Evaluating MYP interdisciplinary 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 *Fostering interdisciplinary teaching and learning in the MYP* (August 2014).

The Middle Years Programme (MYP) interdisciplinary unit planner helps to organize interdisciplinary teaching and learning. Reflecting the unique nature of interdisciplinary study, the planner is designed as a stand-alone planning document, although it can also be used very effectively in conjunction with subject-specific units. The interdisciplinary unit planner promotes effective teamwork and collaboration, helping to lead to more meaningful and rigorous student learning.
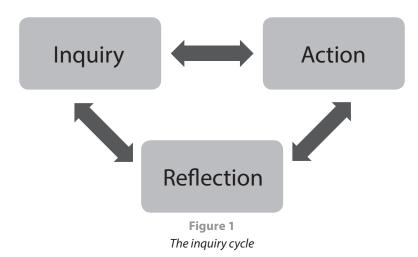
When engaging students in formal collaboratively planned interdisciplinary units, schools must use the interdisciplinary unit planning process. Please refer to the section "Using the interdisciplinary unit planner" from *Fostering interdisciplinary teaching and learning in the MYP* (August 2014) for specific guidance regarding how to complete and use the MYP interdisciplinary planner.

How to use this document

This document is a tool that can be used for self-assessment, collaborative peer review and organizing feedback from the IB's "Building Quality Curriculum" school enhancement 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. 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. In planning curriculum, teachers often move between inquiry, action and reflection; these inquiry-based aspects of curriculum planning are iterative and interrelated rather than strictly linear.

Figure 1
The inquiry cycle

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, 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 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.

This document provides a summary of these characteristics for each element of the interdisciplinary unit planner.

Inquiry

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

Interdisciplinary units **purposefully integrate** understanding from more than one discipline in order to explore interesting issues, problems and questions. Forms of integration can help distinguish relationships between disciplines, as well as suggest relevant learning experiences and performances of understanding.

1. Purpose of integration		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
The purpose of integration: • is identified in a limited way • suggests only superficial connections between disciplines.	The purpose of integration: • is clearly defined • includes some rationale for the integration.	The purpose of integration: • explains why it is worth understanding this issue or idea from an interdisciplinary perspective • provides a meaningful rationale for including the perspectives of each participating discipline in the integrated purpose.

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. In interdisciplinary units, statements of inquiry should reflect an integrated approach.

2. 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 • states an understanding that links disciplines in a limited way • has limited integration, focusing mainly on disciplinary understanding	The statement of inquiry: • includes a key concept, related concept(s) (if appropriate) and a specific global context exploration • states an understanding that connects two or more disciplines • expresses an idea that is relevant for the selected disciplines	The statement of inquiry: • includes a key concept, related concept(s) (if appropriate) with explicit reference to an interdisciplinary exploration of a global context • proposes an integrative understanding to be developed through the interdisciplinary unit

2. Statement of inquiry		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
• uses language that might overwhelm students, limit their ability to engage with the inquiry or to articulate for themselves its purpose and value.	• communicates in student-friendly language that invites inquiry and engagement.	• considers multiple relevant disciplines and explores multifaceted, transferable ideas across a range of facts and topics • 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. Good interdisciplinary inquiry questions also foster integration and synthesis. They need to be student-friendly, and as such should be relevant, feasible, and clearly framed.

3. 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 the statement of inquiry • may represent a single approach 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 that help students to deepen connections between disciplines • develop deep interdisciplinary understanding of concepts and global context • offer pathways for diverse learners into the unit's subject matter/topic • represent appropriate complexity that can help to develop critical and creative thinking to support synthesis • 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 criteria. Teachers should identify interdisciplinary criteria that will be addressed in the summative assessment—usually, all of them (A–D). For criterion A, teachers may opt to use the subject group(s) criteria to determine a level of achievement. Summative assessments represent performance of understanding that make interdisciplinary learning visible.

4. Summative assessment—interdisciplinary performance(s) of understanding		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
The summative assessment task(s): • has a limited connection with the statement of inquiry • may not use MYP interdisciplinary criteria as designed • may be based on some but not all of the selected disciplines • may not clearly describe what students will do to demonstrate their understanding • may offer limited scope for differentiation to meet diverse learning needs.	The summative assessment task(s): • connects with an integrative statement of inquiry • uses MYP interdisciplinary assessment criteria appropriately • includes opportunities to demonstrate disciplinary and interdisciplinary understanding • clearly describes what students will do to make their interdisciplinary understanding visible • can be differentiated to meet diverse learning needs.	The summative assessment task(s): • thoughtfully connects with the statement of inquiry, bringing disciplinary and interdisciplinary insights together with coherence and creativity • uses the MYP interdisciplinary assessment criteria to explain how student achievement will be evaluated • provides balanced opportunities to move between disciplinary and interdisciplinary understanding • thoroughly explains what students will do to demonstrate comprehensive understanding of issues and ideas in ways that are meaningfully integrated • 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 interdisciplinary unit.

5. 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 within and across disciplines.	ATL skills in this unit: • are specifically identified and provide support for achieving the unit's objectives • provide a focus for student self-evaluation and reflection on personal growth and development • include descriptions of how the skills are explicitly taught and practiced in the unit • support progression of learning across MYP years within and across disciplines.	ATL skills in this unit: • are specifically identified and integrate meaningfully with unit's objectives, learning engagements and assessment tasks • offer students opportunities to develop responsibility for their own learning through independent practice • include descriptions of how the skills are explicitly taught and specific strategies are practised • support a clearly identified progression of learning across MYP years through their articulation within and across subject groups, year levels, 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. Everything that teachers and students do should serve the integrative purpose of the interdisciplinary unit.

Disciplinary grounding is necessary to ensure that students can effectively achieve interdisciplinary understanding. This section identifies significant discipline-specific content. (Content may include methods, tools, theories, knowledge or forms of communication from relevant disciplines that are necessary to develop interdisciplinary understanding as expressed in the unit's statement of inquiry.)

6. Disciplinary grounding		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
Disciplinary grounding: • includes knowledge and skills that are not clearly connected with the selected disciplines or that relate to the statement of inquiry in a limited way • may not identify relevant subject-group aims and objectives (and related concepts) • features general teaching strategies that may not build effectively towards interdisciplinary learning engagements • provides limited opportunities for students to develop their ability to evaluate disciplinary knowledge (and ways of knowing) • focuses on teacher-centred classroom activities.	Disciplinary grounding: • includes disciplinary knowledge and skills that clearly relate to an integrated statement of inquiry • identifies subject-group aims and objectives (and related concepts) that develop necessary disciplinary grounding • includes teaching strategies that support interdisciplinary learning • helps students to develop their ability to evaluate disciplinary knowledge (and ways of knowing) • includes some inquiry-based teaching strategies.	Disciplinary grounding: • includes disciplinary knowledge and skills that support transferable understanding and an integrated statement of inquiry • aligns clearly with subject-group aims and objectives (and related concepts) that develop disciplinary grounding and inspire further inquiry • is developed through active, inquiry-based teaching strategies that builds purposefully towards interdisciplinary learning • challenges students to explore the benefits and limitations of disciplinary knowledge (and ways of knowing) • uses a variety of inquiry-based strategies for teaching and learning that help students connect factual, conceptual, and procedural knowledge.

Interdisciplinary learning experiences and teaching strategies help to develop integrative understanding. This section of the planner focuses on how teachers will create a learning environment that develops interdisciplinary understanding.

7. Interdisciplinary learning process		
a. Interdisciplinary learning experiences and teaching strategies		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
Interdisciplinary 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 interdisciplinary concepts and contexts • may not be developmentally appropriate • focus on teacher-centred classroom activities.	Interdisciplinary learning experiences and teaching strategies: • describe in sufficient detail what students will do and in what order • indicate how students will explore interdisciplinary concepts and context • are developmentally appropriate • include some inquiry-based teaching strategies.	Interdisciplinary learning experiences and teaching strategies: • describe with clarity and specific detail what students will do and in what order • indicate how students will explore interdisciplinary concepts and context through a variety of learning experiences • are developmentally appropriate, thought-provoking and engaging • use a variety of inquiry-based strategies for teaching and learning that help students connect factual, conceptual and procedural knowledge • build on prior disciplinary and interdisciplinary 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 interdisciplinary summative assessment	Formative assessment: • aligns with knowledge, understanding and skills required for success in interdisciplinary summative assessment	Formative assessment: • comprehensively aligns with knowledge, understanding and skills required for success in the interdisciplinary summative assessment

b. Formative assessment		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
• provides limited opportunity to monitor and support students' disciplinary and interdisciplinary learning • may not create evidence that teachers can use to adjust planned learning experiences and teaching strategies.	• provides opportunities for explicit feedback that supports students' disciplinary and interdisciplinary learning • creates some evidence that teachers can use to adjust teaching and learning in ways that promote student achievement.	• provides varied opportunities for practice and detailed feedback for student's disciplinary and interdisciplinary learning • creates meaningful evidence that teachers can use to make adjustments to planned experiences and teaching strategies • divides complex tasks into discrete steps with interim markers of progress in disciplinary and interdisciplinary understanding • 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 additional 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.

Colleagues from multiple disciplines can collaborate to generate possibilities and innovative solutions to resourcing challenges.

8. 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 experiences and multi-literacies.	Resources: • represent a range of entry points to interdisciplinary learning environments that creatively achieve the unit's purpose • promote student inquiry through learning support and extension • provide diverse and culturally responsive points of view on interdisciplinary issues and ideas • integrate technology effectively • use students' life experiences 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 important periods in the unit's development and implementation.

This section of the planner prompts critical reflection throughout the process of **planning, teaching and reviewing the impact** of interdisciplinary units. Throughout the unit, teachers should explicitly teach, model and provide meaningful feedback on the process of reflection.

9. Before, during and after teaching 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 and 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 development • 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 throughout the teaching and learning process, including how well the chosen disciplines provided opportunities for integration • documents the unit's connection with the IB's philosophy of education (international-mindedness, IB learner profile, ATL skills, 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 • considers impact and future development of the interdisciplinary planning process, teacher collaboration and the logistics of interdisciplinary learning

9. Before, during and after teaching the unit		
Beginning/developing	**Using**	**Sharing**
		• includes information about standardization of assessment and student achievement data • considers horizontal and vertical articulation • 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 Purpose of integration			
2 Statement of inquiry			
3 Inquiry questions			
4 Summative assessment—interdisciplinary performance(s) of understanding			
5 Approaches to learning			
Action: Teaching and learning through inquiry			
6 Disciplinary grounding			
7 Interdisciplinary learning process			
a. Learning experiences and teaching strategies			
b. Formative assessment			
c. Differentiation			
8 Resources			
Reflection: Considering the planning, process and impact of the inquiry			
9 Before, during and after teaching the unit			

Teaching context

Collaborative planning	How was the unit planned? When and how was collaboration present in the planning?
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?
Relation to broader plans (including subject-group overviews)	How does the unit fit with the broader plans for teaching and learning?