Evaluating MYP unit plans

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Middle Years Programme
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IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS
We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE
We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS
We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS
We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED
We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED
We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING
We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS
We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED
We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE
We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

Contents

Introduction

For use in conjunction with *MYP: From principles into practice* (May 2014).

The unit-planning process is an essential requirement of the MYP. To develop an MYP unit plan, teachers work collaboratively to establish the purpose of the unit; define the process of teaching and learning through inquiry; and reflect on the planning, process and impact of the inquiry. The MYP unit-planning process is an important expression of the inquiry cycle that frames teaching and learning in IB World Schools.
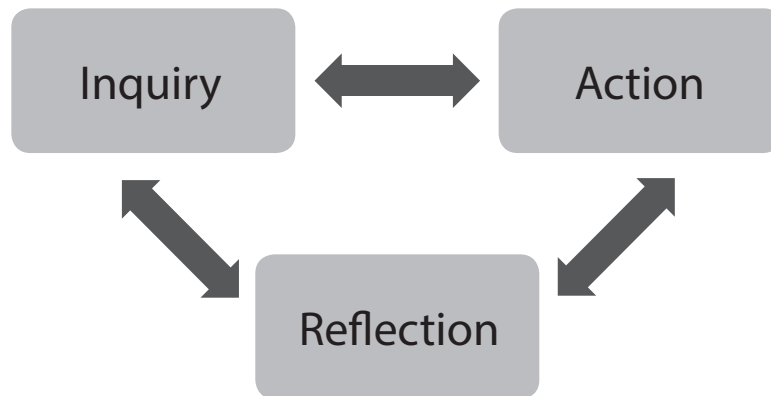
Figure 1
The inquiry cycle

This document supports teachers and schools in implementing the MYP unit-planning process. Its purpose is to prompt critical reflection that can lead to more effective teaching and learning. Before evaluating the unit, make sure all required elements are complete.

Does the unit include the following?	✓
Name of the teacher(s)	
MYP subject group and the specific discipline (If the unit is part of an integrated course, note which subjects or disciplines are integrated. For modular courses, indicate which discipline the module addresses.)	
Unit title (a topic, question, content requirement or big idea)	
Approximate number of guided learning hours (total)	
Key concept	
Related concept(s)	
Global context and specific exploration	
Subject-group objectives and specific relevant strands	
Task-specific clarification (description of how teachers helped students understand the criteria and level descriptors)	

Does the unit include the following?	✓
Content that specifies topics and/or local or national standards	
Learning experiences/teaching strategies, differentiation, formative assessment	
Resources	
Reflections developed before, during and after teaching	

How to use this document

Evaluating MYP unit plans can be used for self-assessment, collaborative peer review and standardizing feedback from the IB's "Building Quality Curriculum" service.

Feedback in this process is structured according to the "inquiry–action–reflection" cycle that informs teaching and learning in all IB programmes and organizes the required elements of the MYP unit-planning process. Characteristics of effective implementation are arranged according to a developmental scale that moves from **emergent** to **capable** to **exemplary**. Moving from lower to higher levels of successful implementation, this continuum generally parallels terminology that all MYP learners can use to describe increasing levels of competence.

In educational terms, feedback based on this document is designed to be formative—it should be given and received with the intention of prompting reflection that can lead to further personal and organizational growth.

> **Beginning/developing:** *emergent* implementation that may require substantial revision in order to create an effectively planned and documented unit of inquiry. These units may benefit from extended collaboration that improves clarity, provides greater detail and develops greater coherence.
>
> **Using:** *capable* implementation that demonstrates confidence in planning and documenting inquiry using the MYP collaborative unit-planning process.
>
> **Sharing:** *exemplary* implementation that provides a model of good practice that can inform and inspire the unit-planning process of other MYP teachers and schools.

In planning the curriculum, teachers often move between inquiry, action and reflection; these inquiry-based aspects of curriculum planning are iterative and interrelated rather than strictly linear. The relationship between these aspects of teaching and learning is dynamic, and any aspect might provide the point from which teachers begin their planning and self-evaluation. The following elements of unit planning are numbered for reference and convenience only.

Inquiry

The "Inquiry" section of the MYP unit planner identifies the purpose of the unit to ensure its alignment with MYP philosophy and requirements.

Statements of inquiry set conceptual understanding in a global context to frame classroom inquiry and direct purposeful learning. Statements of inquiry summarize "what we will be learning and why" in language that is meaningful to students.

1. Statement of inquiry		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
The statement of inquiry: • may not include a clearly identifiable key concept, related concept(s) and global context • may mechanically connect concepts and global context in the statement of inquiry • offers limited potential for transferring understanding beyond the content of this unit • uses language that might overwhelm students, limit their ability to engage with the inquiry or to articulate for themselves its purpose and value.	The statement of inquiry: • includes a key concept, related concept(s) and a specific global context exploration • clearly states a significant understanding that combines key and related concepts in a meaningful statement of inquiry • has the potential to develop transferable understanding • communicates in student-friendly language that invites inquiry and engagement.	The statement of inquiry: • includes a key concept, related concept(s), and a specific, relevant and engaging global context exploration • meaningfully connects key (broad) and related (deep disciplinary) concepts in ways that students can understand • develops specific disciplinary knowledge that supports transferable understanding • establishes the unit's relevancy and long-term value by articulating a clear, meaningful purpose for the inquiry • represents creativity and appropriate complexity in its synthesis of concepts and global context.

Inquiry questions are drawn from, and inspired by, the statement of inquiry. Factual, conceptual and debatable questions give shape and scope to the inquiry and promote critical and creative thinking.

2. Inquiry questions		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
Inquiry questions: • show limited understanding of the distinction between factual, conceptual and debatable questions • may have minimal connection with each other and the purpose of the unit as described in its statement of inquiry • may represent a single pathway into the unit's subject matter/topic • develop too many or too few questions that may be too simple or too complex for the intended learners.	Inquiry questions: • include examples of factual, conceptual and debatable questions • are connected to the concepts and global context included in the statement of inquiry • describe multiple pathways into the unit's subject matter/topic • are appropriately rigorous.	Inquiry questions: • demonstrate clear understanding of the relationship between facts, concepts and debates • develop deep understanding of concepts and context combined in the statement of inquiry • offer pathways for diverse learners into the unit's subject matter/topic • represent appropriate complexity that can help to develop critical and creative thinking • include teacher- and student-generated inquiries • help to prepare students to undertake summative assessment.

Summative assessment task(s) provide evidence for assessing student achievement using required MYP subject-group criteria.

3. Summative assessment		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
The summative assessment task(s): • has a limited connection with the statement of inquiry • does not clearly address subject-group objectives • may represent an assignment that is not challenging enough or is too complex for most learners	The summative assessment task(s): • relates clearly to the statement of inquiry • addresses subject-group objectives • offers students a meaningful opportunity to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do	The summative assessment task(s): • thoughtfully connects with the statement of inquiry • addresses relevant subject-group objectives by strand • offers authentic, challenging, open-ended and varied ways for students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do

3. Summative assessment		
Beginning/developing	Using	Sharing
• may not clearly describe what students will do to demonstrate their understanding • may offer limited scope for differentiation to meet diverse learning needs.	• clearly describes what students will do to demonstrate their understanding • can be differentiated to meet diverse learning needs.	• thoroughly explains what students will do to demonstrate understanding • provides access to reasonable adjustments and inclusive assessment arrangements.

MYP units aim to develop a range of **approaches to learning (ATL)** skills for thinking, self-management, social interaction, communication and research. Teachers identify the specific skills that students will develop through their engagement with the unit.

4. Approaches to learning (ATL)		
Beginning/developing	Using	Sharing
ATL skills in this unit: • provide students limited support for achieving the unit's objectives • offer students limited opportunities to develop skills that support independent learning • include brief identification of how the skills are supported in the unit • have some connection with a larger plan for developing students' ATL skills.	ATL skills in this unit: • are specifically identified • provide a focus for student self-evaluation and reflection on personal growth and development • include some indication of how the skills are taught and practised in the unit • support progression of learning across MYP years.	ATL skills in this unit: • are specifically identified and integrate meaningfully with learning engagements and assessment tasks • offer students opportunities to develop responsibility for their own learning through independent practice • include clear descriptions of how skills are explicitly taught and specific strategies are practised • support a clearly identified progression of learning across the MYP through their articulation with other subject groups, year levels or school-wide plans (documented in the school's ATL chart) • help students reach higher levels of achievement for the unit's objectives through related summative assessment task(s).

Action

The "Action" section of the MYP unit planner identifies the taught curriculum. Teachers use this section to focus on how students will learn as well as to identify the content (the disciplinary knowledge and skills) to be taught and learned throughout the unit.

5. Content		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
The unit's identified subject matter/content: • may not be clearly aligned with the unit's key and related concepts • does not clearly connect with MYP subject-group aims and objectives • suggests inappropriate expectations for the MYP level (too low or too high) • is not linked with students' prior understanding.	The unit's identified subject matter/content: • lists disciplinary knowledge that illustrates or is informed by the unit's chosen key and related concepts • aligns with MYP subject-group aims and objectives • represents an appropriate level of challenge (is reasonable in its breadth and depth) • connects new information and experience with prior understanding.	The unit's identified subject matter/content: • includes disciplinary knowledge and skills to be taught and learned that are closely connected with the chosen key and related concepts • clearly and comprehensively aligns with MYP subject-group aims and objectives (and, if applicable, required local standards and content) • represents an appropriate developmental challenge that prepares students for future study • connects new information and experience with what students already know, building the additional background knowledge necessary to develop deep understanding • if relevant, establishes links with MYP topics for eAssessment.

The **learning experiences and teaching strategies** section of the MYP unit planner focuses on how teachers will create a learning environment that promotes active, inquiry-based learning and develops disciplinary understanding. These learning experiences and teaching strategies allow students with a range of learning needs to meet subject-group aims and objectives.

6. Learning process		
a. Learning experiences and teaching strategies		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
Learning experiences and teaching strategies: • may require further development and additional details about what students will do and in what order • may need to clarify how students will explore concepts and contexts • may not be developmentally appropriate • focus on teacher-centred classroom activities.	Learning experiences and teaching strategies: • describe in sufficient detail what students will do and in what order • indicate how students will explore concepts and context • are developmentally appropriate • include inquiry-based teaching strategies.	Learning experiences and teaching strategies: • describe with clarity and specific detail what students will do and in what order • indicate how students will explore concepts and context through a variety of learning experiences • are developmentally appropriate, thought-provoking and engaging • use a variety of inquiry-based approaches for teaching and learning that help students connect factual, conceptual and procedural knowledge • build on prior learning.

Formative assessment (assessment **for** learning) provides teachers and students with insights into the ongoing development of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes.

b. Formative assessment		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
Formative assessment: • may not be clearly connected with the knowledge, understanding and skills required for success in summative assessment • provides limited opportunities to monitor and support student learning	Formative assessment: • aligns with the knowledge, understanding and skills required for success in summative assessment • provides opportunities for explicit feedback for learning	Formative assessment: • comprehensively aligns with knowledge, understanding and skills required for success in summative assessment • provides varied opportunities for practice and detailed feedback for learning

b. Formative assessment		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
• may not create evidence that teachers can use to adjust planned learning experiences and teaching strategies.	• creates some evidence that teachers can use to adjust teaching and learning in ways that promote student achievement.	• creates meaningful evidence that teachers can use to make adjustments to planned experiences and teaching strategies • includes opportunities for peer assessment and self-assessment.

Differentiation involves modifying teaching strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners and building opportunities for each student to develop, pursue and achieve appropriate personal learning goals.

c. Differentiation		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
Differentiation: • documents few or generic strategies that meet the needs of diverse learners • addresses in a very limited way students' diverse language profiles and learning support requirements • offers limited opportunity for students to pursue and achieve learning goals.	Differentiation: • documents specific strategies that meet the needs of diverse learners in terms of content, process or product • addresses students' diverse language profiles and learning support requirements • offers opportunities for students to pursue and achieve learning goals.	Differentiation: • documents specific strategies for accommodating learning diversity in terms of content, process and product • addresses students' diverse language profiles and learning support requirements in ways that use diversity as a resource for all students' learning • allows each student to develop, pursue and achieve appropriate learning goals.

Teachers inventory available **resources** and consider what people, learning environments and teaching materials are necessary to fulfill the unit's purpose. This section also considers the language and life experiences that students and the larger school community can bring to the inquiry.

7. Resources		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
Resources: • provide some of the information and learning environments necessary for achieving the unit's purpose • may not support effective differentiation • may not support the development of multiple points of view • may not consider appropriate technology integration.	Resources: • provide information and learning environments necessary for achieving the unit's purpose • support differentiated learning through learning support or extension • represent some culturally appropriate and diverse points of view • integrate appropriate technology • acknowledge students' life experience and multi-literacies.	Resources: • represent a range of entry points and learning environments that creatively achieve the unit's purpose • promote student inquiry through learning support and extension • represent diverse and culturally responsive points of view • integrate technology effectively • use students' life experience and multi-literacies to inspire learning • create opportunities for action and real-world learning • include meaningful opportunities for interaction with people, organizations and facilities in the community.

Reflection

The "Reflection" section of the MYP unit planner provides teachers with an invitation to record their reflection at three important periods in the unit's development and implementation: planning, teaching and reviewing success.

Critical **reflection** on the unit plan can provide a starting point for collaborative planning, an ongoing reminder for reflective practice throughout the teaching process, and a format in which to evaluate teaching strategies and learning outcomes. Teachers can use their own reflection as a model for helping students learn reflective practice.

8. Before, during and after the unit		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
Reflection before, during and after teaching the unit: • documents partial reflection on the planning, process or impact of the inquiry • notes limited connections with other programme components (international-mindedness, IB learner profile, ATL skills, interdisciplinary understanding, student-led action or service learning) • captures general observations about what went well and what might be improved • considers general student motivation and engagement with the unit.	Reflection before, during and after teaching the unit: • documents reflection on the planning, process and impact of the inquiry • notes possible links with other programme components (international-mindedness, IB learner profile, ATL skills, interdisciplinary understanding, student-led action and service learning) • specifically notes what went well and proposes ideas for future improvement • reports on student motivation and engagement with respect to specific learning engagements or assessment tasks.	Reflection before, during and after teaching the unit: • documents thorough and meaningful reflection on the planning, process and impact of the inquiry • documents the unit's connection with the IB's philosophy of education (including international-mindedness, IB learner profile, other ATL skill categories, interdisciplinary understanding, student-led action and service learning) • details potential future development based on student achievement data • documents the unit's impact on students' intrinsic motivation and ownership of their own learning • includes information about standardization of assessment and student achievement • considers horizontal and vertical articulation of the subject group • is mindful of teachers' personal response, social-emotional learning and professional growth.

Summary

		Beginning/ developing Emergent	Using Capable	Sharing Exemplary
Inquiry: Establishing the purpose of the unit				
1	Statement of inquiry			
2	Inquiry questions			
3	Summative assessment task			
4	Approaches to learning			
Action: Teaching and learning through inquiry				
5	Content			
6	Learning process			
	a. Learning experiences and teaching strategies			
	b. Formative assessment			
	c. Differentiation			
7	Resources			
Reflection: Considering the planning, process and impact of the inquiry				
8	Before, during and after teaching			

Teaching context

Collaborative planning	How was the unit planned?
Students and teaching environment	What unique local circumstances and student characteristics informed the unit's development?
Task-specific clarification	How did teachers clarify expected levels of achievement for the unit's summative assessment?
Subject-group/course curriculum	How does the unit fit in the broader plans for teaching and learning?