

Internationalism in the Classroom: What does it look like?

By Jodie Leatherman, IB PYP Coordinator

As the IB PYP coordinator, in addition to working directly with teachers, it is my goal to increase the awareness amongst the parent community of how the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program is implemented in the classroom. A common question is “what does internationalism look like in the classroom?” **Internationalism as defined by the International Baccalaureate Organization is different than multiculturalism. Multiculturalism means including many different cultures.**

To be internationally minded, according to the IBO, is to embody the Learner Profile. IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled,
Open-minded, Caring, Risk-takers, Balanced, Reflective

In essence, **an internationally minded student** is aware of, curious about, is open minded to, reflective of their own, and cares about **different cultures (multiculturalism)**. In addition, the student has the courage to act in order to make the world a better place. **Being internationally minded is also not only being aware of the differences but also the commonalities amongst humans.**

In the classroom, this is promoted in different ways:

- Each IB unit has two Learner Profile Attributes that students focus on during the unit.
- Each IB unit falls under a Transdisciplinary Theme *that no matter where one is in the world are relevant (Who We Are, Where We Are in Place and Time, How We Express Ourselves, How the World Works, How We Organize Ourselves, Sharing the Planet)*
- As students gain knowledge within a specific unit, they consider a central idea that is also timeless and globally relevant. For example, first grade’s *How We Express Ourselves* unit’s central idea is: “Celebrations are a form of interpretation connecting different beliefs and traditions.” Students are investigating world-wide celebrations as well as their own and how these express culture and traditions.. Third grade’s *How the World Works* unit focuses on: “The Earth’s resources change due to natural forces and processes.” Again this is a timeless and globally relevant central idea.
- Student action is a specific component in each unit: How are students taking what they learned and sharing that with others or doing something as a result of their learning? This could be small, like sharing their new knowledge with their families or getting more books about specific topic or be on a bigger scale. (See photo of how first graders took action by raising items for flood victims).

So often when people think internationalism, they think of the 4 Fs: fashion, flags, food, and festivals. An International Baccalaureate school goes deeper.

By exploring themes and central ideas that are timeless and globally relevant and developing the Learner Profile attributes, students become internationally minded. Please see the IB section of the Bradley website for ideas of how to develop the Learner Profile attributes at home and a list of current units of inquiry. Happy Holidays!

