

GIS is certainly a busy place!

In the spirit of “keeping a big school small” I would like to share two of the foci of the MYP this academic year.

The first has to be all about the work we are doing to polish our assessment practices to reflect that we are truly an IB World School. I have to mention the interesting statistic Mr. Simon found as he and the team analyzed the fantastic GIS Diploma results last academic year... the longer a student has been in the MYP (and at GIS), the better s/he fared in the Diploma. Our top performing candidates have been MYP students at GIS since Grade 6!

There are 4 reports in the academic year, 2 full semester reports and two interim reports. The full semester reports reflect students' grades in all assessment criteria, while the interim reports reflect only one or two. Grades are derived from students' performance in summative assessments and these are supported by regular formative assessment, which directs the learning, as well as provides stepping stones and feedback, which will enable the students to complete the summative assessment successfully. Feedback may be given verbally in class, may be comments in the students' notebooks or may be uploaded on to Managebac. Feedback gives you and the student an indication of progress and by working together we can ensure that each student is able to achieve his/her personal best. Please ask us questions, make sure that you can access Managebac and check in with your child to see how school is going! Assessment is ongoing and rigorous (it demands that students understand and apply the content and concepts as well as the skills that are taught at different stages of the year). Please encourage your child to make use of all the opportunities offered at school to ensure that s/he is able to be the best version of him/her-self.

The second focus that I would like to share is about the work we are doing to ensure the step from Grade 5 to 6 at GIS is as smooth for the students as it can be. Mark Krabousanos (the PYP Coordinator), myself and Mike Norton (academic coordinator) as well as other academic leaders and teachers are working together to achieve this and this week all Grade 5 and 6 teachers participated in a workshop on Tuesday to explore the similarities and differences in our assessment practices so that we may understand the students journey more and support them fully all the way.

This week in the MYP we focused on one of our other school aims for the year: “Academic excellence for all”. After the MAP tests we had time to explore and develop our approaches to learning skills. First of all, students were taught different techniques to relax and reduce anxiety. We learnt how to doodle, we explored our own ‘Power-Ups’ and considered the things we have to be grateful for. As we come out of the anxious and difficult times imposed upon our world by the virus, mental health issues have really come to the fore and this is one way of teaching our students how they may cope with and manage difficult times. I have been surprised by how many of our students have chosen to explore mental health issues in their Personal Projects, it gives us an insight into how important these are for our students.



The MYP demands that we think both critically and creatively about issues that affect ourselves and our world and we explored our own perspective on issues and learnt how to use the 6 thinking hats to understand these from different perspectives. We hope that these lessons will positively impact the work done in lessons and that students will remember and use these tools for a long time to come.

The MYP curriculum is multifaceted, the content, concepts and acquisition of skills work together to ensure that the system is balanced and holistic; related to the real world and engages our students. This is promising to be an exciting year. I'm so pleased to be sharing it with all of you!