

IB Global News issue 8, 2015

This is a simple text version of the news articles and blog posts highlighted in IB Global News #8, 2015.

Latest news articles

Dedicated new web page created for parents



We have created a new page dedicated to helping parents understand, and make the most of, the programmes we offer in partnership with IB World Schools – this is part of our shared commitment to the success of their children. You will find information and FAQs about the four programmes, plus recommended resources, research, advice on how to get transcripts, how to help students prepared for the move to higher education, and much more. Feel free to link to the page from your school website and please tell us what you think of the page - we are collecting early feedback using [this link](#) until 30 November.

[Visit the parents page](#)

Key research findings for Africa, Europe, Middle East region

The latest summary of key findings for the [IB in Africa, Europe and Middle East](#) includes both IB-commissioned and independent research on the MYP and DP. All key findings published in 2015 are available here: [Asia-Pacific, Americas, Africa, Europe, Middle East](#).

[Discover more research](#)



Visit the new Follett IB Store

The IB Store has moved – from November 2015, customers can visit the **new Follett IB Store**. The IB's new partnership with Follett means that thousands of existing customers will benefit from the IB's expertise in publishing combined with Follett's specialist customer care and efficient delivery service. [Read the news article](#).

[Go to the new Follett IB Store](#)



Sir Ken Robinson describes how the IB helps talent to flourish

More than 1,600 people gathered in The Hague last week for the 2015 AEM Annual Regional Conference and The IB Heads World Conference. Until the highlights are ready to share, take a look at video highlights from Sir Ken Robinson's plenary at the IB America's conference.

[Watch video](#)



News and opportunities for IB students and graduates

More than 44,000 alumni subscribe to the dedicated alumni newsletter. They hear the latest stories from their peers, get tips for success at university and beyond, and learn about exciting opportunities like the STEM awards and Images of Research photographic competition. We thought you might want to share it more widely with graduates, IB students and parents.

[Get the link and share](#)



Latest on the IB community blog

Approaches to reflection

By Neil Bunting

The IB learner profile is a fantastic set of attributes. I haven't encountered another school programme that uses shared humanitarian values explicitly in the same way. My blog posts contain some personal interpretations and thoughts about the IB learner profile values. I hope that they encourage further discussion, inspired by the common humanity and international mindedness inherent in the ten attributes.



Throughout civilization, reflection has been the foundation for further progress.

As a visual artist, I recognize the importance of reflection. It has played a role of paramount importance in my practice for many years; not just in reflecting on my own creativity in my paintings, but in all aspects of my life.

For artists—creative people in general—the process of reflection defines how to move on, and how to learn from what has been created, to synthesise and define what comes next. On the Diploma Programme (DP) visual arts course, students are taught the importance of self-analysis, and reflection. The investigative workbook is a means of analysing each finished studio piece and helps them decide where to go, and what to create next, as a result.

Often, the cold light of day can create a very different reflection than in the heat of the moment. Time and distance from the event, or creation, gives perspective and perhaps greater objectivity. Artists will spend hours, even weeks and months reflecting before moving on.

In the heat of action in the classroom, the cool and calm role of reflection can often be neglected, but it should never be dismissed or ignored. This is a vital process that underpins the learning. Reflection can happen at any time in the lesson, and it is vital that it is given time, whether through the teacher, individuals or groups, written or verbal.

The IB philosophy emphasises the central role that reflection plays in education. All good learning and teaching practice recognizes the need to build in windows of opportunity for students and educators to share thoughtful reflection.

Reflection is very important in sport. For example, football coaches analyse match play as a science using performance software to reflect on the match and help inform future performance through detailed analysis. The programme will give them all sorts of information about each player: their movements on the pitch, athletic performance, distance covered and the number of passes completed. More time will be spent dissecting data than actually playing.

Successful sports teams, companies and businesses should, of course, allow some time for the recognition and celebration of success, but great coaches and bosses always reflect on what could be done better and what is coming next. They always look to push forward, and not to be complacent and rest on their laurels. Time never stands still, and all businesses need to move to keep up.

However, there is also a fine line between fruitful reflection and over-analysis. Every big newsworthy event that happens now is analysed, over and over again, by experts from a million camera angles, using conventional reportage and film, plus more and more recordings from bystanders' smart phones. This can result in an over-saturation of information, but also give a wider range of viewpoint.

There is an ongoing debate about the use of technology to make decisions in sport. With so much money involved, the move is inevitable, but at the cost of slowing down the game and possibly over-analysing every single action.

One thing is clear, sport will never be the same again, and coaches are much more learned individuals. For example, Arsene Wenger, known as 'the professor', who has modernised English football, changed diets and attitudes, and football, forever. He is, clearly, a reflective and intelligent leader.

Thoughtful leaders from all walks of life can be great role models for young people in developing reflective skills.

The IB emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning, and as adults we all continue to grow and learn – learning is an aspirational goal and experience for all of us. Simply, life is dead when there is no growth.

Professional development (PD) plays a key role in any educational institution, and we all expect PD as part of our teaching package and conditions of service. We expect the opportunity to learn and grow as educators. Little else matches the inspirational professional experience of a relevant and invigorating workshop, and in our personal lives we look for challenges and opportunities to grow. It might be through learning a language, a musical instrument, travel, or joining a sports team. How taxing we make that challenge, and growth, depends on the individual – some want more than others, but we all agree we cannot simply eat work and sleep. Some need more education, others more play.

A good educator certainly does not claim to be the fount of all knowledge. He or she is open to continued learning—whether at university or in the workplace—from their peers, supervisors and all of their students, sharing ideas and listening to a variety of opinions, based on different outlooks and experience.

As a school leader, when I am recruiting new staff, I am very keen to hear about their strengths and weaknesses and their viewpoint and opinions. I expect them to speak confidently about what they have achieved, with examples and anecdotes, and what they can improve on. I am concerned not by weakness—because admitting weakness shows good reflective skills and courage—but I am concerned by lack of reflection and if a teacher believes they have no weaknesses. Failure is an option, and should always be an option. Without making mistakes, there is no learning.

Neil Bunting is the Head of Secondary Programme at [Greenfield Community School](#) – a Taaleem school. He originally published this post on LinkedIn in February 2015. Watch out for more posts from Neil as he explores common themes that weave through all IB programmes.

Study finds MYP students outscore non-MYP students on the IB diploma

New research conducted by the [Australian Council for Educational Research \(ACER\)](#) sought to better understand the impact of the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) on Diploma Programme (DP) outcomes for students studying in China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, and Japan. ACER compared DP outcomes among students who completed their middle years education with the MYP, another international programme, or a state or national curriculum. The findings suggest that students who completed the MYP scored higher than non-MYP participants within specific DP subjects, including Theory of Knowledge (TOK), as well as in total diploma points.

MYP students score higher than non-MYP students on the IB diploma

ACER used both qualitative and quantitative data to assess the differences between MYP and non-MYP students. The researchers collected DP subject scores, diploma scores, and grades for TOK and the Extended Essay.

| Country of currently studying in | Number of schools | Type of middle years programme | | | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| | | IB MYP | Cambridge IGCSE | Other | |
| China | 3 | 39 (38) | 0 | 16 (16) | 55 (54) |
| Hong Kong | 5 | 145 (139) | 3 (3) | 8 (8) | 156 (150) |
| India | 6 | 40 (38) | 24 (24) | 23 (23) | 87 (85) |
| Indonesia | 6 | 179 (170) | 16(13) | 27 (23) | 222 (206) |
| Japan | 2 | 23 (23) | 0 | 5 (5) | 28 (28) |
| Total | 22 | 426 (408) | 43 (40) | 79 (75) | 548 (523) |

Figure 1. Student respondents by country and type of middle years curriculum

To compare the two groups' performances, t-test and effect size results were reported. The MYP group had a higher average diploma score compared to the non-MYP group, and these results were significant with a moderate effect size of 0.39. Looking at specific subject areas, the MYP cohort scored significantly higher in the areas of language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, and mathematics. The difference between the two cohorts was not significant for the arts and science.

Additionally, MYP students received a higher relative proportion of A and B grades and a lower proportion of C, D or E grades, compared to non-MYP students, and these differences were found to be statistically significant. These results suggest that the type of education received during students' middle years influences their performance in the IB Diploma Programme.

MYP and non-MYP students acquire different skills

ACER also surveyed students, interviewed teachers, and held focus groups for a qualitative approach to enrich the data collected. From the student perspective, MYP students reported more frequent use of higher-order thinking skills and literacy and writing skills. Additionally, while MYP students reported group work and collaboration to be important skills gained during the middle years education, non-MYP students reported that their ability to summarize content and memorize information were useful for preparing for DP exams. Both MYP and non-MYP students indicated the need for a better transition period from the middle years into the DP, including increased clarity of DP expectations and a greater opportunity to develop analytical skills and exam-taking techniques.

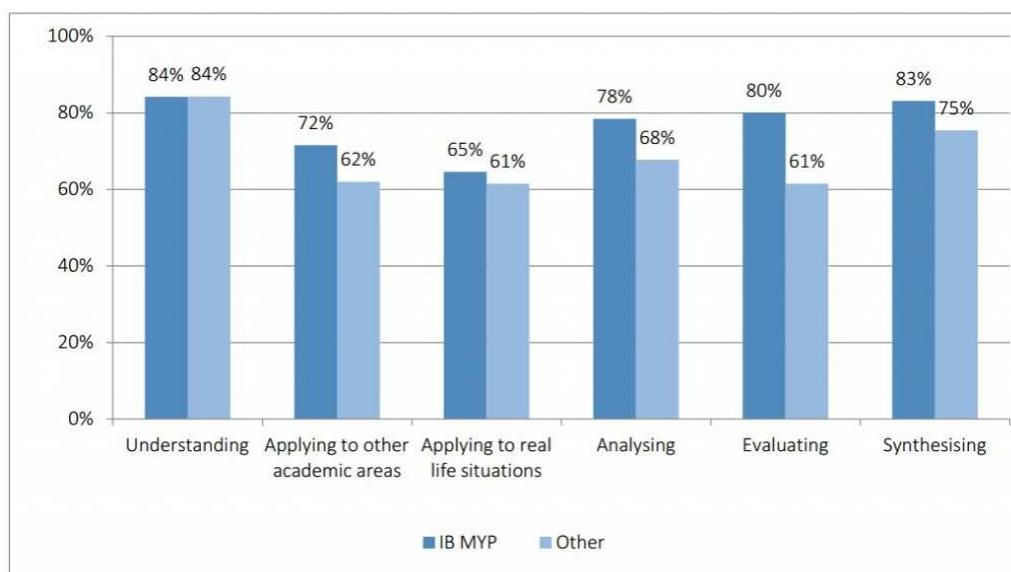


Figure 2. Proportion of students reporting engagement with higher-order thinking skills “often” or “very often” in middle years studies

Teacher perceptions of non-MYP and MYP students

Teachers from two schools in Indonesia and India reported that MYP students exhibited greater analytical and writing skills associated with the inquiry-based MYP curriculum. However, there was consensus that MYP student did not always enter the DP programme with the necessary content knowledge. One potential reason for these differences is the MYP’s emphasis on a holistic, interdisciplinary learning experience, whereas non-MYP students likely spent these years focusing more closely on academic subjects.

Conclusions

Overall, this study indicates that MYP students perform better than those students who completed their middle years studies through a different programme. Both students and teachers also reported differences between MYP students and non-MYP students upon entering the DP. MYP students were reported to have greater analytical skills, while non-MYP students had more in-depth content knowledge and exam skills. To improve the transition from MYP to DP, students and

teachers suggested providing more exam-taking practice, consistent grading between MYP and DP, and increased clarity regarding DP expectations.

For more information, please see the [research summary](#) or [full report](#).

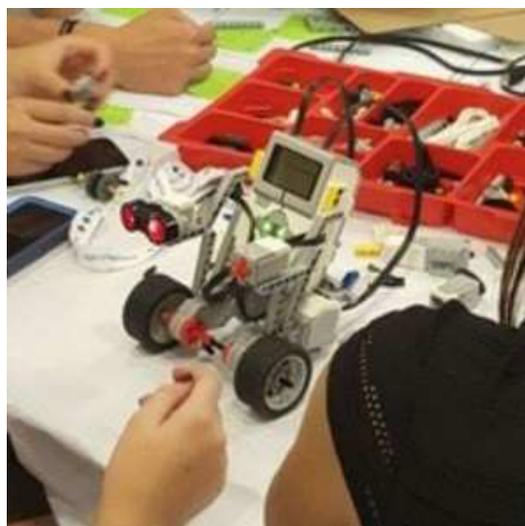
Contributing author Kari Lorentson is writing about the experience of IB graduates at universities around the world. Lorentson studies at [American University](#) and previously attended [Fishers High School](#). Contact her at alumni.relations@ibo.org.

Inspiring tomorrow's entrepreneurs

In July 2015, 150 IB Diploma Programme students, from 45 schools and 20 different countries gathered in Barcelona, Spain, to discover how technology has transformed our world and influenced society.

The IB World Student Conference (IBWSC), entitled 'Technology in a global society', encouraged students to explore various forms of technology and become architects, engineers, business managers and entrepreneurs for the week.

Taking place at the La Salle Campus, part of University Ramon Llull, Barcelona, students had a unique opportunity to listen to and learn from researchers, engineers and officials from the city's council. Not many students realized that Barcelona is home to a thriving ICT sector, and has invested huge amounts of resource to grow and promote this.



*DP student **Robert Whittaker**, from Kent College Canterbury, in the UK, reflects on his week at IBWSC:*

It was the first time I'd flown anywhere alone. It wasn't an enjoyable experience but, by the end of the week, I realized it was worth it.

On arrival, we were allocated into small chaperone groups. In my group there were students from India, Denmark, Armenia, and various US states, including Texas, New Jersey and Minnesota. A mixture of exhaustion and nervousness meant that we were a little reserved. But after a good night's rest, everyone was ready for our first full day.

A new society

Our first speaker was Mr Josep Miquel Piqué, CEO of the Office of Economic Growth from Barcelona City Council, who gave a keynote speech entitled 'New Technology, New Economy, New Society'. He said that, one day, 'everything will be connected to the cloud', which made me think about how different our lives will be as a result. He also noted that more of us are becoming global citizens because of technology.

We were put into Global Action Teams (GAT) groups, and everyday after each keynote we would congregate and discuss the presentation. During our first GAT session, we were asked to define a 'global citizen'.

Our definition, which we shared with everyone, was: A person who is respectful and aware of people from other walks of life, who is a law-abiding member of a wider international community, and has a set of rights and responsibilities such as upholding social justice.

In the third and final session of the day, we were introduced to our week-long 'start-up challenge'. Throughout the week, my group worked on a product based on 'Viuing', a screen that allows spectators to catch all the action at F1 events.

Each evening, we went on a different city adventure, navigating our way around by the Metro. We visited Barcelona beach; the city's famous unfinished cathedral Sagrada Familia; the well-known avenue Las Ramblas; and indulged in many of the country's famous cuisines such as paella and tapas.

Eduard Martin Lineros and Ramon Martin de Pozuelo discuss why smart cities are the future

Smart cities and robotics

On Tuesday, we heard from Eduard Martin Lineros and Ramon Martin de Pozuelo who spoke about smart cities; specifically how Barcelona is leading the field in smart cities.

The GAT session that followed asked us to concentrate on a problem in a major city and how it might be solved with smart technology. We decided to solve the chronic traffic problems that fellow student Liane had experienced in Manila, Philippines.

To manage the rush hour more effectively, our idea was to plan her journeys and send suggested departure times and directions via a mobile app. We developed a business plan and although this idea was received warmly, we decided it would have been difficult to implement and uphold.

Alex Barco Martelo, a professor of robotics, explains how robots can enhance learning

Wednesday began with a keynote speech from Alex Barco Martelo, a professor of robotics. He taught us about the use of anthropomorphic machines in therapy and how it can help with autism and cognitive rehabilitation. We also learned about Asimov's *Three Laws of Robotics*.

We had an exciting opportunity to develop Lego robots within our GAT groups. We designed a robot that could be a companion to an elderly person – it could smile and featured a cup holder to hold cups of tea!



We designed branding for our robots during the afternoon start-up challenge session, helping us develop key business skills. Having seen much of Barcelona on the previous two nights, this evening was reserved for celebrating international culture.

Celebrating international culture

Students from each nation produced a poster about their country, which lined the walls around the campus. I took the opportunity to teach 'Cockney rhyming slang' and share my knowledge about the British political system. Students from Indonesia put together a very entertaining, traditional puppet show, called wayang. The vibrant and cohesive evening ended with Bollywood dancing. It was great to see everyone get involved.



Thursday saw an exciting day at CosmoCaixa – Barcelona's stunning science museum, which houses a part of the Amazonian rain forests. We had a guided tour of an exhibit detailing what the earth might be like in 2100. While this was really informative, it was also quite alarming. It's predicted that the sea level could rise by up to 12 metres in Barcelona, engulfing vast swathes of the city. It made me think that something needs to be done.

We also watched a really cool 3D video, projected onto the dome ceiling in the planetarium, about how satellites work and how our world would not be the same without the scientific and technological advances that space exploration has given us.

That evening ended with a lively jazz concert and we watched *Back to the Future* at an open air cinema.

Friends for life

Reflecting back to July, the best thing about the IBWSC was the incredible people I met. I now have new friends in Denmark, India, Tanzania, the Philippines, Singapore, Kenya, Colorado, Minnesota, New Jersey and Reno to name just a few.

We've all kept in close contact through social media. We're already planning our next reunion – I can't wait to see them again.

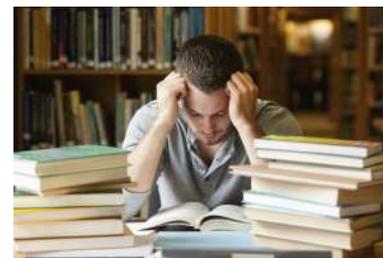


Students came together to share and celebrate their different cultures

Keep calm and carry on

IB World magazine asks IB World teachers how they stay cool, calm and collected at a time when their students need them the most

Assessment season is a stressful time for many students, but it's also far from relaxing for teachers. Not only do they have to keep their own anxieties under control, but they must also find ways to prevent their students from panicking. How do they do it?



How do you help your students with their revision?

"I hold a study period a week or so before the exam," says Sarah Clancy, DP and MYP Teacher, at International Academy Okma Campus, Michigan, USA. "The students go through sample questions based around prose and poetry and then we discuss what points particularly stand out in the marker's notes. Because it feels more like a seminar than a cramming session, students enter their exam feeling prepared, calm and confident."

Students at Stephen Perse Foundation, UK, can fill in any gaps in their own notes from the school's specialized iTunes U library. Here, they can find videos made by staff explaining key concepts and how to approach certain questions and iTunes U's interface allows the information to be presented clearly and logically.

"Students tell us that they feel better prepared and better supported," says Simon Armitage, Director of Guidance at the school. "DP assessments are tough – two years of work all examined in little over three weeks. Making revision more accessible, more varied and even a bit more exciting has got to be worthwhile."

A robust revision timetable is a must-have, and teachers can lend a helping hand putting these together. When assisting his class in putting together their own timetables, Martin Griffiths, IB Diploma Programme English Literature Teacher, College Champittet, Switzerland, urges them to include some downtime too. "This encourages them to take ownership of the process and take breaks which will keep learning fresh," he explains.

How do you keep your class calm?

Cobourg Collegiate Institute, Canada, runs a Student Wellness Programme, where people from the community talk to students about maintaining a healthy school-life balance.

"We cover topics such as time management, diet, sleep, study skills and also offer yoga and meditation workshops," explains Erin MacKenzie, Lead Teacher, Guidance. "The hope is that students will incorporate these strategies into their everyday lives so that when we get into the exam weeks, they are second nature."



MacKenzie's school also promotes regular study groups, which not only give students a place where they can review their class materials but also somewhere to interact with their classmates and share their woes. "These gatherings create a support network and reduce the feelings of isolation that can be distressing at all times of the year, but most notably during exams," says MacKenzie. It doesn't hurt that hot chocolate with marshmallows is regularly on offer at these sessions either!

Other teachers use motivational words. “If they have worked hard then I encourage them to prove what they know and what they think, and enjoy embracing the challenge,” says Griffiths. “I think ‘Go smash it’ is the best last-minute advice I can give.”

Meanwhile, Micah Hirokawa, MYP Humanities Teacher (and former DP history teacher), Island Pacific Academy, USA, believes that embracing pressure as a natural part of exam preparation is important for keeping it under control. “The best way I feel to help students deal with exam stress is acknowledging and accepting they are stressed,” he says.

How do you help a student whose stress has reached an unhealthy level?

Overly stressed students typically demonstrate with lots of questions, most of which we’ve covered endlessly already, and taking advantage of every revision opportunity without giving themselves space to breathe. I zero in on these students with a kind and gentle but somewhat cajoling attitude for them to laugh a little, lightening up the atmosphere. Sarah Clancy, DP and MYP Teacher

While Philip Williams, librarian at Vientiane International School, Laos, would advise anybody worried about a particular student to consult the school counselor as soon as possible. He believes that the school’s library staff have a privileged position for monitoring students’ wellbeing as they see them interacting regularly in the relaxed setting of the library.

“I hear many conversations and see their worried faces so I am able to gain a general sense of the mood and wellbeing of students,” says Williams. “Fortunately, this year as students came into the library to debrief after exams, there was generally a quiet confidence about their conversations that indicated that although they were under pressure, their demeanour was calm.” Williams adds that he is now looking into ways to encourage teaching staff into the library more often so they too can benefit from this insight into their students’ stress levels.

MacKenzie says that the mindfulness techniques and breathing exercises her school counselling service offer throughout the year are especially beneficial for stressed students. But she also emphasizes that it is extremely important to talk to the student’s parents or home support network so that they can get the help they need from their family doctor.

What do you do to keep your own nerves in check?

The first aid adage about not being able to help a victim if you become a victim yourself is relevant in exam situations, too. Self-care is just as important for teachers as it is for students. “Often, I am so busy that it is easy to give up exercise or stay up late to get things done,” says MacKenzie.

I have adjusted my routine so that I now exercise in the morning, giving me energy to start the day. I also do nighttime yoga which helps to settle my mind so that I can get to sleep instead of thinking about all of the things that I didn’t get done.

Hirokawa believes that, much like students’ natural nerves, worn-out teachers around exam season are almost inevitable. However, clever educators can use these emotions to their advantage.

I think it is important for students to know that you, as their teacher, are human. Being stressed can show that you’re genuinely invested in their success.

Teachers, tell us how you keep your students calm during exam season: email editor@ibo.org

Redefining collaboration in the PYP exhibition

One school shares the various factors influencing the collaboration for their PYP exhibition.

During the 2013/14 academic year, the Year 6 Exhibition at RCHK took on a new look. Each student was able to authentically follow their passion and share what they had learnt with a wider audience within the school community.



Challenge

- All students to carry out their specific, chosen inquiry, rather than being grouped by a vaguely connected area of interest
- Increase motivation and engagement
- Flexible groupings
- Varied modes of collaboration
- Increase school community access to the exhibition process and product

Threats of traditional model of collaboration

- Student motivation was threatened by vague interest groupings
- Personal learning preference – intrapersonal over interpersonal
- Students become ‘passengers’ in their team
- Students were only able to work with others from their own class

Moving forward

Each of the 168 children explored their passions and developed these into a potential Central Idea (CI), identifying the issues connected to their area. They then explored how a connection with the transdisciplinary theme ‘How We Organise Ourselves’ could authentically be made.

Students began their inquiries individually but opportunities for collaboration were offered throughout the process:

- Issue based sessions for sharing and collaboration (environment, technology, animals etc.) across the year level (some groups with common CI formed across different Year 6 classes)
- Groups within the class formed and reformed naturally as all students had access to a Google document detailing the CI
- Collaboration via flexible mentoring rather than one mentor per group
- Collaboration with subject experts (secondary teachers)
- Students collaborated with regards to presentation style, offering feedback and tips
- Collaboration with outside agencies in person or through technology

Pros

- A broader variety of exhibition issues and presentation styles
- More student-driven
- Motivation was high as students were focused on their passion and issues
- More authentic collaboration as it was organic and developed as part of the process, rather than being set at the beginning

- Fewer social issues; students were motivated to solve problems during collaboration as the group effort was purposeful

Cons

- Challenge to organize space for sharing 145 different exhibitions, some individual and some group
- Managing so many different exhibition groups from across six classes

The end result was an exciting and diverse exhibition and fulfilling learning experience for all students. The reward was definitely worth the effort and risk-taking on the part of the teachers. In removing the expectation of students working in fixed groups for the length of the unit, collaboration was enhanced and more authentic.

How do your students collaborate when they do their exhibition? Share with us your PYP exhibition story!

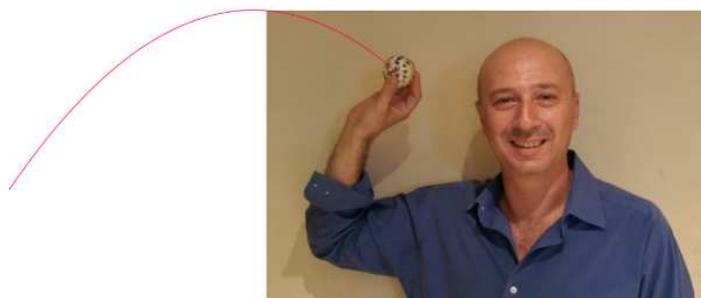
Tracy Wnek began teaching at the Renaissance College in Hong Kong 8 years ago. She has taught P2 and P3, and is currently teaching and leading P6. She believes that we learn best through discovery and developing our curiosity, and by making connections between ourselves, what we are learning, and our daily interactions.

From scepticism to optimism for MYP eAssessment

By Hamed Mokhtar

I was sceptical and even disappointed when I first heard about MYP eAssessment!

Questions invaded my mind, and I felt completely lost; 'onscreen' means internet access is needed, so what if the internet connection is slow? Will students in schools with weak internet connection be at a disadvantage? And what if the internet connection is completely lost? What will happen to students who do not know how to use the on-screen software?



Questions, questions, but I had to find answers. I found answers for my questions and a lot more in two documents published on the OCC: *MYP eAssessment Q&A Sheet – May 2015* and *Guide to MYP eAssessment (2015 live pilot examinations)*. Now, there is even more information available: familiarization tool, Guide to MYP eAssessment, specimen exams, a report on the live pilot session – all on the [OCC](#).

I discovered that the on-screen examination does not mean that students have to take the exam in a live online environment, although there is certainly the option to do so.*

Actually, the school downloads the exam instead of receiving an exam paper by post, and then each student enters his/her code and can take the examination offline. If the computer crashes, exams can be rescheduled on the same day by the school invigilator, in coordination with the IB Assessment Centre in Cardiff.” There is immediate support available for schools throughout the set-up, examination and upload process.

All the hassles and expenses related to mailing do not exist anymore, and there are huge benefits in using technology for assessment. It allows audio-visual presentations of problems that are way easier for students to work with because they are more relevant to their digital 21st century world. It also allows students to demonstrate a wide variety of skills as they will be able to use technological tools similar to those that they already use in their daily life. One of my students once asked me “why aren’t assessments relevant to real-life problems; why I am not able to use tools I already possess?” Well, the eAssessment is now the environment that allows this.

And not only are the technology tools in the on-screen examination easy to use, but also, students will have months to familiarize themselves with the on-screen technology tools since a familiarization tool is available to schools well in advance of the examinations.

We always knew that despite the huge effort the IB was making in moderation to ensure standardisation, there was still an inevitable drawback: variability in the level of complexity of the required tasks, and differences in schools’ expectations that made it difficult to establish a consistent and reliably applied global standard. With the growth of the MYP, it was becoming more and more difficult to ensure that students of different schools were achieving MYP grades that were equivalent, regardless of the tasks developed in such a wide community of practice. What is considered challenging in one school might be considered easy for another.

Examinations can offer greater reliability in marking, but another flow of questions began to trouble me about eAssessment:

Does this mean ONE external summative assessment can adequately allow students to demonstrate their achievement against four criteria? We are not used to that! In mathematics, some criteria have to be assessed through a task that takes days for students to accomplish, so how can they be assessed on all criteria just in a single two-hour exam?

My students are very well trained on the MYP objectives, and my moderation samples used to receive excellent moderation reports. What will happen now? My students are not trained to use this new kind of assessment.

Is the MYP giving up the criteria-related assessments? How will someone else be able to make better judgements about my students’ performance than I can?

Is the MYP going backwards from ‘point of view’ assessment? Are we giving up validity for reliability?

Well, I had to improve my understanding of the nature of this eAssessment to be able to regain my passion as MYP teacher! I revisited the original two documents I mentioned above on the OCC and discovered amazing facts:

- The eAssessment is a series of tasks, each assessing one or more criterion and questions cover multiple strands; it is not a new kind of assessment. It states that *eAssessment is just high-quality implementation of the programme*. Hence, if my students are well prepared, and my moderation reports did confirm my understanding then my students should do well in the eAssessment.
- Furthermore, sample tasks and mark schemes are provided, so practically speaking, my students and I can see exactly how the examinations are related to our classroom assessments. It states *Questions are allocated marks with reference to MYP assessment criteria. Marks are used to score partial achievement of each level in order to give more reproducible marking. The final grade award is criterion-related (using subject expert judgement) which reflects MYP assessment practice of using achievement level descriptors*. Therefore, it is not just about marks allocated to questions and an old fashion marks exam.
- Actually, the final grade will be based on subject-specific grade descriptors. The marks ensure a valid, balanced assessment for different areas of the framework and one mark = one minute ensures that the two hours are appropriate duration for the students at this age.

The bottom line for me: there are good reasons for us to be optimistic about the improvements and new opportunities that MYP eAssessment brings for all schools, especially schools that have used moderation to validate their understanding and implementation of the MYP.

*There will be an option for schools to have a real-time connection to the internet in order to provide further assurance that students' answers are being saved remotely throughout the examination.

Hamed Mokhtar is a Maths Teacher and Supervisor, plus Curriculum Manager, MYP and DP departments, [Green Land Pré Vert International School \(GPIS\)](#), Egypt.

An alum's reflection on university admissions and the IB experience

Autumn has arrived in the northern hemisphere, which means the university admissions season has officially begun. One IB Diploma recipient offers his advice on how to navigate the university admissions process. He also reflects on his IB Diploma Programme experience.

When deciding upon which universities to apply, Justin Parker, a 2013 graduate of [Brooke Point High School](#) in Stafford, Virginia, suggests searching for schools that align with your interest and goals. He recommends that students “seek out an institution that will best equip you to pursue your passions.”



During his own application process, Justin researched universities with strong academic programs in the field of international relations and applied to eight universities. Of these institutions, he

applied for the early decision route at [American University](#) with ambitions to enroll in the accelerated 3-year Global Scholars Program. “I chose American University because I felt that this institution was best placed and equipped to ensure that I am prepared to handle the large issues of the future revolving around nations and security.”

The IB challenged me to consider international perspectives and account for differences in thinking.

While completing his degree, Justin has studied abroad twice, first in the UK and then in Russia. “The IB challenged me to consider international perspectives and account for differences in thinking,” said Justin. “My first experience at Cambridge University in the UK exposed me to a wide range of critical thinking. I took this one step further when I studied at Moscow State University for International Relations in Russia. At both these institutions, the importance of international mindedness and diplomacy stood center field in the lessons.” With all of these experiences combined, Justin found himself at the Pentagon interning for the US Department of Defense. There, he was able to observe diplomacy from a security perspective and interact with partners from the Baltic region and members of the EU Parliament.

The IB Diploma Programme (DP) really pushed me to balance my life ... I know how to prioritize and spend time on things that matter. I live life more now, because I never feel like I’m just wasting time.

In addition to the international mindedness of the DP, Justin also attributes much of his university success to the programme. While it can be challenging to perform well academically while also maintaining extracurricular activities and social life in high school, these pressures prepared him for university life. “The IB Diploma programme really pushed me to balance my life,” said Parker. “I know how to prioritize and spend time on things that matter. I live life more now, because I never feel like I’m just wasting time.”

Contributing author Kari Lorentson is writing about the experience of IB graduates at universities around the world. Lorentson studies at [American University](#) and previously attended [Fishers High School](#). Contact her at alumni.relations@ibo.org.

Short video from Danish school shows inclusion in action

It is always a delight to see schools that are continually progressing on their inclusion journey, which is why we were thrilled when [Copenhagen International School](#) opened their doors to us last January and allowed us to film their good practice in action. Each teacher, coordinator, support staff and school leader had the same inclusion story to tell, expressing the importance of whole school development and their ambition to provide for a diversified range of students.

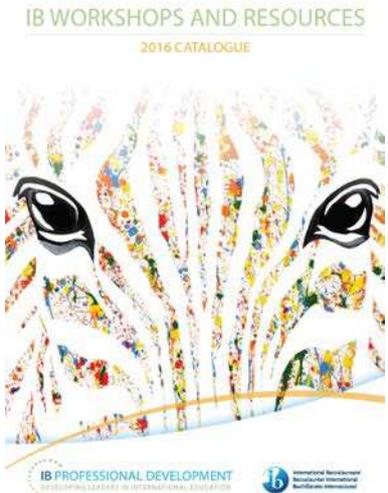
[Watch](#) this 10 minute video to see what whole-school inclusive practice looks like in action.



The 2016 Professional Development (PD) catalogue is now available with a beautiful cover designed by DP visual arts student Charne Olivier, a 2014 graduate from the [International School of Luxembourg](#).

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