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From the Executive Directors Desk

Eliada Gudza

Africa is one of the most fascinating continent. I believe that is what attracted the early explorers and settlers. What amazes me is the diversity of people, their food, dwellings, language, life styles, you name it, and yet where ever you go there is just something that tells you are in Africa. My recent and first visit to Ghana was one such experience. Having only been to Nigeria and Abidjan, my knowledge of West Africa was rather limited. That is why this visit to Ghana was something I looked forward to and to a great extent I was not disappointed. Accra is in deed a great city with great people. Typical West African like Lagos in some respects but clean and well organized.

That Ghana was the first country in Africa to attain independence from colonial rule is not obvious but is easy to prove. The monuments and statues honoring individuals such as Kwame Nkrumah and many others say it all. One easily observes self evident political maturity, self respect and respect for the other person as one goes about business on the streets of Accra. One gets the sense of a people that love the other fellow man, have trust and can be trusted. My very first day in Accra involved traveling some 30 or more kilometers out of Accra by public transport. I was dropped off by a taxi driver at a bus terminus, just like our Mbare-Musika, in the heart of the city.



The Independence Arch (Ghana)

I was naturally afraid of what might happen to me with all my bags, but little did I know that I was in safe hands and my journey to learn something about the people of this land had begun. Having been safely escorted to the bus by one of the parking attendants just like we have it here, over an hour later I was still sitting on the bus with my suitcase safely stored in an open trunk behind the bus and during that period I observed something of the Ghanaian culture and business practice that I could only, but admire and wish for Zimbabwe.

Anyone who has used public transport such as buses from Mbare will tell you how the waiting period before the bus fills up with passengers is in itself a daylight nightmare. Genuine travelers literary get harassed and bothered by vendors who get on the bus congesting the aisle pestering passengers, coercing them to buy their wares. Some of these would not even be genuine vendors but pickpockets and robbers in disguise.

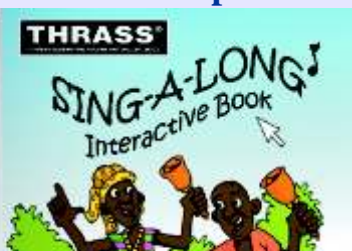
Such was not the experience in Accra. One at a time, the vendors would jump onto the stationary bus, stand in front, place their bag of ware down and deliver gracefully, powerful marketing lectures on each product whilst the people listened quietly. Even if one had no intention to

buy, the marketing was just so educative that you could not help listen. Some came in and delivered sermons and conducted prayers, which everyone joined in reverently.

Never was there a time that two or more vendors would come at the same time and compete for attention. It was always one at a time and there was no pressure to buy. Feeling thirsty I asked for the price of clear water and before I knew it, my neighbor on the front seat had already paid for it and offered me to drink.

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Ridgeview Primary THRASS Report



We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for selecting our school to participate in this educational program. Please find below our observations and comments as requested.

The THRASS Program was introduced two weeks ago to a grade one class 28 students aged between 5 to 6 years old.

A lap top was set up in the classroom on the reading mat and students sat in front of the screen. Once the initial song was played pupils were excited and unable to contain themselves. They began to scramble over each other to get a better view. Most children had never been exposed to computer packages made for children and thus were in awe.

Some of the comments were:

"Mrs. Shariff, I thought lap tops are only for mummies and daddies"

"Wow cartoons on a computer!"

"The computer can make songs!"

"Why aren't the cartoons dancing?"

"I like the songs"

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More Virtual Reality Learning Objects

A.K Kashambwa



The Gully Control

As indicated in the previous edition of our newsletter, progress has been made to localize more learning objects. Recently a fourth topic, namely The Line Level, has been added to the list of Learning Objects recorded in Shona. Work on Ndebele scripts started this month.

In this issue we focus on The Gully Control which shows us how to repair areas affected by erosion using a simple but effective method known as a stone check wall. In Africa and our country in particular, each year, tons of fertile and productive soils are being washed into rivers, dams, lakes and the seas due to poor land husbandry practices that lead to soil erosion. Soil erosion, if unchecked, will lead to a catastrophe of immense proportions, particularly in our own country.

Below are important steps to follow when building a stone check wall.

- ? Collect stones from the surrounding area.
- ? Dig a shallow trench straight across a rill. The trench should not be more than 0.3 m deep and 0.5 m wide.
- ? Put the soil dug from the trench before the stone trench viewed from the point of flow direction.
- ? Fill the trench with stones. Put the smaller stones inside, and the larger ones outside the stone check. The lowest point of the stone check should be in the middle so that water will overflow there during heavy rains.
- ? Place a tongue of stones below the lowest point and ensure the wings go above normal ground level.

And there you have it, your own stone check dam. But, as they say in Ndebele, Ukutshelwa yikuncitshwa! Kutaurirwa hunyimwa! (Being told is not enough!) Go into the learning object yourself and learn the VR Way.

As the bus took off, almost two hours later, yet another great speaker, turned out preacher, stood up and commenced to deliver a sermon followed by prayers for the journey ending with the sale of copies of the Bible. Leaving us to complete the rest of our journey, he dropped off on the outskirts of Accra to catch yet another bus and preach the word. In all this, what fascinated me most was the respect and peaceful



Traditional Dancers

atmosphere that prevailed. I could only think of the scripture that says "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom". It would be naïve to assume that life in Accra or in Ghana is like a bed of roses, but if these experiences are anything to go by, there is something of the Ghanaians that speaks of the Africa that we of the south call Ubuntu or Unhuism.



Reception Staff - Wangara Hotel

Try going shopping in Accra! The Cultural Market place was our first stop. You really need to have majored in choice and to improve on assertiveness in order to withstand the marketing skills of the Ghanaian traders of all ages. I imagine being pulled gently into a little corner with bright



Eat, drink coconut juice on the street

merchandise of all colours and shades before you to choose. A chair is offered for you to sit, perhaps a drink of water. You could even put up your feet and at this stage your wish is the trader's command. You only have to point at what you want to look at and no matter how high it is hanging its down for you to try or look at closely. Then comes the price bargaining. You can't beat these young ladies or boys! They just have the language and they might even pronounce God's richest



Snails ready to cook

blessing upon you for blessing them by your purchase! Unlike some parts of the world, here whether or not you purchase, it seems like all that begins well ends well. But if you have a soft heart like mine, you feel kind of bad that you have not a deep enough pocket to have bought something from everyone of these blessed humble people. However, do not be fooled, not all that glitters, is gold. You can be cheated and pay a fortune for something cheap. It's a kind of game and the winner takes it all! Like any capital, you will find on the streets Accra supposedly enterprising nationals from other neighboring countries who do not reflect the true Ghanaian character. But all that said, Accra struck me as one of those places I would love not only to visit but even to live in!



More on Eurotalk Interactive Lessons

A.C. Kashambwa

In this issue of the newsletter we take a closer look at the Interactive video lessons from EuroTalk. Our topic is, "Looking after your teeth".

Did you know that your teeth are meant to last a lifetime? Yes, this is if you look after them properly and take the necessary care. Teeth that are not looked after well can cause serious infection that affects other parts of the body and make you ill. There are many things you can do to care for your teeth and gums.

- ? First, avoid sweets and foods such as pastry, tea or coffee with sugar but you can eat plenty of fruit and vegetables.
- ? Brush your teeth from top to bottom and from the sides everyday and especially after eating anything with sugar.
- ? Start to brush children's teeth as soon as they appear and teach them to brush their own teeth as they grow.
- ? Should you brush your teeth only when you have a toothbrush and toothpaste? No, sometimes we run out of toothpaste and in some instances cannot afford to buy a brush because we do not have money.
- ? If you don't have a toothbrush you can make one by chewing a small twig on one end to make bristles for cleaning your teeth.
- ? You can also use water with salt and charcoal to clean your teeth if you do not have toothpaste.
- ? A small piece of plastic stretched from a clean plastic bag can be used as dental floss to clean between the teeth.
- ? If your tooth already has a hole, avoid as much as you can eating sweets, cool drinks and sugar and brush well after every meal.
- ? Don't wait until it gets worse.
- ? Have it filled by a dentist if possible. Above all, visit your dentist regularly each year even if you do not have dental problems.

Remember that good teeth will give you good speech, good looks, good breath, good eating and above all good health. ■

Message by George Carlin:

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider Freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time.

We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbour. We conquered outer space but not inner space.

We've done larger things, but not better things.



We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill.

It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete...

Remember - spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever.

Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.

Remember, to say, 'I love you' to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you.

Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there anymore.

Give time to love, give time to speak! And give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind. ■

Ridgeview Primary THRASS Report

After the initial excitement, children were able to settle down and hum along with the DVD. By the end of the 30 minute lesson they knew the chorus of 'Fly little bird'. The pupils asked the teacher to repeat the song over and over again.

Pupils enjoy looking through the Picture book and are attracted by the bright colours.

The Coloring book is used to reinforce the oral lesson. Pupils hum the tune whilst coloring in the picture.

The pupils immediately take their place on the reading mat and ready themselves for a new song when they see the teacher setting up the lap top. This lesson seems to be the highlight of their lives at present.

The teachers in the English Department were excited and impressed by the package. However, they felt that the kit which they received was inadequate and felt that wall posters, flash cards, workbooks and other aids will have complemented the kit received in order to make a greater impact, reinforce and consolidate the concepts being taught. It was also noted that the letters at grade one level are taught by the way the sound i.e. Bb is "buh". The material received could be used in English language, spelling and or to some degree in Music and Movement.

The only distraction noted was that of a little girl aged 6 years old who had noticed that on every second or third page there seemed to be a mouse appearing.



She was more focused on the mouse and what the function of the mouse was rather than on the lesson and couldn't wait to see the next page to see if the mouse was there. Her question was "What is the mouse doing?" "Why is he always there?" Zimbabwe being a multi-racial country we feel that all nations, be it African, Asian and European characters should be used in the illustrations so that the children are able to identify with their peers.

Due to lack of equipment, the school was unable to introduce this package to the entire infants department, i.e. Grades 1, 2 and 3, in order to give a broader report concerning THRASS. Laptops would serve our current situation in Zimbabwe due to the number of power cuts. Lessons will not have to be postponed due to power cuts as the laptops are battery powered. However, it was noted that if each child had his / her own monitor in the computer lab children will have a better view and will be able to use the mouse on their own to turn pages and interact with the program with supervision from the class teacher.

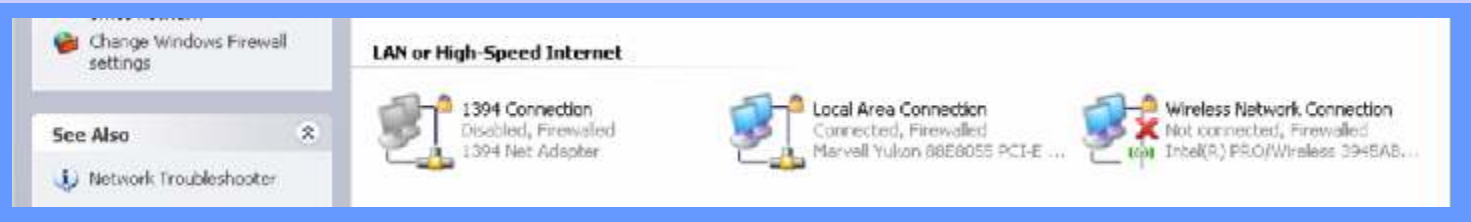
In conclusion, teachers felt that this package would be best used in the third grade at the moment, but if ideally given the opportunity, material and equipment it could be implemented as early as first grade.

We hope the observations made are beneficial to your organization and we would like to thank you once again for nominating our school for this project.

Tech Tips For You

by Justin Mupinda

What is a 1394 network connection? Is this a familiar feature of your Windows XP Network Connection page?



The 1394 Connection network device is your FireWire card. Although most users use FireWire to connect video and storage peripherals, Microsoft chose to list FireWire as a network device, which might confuse some users. Either you can ignore this connection, or you can disable it by right-clicking the connection from within Network Connections (from the Start menu, go to Settings, Network Connections) and selecting Disable.

News from Microsoft Office product support

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