

The exhibition

Culminating learning experiences

Summary

- The exhibition is the culminating, collaborative experience in the final year of the PYP.
- The exhibition is an authentic process for students to explore, document and share their understanding of issues or opportunities of personal significance.
- All exhibitions are student-initiated, designed and collaborative.
- The degree to which students are engaged with planning and implementing their exhibition depends on the students and schools' experience with the PYP.

Demonstrating understanding

Learning in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) provides many formal and informal opportunities for students to develop, demonstrate and reflect on their knowledge, conceptual understandings, skills and learner profile attributes through the inquiries they undertake. The PYP exhibition is a notable example of these opportunities.

All IB programmes include a culminating or consolidating learning experience in their final year: the exhibition in the PYP; the community project in the Middle Years Programme (MYP); the extended essay in the Diploma Programme (DP); and the reflective project in the Career-related Programme (CP).

In the PYP exhibition, students demonstrate their understanding of issues or opportunities they have chosen to explore. They undertake their investigation both individually and with their peers, together with the guidance of a mentor. Through the exhibition, students demonstrate their ability to take responsibility for their learning—and their capacity to take action—as they actively engage in the ongoing process of planning, sharing and assessing learning.

The exhibition is a powerful demonstration of student agency, as well as the agency of the community that has nurtured them through their years in the PYP. The learning community participates in the

exhibition, supporting and celebrating the development of internationally minded students who make a positive difference in their lives and the lives of others.

Features of the exhibition

The exhibition may be one of the six units of inquiry during the final year or it may stand outside of the programme of inquiry to explore a global issue or opportunity that may cross all transdisciplinary themes. It may run concurrently with other units or be contained within a specific time frame during the year.

All exhibitions are student-initiated, designed and collaborative.

Student-initiated: Students have a role in choosing the issue or opportunity to be explored; the transdisciplinary theme(s); the development of the central idea; the lines of inquiry; and identification of the specified and additional concepts that will drive their inquiries. They identify what knowledge they will need to acquire, and what skills they will need to develop.

Student-designed: Students co-design their learning goals and establish the criteria of what success will look like for them. They co-design strategies and tools with teachers, mentors and peers to document and self-assess their learning, and evaluate the success of the exhibition through ongoing reflection.

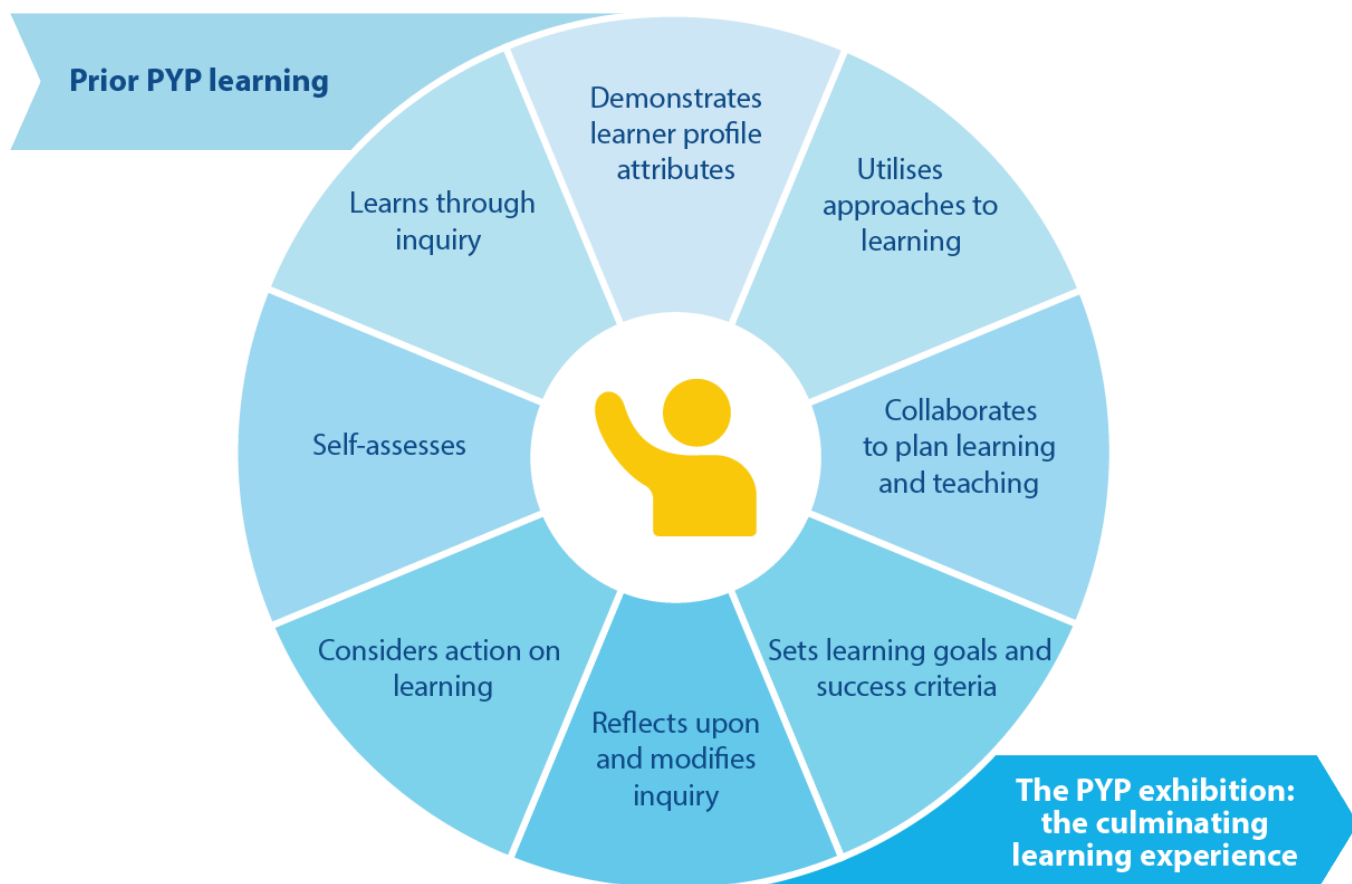
Collaborative: Students collaborate with their peers, teachers and mentors throughout the exhibition process. There is a genuine sense of participation and engagement through regular sharing of progress and feedback. As students are diverse, some will engage with the exhibition in groups while others will engage individually, supported by mentors.

All students take an active role in all aspects of planning, inquiring, investigating, communicating and assessing their learning in the exhibition. All students will benefit from guidance and collaboration with teachers, peers and mentors to facilitate, direct and adjust their learning.

The purposes of the PYP exhibition

The key purposes of the exhibition are:

- for students to engage in an in-depth, collaborative inquiry
- to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate agency and responsibility for their learning
- to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate the attributes of the learner profile in authentic contexts
- to provide students with an opportunity to explore multiple, diverse and divergent perspectives
- to provide an authentic process for students to monitor, document and share their learning
- to provide students with an opportunity to synthesize and apply their learning
- for students to take action throughout their learning
- to unite the students, teachers and other members of the learning community in a collaborative experience
- to provide an authentic context for students to reflect on their PYP education
- to support the well-being of students by celebrating their transition to the next stages of their education
- to provide an authentic task for the community to evaluate its implementation of the PYP
- to provide students with an opportunity to engage with the broader learning community
- to support students to engage and re-engage with their personal positions through critical reflection and reflexivity.



The exhibition participants

The students

For all PYP schools*, the exhibition will be different, and the degree to which students have the capacity to be fully engaged with planning and implementing their exhibition may reflect the experience of the school, its students and its staff. As a school's experience with the PYP deepens, the expectation for student independence increases. Therefore, learning communities may start from a guided exhibition and move to a student-led exhibition.

*For schools that offer the PYP only in the early years, an exhibition is not required. Only authorized IB World Schools offering the PYP are required to participate in the exhibition, although candidate schools may choose to do so.



**Guided
exhibition**



**Student-led
exhibition**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A guided exhibition is a positive experience for students and they are given a voice within adult-facilitated activities. • Students use the same central idea to develop their own lines of inquiry in collaboration with group members and mentor. • Students follow similar processes and have similar products, although they can formulate their own points of view and discuss the issues and their ideas with others. • Within a guided exhibition choices may be proposed by teachers and mentors about the transdisciplinary theme or the way the exhibition is shared. • Students explore possibilities and take action appropriate to their inquiries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students understand the intentions of the exhibition as a reflection of their learning and understand planning and assessment processes. • Students are consulted and engaged in developing the central idea and lines of inquiry. • Student points of view are honoured and they can comment on the value and relevance to their learning. • Students develop and exhibit inquiry skills such as decision-making, collaboration and investigation, and can draw upon technical assistance and advice from mentors and others. • Students consider and take action appropriate to their inquiries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students develop their own central ideas and plan responsive lines of inquiry. • Students take full responsibility for planning their inquiries and are confident and flexible to change direction if/as required. • Students are assessment capable and can assess their own learning and give feedback to others against success criteria, offering improvements for learning. • Students initiate individual and collaborative action that is responsive to local and/or global issues.
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All exhibition students aim to:

- understand the purpose and requirements of the exhibition from the outset of the process

- participate in selecting real-life issues or opportunities for the exhibition
- develop their inquiry by collaborating on the central idea, lines of inquiry and student questions with teachers
- determine specified and additional concepts for exploration
- develop questions to guide the inquiry process
- develop conceptual understandings through exploring concepts that are significant, relevant, challenging and engaging
- inquire across and within transdisciplinary themes
- demonstrate the attributes of the learner profile through their learning
- engage in action—the exhibition could begin with action, or it could emerge throughout the process
- use and demonstrate the approaches to learning and the skills of inquiry
- select and use a variety of strategies and resources to develop their inquiries, including first-hand experiences, interviews, surveys, field visits, artefacts, science investigations, working models
- engage in a collaborative, student-led, in-depth inquiry facilitated by teachers and mentors
- co-construct success criteria and reflection opportunities that include self-assessment of their learning and an evaluation of the exhibition process
- show academic integrity
- celebrate their learning by sharing the exhibition with the learning community and beyond.

Students and mentors may choose to use a PYP exhibition journal to document questions, reflections and actions throughout the process of their exhibition. The journal provides a tool for collaborating, planning, setting and revising learning goals, self-assessing and peer feedback against success criteria and rubrics, and other tools, as well as recording and reflecting on feedback from regular meetings with mentors. The journal is owned by the student and can be shared with the learning community.

The teacher or mentor

The teacher or mentor supports students in a number of ways. They:

- understand the purpose and requirements of the exhibition

- provide clear guidelines for the exhibition
- initiate, facilitate and guide the exhibition process
- plan collaboratively with other teachers and mentors
- encourage engagement in, with and from immediate, wider, local and global communities
- support student inquiries and ensure individual participation and well-being by considering student interests, needs and prior knowledge
- communicate regularly with students, mentors and the learning community
- develop essential agreements with students regarding academic integrity to ensure they show responsibility in learning and are principled in using resources
- encourage students to use a balance of primary and secondary sources
- evaluate the exhibition process
- document the process, including ongoing reflection
- enable students to feel able to take action in response to their inquiry, throughout the exhibition process
- act as a mentor when required or appropriate
- participate in the sharing of the exhibition with students.

The learning community

The exhibition is a shared learning community responsibility. The community supports students in their development of all components of the PYP at every year level, as these components will be drawn upon during this final learning experience. The learning community encourages and actively supports the well-being of students and teachers throughout the process of the exhibition.

Students, as agents of their own learning, are responsible for contacting and organizing meetings with their mentor. Mentors balance their involvement with encouragement of student responsibility and independence.

Teachers support the development of knowledge, skills, conceptual understandings, learner profile attributes and considerations for action at every year level. They act as mentors when needed.

Mentors may be drawn from all members of the learning community. Mentors help students set and meet their goals by asking questions, suggesting resources, helping to interpret difficult information and facilitating interviews or contacts outside the school. They may also contribute as subject-area experts.

The pedagogical leadership team additionally supports the exhibition by providing relevant professional development for the teachers involved. They promote the exhibition to their learning community and, if possible, in the network of PYP schools and wider community. The leadership team allocates time for teachers to plan collaboratively on the exhibition and allocates funds to provide appropriate resources.

Parents/legal guardians and older students in a school are informed and encouraged to contribute their expertise and feedback. They may act as mentors where appropriate.

The entire learning community is involved in the exhibition, either in the organization and timing, in accessing resources (including primary resources in the wider community) or as mentors throughout the process. The community celebrates the learning with students at the exhibition.

The exhibition process

Identifying globally significant issues

The exhibition is based on local or global issues or opportunities, from which teachers and students develop central ideas. These issues or opportunities are open to connections within, between and across the transdisciplinary themes, and provide opportunities for engaging in responsive, reflexive and reciprocal action and non-action. At the beginning of the exhibition process, students and teachers explore local or global issues and opportunities that have meaning to them. These explorations generate ideas, interests and directions for student inquiries. A global issue or opportunity:

- is accessible across subjects
- is accessible within, between and across transdisciplinary themes
- has local and/or global significance that students can connect to
- is of sufficient scope and significance to encourage a detailed investigation by all students

- is responsive to students' experiences with the PYP
- supports students of differing passions, interests and strengths.

There are a range of ways to group students in developing the scope or purpose of exhibition inquiries. For example:

- the whole grade level/year group selects one issue or opportunity and develops the same central idea
- the whole grade level/year group selects one issue or opportunity and each class, group or individual develops their own central idea based on interest
- each class, group or individual selects a different local and/or global issue or opportunity and corresponding central idea.

Whichever grouping strategies are applied, the students are aware that the exhibition is a collaborative inquiry involving all students in the grade level/year group. They regularly share work in progress and demonstrate a genuine sense of participation in a collaborative effort.

Students or schools, new to the PYP, might initially choose a guided exhibition. As the learners'—and the learning community's—experience with the PYP matures, an increasing depth of understanding of the PYP framework is demonstrated through the exhibition. Over time, there is more evidence of students' agency in the exhibition.

Determining timing and time frame

The exhibition can be a unit of inquiry in the final year of the PYP or can sit outside the programme of inquiry—in which case it would be in addition to the six units of inquiry. Some schools that choose to have the exhibition sit outside the programme of inquiry do this over a longer time period, and students can choose which theme to explore. In this example, the exhibition does not become a seventh unit but instead is a culminating experience that may touch multiple units in various ways through a single central idea and may build on each of the six units being explored in the final year.

The timing of the exhibition is at the discretion of the school. However, the learning community appreciates that the exhibition is a culminating experience of the programme demonstrating the development of knowledge, skills and conceptual understandings. It is therefore important to provide

students with sufficient time in the school year to thoroughly plan, carry out and reflect upon the exhibition. In preparation for the exhibition, students will need both structured and unstructured time to learn collaboratively over an extended period.

This time frame includes:

- touch points to develop central ideas
- collaboration to develop central ideas
- identification of group or individual lines of inquiry and student questions
- designated time to focus on ongoing exhibition inquiries
- designated “check-in” times with mentors to monitor and document progress, and to provide feedback on the process.

Engaging support from the learning community

In the initial stages of planning, the teachers and students:

- review the previous year’s exhibition reflections to act on any past recommendations
- set a time frame for the inquiry process, which includes sharing the exhibition learning process, journey, learning experiences and products with the learning community
- collaborate with others to establish mentors across the school, learning and wider community
- inform the learning community of the purpose of the exhibition and the differing roles and responsibilities of everyone involved
- anticipate and source any resources or budget required
- review any sample exhibition materials.

Organizing learning

In starting the inquiry process, students, in collaboration with their teachers and mentors, might consider the following questions.

- What can be learned from previous exhibitions?
- What kind of experiences might inform the scope of the inquiries?

- What specific knowledge and skills might be needed that the students do not already have?
- What type of materials and resources will contribute to the inquiries?
- Where can these materials be sourced?
- Who might the students learn from inside and outside of school?
- How will the learning community be informed about the exhibition?

Monitoring the exhibition

Mentors support students by monitoring individuals and groups throughout the exhibition process through regular check-in times and by documenting feedback in the students' PYP exhibition journals. As part of PYP assessment practices, monitoring and documenting the exhibition includes decisions on learning made in collaboration with students and mentors.

TSM: [Solo taxonomy](#)

Sharing the exhibition

While the exhibition is expected to culminate in a final product or experience, value is placed upon the exhibition learning process and journey. Students are not expected to prepare a large event or production. There are many formats a sharing event could take; the culmination of the exhibition could be a planned sharing of the learning process, feedback and reflections with the learning community. Simple events can be very effective. Schools are encouraged to consider the environmental and social impact of the exhibition.

The exhibition could include:

- PYP exhibition journals by students, with the opportunity to articulate and present their learning processes and progress
- learning products, such as dioramas, songs, poems, dramatic performances
- learning through a variety of languages and modalities
- connecting action and community engagement—for example, experiential learning through reciprocal engagement in local community projects.

There are also infinite possibilities to make the learning process visible. Students, in collaboration with mentors, may use existing—or develop new—tools, artefacts and strategies to further explore and share issues and opportunities.

Exploration of issues and opportunities	Tools, artefacts and strategies
Democratic decision-making and movements, societies and cooperatives via locally transformative, self-reliant community projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map alternative social and economic models, gather primary material and non-material data, carry out intergenerational interviews, share findings using visual stories, poetry and music.
Social and environmental justice via the rights of indigenous peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document personal and group journeys/ experiences during participation in community action through images, recordings or mixed media.
Representation of diversity of voice via community arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create immersive performances, movement and dance festivals, moderate conversations, interviews and readings.
Climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience via diverse ways of knowing and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop flow charts, models and simulations, make observational and technical drawings, script and film short interviews, documentaries or animations, set up and lead debates.

Figure EX03 *Example of exhibition artifacts and strategies*

Reflection on the exhibition process

Reflections on the exhibition from different members of the learning community support the review of the exhibition process. They enrich the self-assessment experience for students. Examples of

reflections, recommendations and artefacts are collected and archived to provide evidence of student learning and inform decisions for future exhibitions.

Student and mentor reflections may be documented through the ongoing development of a PYP exhibition journal. Students and the learning community use the co-constructed success criteria to provide feedback on the learning that occurred during the exhibition. They use this information to take a wider view of the success of the exhibition process, noting areas of strength and areas for improvement.

Bibliography

Further reading

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