



Veronica Hughes  
Chair of the ISD  
Transitions Steering  
Group

## Thriving in transition

The Transitions Steering group at ISD invited Debra Rader to ISD to support their work. Debra Rader is an educator, author and presenter on transition education. She has been principal in a number of international schools and an educational consultant for the last 25 years. On 25th and 26th March Debra presented to the parent community and faculty, and also taught a lesson on transitions to grade three, as well as meeting with other groups of teachers throughout the day.

Debra's message was that moving to a new country and culture can be both exciting and daunting. However, with support and understanding we can all thrive in transition and benefit from the rich experience of living and learning in another country and culture, and with others from different cultural and language backgrounds. Whether families

are short or long-term residents we all have much to gain from knowing each other. We have a shared responsibility to create caring and compassionate school communities committed to the well-being of children and each other. When we work together to do so with mindfulness and intentionality we all benefit immensely.

Debra acknowledged that an internationally mobile lifestyle presents benefits and challenges to both children and adults and that some experiences are both benefits *and* challenges. These were some of the benefits and challenges shared at the parent presentation:

### Challenges

- Uncertainty
- Being away from family
- Forming deep relationships
- Being left behind
- Language, laws, culture
- Creature comforts - food, stores, etc
- People at home not being interested

### Benefits

- Bigger world view
- Travel opportunities
- Improved resilience
- Getting to know others meaningfully
- Acceptance
- Adapting to new situations and skills
- Learning a new language

In her lesson to grade 3 students Debra read the story "Alexander, Who's Not (Do you hear me? I mean it!) Going to Move" by Judith Viorst. She explored with them the experience of moving to a new place, and the reasons and the feelings that they have had when they move. They worked in small groups thinking about advice and strategies to help children when moving to a new country and culture. As an action some of their ideas were to compile an advice book or video which could become a transition resource at ISD.

In her feedback to ISD Debra said that- "There is much that you are already doing in terms of transition programmes and activities and there are exciting possibilities to continue to honour the cultures, languages and experiences of the children and adults in your school, and value them in deep and meaningful ways. ISD is clearly a very special place for children, families and faculty and I have no doubt it will become even more so as you further develop your transition education, activities and programmes." If you were unable to attend Debra's presentation to parents and would like a copy of her handout please contact [transitions@isdedu.de](mailto:transitions@isdedu.de).

### The ISD Transitions Steering Group Mission Statement:

*"To support students, staff and parents arrive at, stay on and move out of ISD."*

