

Action in PYP

Dear Parent

When your child is engaged in their learning, it can lead to some action at home! When this happens, we want to hear about it 😊

Action- How do we want students to act?

In the Primary Years Programme, it is believed that education must extend beyond the intellectual to include not only socially responsible attitudes but also thoughtful and appropriate action. Students at DPS International are encouraged to embrace opportunities to positively impact others. Our students are empowered to choose to act, to decide on their actions, and to reflect on these actions in order to make a difference in and to the world.

What does Action look like?

Action from a child in the PYP can be as simple as a student wanting to share with someone what they are learning about or even wanting to go online or to the library to continue their learning of a particular topic. It can be an action like creating a poster to educate others, writing to a local authority or to a corporate CEO about an issue that was raised during a particular unit of inquiry. Action in the PYP can also be deciding not to act, for example if during a unit on health a student realizes that a bar of chocolate as a snack is not the best choice and they opt for almonds instead.

Action in DPSI :

- Emaan of Nursery A during nature walk in a garden shared his knowledge about caterpillars, cocoons and butterflies with his mother.
- Sky(K.G A) showed his parents the song and dance learnt from school.
- Tiana (Grade 1A) changed her eating habits and chose to eat healthy food with lot of vegetables when she went out to eat with her parents. She also encouraged others to play in the sun as it is a good source vitamin D and inquired about sources of vitamin K
- It was very proudly reported by Angad's(Grade 1B) parents that he saw an injured bird in the balcony at home and helped the bird with some food and water and shared that birds need to be taken care of otherwise they will become endangered.
- Alexis (Grade 4) started learning Hebrew so she could communicate with the new girl, in class who apparently does not speak English.
- Saiansh (Grade 2) while watching an ad on television of Kissan ketchup where they show how tomatoes get converted into sauce and was able to make connections with what happened in the classroom and explained it to his parents.

There are many more such success stories.....and we look forward to hear many more.

Regards

Arpita Saxena

An example of learner agency

Dear Parents,

As the team of teachers at DPS International reflect on ways to promote students' voice, choice and ownership in their classroom. I ponder on the factors that affect the child's ultimate well-being and happiness. One such factor that keeps surfacing is the ability to 'act' in the world, to make decisions and carry out actions rooted in self-confidence in one's knowledge and abilities. This 'act' or the 'learner agency' must begin at home, the first learning platform for any child. I take this opportunity to share with you an example of how a family vacation to Sri Lanka changed the mind-set of the parents and the trip became an enriching experience for children. The details of the experience can be read on link below:

<https://learningtowearthebigshoes.wordpress.com/2018/08/26/agency-begins-at-home/>

I would be interested in hearing about any such experience you had with your child.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Arpita

Assessments in PYP

Dear Parent

The teaching and learning process in PYP has never failed to amaze me and I feel very fortunate witnessing some wonderful ways in which students are assessed in the classrooms I would like to share few successful stories with you all. Hence the focus of this mail is **Assessments in the PYP**.

What are the characteristics of effective assessments in the PYP?

- Have criteria that are known and understood in advance
- Allow children to synthesize and apply their learning, not merely recall facts
- Promote student reflection and self-evaluation
- Focus on the production of quality products or performances
- Highlight children's strengths and allows them to demonstrate mastery and expertise
- Allow children to express different points of view and interpretations
- Provide feedback regarding every stage of the learning/teaching cycle
- Based on student needs, interests and learning styles (student-driven)
- Involve collaboration between students and teachers
- Produce evidence of student growth and learning that can be clearly reported and understood by children, parents, teachers and administrators
- Identify what is worth knowing
- Begin with the end results in mind (backwards design – what students should be able to know or do by the end of a learning unit, lesson or process)

Three main types of assessment we use are **pre-assessment (prior knowledge assessment)**, **formative assessment** and **summative assessment**. These assessments are used in all the areas of the curriculum and are not restricted to paper and pencil only.

Pre-assessment provides an insight into what students know and is the starting point of teaching learning process. Topic wheel (a graphic organizer used by students to write what they know of the topic), classroom discussions and students' reflections are some of the ways to tap into students' prior knowledge.

Looking at what the students know, understand and can do throughout the learning process is achieved through **formative assessments**. It is a tool to improve students' learning. Few examples of formative assessments at DPSI:

- Students of Grade 2 used "Vittle" (a tool for recording) to record their understanding on body system.
- Students of Grade 4 wrote an informal letter to their pen pal informing them of aspects of town planning in an ancient civilization. They also developed multiple choice questions on measurement for their peers to attempt.
- Grade 5 students designed various tasks through which they could share their knowledge of vocabulary words learnt during the unit of inquiry. Through these tasks, the teachers were able to gauge the understanding of students and planned for the next lessons.

Summative assessments on the other hand take place at the end of a learning unit or process. It is a chance for students and teachers to evaluate progress and demonstrate what has been learned over the

course of time. It is a formal ending point to a taught unit or of a process but not necessarily the end of student learning in the areas being assessed.

A few examples are:

- As a culmination task (summative assessment) on systems within a community, students of Grade choose a system from the community (school/hotel/ hospital) and designed a 'Snakes and Ladders' game (using 5 snakes and 5 ladders) which demonstrated their understanding of what happens when the system works well (ladders) and what can happen if the system breaks down (snakes). This task clearly demonstrated their understanding that, 'Communities function because of the systems within them.'
- As a part of summative task on migration, students of Grade 3 reviewed a case study of migration of people migrating from Mexico to America and identified the push – pull factors responsible for the migration and it's impact on the destination country.
- Grade 1 students demonstrated their understanding of landforms by making models of the landform using clay and listing ways in which they have being negatively impacted by humans. They also suggested ways to conserve the landform.

In early years, our teachers assess in a variety of ways too. The most suitable form of assessment in early years setting is through documenting and analyzing children's play narratives. These narratives are helpful in understanding students' thinking. Hence teachers make lots of video clippings to capture students narrating stories or constructing theories and express their understanding of the world. Observing students work with manipulatives also gives teachers an insight into students' knowledge and understanding.

Most written assessments are sent home for parent's review. Please do not hesitate to contact the form tutor or me to know more about the assessments.

Alternately you can visit the IB website <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/primary-years-programme/> for more information on assessments.

Regards

Arpita Saxena

Inquiry in mathematics

Dear Parent

At DPSI, children learn the concepts and skills identified for each grade in the PYP framework in five strands of mathematics: **data handling, measurement, shape and space, pattern and function and number**. You will see these strand names on your child's report card. In Math, children work conceptually from the very beginning of Math learning because of the nature of the subject. In the PYP students are encouraged to investigate the concepts through a variety of different ways and with concrete materials in order to have a concrete understanding and a context for the mathematical concepts. This context is often the units of inquiry that make up our Programme of Inquiry. When the big ideas can be applied to real life situations, the learner constructs their own meaning and application.

Maths teaching has changed over the years since many of us attended school, and in a PYP school, where a transdisciplinary approach is taught, the strategies and teaching methods can sometimes be unfamiliar and we might be left asking ourselves. 'How can I help my child at home with their Maths?' How will my child learn Maths? Children learn mathematics best through activities that encourage them to: investigate; think about what they are investigating; gather information, organize it, and act on it; use information that they have gathered from a variety of sources to solve problems; explain how they reached their solutions. Children learn more easily when they can connect mathematics concepts (the big ideas) and procedures with their own experience. By using things in the home (such as measuring cups, bathroom scales, a deck of cards, recipes, catalogues) and observing everyday events (such as weather trends, sports scores, timetables), they can "see" the ideas that are being taught. An important part of learning mathematics is learning how to understand and solve problems. Children are encouraged to use systematic trial and error and a variety of other strategies to develop their reasoning and to learn how to go about problem solving. They learn that there are many ways to solve problems and there is often more than one solution to any given problem. They also learn to communicate clearly as they explain their solutions. It does not matter what language they use when they are talking about mathematics. Be positive, and talk about the ways you use mathematics every day

- Sharing negative experiences (by saying, for example, "I was never very good at maths at school") will not encourage your child to engage in mathematics and be confident about taking risks as he or she solves problems. Instead, try statements like this: "Okay, we can solve this if we work it out together. What are you thinking?"
- Let your child know that you think mathematics is important. Point out the ways in which different family members use mathematics in their jobs and at home.
- Let your child know that everyone can learn mathematics.
- Praise your child when he or she makes an effort and understands something for the first time, and share in the excitement when you and your child solve a problem together.
- Encourage your child to be persistent when a problem seems difficult. Make mathematics part of your child's day
- Point out to your child the many ways in which mathematics is used throughout his or her day.

- Encourage your child to tell or show you how he or she uses mathematics. Include your child in everyday activities that involve mathematics – making purchases, measuring ingredients, counting out plates and utensils for dinner, measuring and calculating the area of a room.
- Play games and do puzzles with your child that involves mathematics. Such activities may focus on direction or time, logic, reasoning, sorting, classifying, and/or estimating.
- Work with your child to solve mathematics problems. Problem solving helps your child develop mathematical thinking and reasoning. In addition to mathematics tools, such as a ruler and a calculator, use household objects, such as toothpicks, a measuring cup, and containers of various shapes and sizes, when doing mathematics with your child. Encourage your child to give explanations
- When you and your child are trying to solve a problem, have your child share his or her thinking aloud and talk about the strategies that he or she used to reach a solution. If some of your child's ideas are puzzling, ask your child to explain further. As children talk about their ideas and how they reach solutions, they are learning to reason mathematically.
- Suggest that your child act out a problem or draw a diagram to solve it. Have your child show how he or she reached a conclusion by drawing pictures and moving objects as well as by using words. Treat errors and misconceptions as opportunities to develop reasoning skills and new ideas.
- Identify which part of your child's reasoning is convincing and which part is less convincing. For example, "I like the way you organized the information. Can we look at the chart again to see if the numbers are accurate?" Also, prompt your child to think of another way to solve the problem.' Getting help Your child's teacher can provide advice about helping your child with mathematics. Here are some topics you could discuss with the teacher: your child's level of performance on mathematics assessment tasks the goals your child is working towards in mathematics, and how you can support your child in achieving them strategies you can use to assist your child in areas that he or she finds difficult activities to work on at home with your child other resources, such as books, games, and websites.

Regards

Arpita Saxena

Inquiry in PYP

Dear Parents

It was an absolute pleasure to welcome the children to yet another academic year. They seemed to have grown so much during the summer and were full of tales about their vacations. They looked curious about their new class, new friends, new building and new teachers and have finally settled well in their classes.

For some, inquiry was a way of life and for some it took a while to understand that all questions are welcomed and respected in the class. I seek this opportunity to make parents aware of the importance of inquiry and the role of questions in an inquiry process.

Inquiry is defined as "a seeking for truth, information, or knowledge -- seeking information by questioning." Every year, five million children enter kindergarten armed with one word: "Why?" They continuously ask questions in what seems like an unending loop. On the other side, parents, caretakers, and teachers do their best to come up with answers to manage this kiddie-inquisition. Yet there's no allaying it. Behind that question hides another. And another. And another. As painful as this activity may be for adults, the process is important for children. Their brains are busily creating pathways. They are trying to understand how things work. They are learning -- and learning how to learn.

Today, the need for curious people has heightened. We are at a critical time in our world with many global issues needing to be solved. To make a better world, our society needs people to ask questions, seek answers, and create solutions. As such, it's time to reconnect with curiosity again and nurture it in our children. Children who ask questions will become adults who continue to ask questions.

In PYP, all grades are committed to inquiry as the preferred approach to teaching and learning. In an inquiry classroom, we encourage students to "notice" their learning. We build a discourse about learning itself about how we learn what we learn and about ways to improve ourselves as learners. Through the process of inquiry, students view themselves as learners in the process of learning.

They accept an "invitation to learn" and willingly engage in an exploration process. Students are able to construct much of their understanding of the natural and human-designed worlds.

Inquiry implies a "need or want to know" premise. Inquiry is not so much seeking the right answer -- because often there is none -- but rather seeking appropriate resolutions to questions and issues. Students in classes are actively involved in make observations, collecting, analyzing, synthesizing information, and drawing conclusions. This process helps in developing useful problem-solving skills. These skills can be applied to future "need to know" situations that students will encounter both at school and at work.

Developing curiosity is the first step towards inquiry and as parents and caretakers you can help in nurturing curiosity. So make space for asking questions. Instead of asking, "What did you learn today?", try asking, "What good questions did you ask today?" This small alteration indicates that finding out about things is important. Curious children emerge from curious adults, so find time to try new things yourself along with your child.

So keep your inner scientist's flame aglow.

Regards

Arpita Saxena

Learner agency

Dear Parent

IB has certainly made an impact since it was launched in 1968. From prime ministers to astronauts, teachers to filmmakers, the IB education has developed generations of inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who seek to create a more peaceful world. The year 2018 marks a truly significant milestone in the history of IB as it celebrates its successful 50 years of existence. IB education continues in its endeavours to create a better world through education that is more meaningful than ever. This year at the IB Annual Conference in Singapore, the buzz word was 'Learner Agency'. Educators from different parts of the Asia Pacific came together and discussed what learner agency means and its implications.

The Meaning:

One way of thinking of learner agency is when learners have 'the power to act'. Agency is when learning involves the activity and the initiative of the learner, more than the inputs that are transmitted to the learner from the teacher, from the curriculum, the resources and so forth. The learners move from being passive recipients to being much more active in the learning process, actively involved in the decisions about the learning, then they have greater agency.

Its implication for the student:

Firstly, before a learner can exercise agency in their particular learning context they must have a belief that their behaviour and their approach to learning is actually going to make a difference for them in the learning in that setting - in other words, a personal sense of agency.

Secondly, agency is interdependent. It's not just about a learner in isolation doing their own thing and what suits them. Learners must develop awareness that there are consequences for the decisions they make and actions they take, and will take account of that in the way(s) they exercise their agency in learning.

And lastly, agency includes an awareness of the responsibility of one's own actions on the environment and on others. So there's a social connectedness kind of dimension to that. Every decision a learner makes, and action she or he takes, will impact on the thinking, behaviour or decisions of others - and vice versa.

Ways to promote learner agency at home:

- Be a responsive observer, help but don't be too helpful.
- Ensures opportunities for student to share their voice and hear their opinions.

- Negotiate with your child to overcome tensions and strive for balance.
- Support your child to plan, modify and discuss their projects and not plan for them.
- Respond to their plans and curates appropriate resources so they can make their plans a reality.
- Model risk-taking behaviour.
- Praise your child's victories but celebrate their failure too and consider it to be a learning experience.

At school we strive to promote student agency by creating a culture of inquiry and creativity, encouraging and respecting students' perspectives. Lessons are stimulating and relevant to the development of agency. Feedback is constructive and in ways that provide scaffolding for students to solve their own problems ,take regular steps to detect and respond to confusion in class, but in ways that share responsibility (and agency) with students for doing the thinking and more.

Regards
Arpita Saxena

Mother Tongue

Dear Parent

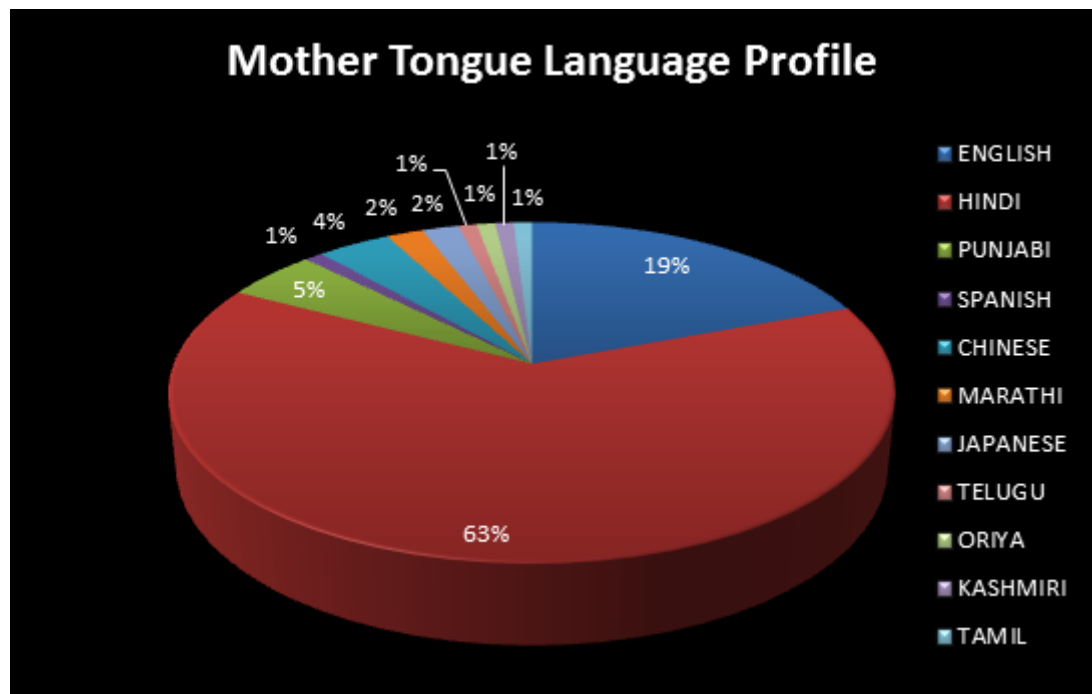
It is well known that a child's first comprehension of the world around him or her and the expression of feelings and first words are through his or her mother tongue. The International Baccalaureate attaches importance to language learning through the development of each student's mother tongue and the acquisition of other languages, including the host country language. *Jim Cummins*, a leader in second language learning and literacy development research, underscores the importance of mother tongue competency, in his research paper, *Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why Is It Important for Education?* : "*Children who come to school with a strong foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the language used at school*".

In our quest to support mother tongue fluency, we have consciously taken a decision to promote it and you as parents play a crucial role in developing and maintaining your child's proficiency in his or her mother tongue. Please note that verbal language also plays an important role in establishing a strong bond between parent and child.

Here are a few suggestions for you to support the development of mother tongue skills at home:

- Talk to your children and take advantage of every opportunity to use their mother tongue in the course of your daily interactions
- Encourage reading and writing in their mother tongue
- Narrate stories and encourage discussions on different topics in their mother tongue
- Provide your child with books, magazines and videos in their mother language
- Watch television programmes and cartoons in their mother tongue
- Listen to songs in their mother tongue
- Buy a mother language dictionary suitable for their age, e.g. picture dictionary for younger children
- Meet with other children who speak the same language
- Be a good role model and take pride in speaking and reading their mother tongue

On the school's part, building library resources, giving students every opportunity in class to use their mother tongue, marking the 'International Mother Language Day' are a few steps taken to promote mother tongue. Given below is the mother language profile of our current students.



After all, every language spoken in the world represents a special culture and to everyone their mother language is certainly one of the most precious treasures.

Power of Play

Dear Parent,

I am sure that play has been a cherished part of your childhood and you can recall memories of playing with sibling, cousins, friends or by yourself. Play is so important in a child's development that it's been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child.

Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. It allows children to explore the world, practice adult roles, and gain confidence. It also improves children's social skills by helping them to learn how to work in groups, to share, to negotiate, to resolve conflicts, and to learn self-advocacy skills.

At DPS International we believe in providing children with a range of playthings which will help them learn in a number of ways. In early year classes, there are ample opportunities of learning through play. The various setups like dress up corner, puppet corner, creative corner, art corner and block/ puzzles corner provide students with opportunities to develop their language skills, emotions, creativity and social skills. Students are encouraged to choose any corner and engage actively in them. The activities are supervised but not guided. This allows students to make choices, voice their opinions and take ownership of their learning.

In upper primary too students have a choice to engage actively in numeracy and literacy games which are placed outside their classrooms. After lunch the students are encouraged to explore outdoor play enabling them to develop a wide variety of physical and social skills.

As parents you are the biggest supporters of your child's learning and it is important that you encourage your child to set up their own play area at home and select what they will play with from a range of simple play items like blocks, big beads, puzzles, cardboard boxes or any everyday items. To help children to get the most out of their play experiences try some of the following ideas:

- **Observe:** Watching your child closely during play will give you an insight into his or her skill levels and favourite activities.
- **Participate:** The richest play can occur when an adult takes an active role and plays alongside the child, rather than just providing the toys or supervising the activity. Plan the setup of play items with your child. However allow your child to remain in control of the activity so that they can lead and determine the direction of the play. Talk to your child during play. Ask questions but do not be proactive in providing solutions. Remember you and your child are 'equals' during play .
- **Stretch boundaries:** Let go of the adult notion that there is only one way to play with a toy. Let your child use his imagination and engage in make believe play. Let your child make a board game and set rules for it.
- **Include outdoor play:** Visit parks or other local outdoor areas whenever possible. Simple games like passing the ball, catching and throwing, kicking, running can be very de stressing.

- **Have Fun:** The most important thing you can do is to simply enjoy yourself and have fun with your child during play time.

So parents “just play, have fun, enjoy the game”- Michael Jordan. Let the opportunity to play be the favourite part of your game.

Regards
Arpita Saxena

Sustainability

Dear Parents,

Sustainability is not a choice but a necessity, the issue of environmental sustainability has become an issue of human health, well-being and even survival. It is becoming imperative that we make our students aware of the global realities that need to be addressed in building a sustainable future. They need to understand how our daily lives, as inhabitants of the world, are related to social, economic and environmental processes.

Developing, understanding and applying knowledge of environmental problems and the solutions to those problems is the purpose of sustainability education. At DPSI, this academic year sustainability will play an important role in children's environmental learning.

In Primary Years Programme (PYP) sustainable development goals (SGD) are identified for Grades 2-5 and embedded in their unit of inquiries. Students will continue with their enthusiastic participation in school initiated projects, 'Eco club' (to improve green cover at zero cost) and 'Waste to Wealth' (to recycle waste paper).

But to expect our students to be more sustainable we need parents to exert a significant influence on children's environmental attitudes and behaviours. At home, at work, in the street, shopping, cooking, in our leisure time, almost all our daily activities can be modified to be less harmful to the environment. The choice of LED bulbs rather than conventional bulbs, the preference of the bicycle over the car, the use of the pressure cooker, the correct oil recycling and the importance of understanding ecolabels are a few of these.

Some of the other things that you can do to model sustainability are:

- Make informed choices: Avoid products that use excessive packaging because it is going to increase waste.
- Grow your own garden: Food you purchase from the market goes through a process where food is grown, transported, and stored before it can reach the shelves of a supermarket. You can help reduce your carbon footprint and reduce negative environmental impacts by growing your own food in your backyard if possible.
- Minimize waste: Buy only the products that you need. Avoid excessive packaging and recycle everything that you can.

- Watch your utility bills: Little things like unplugging your appliances while not in use or closing your windows when heat or air conditioning is on will reduce bills, save energy and reduce environmental footprints,
- Purchase energy efficient appliances: Replace all your old home appliances with energy efficient ones. Look for energy star ratings and other energy saving features.
- Support organizations dedicated to sustainability: You can get involved with organizations that promote sustainability.

Please try out some of these suggestions and let us know how they are making a difference in your life. You can write to me at arpita.saxena@dpsiedge.edu.in or send messages through your child's school diary. Your action towards sustainability will greatly inspire us.

Let sustainability be the guiding force in our lives.

Buy less, choose well, make it last. – Vivienne Westwood

References:

<https://www.activesustainability.com/sustainable-life/sustainability-in-everyday-life/>

Source: Environmental Professionals Network

Regards

Arpita Saxena