



RIST Counselor's Corner

Post WASC, Anti-Bully Week and Conflict Resolution

by Steve Summerfield, RIST Counselor

Redeemer International School Thailand is a special school for many reasons. The WASC Accreditation Team was quite complimentary of our program and it was gratifying to receive such a positive affirmation from the visiting team. It was also special for me personally, as the Chair of the WASC committee, Michael Saffarewich, dropped into my office just before addressing all of the stakeholders for the final report. The two of us were able to share our experiences working at larger international schools, and he kept making references to the more nurturing aspects of smaller programs such as Redeemer.

My question to him was, "Are we shielding students too much in such an environment?" His response was immediate and unequivocal. "This is the time in a young person's life to have the scaffolding and support a smaller

school can provide." He went on to say that students in this school also face the challenge of academics as second language learners, and it's wonderful not to have other major concerns such as bullying, harassment, and finding a place to belong. I think it's important to add here that subtle forms of bullying will always exist when large groups of students form, but how one 'responds' to different forms of bullying is the critical message we want to convey to our students.

Both RIS and RIST devoted the last week of November to discuss bullying behavior, harassment, and other forms of intimidation. Our focus at RIST has been all about inclusion, and we opened the week with a video the seniors put together last year at the talent show. Students went on to make anti-bullying posters and raise awareness about the importance of inclusion. At the final assembly on Thursday poster



award winners were recognized, and the student council members did role-plays on how the victim might confront the bully by giving him/her choices before asking for outside help from a teacher or bystander.

Lastly, student council members will be prepped on how to discuss in homeroom classes over the next few weeks the bystander's role in bullying situations. They will present a variety of interventions the bystander can take to support the victim, avoiding direct confrontation if possible. Understanding bullying types of behavior and how conflict arises will also be discussed in the broader context as we look at the current events happening here in Thailand and abroad.



RIST regrets and apologizes for an error in the placement details of the class of 2008 in the last edition of the newsletter. Eri Fukuhara is studying Law at Nagoya University not Kwansai Gakuin University as previously stated.