



Review of Flowers for Algernon

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From the beginning of this school year, I have been reading a novel called "Flowers for Algernon" with the Headmaster. It is a novel written by Daniel Keyes. Let me first offer a plot summary.

This novel is about a mentally challenged thirty-year old man named Charlie who is chosen to be a part of a surgical experiment that could make retarded people into geniuses. Charlie was taken to the university hospital to see a certain Professor Nemur. Nemur held out some cards with blobs of ink on them, and he asked Charlie what he saw on the cards. Charlie was supposed to be able to use his imagination to see shapes. However for every card he answered, "All I see are just blobs of ink."

After that, Charlie was taken to another room where he met a man named Burt who took care of a

white mouse there named Algernon. This mouse had had the same operation as the one that Charlie was going to have. According to Burt Algernon is three times smarter than the average mouse. In that room, Charlie was given a paper with a maze drawn on it. He was told to do a race where he would have to try and finish the maze before Algernon could finish his, but at first every time Charlie lost to him.

This novel takes the form of Charlie's progress reports. After Charlie's operation, he wrote that he didn't feel any different from before his operation. However, as I read on, I noticed that Charlie's spelling and grammar were slowly improving. And as he got smarter, he realized that he was in love with a woman named Alice Kinnian, who taught Charlie at a college for retarded adults. However, Charlie al-



ways felt awkward around her after his operation. Alice knew about Charlie's feelings, but she said that they should wait a little bit longer before they take things further.

Charlie also went to a national convention in Chicago for professors interested in the operation that Charlie and Algernon had received. At the convention, Nemur refused to accept the fact that some scientists in other countries were ahead of his own research and from this Charlie suspected that Nemur was a fraud. During the convention Charlie let Algernon out of his cage and caused a commotion, sending everyone at the convention running around searching for him. Charlie found Algernon before anyone else and they both escaped the convention without anybody finding out.

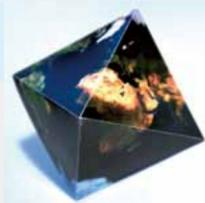
Charlie and Algernon went to New York and moved into an apartment building. There, Charlie met a woman named Fay who is painter who lived right next door. Charlie fell in love with her right away.

At this point, the Headmaster and I have read and discussed over half of the novel. I am very excited to read and discuss the remaining chapters. In answer to a question that the Headmaster asked at a recent session, I said that I suspect that Charlie's operation is not going "stick" and that he is going to return to his original, retarded state.

I am enjoying this novel so far, I like it because it makes such a strong case that mentally challenged people shouldn't be treated differently from other people and are deserving of minimal human dignity. ■

GLOBAL VISION

The Path to IBDP Authorization



As most of our community's stakeholders know, our school has become a candidate for authorization for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). Candidate status is an essential first step to becoming an IB World School, though authorization is not at this point guaranteed. We are hoping to be authorized by the IB Organization and to implement the IBDP in April of 2015.

If authorized, we will teach all subjects (other than Japanese Language and Literature) in English. The IBDP will, of course, be an optional and not a required course of studies. However, we firmly believe that pursuing a rigorous course of academic studies in a foreign language will greatly benefit our students.

currently for their last two years of senior high school. They will study half of these subjects for 240 hours and the other half for 150 hours. In addition, they will write an Extended Essay of 4000 words, study the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) for 100 hours and perform 150 hours of Creativity, Action and Service.

The ordinary Japanese high school curriculum does not require students to do research and high-level academic writing. The IBDP, however, does.

Research clearly demonstrates that students who acquire high-level cognitive and academic writing skills, particularly in a foreign language, have a much better chance of notable success at university, whether here in Japan or abroad.

The world is no longer divided into academic fiefdoms. Connections among subjects are all

We will continue, of course, to offer our popular International Studies program. This course offers students eight to seventeen hours of English instruction per week. In addition, students in that course can study for one to two months in New Zealand in their second year of high school.

We will also offer our Advanced General Studies course in the senior high school. This course has a rich English component but is focused on college entrance examination preparation and features substantial supplementary instruction by cram school professionals.

As for the IBDP, only students with excellent English and other academic skills will be permitted to participate. Students in the IBDP will study six subjects con-

important. The TOK course makes these connections explicit.

IBDP graduates who have passed the Diploma exam are twenty-one percent more likely to enter elite universities around the world. This is an impressive fact.

What is more important, however, is that successful IBDP graduates are critical thinkers who are internationally minded and who take seriously their stewardship of our planet.

IBDP students think outside of the box. They inquire. They reflect on their accomplishments and their shortcomings. They are open-minded and are committed to participating meaningfully in a changing world. They are our hope for a future of peace and dialogue as opposed to a future of threats and hostility. Let us support them with all of our passion. ■

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THE FRONTIER TIMES

[ザ・フロンティア・タイムズ]



記念すべき第10回定期演奏会に向けて練習に励む吹奏楽部の国際生たち

[Facing Modern Decisive Challenges]

The challenges that our young people will need to face as they go forward into this brave new world are truly formidable—exponential population growth, terrorism, war, extreme poverty, AIDS, lack of clean water, lack of sufficient food, climate change, resurgence of religious dogmatism—just to name a few. How can we properly educate our students to meet these decisive challenges?

First, we must endeavor in our curriculum to inculcate in our students the virtues of compassion and empathy for other human beings, wherever in our increasingly interconnected world they may live.

Recently, at our school's Opening Ceremony for New Students, the Headmistress of our new sister school, The Rivers School in Boston, was our guest speaker. She emphasized the paramount importance of empathy. Our students, she said, must learn to understand that all people are equally important. She said that our students must acquire the ability to recognize and understand the emotions and motivations of the people with whom they come into contact. It does not matter, she said,

what countries these other people come from, what religions they call their own or what languages they speak. Human beings are human beings. Our Earth is smaller than ever. We have a responsibility to face the world that we have created.

Second, we must encourage our students to become aware of moral dilemmas and acquire the dispositions and vocabulary to engage these. We have a categorical imperative to develop a civic ethic to guide humanity through the many trials that we are facing in the twenty-first century. We need to think very deeply indeed about what constitutes a good education, a just society and a world that is friendly to all life that flourishes here.

It's not common in Japanese classrooms to engage in open debate about moral issues. However, many Japanese people are becoming convinced that this sort of debate is essential. By engaging in dialogue about the major challenges facing humanity, young people can refine their values and step forward with confidence to take a leadership role in solving the problems that confound us.

Recently, NHK broadcast a series of lectures by the eminent Harvard moral philosopher Michael Sandel. It was, in fact, so popular that NHK decided to re-broadcast the lectures.

Professor Sandel is an immensely popular lecturer. About one thousand students crowd into Harvard's Sanders Theater for these lectures on justice. What has astounded many of the Japanese who have watched these lectures is how active Harvard University students are, even in such a large class. They express their opinions freely. They take exception with certain of the Professor's points. They are the opposite of passive learners. They take responsibility for their learning and proudly take an intellectual and moral stance.

This is what we need in modern Japan. This is what Nagoya International Junior and Senior High School seeks. We want to educate young men and women who can stand on the international stage and, with empathy and intellectual courage, address the challenges that face us all. ■