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University Elementary *TB Monthly*



PYP in Action

PYP in Action:

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ACTION! Part 1: We Are What We Do

What do we do with all the knowledge that we gain? We inquire and learn, we reflect, and then what? Ideally, learning changes something in us.

University School's vision statement is "Preparing students for positive action in a global community." Our students are gaining knowledge and skills that will help them to be active community members.

"When students see tangible actions that they can choose to take to make a difference, they see themselves as competent, capable and active agents of change." (Oxfam) So the question becomes: *How do we help our kids to see tangible actions?*

IB sees action less as big fundraisers and more as intimate, real interactions. These actions are initiated by students and are authentic, meaningful, mindful, responsible, and responsive.

Action could look like:

- A change in attitude or lifestyle based on new learning
- Sharing what you've learned and your ideas with someone else
- Exploring issues from different perspectives
- Demonstrating responsibility or respect for self, others, or the environment
- Participating discussions or activities
- Volunteering
- Being a leader in, or taking part in, projects that have an impact on the community

Parents often provide teachers with valuable feedback. Did your child come home and tell you about something he learned? Did she ask about family history or traditions because it was being discussed in her current unit of inquiry? Did your child want to look at ingredients in foods based on a classroom discussion? If scenarios like this have happened in your home, please consider dropping a brief email to the teacher. This evidence helps us to further plan our units.

Small actions x many people = BIG CHANGE. To be continued.





Preschool

Preschool has begun the IB Unit, How We Express Ourselves. Our inquiry is about how signs and symbols help us learn about people, places and things. We have spent the last several weeks investigating food and cooking symbols. We have followed visual recipes to make pumpkin pie playdough and pumpkin pie. Next week, we are making bread to take home to our families. Two of the books we have been reading are *Bunny Cakes* by Rosemary Wells and *I Know An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Pie* by Anne Miranda and Janet Stevens. Two friends in our class have begun sight reading cooking words. Other friends break uncooked pasta in the sensory bin and are overheard discussing their favorite vegetables. Many have enjoyed shopping in the classroom grocery store, which is filled with empty boxes of our favorite foods, sent in from our families. We have also each made a collage page for a class song book of our favorite foods. Bringing bread home to our families before the Thanksgiving holiday allows us to contribute and to share with our families. After Thanksgiving Break, we will begin investigating traffic signs.

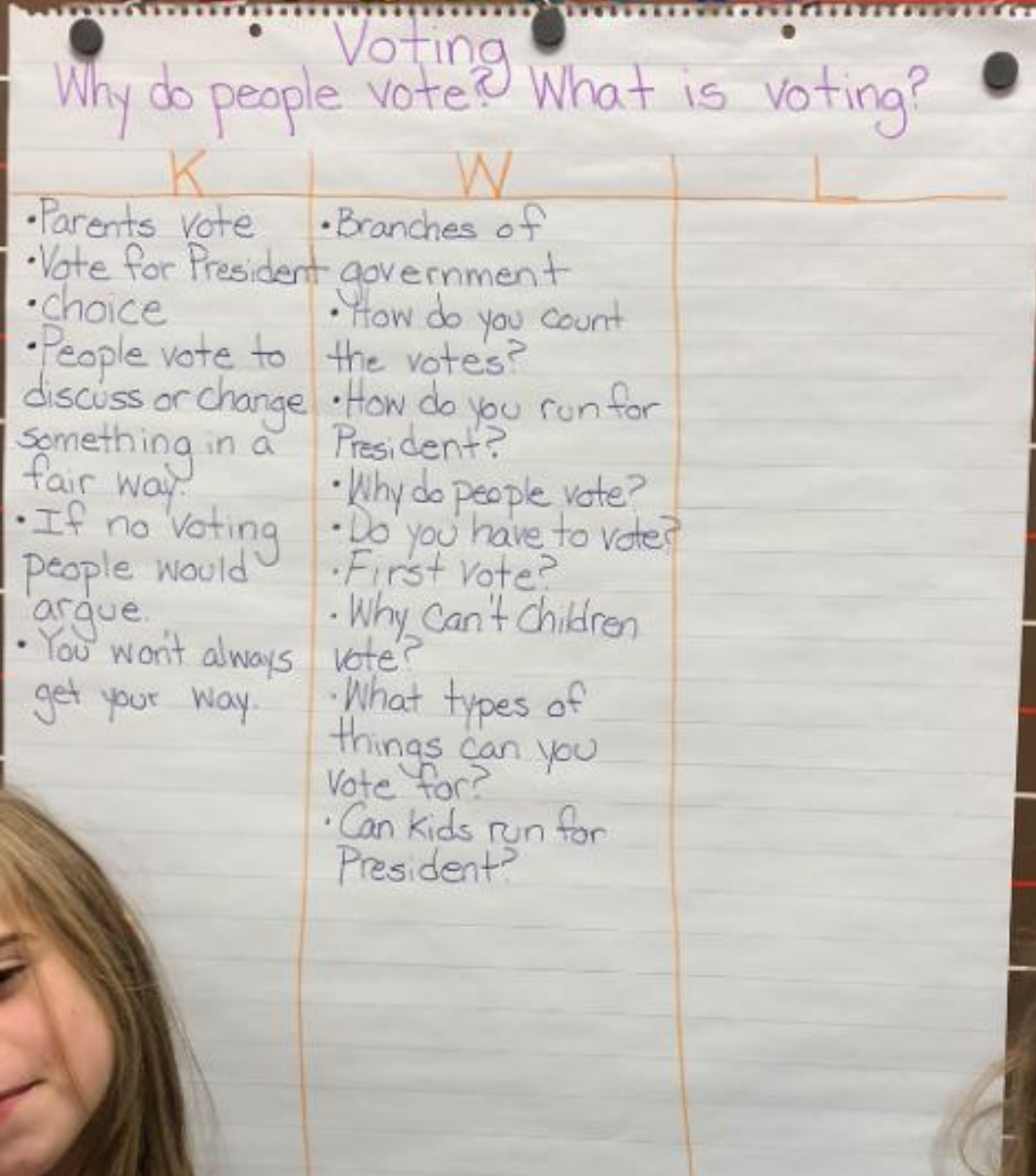
Kindergarten

Where do chocolate chip cookies come from? Through the IB theme of “Who We Are in Place and Time” kindergarteners are learning that humans rely on others for food production. They’ve discovered that our food (like a chocolate chip cookie) doesn’t simply come from the oven, our refrigerator, or the grocery store. It comes from ingredients produced all over the world thanks to farmers, factory workers, shipping workers, scientists, grocers, and chefs! Our second line of inquiry focuses on how foods are produced and distributed. (Too bad our breakfast can’t be delivered by weather, like in the story, *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*.) Our final inquiry focus will allow us to explore seasonal harvests, both local and global. Our unit will culminate with each class having a harvest feast made from food produced all over the world!



First Grade

First grade started their inquiry into How People and Places Change Over Time. Students learned about all kinds of maps and the parts of a map. They learned the seven continents and the five oceans as well as the cardinal directions. Using their new knowledge about maps, students worked on learning basic coding using simple algorithms. Finally, first grade will inquire into how things have changed over time and how timelines can be used to illustrate the changes.



Second Grade

What does it mean to vote? Second graders are starting to explore this concept in our second IB unit of inquiry of Who We Are. Our central idea is the elective process is a right, and our decisions are influenced by our beliefs and values. We begin by talking about how our school is great, but as good as it is, how can we make it better? Students will investigate the importance of leaders in a community. They will learn about the voting policies and get an introduction into the meaning of democracy. Each classroom will conclude this unit of inquiry by having a class election.



Third Grade

What do Malala, Cesar Chavez, Gandhi, Iqbal, and Nelson Mandela have in common? These individuals took risks to secure freedoms. As we wrap up this final phase of our IB unit, Pay It Forward, students were introduced to various influential people from around the globe who took risks to secure freedoms. Using children's literature books and videos, students were transported back in time where brave men and women, boys and girls were willing to stand up to injustices. Students learned how these brave individuals were the inspiration to modern day leaders causing a global ripple effect of courage. For our culminating project students researched a person who made a positive influence in the world.



Fourth Grade

Fourth grade has been studying the cause/effect relationship humans have with the natural world in our How the World Works unit. How does the earth change slowly over time? How does it change quickly? What are the different forms of these changes? What causes these changes? This unit included an inquiry into landforms and natural disasters, as well as geography. How do landforms affect the way we live? How is the United States divided into regions? What form do these regions take? What are they like? Why do we have regions in Indiana? How has the land in Indiana changed over time? We did several investigations to find out the answers to these questions. We simulated the movement of earth in a river using stream tables. We tumbled rocks, and we observed what happens to rocks in "acid rain." We dove deep into natural disasters, the causes and effects, and how they change our earth rapidly. Students were able to show what they learned through a culminating project of creating a comic book about a natural disaster, shared at a class "Comic Con," where students were invited to dress up as the natural disaster they studied. Students also worked on US regional posters, and made models of the regions of Indiana.



Fifth Grade

In fifth grade we have just finished our second IB unit How We Organize Ourselves. We investigated the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; societal decision-making and how humans look for parallels between the structures in the systems present in the universe and human created systems such as government.

While studying the organization of US Government students utilized the metaphor of a three-legged stool to understand the three branches of government and the checks and balances outlined in the US Constitution. Indiana University students from the Maurer Law School presented lessons on The Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

One of the culminating activities incorporated computer science connections by having students create a slide presentation in Google Slides to demonstrate an understanding of the types of national governments have been developed around the world. Other students researched and labeled a world map with types of government. We also conducted research and experiments to reveal patterns of daily changes in length and direction of shadows, day and night, and the seasonal appearance of stars in the night sky.



Sixth Grade

Towards the end of the first quarter, sixth grade started working on the transdisciplinary unit, Who We Are. Unlike most IB units, this unit will span the course of the year. During the unit students complete an open inquiry into a real world issue of their choosing in order to better understand the unit's central idea that developing an awareness and understanding of inequity empowers us to act. The Primary Years Program Exhibition Project is a significant event in the life of each sixth grade student at University Elementary School, and it allows sixth grade students to synthesize the essential elements of the PYP. Each sixth grade student will spend the next quarter inquiring about a real-world issue related to one of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Goals in order to gather information through research. During the third quarter of the year, students will conduct interviews and learn how others in the community and world are working towards solutions in order to solve world problems. Finally, during the last quarter of the year, students will work towards the culminating pieces of these inquiries (a paper, presentation, and action plan), and the projects will culminate in a schoolwide Exhibition Fair. We are excited to share these inquiries and actions with the entire school community on May 8th during the Exhibition Fair from 9:15-11:00 AM and during the Learning Festival that evening. Watch for an email soon that will list all sixth grade students researchable topics. We will be asking our school community for help locating organizations and possible interviewees that match up with each students chosen topic.





In addition to working towards our year long PYP Exhibition, sixth grade is continuing our second IB Theme, How the World Works. The central idea is that models provide an understanding of intangible systems. We are looking at models and discussing how they make it easier for us to understand our world, but that in some cases models can be deceiving and can lead to misconceptions. Having a critical eye and knowing what questions to ask can help us to fully understand what the models we use tell us. Additionally, we will be investigating structure within the theme of models and How the World Works. We will look at how readers and authors (also musicians, athletes, etc.) use structure to increase creativity. We will look at structure within our natural world and social organizations. This unit will conclude with students researching an abstract concept or idea and planning and creating a model for it. Students will then present these during a very special fashion show showcasing a wide range of models that represent language arts, math, science, or social studies concepts.

10 Reasons



Primary Years Programme

why the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) is ideal for students to become active, lifelong learners

1



It encourages students to inquire

The PYP fosters natural curiosity and learning in creative, supportive and collaborative environments.

2



Understanding a complex and interdependent world

PYP students create meaning for themselves and build understanding through exploring real-world issues.

3



PYP students are confident communicators

PYP students learn to communicate in a variety of ways and in more than one language.

4



Learning how to learn

PYP students work collaboratively with teachers and other students to plan, present and assess their own learning.

5



It encourages international-mindedness

Collaboration and understanding of their own and other cultures are an important focus of the PYP — students learn how to be respectful and open-minded.

6



Seeing things from different perspectives

PYP students use critical and creative thinking to develop knowledge, understanding and skills within and across subject areas.

7



Students take action

PYP students believe they are able to grow and succeed. They make appropriate choices and take responsibility for their actions.

8



Thinking about issues

Creative learning gives students the agility and imagination to respond to new and unexpected challenges and opportunities in an increasingly globalized and uncertain world.

10



Caring and responsible citizens

Students can express ideas and opinions, and they can propose solutions that make a difference in their lives and the lives of others.

9



It involves the whole school learning community

Together we celebrate our common humanity and the belief that education can help to build a better and more peaceful world.



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