



Antony Wilson

in Excellence

MYP English Teacher, Head of Student Life, Global Education & Outreach Coordinator

“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” - Howard Thurman

Q: As a teacher, how do you keep students engaged?

A: We talk a lot these days about encouraging young people to find their passion, but I think what’s more important is personal and creative engagement. The world needs young people to make, act, do, come alive. Perhaps this sounds like semantics, but passion needs wings; we are asking students the wrong question. I have always felt uncomfortable when asked ‘What’s your passion?’, because it shouldn’t be all about the self, about ‘my’ passion, but rather about understanding what life is asking of me. As David Brooks said in his recent Op-Ed, the more important question is ‘How can I match my intrinsic talents with one of the world’s deep needs?’ I believe the ideal place for youth to ‘come alive’ and find those deep needs is outside the classroom in student leadership, voice, and creativity, action and service (CAS).

Q: Are there any words of wisdom you live by?

A: There is a quote from the old Marxist Antonio Gramsci which says, “Pessimism of the intellect; optimism of the will.” You could say this is my mantra. I always try to engage the world within this balanced critical dialectic: never accept things as given, question everything, but, at the same time, always believe in good possibilities and have faith in the human spirit to find better paths beyond the limits of the possible. You could say this really is my idea of “balance” from the IB learner profile!



52 in 52

Inspired by Erin Moore’s story, Mr. Wilson and his daughter Ava (G3) are currently working on a fun challenge — 52 hikes in 52 weeks.

“We have some catching up to do this summer and look forward to creating a blog to share our journey.”

Antony Wilson, bio

Mr. Wilson grew up in Toronto in the 60s and 70s, the youngest of what he lovingly refers to as a ‘Brady Bunch’ family of hippies, artists, musicians, lefties, feminists, and visiting poets, from Leonard Cohen to Margaret Atwood, and a sprinkling of Dennis Lee for the kids. His father’s positions as professor of English at Trinity College and editor of the progressive arts and politics rag *The Canadian Forum* afforded Tony and his family a wider window into the world. The importance of the arts, social justice, human rights and diversity filled Mr. Wilson’s world from a young age. He pursued a degree in English from Western which, after getting politicised travelling to Indonesia and India, he followed up with a BA and MA in international relations from York. He then began a PhD in political science at the University of Toronto, but after working for a year at public housing complex in Scarborough, he decided to take teacher education at OISE instead. In 2000, when the Upper School was just an portable on the field, Tony joined Mulgrave as a teacher of G8 - 9 English and Social Studies and faculty advisor for our first ‘Student Council’ leadership group. Since then, he has taught English, Social Studies, Philosophy, and ToK to students from G7-12 and served as Dean of Students, Vice Principal and now Head of Student Life and GEO.



Embracing the Quiet of Introverts

Mr. Wilson is a student of teaching and learning trends. As he writes below, he has noticed a growing 'extrovert bias', a term used by Susan Cain in the popular book *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*.

I am always interested in new findings that impact teaching and learning practices. For some time now, I've noticed a growing 'extrovert bias' in education, to use the words of Susan Cain's *Quiet* and her TedTalk on the power of introversion. I think this is something we need to challenge in schools. Today, we focus so much on visible or active learning and the importance of collaboration and participation such that we risk marginalising the immense value of solitude, introspection, listening,

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independence and observation. With at least one-third of all people fitting within this orientation, these qualities of introversion, among others, are important as all teachers seek to build rich, creative and inclusive learning environments and diverse student leadership teams beyond the classroom. When I notice a student not 'participating' in class, I remind myself that quiet can be engagement. Although there is a systemic swing towards an extroverted bias in

education, business and beyond, I do think Mulgrave provides a counterbalance to this trend largely because of the school's amazing teachers. Mulgrave's teachers know their students. Period.

Trends in education may come and go but, in the end, good teaching is all about knowing your students, building relationships and being there - where the student is.

At Mulgrave we do this through our advisory model, pastoral care, smaller classes and personalisation of learning. It is through this education model and through engaged and invested teachers that the quiet of introverts can be heard. - TW

LIFELONG LEARNER:

What does it mean to you?



"For me, embracing the concept of being a lifelong learner means having a mindset that always questions, tries new things, connects, reflects and empathises with others. My 'early adopter' approach to new social media and educational technology or #edtech over the last 5 years epitomizes this learning process for me."

WOULD YOU RATHER ...
with Mrs. Wilson

Global or Local?

Globalocal!

"Getting engaged in global experiences are important rites of passage into seeing the world, your world, through the eyes of others. My trip to Indonesia as a youth was transformative. At the same time, volunteerism is just a catalyst. I think local service is at the heart of it all where I have learned the most and had the greatest impact. That's why we want Mulgrave students to get out and volunteer more in our community."



Friday PM or Saturday AM?

Saturday

"I moved to Vancouver in the late 90s and met my amazing partner Britt. We have two kids, Ava (3UM) and Eli, who will be joining the ELC as a PreK4 this September. Family is everything to us and our weekends are full of urban and outdoor adventures on the North Shore, including hikes, bikes and sports."

Dogs or Cats?

Both!

"We are a family of great animal lovers. As a child, my house was a zoo. We are in a pet transition phase and recently got a new Cheshire kitten 'Tora' and are looking forward to the arrival of a fancy rat and Boston Terrier puppy 'Shakespeare' this summer."



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