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# THE LEMONADE STAND

How schools teach kids the real world business of making money

By C Bryan Jones

As Japan looks to a future of stiff global competition and a smaller workforce, the importance of teaching innovation and entrepreneurship looms large for educators. The country's traditional approach to teaching, and a curriculum that favors rote learning and conformity, may not prepare students for a world that will look very different from that of the past century.

International schools in Japan are pushing the envelope with programs and courses that help the business world's next generation learn to think in creative ways for the betterment of society. *The ACCJ Journal* talked to five institutions about their approaches and results.

## LEARNING SERVICE

Michael Roberts, Middle Years Programme (MYP) Coordinator at Chiyoda International School Tokyo (CHIST), said that service learning is a major part of CHIST's MYP curriculum. "Students take on a project where they perform actions that benefit the community on a local or even global level, through direct or indirect action or advocacy," he explained.

"Examples of direct-action projects include tutoring someone or teaching behaviors to a dog that is up for adoption.

An indirect-action project, where the end result is not readily apparent, might be creating a picture book, teaching a foreign language, or rescuing an animal for release back into the wild. And advocacy involves speaking and presenting on behalf of a cause, such as Save the Children, anti-bullying, or water conservation."

All projects are completed while retaining a focus on a context such as globalization and sustainability or personal and cultural expression.

"There are six global contexts we learn during MYP, and they are the lens by which we contextualize our learning at CHIST. Most recently, MYP Year 1 students decided, as part of their service learning, to get involved with the WE Charity community, an international organization that encourages students to become interested and take part in solving global issues. The students held an event to raise money for this worthwhile cause," he said.

Canadian Academy, in Kobe, also has a very robust service program, explained Director of Admissions and Marketing Rob Smailes, who is also chair of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) Kansai Community Service Committee.

"Generally, we have about 20 service clubs that are initiated and run by students. Many of these have a strong entrepreneurial spirit that supports our school mission, part of which is 'to compassionately impact the world.'

"For example, our ECO Club has raised money and awareness by selling water bottles, thereby heavily reducing the presence

of PET bottles on our campus. And our Entrepreneur's Club has explored ways to survey the needs of the school and to provide an event or product that raises additional funds for a variety of organizations."

Canadian Academy's long history—it was founded in 1913—gives it a community that stretches well beyond the current students, Smailes added. "Networks gained from being a part of Canadian Academy provide support, guidance, and inspiration to all its members. Our mentorship and internship programs provide critical real-life experiences for our children."

The ACCJ and its members can also help provide those experiences, he pointed out. "Just as importantly, our students offer some pretty amazing insight and unique skill sets that companies find very attractive. It's a win-win relationship."

## CREATE YOUR PATH

Aoba-Japan International School (A-JIS) Head of Campus Paul Fradale talked about their Global Leadership Development Program (GLD), which he says best embodies A-JIS's support for entrepreneurial development.

"In this program, students in grades 11 and 12, quite literally, create their own graduation path within broadly described school parameters. Typically, students will include internships as part of this path," he explained. "We encourage them to negotiate their campus presence. For example, students pursuing modeling or entertainment careers will determine when they will be on campus and when they must be away to develop career aspirations. Others, such as IT- or business-minded students, will have a large say in how much time is spent in offices downtown as part of their internships. This ownership of their learning, in a very real sense, and negotiating with the school helps develop an entrepreneurial mindset as well as fundamental skills."

Kacie Leviton, marketing and communications manager at Nishimachi International School, said that, while they do not have an official entrepreneurship program, fostering creative thinking is at the core of their approach to education.

"The Nishimachi Learner Expectations (NLEs) embody the spirit of innovation and guide our school as we develop



Canadian Academy students learn to create business solutions to problems.

young minds to be leaders in the future. We believe that all members of our school community are learners, whether they be students, teachers, staff, parents, or alumni," she explained. "We should always be willing to learn and grow, and we believe that, through these NLEs, our students will develop into learners and leaders who know, care, and take action to bring value to others and make a positive impact on the world."

The NLEs are based on the belief that as learners we:

- Make connections between people, cultures, and ideas
- Take ownership and initiative, and accept responsibility
- Pursue challenges, take risks, and persevere
- Act ethically, respect differences, and are empathetic
- Are creative and use multiple processes to innovate

"We believe that by developing the skills needed to foster innovative thinking from an early age, many of our students will contribute positively to Japan's future in whatever field they pursue," Leviton said.

## STANDOUT MOMENTS

Asked about examples of projects and outcomes that were particularly inspiring, A-JIS's Fradale shared how one student's work in AI-controlled vehicles led to his receiving not only a full scholarship, but a monthly stipend to attend a prestigious engineering university in China. "His achievement really put the GLD out there for the community to consider as a highly viable alternative to our standard International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme path."

Last summer, Laurus International School of Science participated in the Maker Faire at Tokyo Big Sight. First-year students worked in groups of two or three to create an umbrella that collects and purifies water so that you can drink it while walking. Multiple people can use a single umbrella together, and even babies and dogs can use the innovative creation.

Students are also making a difference for their counterparts in other countries. Canadian Academy's Smailes shared how their students raise money and awareness each year for students in Thailand.

"In our design class, our students created a wide variety of flower planters, which were sold to our community. Although simple in scope, it was a wonderful way to integrate service, entrepreneurship, and curriculum into a meaningful



ASIJ's Aimee Dossor presents to her classmates as part of the Nike project.

## Education

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“We aim to develop global leaders capable of leading positive changes in the world. With support from our partners, we encourage an entrepreneurial spirit, innovation, and social responsibility.”

—Ken Sell,  
head of school



**Aoba-Japan International School (A-JIS)**  
By applying a blended learning approach to the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, A-JIS adds value to the traditions of a liberal education. A-JIS is all about intellectual rigor and building student self-efficacy.

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“Synthesizing the best practices from Japanese and global curriculums, CHIST prepares our students for their academic futures.”

—Hirokazu Osako,  
head of school



**Chiyoda International School Tokyo**  
Under the guidance of Musashino University, CHIST opened its elementary school in April 2018. The middle and high school opened in April 2019 and soon after became a candidate school for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years, Middle Years, and Diploma Programmes.

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“At Horizon Japan International School, we encourage and nurture our students to be open-minded, caring, innovative, and confident lifelong learners, both academically and personally.”

—Emin Huseynov,  
head of school



**Horizon Japan International School**  
Located in Yokohama, HJIS is an International Baccalaureate World School accredited by the Council of International Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and the Kanagawa Prefectural Government. HJIS provides preschool–grade-12 learners a modern education in a community environment.

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event that made a world of difference for those in Thailand, who, without our support, wouldn't have been able to afford their school uniforms, supplies, and books.”

Matt Wilce, director of communications at the American School in Japan (ASIJ), told *The ACCJ Journal* about Introduction to Entrepreneurship, an elective course for grades 11 and 12 that is offered as a concurrent enrollment class with Syracuse University.

Nineteen students enrolled in this year's class taught by high school teacher Jason Cancelli, who said, “I want them to do entrepreneurship, not study it.”

They were given a project to work on with Nike to design a plan to encourage kids and women in Tokyo to lead more active lifestyles in ways that benefit Japan, the Nike brand, and Nike's financials.

The students were split into six groups and each worked with up to three of 18 volunteer mentors from Nike. At the end, they presented their strategy. Covid-19 added an additional lesson to the experience as the original plan to present in person at the Nike offices in Tokyo had to be canceled, and recorded presentations were delivered instead.

Cancelli said, “I am not yet sure how the class will influence students in the future, but I hope it provides them with the confidence to put themselves out there, maybe as an entrepreneur, or maybe as a researcher, or an artist, or an activist.”

### FUTURE PROSPECTS

A grayer Japan, with fewer workers, will rely on innovation and entrepreneurial spirit to maintain its high standard of living in the decades to come. Educators agreed that instilling in today's students the skills and drive to make a difference is critical.

“We all know that the world is becoming more complex. It is truly remarkable how different the world our students are entering is from the one we grew up in. Given the rate of change, it is, in many ways, a far greater risk not to innovate, take chances, and generate new ideas,” said Scott Wilcox, ASIJ's deputy head of school for learning.

“As is so evident during this global pandemic, doing things the same way we have done them before is most likely the path to stagnation and obsolescence.”



Nishimachi Learner Expectations encourage innovation and growth.



### ENTREPRENEURS IN ACTION

As the coronavirus threat descended on Tokyo in March and the supply of personal protective equipment began to run low, ASIJ student David Bass took action. Hearing stories about price-gouging in the United States, and recognizing that low-income earners and homeless people were suffering, he decided to start making cheap—even free—sanitizers for people in need, for the betterment of society.

Using his own pocket money to purchase all the materials and equipment, Bass started making hand sanitizers in his house. Quickly his efforts expanded.

“I started to spread the word about my idea, created a group chat, and added anyone interested in it,” he explained. “Luckily, a lot of people were also passionate about my idea, and we started to have meetings to kick off our activities. In the beginning, it was just me and my schoolmates, but now we have managed to recruit others outside of my school.”

Bass is now aiming to produce 5,000 bottles and is thinking of partnering with Japanese high schools and institutions to help them make their own hand sanitizers.

Read a full interview with Bass at:  
[connect.custom-media.com/forum/tackling-sanitizer-price-gouging/](http://connect.custom-media.com/forum/tackling-sanitizer-price-gouging/)

ASIJ is actively working to make sure we are developing creative, critical thinkers who will be innovators and problem-solvers, with the skills and disposition to make a difference in Japan and as global citizens.”

A-JIS's Fradale said: “Japan currently has a debt-to-gross domestic product ratio of more than 200 percent, and the country's population structure and birthrate are considered by many to be a death knell for the economy. Japan faces increasing industrial competition from regional players that it once dominated, and its energy and food security are at risk. Without innovation, Japan is destined to face severe reductions in its standard of living.

“But Japan's deep history of craftsmanship and innovative design—married with its commitment to strive for the highest quality—can provide a way forward by bridging the past to the future,” he continued. “Japan's stability and generally clean environment, along with its highly educated populace, provides the human, political, and environmental capital from which to build a new iteration of Japanese society, should the young people be allowed to take the reins and run with their ideas.” ■