

A School in Harlem

Emmanuel Kostakis is the principal of a Junior High School in Harlem, in a run-down neighbourhood with drug and unemployment problems and block after block of uninhabited buildings. 10% of the students are Asian, 70% are Hispanic and 20% are Black.

1. How long have you been principal of this school ?

Since the very beginning. Twelve years ago there was nothing here, just an empty building that used to be a High School with such a terrible reputation that the City decided to close it down.

"What a great opportunity", I thought, "to set up something different!" And we did. We started from scratch and made such a good school that it has attracted students from all over the city, which is really amazing for a school situated in central Harlem!

2. Is Harlem really so different from the rest of the city?

It's a world apart. Even though you're living in Manhattan, downtown Manhattan is such a different and inaccessible world! A world with so many things kids here just don't have that they feel a lot of anger and frustration.

3. How do they show this anger?

They fight. Fighting is part of their culture. Even parents say "Don't hesitate to hit if you feel threatened". I've seen so many fights start because someone just looked at someone else. Sometimes it's not even a prolonged stare, just a glance. There can also be fights because someone has bumped accidentally into someone else in a crowded corridor. You get touched, you have to touch back.

4. You mean you can't lose face?

Absolutely! For instance when another kid threatens you – they call it 'dissing', which means disrespecting – you have to show that you're tougher and not afraid. That's why they fight. It's the only way they know to resolve their conflicts. They don't listen, they react.

5. Does everyone react this way?

Just about. The key thing here is that practically all students want to belong to their group. For example, being good in school – getting A's – is 'acting white' and being traitors to their culture. So even bright students may sometimes feel trapped.

6. But your school is a magnet school today. How did you manage?

We concentrated on what the kids lack most in this part of the city: science and technology. We specialized in these subjects and now we have an excellent reputation – for safety as well. We have zero tolerance for weapons, drugs (including cigarettes) or fighting.

Any student who breaks the rule gets an automatic suspension.

7. And has all of this paid off?

Definitely. Even though the problems we have *are* difficult, there are very few drop-outs. Many of our students have continued their studies and many of them can say "I've come a long way !".

Matching

Match each sentence or expression from the text (on the left) with its equivalent on the right.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|--|
| 1. I've come a long way | 1] ___ | a] a completely different world |
| 2. a world apart | 2] ___ | b] there's no way out |
| 3. an inaccessible world | 3] ___ | c] he/she makes you feel you are in danger |
| 4. someone threatens you | 4] ___ | d] he doesn't respect the rules of the group |
| 5. he is a traitor | 5] ___ | e] full of people |
| 6. you're trapped | 6] ___ | f] showing disrespect |
| 7. crowded | 7] ___ | g] we have had good results |
| 8. 'dissing' | 8] ___ | h] a world reserved for others that you can't become part of |
| 9. it has paid off | 9] ___ | i] I have overcome many problems. |

Use the words from the text Find the English for :

- | | | |
|--|---------------|---|
| 1. un collège | un lycée..... | 12. Un pâté de maisons : |
| 2. nous sommes partis de zéro | | 13. Un coup d'œil : |
| 3. quelqu'un m'a bousculé..... | | 14. Un regard fixe : |
| 4. un très bon élève | | 15. Avoir de très bonnes notes : |
| 5. ce qui leur manque le plus | | 16. Ne pas avoir; manquer de ... : |
| 6. un couloir plein de monde | | 17. Une exclusion (renvoi temporaire) : |
| 7. des bâtiments abandonnés | | |
| 8. énormément de colère | | |
| 9. la chose la plus importante..... | | |
| 10. nous ne tolérons absolument pas... .. | | |
| 11. un élève qui abandonne / un abandon..... | | |

A School in Harlem (2)

What can it mean ?

Selon vous, et d'après le contexte, que signifient ces expressions tirées du texte?

[0-1] "run-down" : épuisé; délabré; sportif

[1-3] "We started from scratch" Nous avons commencé à nous gratter;
 Nous avons commencé par les éraflures;
 Nous sommes partis de rien.

[5-1] "Just about." à peine; exactement; plus ou moins.

[6-0] "A magnet school."

.....

"10% of the students are Asian,
70% are Hispanic and 20% are
Black."

**What can you say about
that ?**

True or false ?

Say whether the sentences are true or false. In both cases justify your answer by using words and phrases from the text.
When quoting the text, try to write something grammatically correct (start with the subject, for instance).

1] Harlem is in downtown Manhattan. **True** / **False**

.....

2] The population of Harlem is multi-racial.

.....

3] The school is located in a wealthy neighbourhood.

.....

4] The school has existed for over a dozen years. ('over' = more than...)

.....

5] The High School no longer exists.

.....

6] Students from all parts of the city now want to come to this school.

.....

7] Teenagers in Harlem have as many things as teenagers living in other parts of the city.

.....

8] Parents teach their children to avoid violence.

.....

9] The students no longer lack courses in science and technology.

.....

10] The school has a good reputation in science only.

.....

11] Violence is not accepted.

.....

12] Students get suspended for bringing knives, guns or other dangerous items.

.....

13] Many students from this school have succeeded later.

.....

Complete these sentences. (Terminez ces phrases.)

1. The students feel a lot of anger and a lot of frustration because
.....
2. They fight because
.....
3. They show disrespect because... ..
.....
4. The school has become a magnet school because... ..
.....
5. Even bright students sometimes don't get good marks because... ..
.....

Summing up an idea

Observez les deux phrases suivantes :

They concentrated on what the kids lack most.

Students from all over the city want to come to it, which is surprising.

Pourrait-on arrêter la première phrase avant *what* ?

Pourrait-on arrêter la seconde phrase avant *which* ?

Quel est le relatif qui reprend toute la proposition précédente et introduit une proposition ajoutant un commentaire ?

.....

Completez les phrases avec *what* ou *which* selon le cas (ne pas omettre la virgule devant *which*).

1. I didn't hear he answered.
2. He spoke seven languages fluently is astonishing.
3. Jason wants to go to medical school.....is going to be difficult.
4. Bob drank lake water is not recommended.
5. It's easy to understand makes them feel angry and frustrated.
6. Most teenagers don't know they'll do later.
7. There are very few drop-outs means that all of this has paid off.

Construisez des phrases complexes à partir de ces phrases simples, comme dans l'exemple.

In Miami Airport the announcements were in English and Spanish. We found this surprising.

*In Miami Airport the announcements were in English and Spanish, **which we found surprising**.*

1. I had to get into crowded elevators. I hated this.

.....

2. We took a boat ride around Manhattan. I loved it.

.....

3. I saw a grandmother wearing roller blades. I found this so funny !

.....

4. We surfed enormous waves. It was thrilling.

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