. And then when we're there, you're  
942 responsible. You're the ones who have to buy the train tickets. You're the ones  
943 who...the only thing we do is the long-distance travel. You know what I mean...like we  
944 took on this particular German tour which was the best tour I've ever been on, okay...we  
945 flew into Munich, we took a high-speed train to Vienna, and Austria, we stayed in a hotel  
946 for three nights. Group one had to organize the whole itinerary in Vienna, restaurants,  
947 sight-seeing. They had to email the museums to ask...to make reservations...they had to  
948 have a letter from the school saying this is a school group to get a school trip and all of  
949 this. The other ones who had to do the budget, and so on for all the cities we've visited.  
950 And then before we go, they had to have a meeting with their parents, and have to present  
951 the itinerary to their parents. They have to...tell them about the budget. They have to get  
952 their parents' approval for the itinerary. And then while they are there, they need to report.  
953 So, they have to upload to the website and at the end of every year...we will produce  
954 documents like this. So these are the overseas tours and exchanges. And this is what the  
955 students did.

956

957 Tracey: That looks so professional.

958

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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959 Aaron: Okay, this is what the students did. And so they have to come up with you know,  
960 and this is their responsibility. And when they come back, they have to go to the accounts  
961 department and then have to present all of the um...they have to present all of the  
962 um...receipts and all of that to justify their expenditure, because that's what adults have  
963 to do, right?

964

965 Tracey: Yes yes...it's a very practical aspect...

966

967 Aaron: And uh...it's really funny, I don't agree...and it's so funny because the kids do  
968 the presentation, and they'll say where they want to go and then all of that. And they look  
969 at you...like... is that okay...Mr Adames? (Tracey: Yea...yea...) Okay. You guys wanna  
970 go to Berlin, you wanna travel 6,000 miles from Hong Kong, and you want to visit the  
971 Currywurst Museum. You want to see the curry sausage museum? That's what you  
972 wanna see? That is your idea of quintessential German culture? Okay.

973

974 Darren: I went to the Currywurst Museum.

975

976 Tracey: You?

977

978 Darren: It was one block away from the hotel I was staying in...

979

980 Aaron: No...no...but you understand what I'm saying... so... so... so...I and mean...

981

982 Tracey: It's actually a currywurst...

983

984 Aaron: And I...I don't like them die either...I'll be honest with you...I will sometimes  
985 say 'let's get a map of,' sometimes I have to do this...like I'll get a map of Berlin, I  
986 would say, 'okay, this is your itinerary. Can you please plot your itinerary on the map?'  
987 Okay. 'So this is the map of Berlin, we start here, we go there, then we go there, then we  
988 go there, then we go there...do you wanna spend 4 hours of your day on a subway? Why  
989 don't you group them like this? And then the next group on the next day group like this?'

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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990 And then you can have more...ah..to go.' So, we will help out, but the one thing, and it  
991 takes all my strength 'cause I'm a bit of a control freak, okay, it took all my strength to  
992 not say 'no.' But they did a fantastic job, I have to tell. And the kids' appreciation then of  
993 you, you know, what you do to organize things, what you do to lead is really really  
994 awesome. But they have great, a great idea of the way things work, because they had to  
995 do it.

996

997 Tracey: I'm gonna have to leave um...

998

999 Aaron: I can talk forever...

1000

1001 Tracey: ...in about ten minutes, okay?

1002

1003 Aaron: No problem. I should take the clock down.

1004

1005 Tracey: Darren, Do you want to ask a question? This is the one last question.

1006

1007 Darren: I think...I think probably that's enough for me, 'cause I...I guess the main  
1008 ideas...we're drawing on some ideas to add more directions on our proposal, right?  
1009 And...and we follow hopefully we get it...

1010

1011 Aaron: So...so...how would you see...how do you see global education? I'm interested  
1012 to know as a practitioner yourself. How do you see global education?

1013

1014 Tracey: If I wear my academics head, and I draw on my readings, (Aaron: Sure.) and I'll  
1015 tell you that global education is in transition. And there's different understandings of it.  
1016 There's a very utilitarian view of it which is uh...a view of students' who need to have  
1017 skills and knowledge, at least you know, to participate and be competitive, and that's a  
1018 necessary component to it...and then you also have another dimension where people are  
1019 more concerned about the sense of belonging, and um...some people will say these are  
1020 mutually exclusive, sometimes it's on a continuum, sometimes it co-exists, but...but we

## Westfield: Aaron's transcript

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1021 are getting at this...how do this seemingly like...potentially conflicting perspectives  
1022 come out in schools...because you can't just do one or the other.

1023

1024 Aaron: Oh...but...no...but we...we have our own conflicts. I have two girls, I can think  
1025 of straight away. Okay, they started learning French as a Saturday interest class. That  
1026 means they come back on Saturday, they just want to learn a little bit of French. And it  
1027 wasn't an academic class, emphasize interest as opposed to our programs during the week  
1028 which are highly academic uh...certification-oriented courses, you know we have kids  
1029 really gain tangible qualifications, okay. But the Saturday classes were always about 'I  
1030 would like to know a little bit of French...' encouraging kids to, particularly Chinese kids,  
1031 encouraging them to dare to learn another language and another culture. So they did it for  
1032 two years...three years like that. And then they decided that they wanted to make the  
1033 transition to the academic stream. Well, easier said than done I have to tell you okay,  
1034 because they are way behind everyone else, alright. So we...we told them, and we really  
1035 did push them as much as we could. But the one thing which I was always amazed about  
1036 these two girls, they loved French, they were committed to learn it, they didn't care how  
1037 much more work they had to put in, they were willing to do it. But they never wanted to  
1038 go to France. They never wanted to participate in exchanges, even if...you know, I  
1039 thought it was a money thing at first, I thought it was a social thing at  
1040 first...I...I...when...at the end of the day, they were just interested in learning French. (A  
1041 and Darren: Hmm, Okay.) And even when we offered to send them to France for two  
1042 months, to do a language course, to really boost up their language skills on that. 'Oh  
1043 no...no...it's fine. I'd rather spend the two months in Hong Kong, learning at home.'  
1044 And I asked them 'Is there anywhere in the world you'd like to go to, you know, to study  
1045 or whatever, or to live?' 'No, I love Hong Kong, Hong Kong is great.' But, so...but  
1046 they...I can honestly say to you, they would be...I think...like 95% of students in  
1047 traditional schools in that, they know practically nothing about the culture. In the classes,  
1048 we really have to give them very very specific, concrete examples of school system, use  
1049 life, all of these issues, because our curriculum for foreign languages is all topic-based,  
1050 it's all social cultural based. So, so...you know, teenage issues and things like this, we  
1051 might talk about sports and leisure, sports and leisure this kind of thing. And so, we give

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1052 them a context that's adapted to their age group. Okay. And so they would learn the  
1053 theory of the school...French school system. But they have no interest of going into a  
1054 French school.

1055

1056 Tracey: Okay. I could see you know...how students would have different understanding,  
1057 (Aaron: Sure.) what that was important to them, they care about, teachers would have  
1058 different, you know, understandings about you know, what they do about global  
1059 education. (Aaron: Sure.) So, how do we capture that? That's one of the things that I  
1060 really want to see...how do we capture those different types of perspectives?

1061

1062 Aaron: The thing is you need to entice people, instead of to always, instead of defending  
1063 their own culture, okay, instead of holding their own culture, actually, it's perfectly okay  
1064 for you to say, 'find for me,' if you want to remain positive, not critical, 'find for me  
1065 three things about school life in France that you like, that you would like to have in your  
1066 own life, that if, if you could, if I gave you an island, and you could build up your own  
1067 new civilization, what are the three elements that you would take from that? And what  
1068 are the three elements that you would take from your own?' Okay, and now, let's be  
1069 critical. And this is what I say to the kids...because if you don't give the kids a focus  
1070 when you take them abroad, they spend a lot of time talking to each other about stuff in  
1071 Hong Kong. And then they don't look out of the window and see what's going on...they  
1072 don't listen to what other people are saying, because you know, being kids is very  
1073 uh...peer-orientated, they need to know what their peers think, what they're doing and all  
1074 of that...so, you have to give them a focus. So, I would always say, 'give me three things  
1075 that, if you had your own island and you were setting up your own civilization, what are  
1076 the three things you would take? What are the three things you would take from your own  
1077 culture? And what are the three things from this culture you would never take, that you  
1078 would make sure you stop getting owned to your island? And what are the three things  
1079 from your own culture that you would stop?'

1080

1081 Tracey: If I was a researcher, coming into this school, trying to understand, not just the  
1082 predominant world view, but other peripherized world views about global education, how

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1083 would I capture that? How would I capture the different, you know, perspectives that are  
1084 here?

1085

1086 Aaron: I think the first way, I think you...absolutely you have to interview students.  
1087 (Tracey: Students.) I think you have to interview students first, (Tracey: Okay.) because  
1088 in fact, if you're picking up...if you are interviewing...do you wanna answer that? No  
1089 problem.

1090

1091 Tracey: No, it's okay, it's okay.

1092

1093 Aaron: Are you sure?

1094

1095 Tracey: Yea...yea.

1096

1097 Aaron: I think for...I think for example...

1098

1099 Tracey: Okay, I will get it, I'll get it.

1100

1101 Aaron: Okay.

1102

1103 (1:31:13-1:31:23 conversation n Darren: related to the study)

1104

1105 Aaron: I think the big issue that...now, obviously this is not a question you would be able  
1106 to ask P1 to P4. Okay, but the minute you start talking to these kids who participated for  
1107 example, in the exchange programs and things like that, you can ask them to start  
1108 thinking about the context where they were. What did you notice about the physical, the  
1109 physical space, for example, talking about school life, let's just talk about...in terms  
1110 of...you have to give them a focus, (Tracey: Okay.) okay. You have to talk about...even  
1111 if I ask you 'what's your view on global education?' You need to take a breath, you need  
1112 to think back. And this is an area of your interest, okay. So, if you're looking for a  
1113 general perspective, you may ask them to look at different contexts of their work in first

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1114 (Tracey: Okay.) Okay. You may also then ask, now, you have been...you have worked in  
1115 schools which may be or you've been to a school which you may deem as being a very  
1116 traditional...a traditional you know...Hong Kong school, okay. Now, do you think the  
1117 school you work in is the same? If it's not, how is it different? If I...for teachers, if I gave  
1118 you the term 'global', global education, global pedagogy, global...if I use the word  
1119 'global', do you think it's present in any form in your school? (Tracey: Okay.) And if it's  
1120 present in your school, how? Okay. Okay. If you put...what would be your definition  
1121 you...what would be your definition of an ideal global education provider? What  
1122 would...how would you see...what would you think would be the dream?

1123

1124 Tracey: Actually I've had people interpret that question differently. Some people would  
1125 say 'me, here's what I want, here's my ideal, but how it's being defined outside there is  
1126 very different from what my ideal is.'

1127

1128 Aaron: But as you said before, the whole definition is in change...is in transition, (Tracey:  
1129 Yes.) right? So, there is no definition. So, people...it really...people are constructing  
1130 definitions at the moment, (Tracey: There are many...) yea, waiting for a body of  
1131 research to more closely define, okay, right. So, asking them what is...asking them what  
1132 is their view now, if I told you that blah blah blah...if I told you I've talked to someone  
1133 yesterday, and they said that their view on global education was duh-duh-duh...do you  
1134 think their view could be supported? And do you think you could be supported by what  
1135 you observe in your school? Or what you observe in another school?

1136

1137 Tracey: Oh, another interesting one/

1138

1139 Aaron: I have like a...(inaudible)

1140

1141 Tracey: Another interesting one you might be...there's a task that I've been...I've been  
1142 piloting different types of questions, in one, I asked the participants to choose photos that  
1143 best reflected first task, their own idea of global ed. Then, I asked them to look at the  
1144 stack of pictures again, how does your school define global ed.? And if they chose

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1145 different ones, we put them together and ask why are these different? And then that was  
1146 one...yea...I'm supposed they're looking around at how to best approach this. I didn't  
1147 want to look at students, but you are the second person to say, think that would be  
1148 necessary.

1149

1150 Aaron: But, I think...I think the word you have to look at actually, to be honest with you  
1151 for a study like this, I think you need to look at stakeholders. (Tracey: Yes.) And  
1152 unfortunately, you're missing another important group, parents.

1153

1154 Tracey: Okay, now it's a matter of defining the parameters. It's so...but do you think a  
1155 study like this would be a value to other educators?

1156

1157 Aaron: Sure. I think the way you need to set up is with Hong Kong's ever growing  
1158 competitiveness, okay, um...the education system has to be the...one of the major  
1159 juggernauts to try and re-orientate and re-tool the...the society for the...a greater global  
1160 role, to stick out on a stage. Okay, now, it seems that some of our (inaudible) of  
1161 prosperity, like for example, our position as a global financial center, and things like that,  
1162 is really being undermined, okay. I mean, we just had the president of China announce a  
1163 week ago, you know, by 2020, Shanghai will be the third finance...global financial center  
1164 after New York and London. They would... Hong Kong was not mentioned anywhere  
1165 else...so clearly, Hong Kong is starting to lag behind in terms of global competitiveness.  
1166 (Tracey: Yes.) Okay. So, in order for us to become more globally centered, our education  
1167 system has to indeed become more globally relevant, okay. So, we have to look at how  
1168 we work out about that. And it's not just the...the education bureau had said, for example,  
1169 by offering more languages, for example, we can duh-duh-duh...but the reality is...in  
1170 Hong Kong, very very few schools offer. The government only funds senior secondary  
1171 schools, they don't fund junior secondary schools or primary language classes, which  
1172 means that kids would have zero proficiency, okay. The lack of interest, even six years  
1173 later or seven years later, there's only a couple hundred students in total across six  
1174 languages doing a language. Some languages have less than 10 candidates, (Tracey:  
1175 Right.) okay. So, why is it, that they are introducing languages but people are not picking

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1176 it up? Because these uh...these languages that are not being offered as part of a push for  
1177 global education. Now, how does global education... how can the EDB be more  
1178 uh...more forthright and more robust in bringing these values in the local system, part of  
1179 it got to be um...having more...heads of schools for example, they should be not only  
1180 engaging in um...visits, but the EDB for example, should be pairing up schools to work  
1181 on projects without the school (inaudible) we're other leading schools, and looking at for  
1182 example, maybe a school's Science program in Australia is particularly outstanding, so,  
1183 maybe two or three Hong Kong schools can work on a project with that school to look at  
1184 how Science is delivered. What are the learning experiences, you know, and using the  
1185 technology now, the government forth-plan for IT...  
1186