

Press Release
Teaching in the Creative Classroom Study Group
Suzanne Porath

May 2005 - X-box, Playstation 2, I-pods and all other kinds of technogadgets fill the ears, minds and pockets of students today. How does a teacher keep their interest in the classroom? By being creative. For the past six weeks, teachers at the International School of Aruba have explored the idea of teaching in a creative classroom. What does it mean? What does it look like? And where does a teacher get all the good ideas?

This professional development opportunity was based on the series of videos produced by Harvard University's educational research group entitled "Project Zero" and Disney Learning Partnership, a worldwide outreach division of the Walt Disney Company. Each video featured award winning teachers and their classrooms with a focused on each of the following ideas:

- What is a "creative" classroom?
- How do teachers establish a creative classroom environment that supports powerful learning?
- How can teachers promote student engagement in the activities, ownership of the learning, and understanding of key ideas?
- Where do ideas for creative teaching come from?
- How do teaching units evolve?
- How do teachers address standards and still teach creatively?

After each viewing, ISA's teachers discussed and analyzed the classroom situations presented. The videos also generated an environment where teachers shared personal experiences, lesson ideas, and classroom management tips. Each session ended with "homework" for the teachers, which included some additional reading, written reflection, and talking with students about the ideas presented.

ISA's philosophy states "that learning is a continuous process that needs to nurture critical thinking, exploration, and experimentation supported by a conducive and inviting academic framework." This is true, not only for the students at ISA, but for the teachers also. Several professional in-services and workshops have been offered throughout the school year on topics such as writing, using computer software, plagiarism, learning styles, and Montessori education.