

IB Americas eNewsletter

September 2009

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Welcome to the September 2009 IB Americas eNewsletter

Dear Educators,

Welcome to the second edition of the IB Americas eNewsletter.

For the September issue, we reached out to IB coordinators and teachers in the region for their contributions. The powerful insights they provide in the following articles serve as a window into the unique ideas, the unending passion and innovative approaches happening daily in local communities throughout the Americas that offer an IB education to their students.

From a newly authorized Primary Years Programme school in Ecuador to the story of two IB World Schools in the United States and Colombia offering the Middle Years Programme— linked by their commitment to the Amazon ecosystem—we hear firsthand of the challenges and opportunities in expanding the global view of their students and the educational experience in their schools. We also embark on the implementation journey of a rural school in Canada adopting the Diploma Programme.

I hope you find these articles informative and helpful. Please do not hesitate to share your feedback, thoughts and ideas with me directly at iba.director@ibo.org.

Thank you for your continued dedication to providing an IB education to your students.

Kind Regards,

Drew Deutsch
Director
IB Americas

The Primary Years Programme at Colegio Alberto Einstein

By Priscila Alvarado, Principal at Colegio Alberto Einstein in Quito, Ecuador

“For me the Primary Years Programme is an incredible way to learn. It has helped me develop my thinking and learn new things, especially because you can inquire about a single topic through different perspectives. Besides, it allows you to work both individually and in groups. This is really cool because you can share great experiences with your classmates.”

-- David Heller 5th grade

Becoming an international school where international-mindedness is not only present but also cherished is quite a challenge for any school. For us at Colegio Alberto Einstein, it has been an important goal since we decided to become an IB World School. Receiving authorization as an IB World School offering the PYP in May 2009 has opened many doors for us; doors to knowledge, to improvement, to a better education, but most of all, to a community of learners.

For students, the PYP, through its units of inquiry, has been the connection between real life and school. It represents the opportunity to understand the world around them and see how things are interconnected. The units have proposed new challenges for them, have promoted critical thinking, and fostered the use of knowledge in real-life settings.

For teachers it implies a new way to look at education and kids, an opportunity to see each one of their students with their own strengths and weaknesses, but most of all to see them as unique human beings waiting to be moved to their highest potential. Lauren Eason, our 4th grade teacher says: *“The PYP not only develops knowledge at a global level, it also develops an individual as a person.”*

The PYP has introduced a lot of challenges for us, but we are confident that as a community of learners we will be able to accomplish new goals and contribute to our country's education. We believe the cornerstones for success are well informed, open-minded, caring, and reflective students that can make a difference in the world. We are convinced we can promote this kind of human being through the implementation of the PYP in our school.

IB Americas in Action: Amazons, An Ecosystem to Discover

By Jermaine S. McDougald, Diploma Coordinator at Colegio CIEDI (Centro Integral de Educación Individualizada) in Bogotá, Colombia.

How it all got started

Grisham Middle School in Texas, USA and CIEDI in Bogota, Colombia collaboratively studied the Amazon rainforest from different areas of interaction. Through online sharing via a Virtual Learning Environment (MOODLE), year five students at CIEDI became the teachers and learning assessors of the year one students at Grisham. This article will recount our efforts to bridge learning opportunities and increase international-mindedness. This authentic inquiry-based study was facilitated by integrated technology instruction.

The project started from two different schools, in two different countries with a very similar objective in mind, the Amazon rainforest. For CIEDI it started out as an interdisciplinary project between three subject areas in MYP: biology, information technology and humanities. The project objective was to create an “educational tool” to teach others the realities of the Amazon region.

From the other side, Grisham had four subject areas involved: sciences, world cultures, language A and technology. As Grisham students were studying the Amazon they became more curious about whether or not their findings were correct. They began to search for an IB World School located near the Amazon to verify their information; the resulting alliance is history.

Interdisciplinary project in action using areas of interaction

Carrying out an interdisciplinary project is not as easy as it sounds. However, with clear objectives, a timetable, specific assignments and commitment, success is just around the corner.

The project aimed to answer the following question: *“Is the preservation of the Amazon jungle and support of its indigenous inhabitants a luxury or a need in the 21st century?”* CIEDI'S students were organized into seven groups to develop the project. Each one of the groups was in charge of a concept and theoretical research on an assigned theme. The groups were then instructed to collect, classify, create scripts, edit, and deliver the final product: a documentary. The final objective was slightly adapted to facilitate work with the year one MYP students:

“Raise awareness by teaching year one MYP students at Grisham Middle School in Austin, Texas about the Amazon jungle’s preservation of its biodiversity and indigenous inhabitants, through a documentary.”

The project was centered on three different areas of interaction (AOI): environments, community and service and human ingenuity, which were fundamental in developing the project. They learned a great deal not only from the experience of traveling to the Amazons, but because of the AOI focus, they received life-long learning.

As a result of environments, students were able to interact with the environment through a program called "Sembrando Selva" and constructed trenches for aqueducts. They changed their habits, by using only biodegradable products (i.e. shampoo and soap, reusing utensils, plates, etc.), all the while developing a better appreciation of environment, flora, fauna and ecosystems of the Amazon.

From community and service, students actively participated in the community, shared experiences, planted new trees, and developed a greater respect and admiration for the Amazon community, their history and traditions.

“There is a huge influence from the Western culture i.e. clothes. They only use typical clothing for ceremonies and special events”. Cristina Irreño

“They [Amazonians] are quite advanced in technology as far as knowledge (wireless, cell phones, internet, etc.)” Andres Ramos

In order to put all this together, human ingenuity was also explored. The realization and presentation of informative and educational video clips and multimedia came as a direct request from the students. The students created a documentary in both English and Spanish to show the Amazon’s biodiversity and cultural richness, along with an extensive, organized and labeled photo gallery.

Putting it all together with Moodle

CIEDI's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) was used in order to combine traditional learning with virtual learning components thereby creating an ideal learning environment for the project. There was an orientation course for both teachers and students who were not familiar with how Moodle works. The VLE enabled both students and teachers to upload documents, chat in real time, discuss topics via an online forum, and watch videos and PowerPoint presentations to name a few.

Lessons learned

Like any other project there are lessons to be learned from experience. Some of the key aspects that arose from this project were having the ability to transcend the Colombian borders in order to share real experiences about the Amazon and being able to create opportunities of high academic demand for our students. Nevertheless, there were some challenges, such as language barriers, more detailed assigning of tasks, knowing what technology could be used for the project, training students on how to use equipment and, (since it was a bilingual project) ensuring that all post production tasks are done in both English and Spanish.

References:

1. *Planting the Jungle*
 2. www.colegiociedi.edu.co/moodle
 3. MOODLE is a web-based software package designed to help educators create quality online courses. Retrieved from http://docs.moodle.org/en/About_Moodle on July 22, 2009.
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Implementing the IB Diploma Programme in a “Rural” School: A view from Prince Edward Island, Canada

By Lori Ronahan, Diploma coordinator at Colonel Gray High School in Charlottetown, Nova Scotia

I must admit that I chuckled when I was asked to write an article about implementing the Diploma Programme in a rural school. After all, Charlottetown, with a population of approximately 60,000 people is the capital of Prince Edward Island (PEI). Even though we are the smallest province in Canada, we have much of the infrastructure that you find in bigger cities—an airport, shopping malls, a hospital, a university, and a college. But then I had a thought—rural schools don't need to be defined by geographic location. Rural schools could be defined as those with a smaller pool of potential IB students, or those where tradition is comfortable and change is not, or those where the concept of 'international' is relatively new.

The journey to implementation has been interesting. For anyone recently authorized, the application forms, the site visit, and the wait for good news are familiar. It is a lot of work and is common for all newer IB World Schools. What made the process different for our rural school was the philosophical and logistical impact of change.

Our Department of Education and the Eastern School District were instrumental in bringing the programme to PEI and have been fully supportive. Key administrative stakeholders were sent for training. The IB offered level 1 training in Charlottetown, which allowed all of our interested staff to participate. This was a great introduction to the IB, which was foreign to most of the staff, and provided our school with a pool of potential IB teachers.

Full staff meetings were held and brought to light both excitement and anxieties about change. Will the IB programme take the best students out of the provincial stream? Will running the IB with smaller classes mean that other class sizes become larger? Can students and teachers deal with increased expectations? We can only offer a small menu of courses. Will our students be able to find success given the limited options?

When parents and students were invited to attend information sessions, interest was high, but different questions and concerns came to light. Is your staff really ready to provide this education to our children? Are the students going to be guinea pigs since it is new? Will my child be successful? Why is the IB more valuable than the provincial curriculum? The exams are worth how

much? What about scholarships and university recognition? Will my child have time to complete CAS in addition to his/her academic workload? Our international population was excited to have a globally recognized education program, but worried about the level of English proficiency needed to succeed. Until we become established with a pool of graduates to reassure incoming classes, I expect to be asked these questions regularly. I am sure that you have heard these types of questions yourself.

Even now, with September upon us, our IB teachers have concerns. They worry about assessment of student work, predicted grades, delivery of the curriculum, making sure students are successful, supervising extended essays, accountability, and more, because it is all new.

So how do you move forward in the face of so many questions about change? You need support.

We have been fortunate that friends in Nova Scotia have invited our teachers into their IB classes, answered questions, and provided guidance on several occasions. The [online curriculum centre \(occ\)](#) is a wealth of support for any IB teacher—new or experienced. The development of [online IB courses](#) is exciting and opens up collaborative possibilities between students in different parts of the world, bringing international experiences to those who might not otherwise have the opportunity.

We are moving ahead—our first IB class started in September 2008. We are still dealing with challenges because change is both exciting and daunting but we have a firm belief that the IB programme will benefit our students.

There is an old African proverb that states “it takes a whole village to raise a child.” In the IB world, it takes the whole global community to create an IB World School. Support from the IB organization, local governments, boards of education, parents, students, teachers in your school, teachers in your region, teachers on the occ, and people in the community where you live is all you need. You don’t have to go far to find support in the face of change, so it doesn’t matter how ‘rural’ you are.

Professional Development News

Workshop Architecture

The global professional development team is excited to announce our new workshop architecture, beginning 1 January 2010. The new architecture will streamline our workshop offerings globally into a three-tier structure (category 1, category 2, category 3).

To learn more, please visit our [events webpage](#).

We hope that these updated goals and objectives will assist educators in the selection of the appropriate workshop(s) to meet their professional development needs.

If you have any questions or concerns related to the new architecture, please contact us at +1 212 696 4464 x1 or via email at iba@ibo.org.

Space is available for workshops in North America and Latin America from September to December 2009!

For more information, please visit our workshop [calendar](#).

Level 3 workshops

The professional development team would like to thank workshop leaders who submitted level 3 workshop proposals, adding exciting new content-based initiatives to the region's professional development offerings. We encourage all workshop leaders in each of the programmes to submit additional level 3 workshops. The form can be found on our [website](#).

Please submit your proposal via email to [Emily Ross](#) in New York and to [Susana Fernandez](#) in Buenos Aires.

New English language workshops in Mexico

IB Americas is offering the following English language workshops in Mexico City in January, 2010:

- Diploma Programme English A1 levels 1 & 2, 12-13 January
- Middle Years Programme English A levels 1 & 2, 21-22 January

New level 3 study tour to China in July 2010

The IB, in cooperation with EF Educational Tours, is excited to offer a new professional development study tour. This tour will both introduce you to the highlights of China, including school visits in Beijing and Shanghai, the Great Wall and the historic Terracotta Warriors Complex, and be recognized as an IB level 3 workshop.

For more information, call Andrew Hagopian at 800-872-8439.

New level 3 continuum workshops in Istanbul, Turkey, from 6-8 November 2009

- *Vertical Articulation for History and Humanities: Backward mapping the Diploma Programme/MYP Curriculum Grades 9 -12*
- *Vertical Articulation for Math: Backward mapping the Diploma Programme/MYP Curriculum Grades 9 -12*

These workshops are designed for **history and humanities vertical teams** and **math vertical teams** from high schools with the MYP and Diploma Programmes. The goal of the workshops is to facilitate the articulation between the programmes in order to increase student participation and success in the Diploma Programme. The workshops will draw on the Backward Curriculum Map teacher support materials as a guide for teachers to plan their own local curriculum. The maps include an example of a progression of skills for grades 9-12, assessment and scaffolding ideas, and sample MYP units and course outlines. Schools are encouraged to send a team consisting of at least one MYP and one Diploma Programme teacher.

Seminars on Science with the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH)

Begun in 2007, we are continuing to offer IB educators the Museum's award-winning *Seminars on Science* program, which currently features ten online courses ranging from evolution to ocean dynamics to quantum physics. Each course is six weeks long and is designed specifically for educators. The courses, taught by a museum scientist and a veteran classroom instructor, tap into AMNH's immense resources and the expertise of leading scientists. Teachers earn up to four graduate credits and/or IB professional development credit.

The final assessment activity required of each course will focus on an IB classroom application.

For more information, please visit our workshop [calendar](#).

Announcements

First IB Conference of the Americas a Success

Stay tuned to the conference [website](#) for more information about our 2010 conference in Miami, 15-18 July

The 2009 IB Conference of the Americas held in Québec City, brought over 900 participants from 22 countries together for the a genuinely tri-cultural conference around the theme, *New Thinking for a New World*. We thank all of you who were able to attend and participate.

The conference kicked off on Thursday evening with [Daniel Pink](#), author of *A Whole New Mind* and father to two IB students. Mr. Pink challenged the audience to consider the necessity of “artistry and empathy”, which he argues are the right-brain skills that are needed alongside left-brain logical thinking in today’s economy. Noted psychologist [JoAnn Deak](#) continued the discussion of “new thinking” through the delivery of her general session, through which she proposed that the IB is the best educational fit to current brain research. [L. Gen, the Honourable Romeo A. Dallaire](#), author and former UN Force Commander spoke on Saturday, discussing children in conflict areas and empowerment through education, while professor and educator [Isabelino Siede](#) closed the conference on Sunday with a talk on citizenship education.

This year’s conference also brought hundreds of breakout presenters from inside and outside of the IB community, a large number of graduate participants, and a powerful performance piece to the conference stage. Leslie Lewis Sword, an IB graduate, performed *Miracle In Rwanda*, a one-woman play that she created to tell the incredible story of Rwandan genocide survivor Immaculée Ilibagiza.

Information from the conference:

- **Visit** the conference [website](#) to download a copy of the programme and presentations from many of our session presenters.
- **Stay tuned** for video highlights and testimonials from participants posted on [IBtv](#) within the next month.

We look forward to seeing you at next year’s IB Conference of the Americas in Miami in July 2010!

2009 IB World Heads Conference

Seville, Spain, 13-16 October

We are delighted to announce that the 2009 IB World Heads Conference will be held in Seville, Spain from 13-16 October.

Join more than 350 members of the IB heads worldwide community for three days of inspiration, collaboration, and reflection at the Méliá Hotel in Seville city center.

This conference, organized by the HSA in partnership with the [IB Africa, Europe and Middle East Regional Office](#) and the [Colegio de San Francisco de Paula](#), is unique in being organized by heads of IB World Schools, for heads of IB World Schools. It provides an unparalleled opportunity to meet with fellow IB school leaders from around the world, and to give a personal reality to the international nature of our programmes and schools.

In recognition of the diversity of school leadership structures around the world, it has been decided that the conference should adopt an inclusive approach. Therefore, we will welcome registrations from all senior level administrators in schools, universities, school districts and regions.

IB and Social Media: Blogosphere, Facebook, Twitter, IBtv

The IB now has more online tools to help you communicate the IB to your school, students and local community:

- **IB blogosphere:** <http://blogs.ibo.org/>
A network of blogs written by members of the IB community on a wide array of topics. More blogs will be added over the coming months. To be alerted when a new blog is added, you can subscribe by [email](#) or by RSS.
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/IBO.org
A quick and effective way to engage with the IB community online via photos, videos, news items, discussion boards, comment spaces, and links to *IB World* magazine and the IB store. Come join the nearly 9,000 fans on our fan page.
- **Twitter:** <http://twitter.com/iborganization>
Receive real-time short messages about the IB. From new initiatives to news coverage worldwide.
- **IBtv:** <http://blogs.ibo.org/ibtv/>
Inspiring videos from around the world featuring IB students, coordinators, heads of schools, and many others involved in the IB community.

New IB World Schools in the Americas

We are pleased to officially welcome schools that have been authorized to teach an IB programme between 1 April and 1 August 2009:

Primary Years Programme

- Boyd Elementary School, United States
- Bridgedale Elementary School, United States
- British International School of New York, United States
- Centro de Educación Valle Abierto, Venezuela
- Colegio Experimental Alberto Einstein, Ecuador
- Colegio Peruano Británico, Peru
- Courtland Park International School, Canada
- École St-Noël, Canada
- École Terre des jeunes, Canada
- École Val-des-Ormes, Canada
- École du Mont-Bleu, Canada
- École internationale de Saint-Sacrement, Canada
- Glennwood Academy, United States
- Irwin Avenue Open Elementary School, United States
- Jefferson Elementary School, United States
- Kaposia Education Center, United States
- Lincoln Center Elementary School, United States

- Millarville Community School, Canada
- Missoula International School, United States
- Morse Elementary School, United States
- Pleasant Run Elementary School, United States
- Reynaldo G. Garza Elementary School, United States

Middle Years Programme

- Baker Middle School, United States
- Balmoral Junior Secondary School, Canada
- Baton Rouge International School, United States
- Beechwood School, United States
- Brockton Preparatory School, Canada
- Calhoun Middle School, United States
- Carden Traditional School of Surprise, United States
- Cedar Park Middle School, United States
- Central High School, St. Paul, United States
- Colegio Arjí, Mexico
- Commack Middle School, United States
- Cyber Village Academy, United States
- D.M. Smith Middle School, United States
- Denton High School, United States
- East Side High School, United States
- Fort Belvoir Elementary School, United States
- Fundación Colegio de Inglaterra - The English School, Colombia
- Gilmore Academy, United States
- Henry F. Hunt Middle School, United States
- High School of Commerce, United States
- Instituto Educativo Juan XXIII, Venezuela
- Instituto Jefferson de Morelia, Mexico
- Island Pacific School MYP, Canada
- J.E.J. Moore Middle School, United States
- Lancaster Elsie Robertson Middle School, United States
- Lancaster High School, United States
- Louise R. Johnson Middle School, United States
- Mary Passage Middle School, United States
- Mount Vernon Woods Elementary School, United States
- Mulgrave Independent School, Canada
- N.B. Clements Junior High School, United States
- North Dade Middle School, United States
- Notre Dame Preparatory School, United States
- Prince George High School, United States
- Ramsey Junior High School, United States
- Riverside Elementary School, United States
- Soundview School, United States
- Southridge School, Canada
- St. Anthony Middle School, United States
- The British School, Punta Arenas, Chile
- Van Sickle Middle School, United States
- Washington Mill Elementary School, United States
- Woodlawn Elementary School, United States
- Woodley Hills Elementary School, United States
- YES Prep North Central, United States

Diploma Programme

- Adams City High School, United States
- American School of Brasilia, Brazil
- Churchill College, Mexico
- Colegio Fontanar, Mexico
- Colegio Lamatepec, El Salvador
- Colegio Monteverde, Mexico
- Colegio Nacional José Julián Andrade, Ecuador
- Colegio Nacional Primero de Abril, Ecuador
- Colegio Suizo de México - Campus Cuernavaca, Mexico
- Colegio Suizo de México - Campus Mexico, Mexico
- École Jules Verne, Canada
- École Victor Brodeur, Canada
- Fridley High School, United States
- San Jacinto Valley Academy, United States
- Tecnológico de Monterrey - Campus Esmeralda, Mexico
- Tecnológico de Monterrey - Campus San Luis Potosí, Mexico
- Unidad Educativa 'Liceo de Valle', Ecuador
- Unidad Educativa Experimental 'Teodoro Gómez de la Torre', Ecuador
- Unidad Educativa Tomás Moro, Ecuador
- Virgin Islands Montessori School, US Virgin Islands