

EXUPERY SCHOOL: INVENTION & STORYTELLING

Exupery International School (EIS) welcomed its new director in May 2019. We all know those rare, gifted individuals who instantly put others at ease – their qualities often include a broad smile, sincerity, and unforced conviviality, and they exude a sense of instant familiarity and complete understanding. Exupery's new director, Roy White, exemplifies all of these. 'Creativity, innovation and teamwork are the foundations of today's education. Without them, it's impossible to thrive in today's rapidly changing technological world,' he says with conviction. How can one disagree with that?

It's been just six months since White made Latvia his new home. He has many years of experience working in both large and small schools in Canada, the Netherlands, Hong Kong and the UK. And now, a new appointment. Why Exupery School? 'When choosing a school, I am guided by three criteria: I must believe in the vision and values of the school; I must believe that my experience and knowledge will be helpful to the school; and finally, for me there should be a challenge,' White explains. 'As soon as I enter a classroom, within 60 seconds I can see a large array of happenings which will make an immediate impression. In my very first visit to Exupery, I started with the kindergarten and I immediately realised: this is fantastic. Any parent who wants the best for their child would want their child to study here – there is such a cosy, friendly and welcoming atmosphere. And the architectural design



Exupery International School director Roy White

was incredibly inspiring – the space, the light... A unique combination of form and physical space to match the school's pedagogical vision and concept!

To teach and to inspire

EIS's new director is convinced that it is impossible to achieve today's goals for education without the right organisational culture and people who are fully committed to achieving common goals. It is especially important that teachers have the most diverse professional experience and qualifications, each with their own unique strengths. 'Among our teachers there is an engineer, a coach, an inventor, and a scientist working on cancer research,' the director proudly says.

Choosing a school for their child is one of the most important – if not the most important – decisions that parents make. Here's an expert's look at some key education trends.

White believes that the pedagogical approach of the future is one that must be based on creativity, deep thinking, and an entrepreneurial spirit. It is important that students become innovators and show ingenuity both in their studies and in life. They must be able to work in teams and know how to adapt well to new conditions. Accordingly, EIS teachers are ideal role models. 'Young people should see that we are not only their teachers; we are also people with diverse backgrounds and experiences, ready for new challenges and discoveries,' the director explains. 'Our task is to develop in our students a passion for learning – in fact, for everything that they do. They must learn to think deeply, delve into the intricacies of processes, and create.'

Artificial intelligence and storytelling

Humankind is on the cusp of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, one that will change the very core of many sectors and aspects of human life – including education. What we are facing is a fusion of advances in artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), 3D printing, genetic engineering, quantum computing, and other cutting-edge technologies. The main condition for successfully adapting to this new environment is development of the new essential skill set: scientific and critical thinking, the ability to synthesise information, and empathy.

'Today there is a demand for people who know how to solve complex

problems, work in teams, use creative approaches, and strive for innovation,' says White. 'Recently I was told about a business deal involving one billion euros, after which the new owners would need only 50% of the current staff – the rest were to be replaced by new software. On a global scale, such inevitable changes will create tensions. If a person wants to succeed in this high-tech, rapidly changing world, they must develop the necessary skills beginning in childhood'.

According to White, you need to start from the earliest years, and with lots of free play. Through play, children create their own rules and learn how to communicate and negotiate. People are social by nature, yet modern social media is anti-social – it is in fact decimating our social skills. We sit in restaurants and in meetings with our faces buried in our gadgets; we have ceased talking to each other, ceased debating, ceased looking for new meanings. 'During free play, children learn to interact, violate and agree to other people's rules; they create their own rules and adapt to new situations. That's why I strongly emphasise the importance of these opportunities for play, and encourage our students to tell stories in the learning process – beginning from the very first years of life,' stresses White.

Another major trend in today's world is the knowledge of several languages. Exupery features four main languages: English, French, Latvian and Russian. The task of Exupery's teachers is to ensure that all students freely and competently learn at least two languages at very high proficiency.



WHERE TO SPEND SUMMER 2020

For those wishing to try out the EIS environment, a great opportunity to do just that is at Exupery Summer Day Camp 2020 – and admission has already started! Language & Creative Technologies are at the centre of our summer programme, suitable for children and teens 4-16 years old. The

camp is located between Riga and Jūrmala, close to the famous beaches of the Baltic Sea. The entire programme is conducted in English. If needed, staff members are able to communicate with students in Latvian, Russian, Spanish, Hebrew, and French on a personal basis. During camp activities students improve soft

skills, such as teamwork and negotiation, communication, conflict management, emotional intelligence, flexibility, and leadership.

Camp dates:

Tech & Start-Ups, 13-17/07
Tech & Art, 20-24/07
Tech & Science, 27-31/07
Tech & Music, 3-7/08



- International School and Preschool with education in English for children and teens 2-16 years old, just 15 minutes away from Riga and Jūrmala
- Accreditation from the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia
- Authorized by Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) to offer IGCSE and Advanced Levels
- Member of CIS (Council of International Schools); IB PYP (International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme) accreditation

Ideally they should also know a third language, thereby ensuring effortless communication and an understanding of the global community. 'Language is not only a means of communication. It is necessary for a deeper understanding of the meaning, ideas, culture and history of different countries and peoples,' says White. 'At the least it will help build understanding between people, which is crucial for conflict resolution.'

Get to the top

Exupery's new director has high expectations both for himself and for each member of Exupery's pedagogical team. For all teachers, working with children should be a pleasure. One of the most effective learning tools is stories. Any subject or phenomenon can be described in such a way that encourages and involves children in learning and joint creativity. 'Have you ever noticed how with just a few words, kids are able to discuss quite serious issues? We must encourage this in every way possible. It doesn't matter if our students become journalists or writers or not – they shall create stories that will help them reach their goals', says White. 'After all,

today's students will make tomorrow's history; they'll make everyone's life better and safer.'

Choosing a school for their child is one of the most important – if not the most important – decisions that parents make. What influences this choice? The EIS director draws parallels to Maslow's hierarchy of needs: 'We start from the bottom: parents want their child to be happy at school, to be known and cared for, and to be safe – the necessary minimum for any school. We rise to the next level: the academic successes of the school and its students are important for parents. They want their children to receive quality knowledge. Yet the parents of our pupils expect even more – they want their child to develop their talents, invent, create. They want to be proud of their child in the future – these are the highest of ambitions. Today more than ever it is important to have a direct and honest dialogue with parents. We make clear what our school can give its students, and parents have to decide whether our school is suited to their child's potential. The concept of "one school for anyone" is not our way.' exupery.lv