

The Northside-Blodgett Physical Education unit example demonstrates how the MYP Areas of Interaction organize instruction for deeper learning.

In-depth Learning In Action

According to Northside-Blodgett (NSB) Physical Education teacher Darrell Dening, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP), has enhanced his teaching experience and what he brings to his students. "The MYP allows teachers to expand the students' learning outside the realm of their own discipline," said Mr. Dening. "In addition, the program helps students make the connection between having a physically active and healthy lifestyle and the units that we teach. As a result, Physical Education has become an increasingly important part of the students' learning."

Recently, Mr. Dening and his NSB Physical Education colleagues, Bill Hopkins and Kim Wilsoncroft, offered a integrated instructional unit on Diabetes that included traditional classroom activities along with student participation in the American Diabetes Association's "School Walk for Diabetes." This educational school fundraiser supports programs aimed at curing and preventing Diabetes and improving the lives of all those affected by the disease. All NSB students participated in the walk during their gym classes over a two-day period in October of 2005. In total, they raised over \$10,000 for the American Diabetes Association.

According to Mr. Dening, "The MYP requires Community Service as an integral component, so this unit gave our students an opportunity to meet that requirement. In addition, it was a tremendous opportunity for them to make a difference and volunteer their time to help find a cure for this disease that afflicts more than 18.2 million people in the United States." Inside the classroom, the Physical Education unit was structured around a set of "Guiding Questions" that included: What is Diabetes? What can we do as a community in order to help people with this disease? Students were required to research and answer these and other questions to familiarize themselves with the disease. Specifically, they were expected to learn about the two types of Diabetes and their causes, and to understand what lifestyle choices they can make to prevent Type 2 Diabetes, as well as how those with Type 1 Diabetes can structure their lives to best manage their health.

Health teacher Laurie Lewis collaborated with the Physical Education teachers on this unit teaching the students about Diabetes and emphasizing the nutritional aspects of the disease and how diet and exercise can be affected. Ultimately, the students wrote a reflective paper on how

they felt after learning about the disease and explained why it is a good idea for students to be involved in community service and volunteer their time for such a worthy cause. Technology was brought into the assignment as students used computers to research and write their papers.

The Northside-Blodgett Physical Education unit example demonstrates how the MYP Areas of Interaction organize instruction for deeper learning. In this case, the "lenses" of Health and Social Education, and Community and Service brought alive Physical Education and Health lessons through the experience of the Diabetes Walk project. Furthermore, the written reflection exercise gave students practice in critical thinking and communication, essential components of the Approaches To Learning Area of Interaction. Meanwhile, the project incorporated *Quantum Leap's* Rigor, Relevance and Relationships learning goals because the students challenged themselves, saw connections between school and life and worked as a team toward a common goal.

(Continued on reverse)

The Use of Essential Questions and Reflection in IB Instruction

The focus of units through the Areas of Interaction is aided by the use of "Essential Questions," sometimes called "Guiding Questions." This tool prompts students to ask more questions and ultimately use subject content, research tactics and critical thinking skills to process information and develop responses and answers to difficult questions. Essential Questions connect content to Areas of Interaction showing Relationship and Relevance to larger concepts.

Student reflection on learning also is an integral part of each MYP unit. In many cases, the original Essential Questions make good prompts for reflection. Reflection exercises are especially useful in helping students to explore interdisciplinary connections.

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The goals of the unit were to initiate research processes, teach proper citation procedure for scientific research, and promote personal opinion writing.



MYP Research Unit Explores Earth's Forces and Man

Northside Blodgett seventh grade Science teachers Josh Hunkele and Nick Rossington implemented an MYP unit designed to probe students' knowledge of forces on earth's surface and how they affect man. The goals of the unit were to initiate research processes, teach proper citation procedure for scientific research, and promote personal opinion writing.

According to Mr. Rossington, all seventh grade students at Northside Blodgett Middle School were required to complete the "Forces in the Earth and Man Project" during November and December 2005. "Our goal was to have students begin to understand that natural disasters have a far greater reach of influence on man than just the destruction of property and to develop an appreciation of current events," he says.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP) requires each instructional unit to explore an "Essential Question;" in this case it was "How has man been influenced by the forces of the earth?"

During the six-week course, the seventh graders were assigned a force topic (hurricanes, earthquakes or volcanoes) and asked to investigate how man has been influenced by that force. Students compiled and presented their findings in a research paper including cited sources.

The MYP Areas of Interaction were used as a framework to help guide students through this project, and also served to reinforce *Quantum Leap's* Rigor, Relevance and Relationships:

Approaches to Learning

Students worked independently; students demonstrated a critical analysis of infor-

mation (can explain the information to the teacher and classmates); students used American Psychological Association (APA) citation to reference sources of information.

Community & Service / Environment

Students identified the effect of their natural disaster; students explained how science can be applied to prevent problems before they start or help solve them once they are realized; students suggested actions to be taken by themselves and classmates in response to these problems.

Health & Social Education

Students identified the ethical (right vs. wrong) and social (how it impacts the community) necessity of helping others in need.

Homo Faber

Students explained how scientists around the world are responding to this problem.

"As a result of this project, students developed an insight into the research process, an appreciation of the use of personal opinion in regards to ethical and societal issues and an understanding of proper citation practices," said Rossington.

What Students Say About the IB Middle Years Program

In March of 2006, the Corning-Painted Post Area School District asked its students in grades 6 through 8 what they would tell other kids about the MYP. Here are some of their answers:

"I would say that [the MYP] is a program that involves students and widening their learning experience."

"The MYP is a style of learning that relates subjects to each other and shows how every subject can be applied to something in your life. It tries to get us to think and relate what we are learning to our lives."

"MYP is a program that will help you get into a good college when you're older."

"IB is about helping us getting a better education and helping us learn more and better ways to learn."

"[The MYP] is the way we learn and how they want us to think problems through."

"The MYP is all about kids in middle school being more "hands on" and having more educational experiences. It's so we can learn in different ways."

"I would say that it makes us think more, therefore our classes can change yet it doesn't necessarily make things harder."