

TIS Middle Years Programme Course Guide

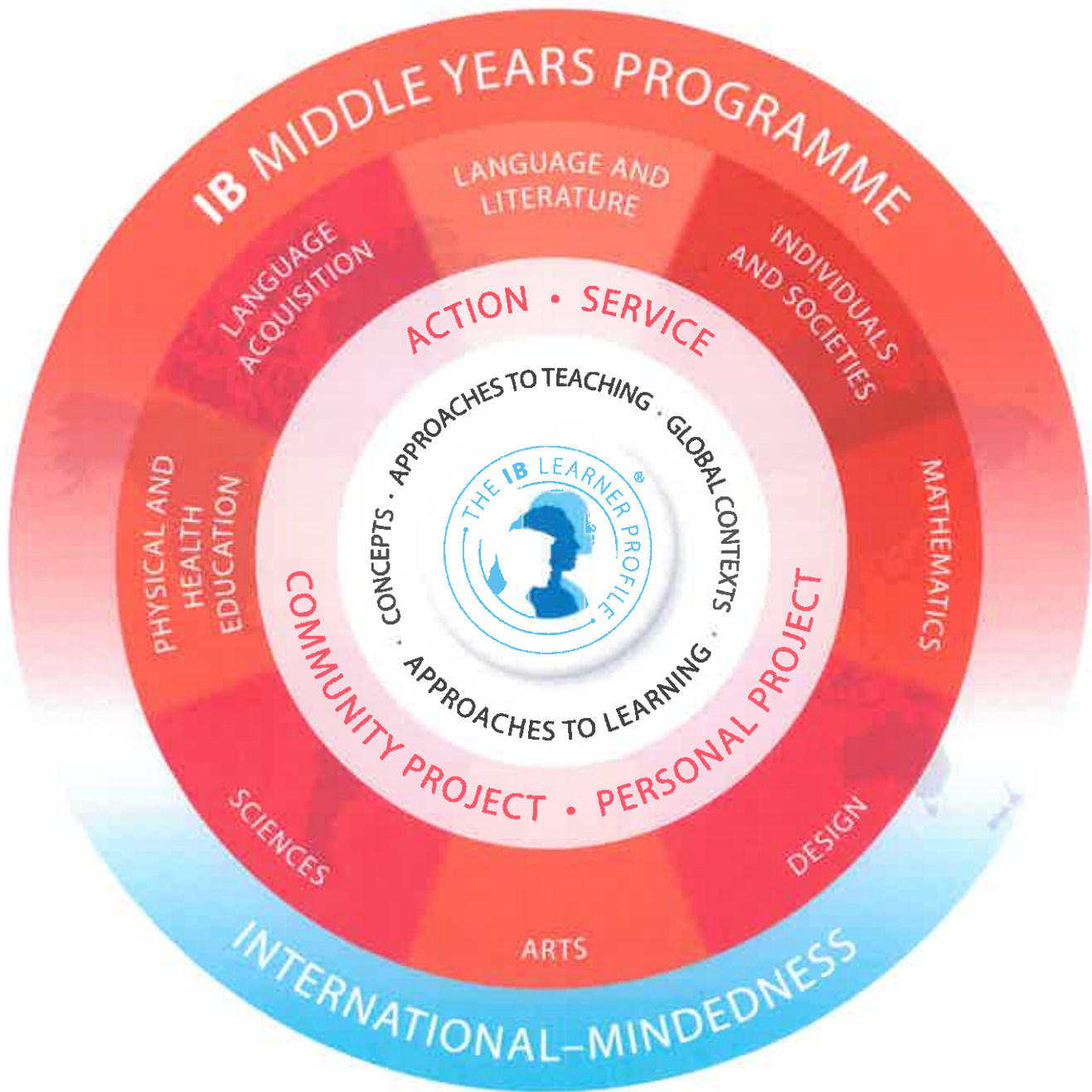


Figure 1
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme model

The MYP is designed for students aged 11 to 16 (grades 6 to 10). It provides a framework of learning that encourages students to become creative, critical and reflective thinkers. The MYP emphasizes intellectual challenge, encouraging students to make connections between their studies in traditional subjects and the real world. It fosters the development of skills for communication, intercultural understanding and global engagement—essential qualities for young people who are becoming global leaders.

The MYP is flexible enough to accommodate the demands of most national or local curriculums. It builds upon the knowledge, skills and attitudes developed in the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) and prepares students to meet the academic challenges of the IB Diploma Programme (DP) and the IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC).

The MYP:

- addresses holistically students' intellectual, social, emotional and physical **well-being**
- provides students opportunities to develop the **knowledge, attitudes and skills** they need in order to manage complexity and take responsible action for the future
- ensures breadth and depth of understanding through study in **eight subject groups**
- requires the study of at least **two languages** to support students in understanding their own cultures and those of others
- empowers students to participate in **service with the community**
- helps to prepare students for **further education, the workplace and a lifetime of learning.**

Each year of the Middle Years Programme (6th-8th) at The International School at Mesa del Sol, all students take the following courses:

Physical and Health Education
Language Acquisition
Sciences

Fine Arts/Performing Arts
Individuals and Societies
Language and Literature

Design
Mathematics

In order to complete middle school successfully, all students must meet the academic requirements of each of these courses. The program adjusts slightly for our HS / MYP (9th and 10th graders) to accommodate for state graduation requirements.

Nature of Physical and Health Education

MYP physical and health education aims to empower students to understand and appreciate the value of being physically active and develop the motivation for making healthy life choices. To this end, physical and health education courses foster the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will contribute to a student's balanced and healthy lifestyle. Through opportunities for active learning, courses in this subject group embody and promote the holistic nature of well-being. Students engaged in physical and health education will explore a variety of concepts that help foster an awareness of physical development and health perspectives, empowering them to make informed decisions and promoting positive social interaction.

Physical and health education focuses on both **learning about** and **learning through** physical activity. Both dimensions help students to develop approaches to learning (ATL) skills across the curriculum. Physical and health education contributes a unique perspective to the development of the attributes of the IB learner profile, promoting the health of individuals and communities.

Through physical and health education, students can learn to appreciate and respect the ideas of others, and develop effective collaboration and communication skills. This subject area also offers many opportunities to build positive interpersonal relationships that can help students to develop a sense of social responsibility. At their best, physical and health education courses develop the enjoyment, engagement and confidence in physical activity that students need in order to achieve and maintain a balanced, healthy life.

Physical activity and health are of central importance to human identity and global communities. They create meaningful connections among people, nations, cultures and the natural world, and they offer a range of opportunities to build intercultural understanding and greater appreciation for our common humanity.

Aims of Physical and Health Education

The aims of MYP physical and health education are to encourage and enable students to:

- use inquiry to explore physical and health education concepts
- participate effectively in a variety of contexts
- understand the value of physical activity
- achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle
- collaborate and communicate effectively
- build positive relationships and demonstrate social responsibility
- reflect on their learning experiences.

These courses are designed to do more than merely provide information about human growth and development. They are intended to influence students to take positive actions about protecting and ensuring their own health as well as the health of others and their community. Students will have the opportunity to have an active and personal role in the learning process allowing them to become active partners in maintaining and improving their level of wellness. Students will participate in simple experiments, self-inventories and projects that will help them to learn how to make healthy choices in all areas of their daily lives (physical, mental and social).

As they acquire knowledge and decision-making skills, they will also gain the confidence they need to take responsibility for their own health while understanding the needs and importance of a healthy community. Topics will include an awareness of body systems, stress management, drug education, human growth and development, human sexuality, first aid, nutrition, physical and emotional health and prevention of disease.

The first middle school physical education experience will be one of excitement, sportsmanship, conflict resolution and minimal competition. Emphasis will be on health and wellness, and basic skills in both team and individual sport activities. A daily activity program, along with assessment results will assist students in meeting NM Physical Education Standards.

Nature of the Arts

The arts are a universal form of human expression and a unique way of knowing that engage us in effective, imaginative and productive activities. Learning through the arts helps us to explore, shape and communicate our sense of identity and individuality. A focus on the individual enhances our self-confidence, resilience and adaptability. It encourages our sense of belonging and community through the recognition of identities. During adolescence, the arts provide an opportunity for age-appropriate and holistic development of the social, emotional, intellectual and personal intelligences of the student.

In MYP arts students have opportunities to function as artists, as well as learners of the arts. Artists have to be curious. By developing curiosity about themselves, others and the world, students become effective learners, inquirers and creative problem-solvers. Students develop through creating, performing and presenting arts in ways that engage and convey feelings, experiences and ideas. It is through this practice that students acquire new skills and master those skills developed in prior learning.

Development in the arts is a dynamic process, and not necessarily linear. The student moves freely through a creative process towards a deeper understanding of the arts. MYP arts values the process of creating artwork and the point of realization; the two elements combined tell us what students have experienced, learned and attempted to convey. In MYP arts, the four objectives have equal importance and value. Although the objectives can be addressed separately to scaffold learning, when used collectively they enrich teaching and learning of the arts.

Thinking creatively fits naturally in MYP arts, but can easily become a focus in other subject groups too. This objective is essential in modern education to address the need for student-centered learning and lifelong learning, looking towards a modern context of flexible employment and a higher demand for innovation and change in the workplace. As both an objective in the arts and an approaches to learning (ATL) skill across the programme, heightened awareness of thinking creatively encourages students to develop metacognitive skills and become self-regulated learners.

Arts in the MYP stimulate young imaginations, challenge perceptions and develop creative and analytical skills. Involvement in the arts encourages students to understand the arts in context and the cultural histories of artworks, thus supporting the development of an inquiring and empathetic worldview. Arts challenge and enrich personal identity and build awareness of the aesthetic in a real-world context.

At TIS we offer both visual and performing arts for our students. Our sixth graders enroll in an introductory program that exposes them to both visual and performing arts with their third trimester focused on a performance with half of the students in the performing roles and the others in the visual role of set production. As seventh and eighth graders the students have choices to focus on music, theater, 2 dimensional art or 3 dimensional art.

The goals in every art class include both objective skills and innovative design and creation. Group and individual projects are designed to foster delight, serious observation, introspection, and growth in design and skill. Students complete a variety of projects including mosaics, paper crafts, batik, printmaking, color work, painting, ceramics, pastel drawings, mural making, and sculpture. Basic drawing lessons teach value, contrast, whole-page composition, contour, perspective, and observation. All students learn how to participate in constructive critiques and are introduced to historical and contemporary art and artists. Throughout the three years of middle school art, students are encouraged to think in innovative and creative ways, and the importance of play and experimentation is never forgotten.

Performing arts play an essential role in shaping the learning experience of all students at The International School at Mesa del Sol. As part of the core curriculum, participation in the performing arts will engage students in content and skills that will provide meaningful and successful life experiences. The International School offers a rich variety of performing art disciplines that include drama, technical theatre, and choir, instrumental music (e.g. piano, guitar, violin, and dance) All Performing Arts activities at The International School lead to performance opportunities where students build self-confidence and a sense of pride in their accomplishment.

Aims of the Arts

The aims of MYP arts are to encourage and enable students to:

- create and present art
- develop skills specific to the discipline
- engage in a process of creative exploration and (self-)discovery
- make purposeful connections between investigation and practice
- understand the relationship between art and its contexts
- respond to and reflect on art
- deepen their understanding of the world.

Fine arts courses are an integral part of the middle years curriculum. All students take the arts for the entire academic year. The middle school fine arts curriculum sets goals and standards for skills, techniques, and knowledge.



Nature of Design

MYP design challenges all students to apply practical and creative thinking skills to solve design problems; encourages students to explore the role of design in both historical and contemporary contexts; and raises students' awareness of their responsibilities when making design decisions and taking action.

Inquiry and problem-solving are at the heart of the subject group. MYP design requires the use of the **design cycle** as a tool, which provides the methodology used to structure the inquiry and analysis of problems, the development of feasible solutions, the creation of solutions, and the testing and evaluation of the solution. In MYP design, a **solution** can be defined as a model, prototype, product or system that students have developed and created independently.

A well-planned design programme enables students to develop not only practical skills but also strategies for creative and critical thinking. The MYP expects all students to become actively involved in, and to focus on, the whole design process rather than on the final product/solution.

MYP design also helps to prepare students for overall success in the DP, and connects directly with their participation in creativity, action, service (CAS) and the extended essay. In CAS, students continue to develop skills in design and evaluation that they use to undertake new challenges, design and plan activities and solve problems in a creative way.

The knowledge, skills and attitudes that students develop in design courses provide a meaningful foundation for further study and help to prepare students for:

- careers in fashion, food, graphic, industrial, instructional, multimedia, product, publications, video game and web design
- architecture
- education
- roles in engineering, manufacturing, advertising and media industries
- project management among others.

Aims of Design

The aims of MYP design are to encourage and enable students to:

- enjoy the design process, develop an appreciation of its elegance and power
- develop knowledge, understanding and skills from different disciplines to design and create solutions to problems using the design cycle
- use and apply technology effectively as a means to access, process and communicate information, model and create solutions, and to solve problems
- develop an appreciation of the impact of design innovations for life, global society and environments
- appreciate past, present and emerging design within cultural, political, social, historical and environmental contexts
- develop respect for others' viewpoints and appreciate alternative solutions to problems
- act with integrity and honesty, and take responsibility for their own actions developing effective working practices.

Nature of Language Acquisition

The ability to communicate in a variety of modes in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes multilingualism and intercultural understanding, both of which are central to the IB's mission.

The study of additional languages in the MYP provides students with the opportunity to develop insights into the features, processes and craft of language and the concept of culture, and to realize that there are diverse ways of living, behaving and viewing the world.

The acquisition of the language of a community and the possibilities to reflect upon and explore cultural perspectives of our own and other communities:

- is valued as central to developing critical thinking, and is considered essential for the cultivation of intercultural awareness and the development of internationally minded and responsible members of local, national and global communities
- is integral to exploring and sustaining personal development and cultural identity, and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development
- greatly contributes to the holistic development of students and to the strengthening of lifelong learning skills
- equips students with the necessary multi-literacy skills and attitudes, enabling them to communicate successfully in various global contexts and build intercultural understanding.

Aims of Language Acquisition

An overarching aim of teaching and learning languages is to enable the student to become a critical and competent communicator.

The aims of the teaching and learning of MYP language acquisition are to:

- gain proficiency in an additional language while supporting maintenance of their mother tongue and cultural heritage
- develop a respect for, and understanding of, diverse linguistic and cultural heritages
- develop the student's communication skills necessary for further language learning, and for study, work and leisure in a range of authentic contexts and for a variety of audiences and purposes
- enable the student to develop multi-literacy skills through the use of a range of learning tools, such as multimedia, in the various modes of communication
- enable the student to develop an appreciation of a variety of literary and non-literary texts and to develop critical and creative techniques for comprehension and construction of meaning
- enable the student to recognize and use language as a vehicle of thought, reflection, self-expression and learning in other subjects, and as a tool for enhancing literacy
- enable the student to understand the nature of language and the process of language learning, which comprises the integration of linguistic, cultural and social components
- offer insight into the cultural characteristics of the communities where the language is spoken
- encourage an awareness and understanding of the perspectives of people from own and other cultures, leading to involvement and action in own and other communities
- foster curiosity, inquiry and a lifelong interest in, and enjoyment of, language learning.

At The International School at Mesa del Sol, the first language of acquisition is Spanish. The courses of Spanish Acquisition are ability leveled and multi-aged. Students are enrolled in the Spanish acquisition courses based upon ability (usually determined by a placement assessment administered prior to registration). In addition, TIS offers a Spanish language class for *heritage speakers*, whose first, or home language, is Spanish and who enter the middle years curriculum with a basic conversational/oral understanding of their language.

The Spanish for Heritage Speakers course is made up of sixth through ninth grade students who have a high command of oral Spanish by having been brought up in a Spanish-speaking household, having lived in a Spanish-speaking country, or having attended a dual language program during elementary school. The course will focus on the specific language needs of these types of speakers. Students will work to enhance their cultural background and to improve their reading, writing, speaking, skills through reading and discussing a variety of literature from Latin America and by studying Latin music, oral tradition, history, and shared values. In-class activities will include small group discussions, storytelling, small performances, writing activities, art projects and music.



Nature of Individuals and Societies

Individuals and societies includes: history, geography, integrated humanities as well as anthropology, business management, civics, economics, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, world religions.

MYP individuals and societies encourages learners to respect and understand the world around them and equips them with the necessary skills to inquire into the historical, contemporary, geopolitical, political, social, economic, religious, technological and cultural factors that have an impact on individuals, societies and environments. It encourages learner, both students and teacher, to consider local and global contexts.

MYP individuals and societies incorporates disciplines traditionally studies under the general term humanities (such as history and philosophy), as well as disciplines in the social sciences (such as economics, business management, geography, sociology and political science).

In this subject group, students can engage with exciting, stimulating and personally relevant topics and issues. Many sensitive and personally challenging topics require careful consideration in the context of a safe and responsible learning environment characterized by respect and open-mindedness. The study of individuals and societies helps students to appreciate critically the diversity of human culture, attitudes and beliefs. Courses in this subject group are important for helping students to recognize that content and methodology can be debatable and controversial, and for practicing the tolerance of uncertainty.

The IB's approach to individuals and societies includes a strong focus on inquiry and investigation. Students collect, describe and analyze data used in studies of societies; test hypotheses; and learn how to interpret increasingly complex information, including original source material. This focus is an essential aspect of the subject group.

The study of individuals and societies helps students to develop their identities as individuals and as responsible members of local and global communities. These explorations of our common humanity are intrinsically interesting, and disciplines in this subject group are filled with potential for creating in students a lifelong fascination with “the human story” as it continues to evolve in an era of rapid change and increasing interconnectedness. Studies in individuals and societies are essential for developing empathy and international-mindedness, including the idea that “other people, with their differences, can also be right”(IB mission statement).

The primary focus of each curriculum is:

- 6th - World History
- 7th - New Mexico History
- 8th – United States History through the Civil War

Aims of Individuals and Societies

The aims of MYP individuals and societies are to encourage and enable students to:

- appreciate human and environmental commonalities and diversity
- understand the interactions and interdependence of individuals, societies and the environment
- understand how both environmental and human systems operate and evolve
- identify and develop concern for the well-being of human communities and the natural environment
- act as responsible citizens of local and global communities
- develop inquiry skills that lead towards conceptual understandings of the relationships between individuals, societies and the environments in which they live.

Nature of Mathematics

The study of mathematics is a fundamental part of a balanced education. It promotes a powerful universal language, analytical reasoning and problem-solving skills that contribute to the development of logical, abstract and critical thinking. Mathematics can help make sense of the world and allows phenomena to be described in precise terms. It also promotes careful analysis and the search for patterns and relationships, skills necessary for success both inside and outside the classroom. Mathematics, then, should be accessible to and studied by all students.

Studying mathematics, however, should be more than simply learning formulae or rules. Students should not have the impression that all of the answers to mathematics can be found in a book but, rather, that they can be active participants in the search for concepts and relationships. In that light, mathematics becomes a subject that is alive with the thrill of exploration and the rewards of discovery. At the same time, that new knowledge may then be applied to other situations, opening up even more doors for students. MYP mathematics promotes both inquiry and application, helping students to develop problem-solving techniques that transcend the discipline and that are useful in the world outside school.

An MYP mathematics programme should be tailored to the needs of students, seeking to intrigue and motivate them to want to learn its principles. Students should see authentic examples of how mathematics is useful and relevant to their lives and be encouraged to apply it to new situations. Mathematics provides the foundation for the study of sciences, engineering and technology. However, it is also evident in the arts and is increasingly important in economics, the social sciences and the structure of language. Students in the MYP are encouraged to use ICT tools to represent information, to explore and model situations, and to find solutions to various problems. These are skills that are useful in a wide range of arenas. MYP mathematics aims to equip all students with the knowledge, understanding and intellectual capabilities to address further courses in mathematics, as well as to prepare those students who will use mathematics in their studies, workplaces and lives in general.

Aims of Math

The aims of MYP mathematics are to encourage and enable students to:

- enjoy mathematics, develop curiosity and begin to appreciate its elegance and power
- develop an understanding of the principles and nature of mathematics
- communicate clearly and confidently in a variety of contexts
- develop logical, critical and creative thinking
- develop confidence, perseverance, and independence in mathematical thinking and problem-solving
- develop powers of generalization and abstraction
- apply and transfer skills to a wide range of real-life situations, other areas of knowledge and future developments
- appreciate how developments in technology and mathematics have influenced each other
- appreciate the moral, social and ethical implications arising from the work of mathematicians and the applications of mathematics
- appreciate the international dimension in mathematics through an awareness of the universality of mathematics and its multicultural and historical perspectives
- appreciate the contribution of mathematics to other areas of knowledge
- develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to pursue further studies in mathematics
- develop the ability to reflect critically upon their own work and the work of others.

The International School at Mesa del Sol mathematics courses represent a rigorous curriculum that strives to

Nature of Sciences

With inquiry at the core, the MYP sciences framework aims to guide students to independently and collaboratively investigate issues through research, observation and experimentation. The MYP sciences curriculum must explore the connections between science and everyday life. As they investigate real examples of science applications, students will discover the tensions and dependencies between science and morality, ethics, culture, economics, politics, and the environment.

Scientific inquiry also fosters critical and creative thinking about research and design, as well as the identification of assumptions and alternative explanations. Students should learn to appreciate and respect the ideas of others, gain good ethical-reasoning skills and further develop their sense of responsibility as members of local and global communities.

Learning science involves more than simply learning technical terminology. The MYP considers all teachers to be language teachers and, thus, MYP sciences should enable students to access, use and communicate scientific knowledge correctly and confidently in oral, written and visual modes.

Aims of the Sciences

The aims of MYP sciences are to encourage and enable students to:

- understand and appreciate science and its implications
- consider science as a human endeavor with benefits and limitations
- cultivate analytical, inquiring and flexible minds that pose questions, solve problems, construct explanations and judge arguments
- develop skills to design and perform investigations, evaluate evidence and reach conclusions
- build an awareness of the need to effectively collaborate and communicate
- apply language skills and knowledge in a variety of real-life contexts
- develop sensitivity towards the living and non-living environments
- reflect on learning experiences and make informed choices.

The International School at Mesa del Sol's middle school science program is a field- and community-based curriculum. It is designed to engage students in real, inquiry-based science. Students are given the opportunity to contribute to the larger world of science by participating in actual research and applied science projects. Whenever possible, students work and share their data with government, university, and other scientists. Students experience their local landscape in ways that allow them to build direct, personal, and visceral connections with it. These connections lay the foundation for students to construct scientific understanding from authentic experiences.

TIS has developed partnerships relevant to our science courses of study, starting with the University of New Mexico and Bosque School, La Luz Academy and the Air Force Research Laboratory. Students participate in the Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP), a research project for long-term environmental monitoring of the bosque ecosystem. BEMP is a joint effort coordinated by the University of New Mexico (UNM) and Bosque School. Through this program, students participate as real scientists doing real scientific research! During a variety of field activities, students collect data to study the biodiversity and ecosystem changes in the bosque: local weather conditions (e.g., rainfall and temperature); amounts and types of leaf litter that fall to the forest floor; depth to the groundwater table; small mammal trapping; surveys of ground-dwelling arthropods; and tracking porcupines. In addition to BEMP and the La Luz Academy, students engage in various inquiry and hands-on learning experiences to make science relevant to their everyday lives. These group and individual activities are designed to spark students' curiosity and observation skills, strengthen their knowledge of our living environment, and help them plan, carry out, and communicate their scientific investigations.

Nature of Language Arts and Literature

Language is fundamental to learning, thinking and communicating; therefore it permeates the whole curriculum. Indeed, all teachers are language teachers, continually expanding the boundaries of what students are thinking about. Mastery of one or more languages enables each student to achieve their full linguistic potential.

Students need to develop an appreciation of the nature of language and literature, of the many influences on language and literature, and of its power and beauty. They will be encouraged to recognize that proficiency in language is a powerful tool for communication in all societies. Furthermore, language and literature incorporates creative processes and encourages the development of imagination and creativity through self-expression.

All IB programmes value language as central to developing critical thinking, which is essential for the cultivation of intercultural understanding, as well as for becoming internationally minded and responsible members of local, national and global communities. Language is integral to exploring and sustaining personal development and cultural identity, and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development. The six skill areas in the MYP language and literature subject group—listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting—develop as both independent and interdependent skills. They are centered within an inquiry-based learning environment. Inquiry is at the heart of MYP language learning, and aims to support students' understanding by providing them with opportunities to independently and collaboratively investigate, take action and reflect.

As well as being academically rigorous, MYP language and literature equips students with linguistic, analytical and communicative skills that can also be used to develop interdisciplinary understanding across all other subject groups. Students' interaction with chosen texts can generate insight into moral, social, economic, political, cultural and environmental factors and so contributes to the development of opinion-forming, decision-making and ethical-reasoning skills, and further develops the attributes of an IB learner.

Aims of Language and Literature

The aims of MYP language and literature are to encourage and enable students to:

- use language as a vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning, self-expression, analysis and social interaction
- develop the skills involved in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting in a variety of contexts
- develop critical, creative and personal approaches to studying and analyzing literary and non-literary texts
- engage with text from different historical periods and a variety of cultures
- explore and analyze aspects of personal, host and other cultures through literary and non-literary texts
- explore language through a variety of media and modes
- develop a lifelong interest in reading
- apply linguistic and literary concepts and skills in a variety of authentic contexts.