



# University Elementary IB Monthly

September 2018

## PYP in Action

“Lifelong learners.” These words appear in most school mission statements. But how do we do it? Is there a way to help make learning stay with our students?

IB firmly believes that people learn by experience and reflection. Throughout our lives we continue learning by making connections to prior knowledge. The units of inquiry are collaboratively designed by our teachers to encourage children to gain knowledge and make meaning. This is accomplished through:

**Central Idea** > Units of Inquiry are framed with a significant idea that expresses an enduring understanding.

**Provocations** > Units begin with a “hook,” designed to make students curious, to start them thinking and making connections.

**Classroom environment** > PYP classrooms are designed to be organized, inviting and stimulating. The current unit of inquiry is evident throughout the room with book displays, charts, and student learning.

**Learning engagements** > Lessons, experiments, research and other engagements are structures to build on the knowledge of the topic and also conceptual understanding. A variety of strategies are employed to provide for different learning styles and to keep the students intrigued.

**Assessment** > Students are formally and informally assessed throughout the unit: to determine prior knowledge, to assure understanding of content and skills, and to measure an understanding of the big ideas and potential action that their new knowledge might inspire.

**Action** > Now we have new knowledge, how can we act on it? PYP actions can be small or grand. Just sharing new knowledge at home is action in the form of raising awareness.

**Reflection** > Student reflection is continuous through each unit. It is often posted in the room. As lifelong learners, reflection is a tool to help us know what we have mastered and what we need to work on or to know about.

How can parents help? Being aware of the unit of inquiry will invite you to make connections to the big ideas at home. Also, if your child shares something about a unit and you do investigate, get a library book, or take any kind of action, please consider dropping an email to your teacher or me ([mdeliso@mccsc.edu](mailto:mdeliso@mccsc.edu)). This self-initiated action is an important piece of feedback used when we reflect on the units.

A splendid year of learning has begun!

Mary D’Eliso

PYP coordinator / librarian



## Preschool

Our first International Baccalaureate (IB) Unit is Who We are. It is an inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; person, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families friends, communities and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.

## Kindergarten

Kindergarten's first IB unit is titled "Know it and Show it!" Our students have been working very hard to learn rules, procedures, and manners. Through our Social Emotional Learning curriculum, students have been taught strategies for how to be a good learner, as well as how to use their "attentoscopes." To conclude our unit we had a big signing party! Mr. Hopkins came to our class to watch students show off their skills at following directions & classroom procedures. We painted his hand to join ours and he signed off on a job well done!

## First Grade

Little choices can make a big difference: Pushing in a chair. Reminding a friend to get their lunchbox, or their bus number was called. In first grade we have been learning about Who We Are. First graders are exploring how people's choices affect communities. How do good citizens make communities better? We are beginning by thinking about how our school choices affect our learning, friendships, and feelings. First graders have been practicing our four actions for learning about listening. 1. Eyes looking. 2. Ears listening. 3. Voice quiet. 4. Body still. By being successful listeners we hope to improve our learning, our friendships, hear others, and have our feelings heard. We are looking forward to sharing first grade inquiry leading to student actions in the classroom and whole school community.



## Second Grade

Things are going round and round in second grade! Our SHARING THE PLANET unit takes us into inquiries about all cycles found in nature. We begin with the most important, the water cycle, then delve further into others such as: the seasons, the moon phases, day and night, etc. We also enjoy observing the life cycles of insects such as the butterfly and the beetle up close and personal within our classrooms. Watching a caterpillar go through metamorphosis and emerging as a butterfly is beyond amazing! Discussions of plant life cycles conclude with cutting into pumpkins so we can dig out the seeds and—start all over again!

## Third Grade

What does it mean to be human? This is the question third graders will explore in our first IB transdisciplinary theme, *Who We Are*. Students will discover how we, as humans, can make a difference locally and globally by just one small act of kindness, that will ripple onward in the lives of many not seen. Students will continue to learn about individuals from around the world who took risks to insure freedoms and opportunities for humanity. At the conclusion of our unit, students will be inspired to be the change they wish to make in the world simply by making one ripple.

## Fourth Grade

We are currently studying the theme, *Who We Are*. We have been **reflecting** on what makes us who we are as a student. What is our personality like? How do we learn? What learner profile attribute most describes us? Each class has made some type of artifact about ourselves, whether it be a writing or picture. This unit also delves into looking at people, places, and things from different **perspectives**. In our 2nd step program, we are talking about walking in another's shoes; but we are also learning how do we approach an artifact, idea, concept from a geographer's point of view? From a scientific point of view? From a historical point of view? We do this as we are forming **connections** with school procedures, how we want our class community to look like, and what goals we want to make for ourselves this school year.



## Fifth Grade

Fifth graders started the year with the IB theme Sharing the Planet. In this unit, students are exploring how little things can make a big difference. We have researched and learned about people from other cultures and places around the world. Students are realizing that even just one person's actions can cause change. What does it mean to be a "hero?" Who are heroes? Students are learning that even at their age, they have the power to create change. Fifth graders are exploring this idea with their own Social Action Projects. Each student is in the process of completing a Social Action Project in which they must do something good for their community in some way. We can make change by doing little things like sparing our recess to help clean the cafeteria or helping in a primary classroom. We can also make change by doing bigger things like having fundraisers to raise money or collect donations for a charity. We are looking forward to seeing all of the change-makers develop!

## Sixth Grade

Sixth grade students have embarked on a study within the IB transdisciplinary theme, Where We Are in Place and Time, and they are searching to better understand how the development of modern societies is supported through understanding our place in relation to past civilizations. In order to recognize and appreciate the influence other cultures have had on modern America, students are learning specifically about ancient Greek history and ancient Greek cultural universals such as family traditions, education, foods and resources, governmental agencies, forms of entertainment and more. As we continue to study the culture of the ancient Greeks, students will develop an understanding of the educational, governmental, and economic systems developed and used both then and now through debates in a Greek Assembly, role playing in a Greek Academy, and enactment of colonization and trade. In addition to studying aspects of ancient Greece through class lessons and simulated activities, students will collaboratively complete a small scale research project for an ancient civilization of their choice. Students will take what we have learned about various cultural universals of the ancient Greeks, and they will compare them to those of another ancient culture. Students will also look at how past civilizations have given rise to modern day systems



and cultures. The purpose of this project is not only to expose students to cultural universals and connections between ancient civilizations and today, but it also serves as an introduction to larger research projects that we will conduct this year, such as our sixth grade capstone, the Exhibition Project.