

IB-MYP Update

December 2019

Welcome to second trimester! As we began our school year in August, our middle school embarked on our journey toward International Baccalaureate or “IB” Authorization. We started slowly by identifying for students the different skills necessary to become an active, life-long learner.

In the beginning of each school year, teachers work with students to help them develop a variety of skills (i.e. keeping organized; studying for tests; communicating their thinking clearly; using digital media responsibly, etc...). Over the years these skills have been called “study-skills” and “habits of life-long learners.” IB- Middle Year Program or “MYP” calls these skills Approaches to Learning or “ATL” skills.

“The focus of ATL in the MYP is on helping students to develop the self-knowledge and skills they need to enjoy a lifetime of learning. ATL skills empower students to succeed in meeting the challenging objectives of MYP subject groups and prepare them for further success in rigorous academic programmes.” (~*Principles to Practice, 2017*)

First trimester we focused on the ATL skill cluster: **Self-Management**, more specifically **organization**. The following is an example of an anchor chart used in classrooms to align the instructional vocabulary for students.

ATL: Self-Management; organization

Learning Goal: We are learning how to manage our time and tasks effectively.

Success Criteria:

- keep and use a weekly planner for assignments
- bring necessary equipment and supplies to class
- meet deadlines

One way you can support your child at home is to recognize the times your child has shown self-management; organization skills and comment about the success your child had. For example, when you notice your child completes his/her homework or studying for a test without being reminded, commend him/her for managing him/herself and being **organized**.

For second trimester we have chosen to focus on the ATL: **Communication**. We are noticing a need to provide students with the language and scaffolding necessary in order to communicate effectively with different audiences and for a variety of purposes. For example, when emailing teachers to request a grade check, students should begin their email with “Dear Mr./Ms.” instead of “hey.” Texting language has become the norm and we want students to be able to recognize their audience and use language appropriate for *that* audience.

Throughout the trimester, teachers will be providing explicit instruction in crafting an email appropriate for their audience. Language is often a person’s first impression of an individual and we want our students to represent themselves in the best possible way, always. Please help us hold students accountable for their communication skills. Encourage them to “consider their audience” and ask themselves, “is this language appropriate?” when communicating (in any way) with others.

If you ever have any questions you can always see your teachers, Mr. Frame, Mr. Stewart or our IB Coordinator, Mrs. Gargani. We will also be speaking about the latest on IB at VCM at our next PTO meeting on January 27th at 2:30 in the library.