

LEARNING & TEACHING IN THE ENHANCED PYP

communications graphic



Learning & Teaching

- Transdisciplinary learning
- Approaches to learning
- Inquiry
- Concepts
- Developing a programme of inquiry
- Assessment
- Language

INTRODUCTION

‘Learning & teaching - part 1’ is the second deep-dive into the enhanced Primary Years Programme (PYP) through the new organising structure of the programme.

This communication is for your information only, so you can familiarise yourselves with enhancements prior to the full release of content in the new PYP digital resource in October 2018.

A transition document providing guidance around implementation of programme enhancements, for schools at various stages of authorization and evaluation, will be released in June 2018.

Please be aware that current standards and practices will remain valid for authorization and evaluation until launch of the revised standards and practices in 2020.

You are strongly advised to continue with current Professional Development (PD) throughout 2018—as PD in the PYP is timeless—built around teachers collaborating to improve practice, sharing and reflecting on learning to make learning more inquiry based, conceptual and transdisciplinary. That will not be changing.

OVERVIEW

Following our November outline of enhancements in [‘The Learner’](#), this communication, ‘Learning & teaching - part 1’ explores transdisciplinary learning, approaches to learning and inquiry in the enhanced PYP.

You will notice that enhancements to these foundational elements of the PYP provide greater flexibility, improved clarity and support for schools to make it:



better for students



easier for teachers to implement



more flexible for schools.

Renata Cabarga - Head of School

“What excites me the most about the enhancements to the PYP is that they present a clearer, more practical view for implementation. I particularly love the enhancements for strengthening transdisciplinary learning and feel that the opportunity to have more specialist teachers involved will deepen and nurture student learning.

The concept of agency will be extremely powerful and a great goal for us all to pursue.”

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WHAT enhancements strengthen TRANSDISCIPLINARY LEARNING?

Grounded in the central ideas and key and related concepts, a deeper relationship between disciplinary and transdisciplinary learning will further support, enrich and connect learning.

The teaching of science and social studies, although encouraged, will no longer be required to take place **solely within the programme of inquiry**. A renewed focus on purposeful, collaborative planning will ensure the authentic balance and articulation of all subjects across the six transdisciplinary themes and within each grade / year level.

Improved guidance will clearly define the 'what, why, when and how' of transdisciplinary learning, to better support the understanding and exploration of how the different elements of the programme strengthen the transdisciplinary learning experience and what that could look like in practice.

WHY?

The transdisciplinary model inherently promotes student agency. Students move beyond looking for a 'correct' solution to exploring the implications of, and solutions to, opportunities and challenges that reflect the changing times. It encourages the integration of many ways of knowing, and perspectives from all members of the learning community, to make sense of a world that has become "too big to know", (Weinberger, 2011).

Students' acquisition of knowledge, concepts and skills remains most relevant and authentic within the units of inquiry because transdisciplinarity *"calls for looking at disciplines in relational terms rather than in isolationist or oppositional terms"* (Giri, 2002). Subject knowledge is not an end, but a means *"to illuminate larger, more integrative ends"* (Boyer, 1995) through key and related concepts.

Effective teaching *"is implicitly transdisciplinary"* (Albright, 2016). Multiple elements of the enhanced PYP work together to bring transdisciplinary learning and teaching to life, emphasizing the close relationship between disciplinary and transdisciplinary learning. Learning is not confined within the boundaries of traditional subjects, but is supported and enriched by them:

"there is no opposition between disciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, but a fertile complementarity. In fact, there is no transdisciplinarity without disciplinarity."(Nicolescu 2014)

To support school and teacher agency, greater flexibility will allow you to address science and social studies outside the programme of inquiry, enabling you to adapt the framework to your unique context.

The original six transdisciplinary themes have enduring relevance and importance—remain cognitively and developmentally appropriate for students from early years through primary school—and will therefore remain the same.

HOW?

The transdisciplinary model permeates the curriculum framework throughout the organising structure of the learner, learning and teaching and the learning community.

Enhancements to the programme will provide greater clarity, flexibility and guidance in transdisciplinary learning and teaching by:



- strengthening and making more transparent the relationship between disciplinary and transdisciplinary learning

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WHAT enhancements strengthen **TRANSDISCIPLINARY LEARNING?** HOW? (continued)



- removing the requirement for science and social studies to be **fully embedded** within the programme of inquiry. However, the planning process must ensure the balance and authenticity of your transdisciplinary programme, and all subjects taught within the programme of inquiry across each grade / year level.

An updated resource will explain the why, what, when and how of integrating transdisciplinarity across the curriculum, eg:



- **approaches to learning** – have relevance across the curriculum and are crucial for exploring subject knowledge in the context of transdisciplinary themes
- **programme of inquiry** – provides the organizing structure to explore the transdisciplinary themes and ensure balance and breadth of the key elements of the programme
- **concepts** – allow for diversity in a connected curriculum and serve as linking operators across, between and beyond subjects.

You can further support transdisciplinary learning by inviting parents and other members of the learning community to learn more about the planning process, strengthening the learning partnership and their understanding of transdisciplinarity.

Jennifer Venance, PYP educator

"I love the focus on using the learning community to plan for diversity—to ensure that knowledge, skills and concepts appeal to students in a variety of different ways and contexts—and provide them with an increased ability to think through a transdisciplinary framework.

The idea that agency and transdisciplinarity exist within inquiry means that we will be able to approach planning, learning and teaching with more confidence. I am looking forward to exploring how we can foster agentic learners and how different elements of the programme will work together to strengthen the transdisciplinary learning experience."

WHAT enhancements strengthen **APPROACHES TO LEARNING?**

To align with other IB programmes, the original set of transdisciplinary skills are renamed approaches to learning.

You will be able to identify your own approaches to learning sub-skills in support of your students and your school context.

WHY?

Approaches to learning are interrelated and transferable across contexts. These skills support purposeful inquiry and set the foundations for lifelong learning. The development of these skills is frequently identified as crucial in supporting students to effectively learn and succeed inside and outside of school (Wagner 2014).

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WHAT enhancements strengthen APPROACHES TO LEARNING?

WHY? (continued)



The approaches to learning develop cognitive and metacognitive skills, which are transferable to different types of learning and school contexts. When combined with the learner profile, development of the approaches to learning will help students learn **how** to learn and become self-regulated, active and agentic learners.



The enhanced resource articulates a set of approaches to learning sub-skills that teachers may choose to adopt, adapt and extend.



Greater flexibility will enable you to:

- identify sub-skills to support your learners and your school context
- consider progressions of sub-skills development, especially in continuum schools.

HOW?

Through collaborative planning, you can consider how to develop the approaches to learning holistically, identifying connections between approaches to learning and the learner profile attributes; eg thinking skills are necessary to become an effective thinker or an inquirer.

Enhancements will support the development and mapping of approaches to learning through deliberate planning, teaching and feedback strategies inside and outside the programme of inquiry.

You can embed the approaches to learning **implicitly** in the classroom culture by:

- using the language of the approaches to learning
- modelling the approaches to learning
- giving feedback about the approaches to learning.

Together with students, you can establish the approaches to learning **explicitly** through your programme of inquiry by:

- identifying specific approaches to learning for development in a unit of inquiry
- co-constructing approaches to learning goals
- reflecting on specific approaches to learning from each unit
- designing specific learning engagements to support the development of approaches to learning
- monitoring and documenting the development of approaches to learning.

You will have the flexibility to **adopt, adapt and extend sub-skills** most relevant to your context, for early learners and primary aged students. Some examples of sub-skills include:

- **thinking** – critical, creative, transfer
- **research** – ethical, media and information literacy
- **communication** – listening, speaking, interpreting
- **social** – interpersonal, social and emotional intelligence
- **self-management** – mindfulness, time management, organisation.

Christianne Cowie, PYP coordinator

“I am happy to see more flexibility around the selection and development of approaches to learning sub-skills that will allow us to plan for their development—within our disciplinary and transdisciplinary inquiries—to provide more contextual, meaningful learning for our students.”

Increased alignment in the language used will also help students transitioning to the MYP and enrich discussions with colleagues in the MYP and DP.”

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WHAT enhancements strengthen INQUIRY?

Concept based inquiry remains the leading pedagogical approach of the enhanced PYP and is the basis for all learning and teaching in the programme.

An explicit focus on agency—voice, choice and ownership—will encourage active, inquiring students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Flexible, open ended timeframes for units of inquiry will allow for more sustained, in-depth inquiry as appropriate.

Teacher support materials will demonstrate inquiry in action and explore the roles of teachers and students in inquiry.

WHY?



Inquiry remains an authentic way for students to explore and understand the world, nurturing their curiosity as they move from current to new and deeper understandings, and embark on a lifelong journey of learning.

HOW?

Play, problem-based learning, collaboration, experimentation, and explicit teaching all have a place within well-considered inquiry-based learning experiences. You will be supported in exploring different types of, and approaches to inquiry, facilitating students' exploration of the transdisciplinary themes or subject-specific knowledge to become critical and creative thinkers, researchers, collaborators and communicators.

You can support purposeful student-initiated inquiry and foster agency by encouraging student interests, questions, discoveries and their evolving theories.

Your **learning community will be encouraged to consider** how to extend a culture of inquiry beyond the classroom.



Teacher support materials include demonstrations of inquiry in action in the early and primary years.



Increased flexibility for schools to make conscious decisions regarding different types of inquiry as they fit the purpose of learning.

Sharron Bailey, IBEN

"IB educators plan and facilitate workshops through a constructivist inquiry process, authentically modelling our fundamental IB pedagogical approach to participants.

Inquiry by nature is open to a range of interpretations and can be sometimes misrepresented as lacking structure or rigour. It's reassuring to see the enhancements to strengthen inquiry articulated so specifically, offering more scaffolding for teachers to deepen their understanding and practice.

It's exciting as a workshop leader to be supported by the enhancements, in designing workshops to help teachers discover how approaches such as problem-based learning, play and explicit teaching actually complement each other in effective inquiry."

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A reminder that 'Learning & teaching – part 2' will address enhancements relating to concepts, developing a programme of inquiry, assessment and language towards the end of March 2018.

Following receipt of this communication you may have questions. For additional clarification related to 'Learning & teaching - part 1', please consult our knowledgeable learning community via social media and our PYP online community. We will monitor carefully and the PYP team will discuss the most common themes during a webinar with IB educators following the release of 'Learning & teaching - part 2'. A recording will be made available on the programme resource centre at a later date.

DIGITAL RESOURCE

The new digital experience launching in October 2018, will replace 'Making the PYP Happen' and most other supporting PDF documents, although these will still be available until transition to the enhanced PYP is complete.

A single-sign on through [My IB](#) will enable you to access the new PYP digital platform on the [programme resource centre](#). This can be personalised to connect you directly to the content most relevant to your needs, with links to the new glossary, teacher support materials and relevant Programme Standards and Practices.

A phased transition plan to support full integration of the enhanced PYP in your school is currently in development and will be released in June 2018. This allows time for you to familiarise yourself with the enhanced programme before revised standards and practices are launched in 2020.

KEY COMMUNICATION TIMELINE



Key communications you may have missed:

[The Learner + FAQs + webinar](#)
[Preparing for the enhanced PYP](#)
[Trusted, timeless and transformational Leadership & preparing for change](#)

- an exploration of enhancements coming to 'the Learner'.
- exciting enhancements coming to the PYP.
- a summary of what's not changing in the enhanced PYP.
- a reflection on the role of agency in leadership and continuous school improvement.

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Questions?