North India and Nepal network of schools (NINNS)

Learn | Collaborate | Empower | Grow

A Summer of learning and achievement NINNS newsletter, 6th edition

Exploring our NINNS story through the IB transdisciplinary themes

This edition of the NINNS Newsletter is organized through the lens of the IB Transdisciplinary Themes, highlighting the people, experiences, achievements, and stories that shape our community. From leadership and shared values to professional milestones, collaborative learning, and personal reflections, each section celebrates a different aspect of our journey together as a network of IB educators.

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Where we are in place and time	**Celebrating milestones –** Recognising educators and schools that have reached important achievements on their professional and IB journeys.
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Leadership spotlight: Chair and Co-chair

Ms. Meenakshi Gupta
NINNS Chairperson

Ms. Nitima Arora
NINNS Co-chairperson

Scan the QR codes to watch a special message from the NINNS Chair and Co-chair

Who we are: The NINNS community

Our traditions and values

At the heart of NINNS is a commitment to collaboration, lifelong learning, and the transformative power of education. Through conferences, workshops, networking, and professional dialogue, we connect educators and strengthen the IB community. Guided by IB principles, we promote international-mindedness, inquiry, innovation, respect, and student-centred learning. Together, we share knowledge, build meaningful relationships, and empower educators to inspire learners and create a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

Where we are in place and time: Achievements and milestones

- The Seekers International School, Patiala, was officially authorised as an International Baccalaureate World School for the Primary Years Programme (PYP) by IB Asia Pacific on 06 November 2025. The school proudly announces its authorisation as the first IB school in its city.
- In November, Bodhi International School successfully completed its first IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) Evaluation, marking an important milestone in the school's commitment to delivering high-quality international education.

How the world works: Highlights at a glance

Professional development session by NINNS for NINNS community	On **18 March 2026**, Ms. Aanchal Batra, a member of NINNS, facilitated a session titled Learning through light: Feedback that moves learning forward in the PYP. This was followed by a session on **13 April 2026** by Ms. Vandana Parasher, How does a PDP support school improvement?, which explored the role of professional development planning in driving school growth and improvement.
NINNS JAS at Heritage International Xperiential School, Gurugram (2nd May)	By exchanging perspectives and practices from diverse school contexts, educators deepened their understanding of their roles within the wider IB network.

Upcoming events

The PAN India Coordinators meet is on the **8th August, 2026**	**Early Years:** NMAJS Early Years Campus Mumbai **PYP:** Don Bosco Mumbai **MYP:** Manchester International School Coimbatore **DP CP:** The British School, New Delhi

From the Chairperson's desk

A new academic year: Renewed hopes and aspirations

By Ms. Meenakshi Gupta
PYP Coordinator at Manav Rachna International School IB 46, Gurugram

As we step into a new academic year, we are reminded that education is not defined by calendars, but by cycles of reflection, renewal, and purposeful action. Each new beginning offers us an opportunity to pause, recalibrate, and move forward with clarity and intent.

For us as educators and leaders within the PYP community, this moment is not just about reopening schools, it is about reimagining learning. In a world that continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace, our responsibility extends beyond delivering curriculum; it lies in shaping environments where curiosity thrives, agency is nurtured, and learning becomes truly meaningful.

The essence of the Primary Years Programme calls us to develop learners who are not only knowledgeable, but also reflective, compassionate, and empowered to take action. As coordinators and school leaders, this is the time to deepen our commitment to inquiry, conceptual understanding, and authentic assessment practices that truly capture student growth.

This year also brings with it an exciting opportunity to reconnect and collaborate more widely through the upcoming PAN Asia IB Coordinators Meet. Such platforms remind us that while we work within our individual school contexts, we are part of a much larger professional learning community. The exchange of ideas, experiences, and perspectives across regions strengthens not only our programmes but also our collective vision for education.

As we prepare to engage in these conversations, let us carry forward a spirit of openness ready to share, to listen, and to learn. The true strength of networks like NINNS lies in this collaborative energy, where each voice contributes to a richer, more nuanced understanding of teaching and learning.

As we begin this new academic year, let us anchor ourselves in what truly matters: creating inclusive and inspiring learning environments where every child feels seen, valued, and capable of making a difference. Let this be a year where we not only set goals, but also build connections, strengthen practices, and lead with purpose.

A new academic year is not just a continuation, it is a renewal. A renewal of our shared aspirations, our professional commitments, and our belief in the transformative power of education.

“नई शुरुआत नए सपनों को जन्म देती है, और सपने ही हमें आगे बढ़ने की दिशा देते हैं।”

A note from the Co-chair

Are we Undermining Reading ?

By Ms Nitima Arora
PYPC and Head of Junior School at
Learners International School, Greater Noida

Reading is far more than learning to decode letters and pronounce words—it is the foundation upon which children build meaning, identity, curiosity, empathy, and lifelong learning. Research consistently demonstrates that the journey of reading begins long before a child enters formal schooling. Between the ages of two and three, the developing brain is especially receptive to language, making this a critical period for nurturing literacy through rich conversations, storytelling, songs, rhymes, and shared reading experiences. In the context of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP), reading is viewed not merely as an academic skill but as a powerful tool for inquiry, communication, and understanding the world.

Children who are immersed in meaningful literacy experiences from an early age develop stronger vocabulary, comprehension, critical thinking, and social-emotional skills. Neuroscientific research highlights that the first five years of life witness rapid brain development, with repeated language interactions strengthening neural pathways associated with comprehension and communication. The work of developmental psychologists such as Lev Vygotsky emphasises that learning is inherently social. Through interactions with adults and peers, children construct meaning within their Zone of Proximal Development, where thoughtful scaffolding enables them to understand texts beyond their independent capabilities.

Similarly, Jean Piaget believed that children actively construct knowledge by connecting new experiences with prior understanding. Jerome Bruner further argued that stories help children organise experiences into meaningful structures, allowing them to interpret the world around them. Marie Clay's work on emergent literacy also reminds educators that reading begins with children understanding that print carries meaning long before they can decode individual words.

Ancient educational philosophies echo these contemporary findings. The Upanishadic tradition emphasises Swadhyaya—the practice of self-study and reflective learning—as a lifelong pursuit. The Panchatantra and Jataka Tales have for centuries used stories to cultivate moral reasoning, critical thinking, and wisdom through inference rather than direct instruction. Confucius famously remarked, "Learning without thought is labour lost; thought without learning is perilous," highlighting the inseparable relationship between reading and reflection. The IB PYP philosophy positions language as central to learning across all disciplines. The PYP recognises that learners develop understanding by engaging with a wide variety of texts—stories, informational texts, visual media, maps, diagrams, photographs, digital resources, and multimodal texts. As inquirers, students are encouraged not only to retrieve information but also to question its credibility, interpret multiple perspectives, and make connections across contexts.

Within the PYP classroom, reading should never be viewed as an isolated subject but as an avenue for developing the learner profile attributes. Through literature, learners become caring as they empathise with diverse characters, open-minded as they explore different perspectives, communicators as they discuss interpretations, thinkers as they analyse ideas, and reflective as they consider how texts influence their beliefs and actions.
Organisations across the world reinforce the significance of early literacy. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) advocates daily shared reading and meaningful conversations as the cornerstone of early language development. UNESCO identifies foundational literacy as one of the strongest predictors of educational success and lifelong participation in society. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has also reported through PISA studies that students who develop reading engagement early demonstrate stronger academic performance across all disciplines.

When educators intentionally create language-rich environments from the earliest years, scaffold both explicit and implicit comprehension, and honour children's natural curiosity, they cultivate readers who do more than decode text—they construct meaning, question assumptions, appreciate multiple perspectives, and take thoughtful action. These aspirations lie at the very heart of the IB Primary Years Programme, where literacy becomes the gateway to agency, international-mindedness, and lifelong learning.

How does a PDP support school improvement?

by Ms. Vandana Parasher, PYP Coordinator and Assistant Principal Primary, Pathways School Noida

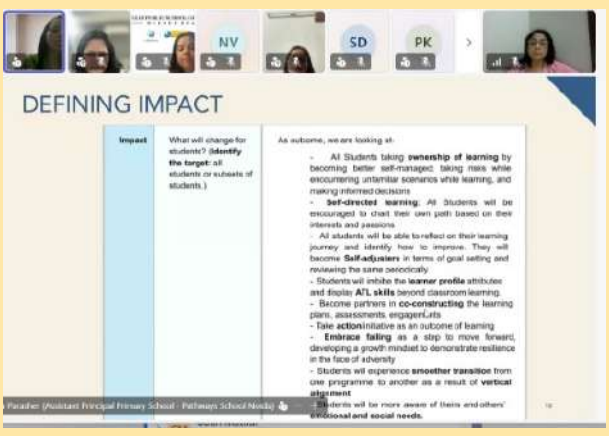
On the evening of 13 April 2026, nearly 56 PYP Coordinators from schools across the North India region came together for an insightful professional learning session led by Ms. Vandana Parasher, PYP Coordinator and Deputy Primary Principal. The session, “How Does a PDP Support School Improvement?”, proved to be an enlightening and thought-provoking experience, equipping participants with practical strategies to strengthen school improvement through purposeful planning.

Ms. Parasher emphasized that a Professional Development Plan (PDP) is much more than a document prepared for authorization or evaluation. Instead, it serves as dynamic roadmap that drives continuous school improvement, fostering a culture of reflection, collaboration, and growth. She highlighted the importance of developing the PDP collaboratively, ensuring that leaders, coordinators, and facilitators collectively identify priorities and take ownership of the school’s improvement journey.

A key takeaway from the session was the significance of defining a focused and achievable improvement area. Participants explored how authentic school data should guide the selection of priorities and how these goals can be meaningfully aligned with the IB PYP Standards and Practices. This alignment ensures that improvement efforts remain intentional, measurable, and centred on enhancing student learning. The session also dispelled several myths surrounding PDP implementation, reinforcing that the process is continuous rather than event-driven. Through regular monitoring, reflection, and refinement, schools can ensure that the PDP remains relevant and responsive to evolving needs.

Equally valuable was the discussion on gathering meaningful evidence to support the PDP. Ms. Parasher shared practical approaches for collecting data through classroom observations, learner voice, teacher reflections, assessment evidence, surveys, and collaborative planning, enabling schools to make informed decisions and measure impact effectively.

The engaging discussions and practical examples made the session highly relevant for all participants. It concluded with renewed confidence among PYP Coordinators to lead purposeful school improvement initiatives, reaffirming the IB philosophy of reflective practice, collaborative leadership, and continuous improvement.



Learning through light: Illuminating learning with effective feedback in the IB PYP

by Ms. Aanchal Batra, PYP Coordinator at Vedanya International School

On 18th March 2026, educators from across the North India Nepal Network of Schools (NINNS) came together for an enriching professional learning experience centred on one of the most powerful drivers of student growth—effective feedback. It was a privilege to facilitate the session, "Learning Through Light: Feedback That Moves Learning Forward in the PYP," exploring how purposeful feedback can transform teaching and learning within the IB Primary Years Programme.

This session held special significance as it marked NINNS' first initiative to bring together PYP Coordinators and Principals on a shared platform dedicated to collaboration, professional dialogue, and collective growth. It was an honour to contribute as the inaugural facilitator for this landmark event, setting the foundation for what promises to become a thriving community of IB educators committed to continuous learning.

The session encouraged participants to reimagine feedback—not as the final stage of assessment, but as an integral part of the learning journey. Grounded in the philosophy of the IB PYP, discussions focused on how effective feedback makes learning visible by revealing students' thinking, identifying misconceptions, celebrating strengths, and guiding meaningful next steps. Participants reflected on the idea that feedback is most impactful when it is timely, specific, actionable, and collaborative, enabling learners to take greater ownership of their progress.

Together, educators explored the shift from traditional evaluative feedback towards approaches that nurture inquiry, reflection, and learner agency. Rather than simply informing students about their performance, effective feedback invites them to ask questions, think critically, revise their understanding, and confidently move their learning forward. This philosophy aligns seamlessly with the PYP's commitment to developing reflective, self-directed, and internationally minded learners.

One of the highlights of the session was the engaging exchange of practical classroom strategies. Participants explored the power of feedforward, where feedback focuses on future growth instead of past mistakes, alongside peer and self-feedback practices that empower students to assess their own learning using shared success criteria. Conversations around visible learning strategies, structured feedback routines, marking codes, and collaborative reflection demonstrated how intentional feedback practices can cultivate classrooms where learning is continuously refined and celebrated.

The discussions also extended to the broader purpose of assessment within the PYP. Participants reflected on how meaningful feedback strengthens student agency by helping learners understand where they are in their learning, where they need to go next, and how they can independently take those next steps. These conversations reinforced the idea that feedback is not merely about improvement—it is about empowering learners to become thoughtful, reflective, and confident individuals.

The enthusiasm, openness, and valuable contributions shared by the PYP Coordinators and Principals made the session especially rewarding. Their willingness to exchange ideas, celebrate successful practices, and collaboratively explore new possibilities reflected the true spirit of professional learning that NINNS seeks to foster.

As this inaugural collaborative initiative concludes, it also marks the beginning of many more opportunities for educators across the network to connect, inspire one another, and grow together. The hope is that these conversations will continue to illuminate classrooms where feedback is viewed not simply as evaluation, but as a powerful tool for making learning visible and empowering every learner to thrive.

Together, we continue making learning visible—one meaningful conversation at a time.

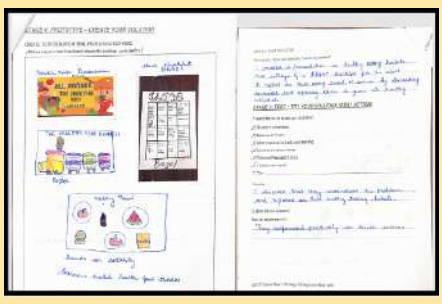
The future-ready child starts in the PYP: Cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset through design thinking

by Ms. Deepshikha Pargal - PYP Coordinator - Strawberry Fields High School, Chandigarh

"How do we prepare children for a future we cannot predict?" This question continues to shape our thinking as educators. Preparing future-ready learners is no longer just about developing knowledge and skills. It is about helping children ask better questions, understand different perspectives and design solutions that make a meaningful difference.
This search for meaningful ways to strengthen learner agency led me to attend a session by Dr. Justin Zhang on the Design Thinking Routine at the IB Global Conference 2026. It reminded me that while technology may accelerate solutions, empathy gives those solutions purpose.

Inspired by the session, I shared the learning with our PYP team through a professional development session. Together, we explored how the Design Thinking Routine aligns with the philosophy of the PYP, strengthening inquiry, learner agency, authentic action and the Approaches to Learning. It resonated deeply with our vision for learning, empowering children to view the world through the lens of empathy and become solution-oriented thinkers.
Before integrating it into our Units of Inquiry, we introduced the five stages of the Design Thinking Routine: Empathise, Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test through Circle Time. Using stories, discussions and everyday situations, learners have developed a shared language of empathy, curiosity and problem-solving. Gradually, they have begun asking deeper questions, considering different perspectives and recognising that meaningful action begins with empathy. What started as a routine is evolving into a mindset that empowers learners to identify opportunities, approach authentic challenges with confidence, embrace international-mindedness and create meaningful solutions that make a positive difference.

Today, the Design Thinking Routine continues to evolve across our PYP, from Kindergarten to Grade 5. Although every grade experiences it differently, the intention remains the same: nurturing children who empathise deeply, think critically, collaborate meaningfully and design solutions that create positive change.



In Grade 2, the Design Thinking Routine became the driving force behind the transdisciplinary theme Who We Are, exploring the central idea, Communities thrive through relationships and interdependence. Learners identified members of the school community, including housekeeping staff, support staff and the Vice Principal, to better understand their roles in the smooth functioning of the school. Together, they co-constructed interview questions before meeting them. As they empathised through conversations, they gained a deeper understanding of their roles and the challenges they encounter each day. They realised that many of these challenges stemmed from students' everyday actions, such as walking on freshly mopped floors, littering, arriving late, not wearing the correct school uniform and not consistently following the school's mutual agreements, leading to an important question: How can we help?
Learners responded by creating awareness posters, visiting classrooms, designing personalised thank-you cards and preparing a radio broadcast for the school community. As part of the Test stage, they will reconnect with the community helpers to evaluate the impact of their actions. They discovered that communities thrive when everyone accepts shared responsibility and contributes through meaningful action.

In Grade 5, through the transdisciplinary theme Who We Are, learners explored the central idea, Evolution shapes humans and influences ways of staying healthy over time. They began by empathising with younger learners to understand habits related to screen time, posture, eye care, hygiene and nutrition. Drawing on their observations and research, they defined authentic health-related challenges they wanted to address. Learners generated ideas, exercised agency in choosing how to communicate their message, and designed awareness campaigns, digital resources and action challenges tailored to their audience. Feedback from learners, educator observations and week-long action checklists enabled them to test, refine and strengthen their ideas, reinforcing that meaningful innovation is an iterative process. Through this inquiry, learners experienced how empathy and purposeful action can inspire healthier choices within their community.

These experiences continue to reinforce an important belief that guides our practice. Entrepreneurship in the PYP is not about preparing children to become business owners. It is about nurturing a mindset that enables learners to recognise opportunities, understand people's needs, embrace challenges with curiosity, learn from feedback and create meaningful solutions that make a positive difference.
As our journey continues, we are exploring how the Design Thinking Routine can further enrich inquiry, collaborative planning and purposeful technology integration.

A future-ready learner is not defined by the ability to use technology alone, but by the wisdom to use it with empathy, purpose and responsibility. Through the Design Thinking Routine, we are nurturing learners who will not only thrive in the future, but shape it with humanity at its core.

The Grade 2 and Grade 5 classroom examples were documented with support from Ms. Sukriti Bajaj and Ms. Arshia Garg.

The thinking curriculum- How inquiry learning progressions are transforming PYP classrooms

by Ms. Neha Aswal, HRT Grade-5, Pathways School Noida

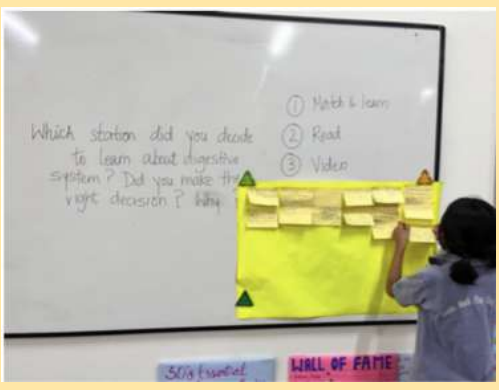
The Thinking Curriculum- How Inquiry Learning Progressions are transforming PYP Classrooms

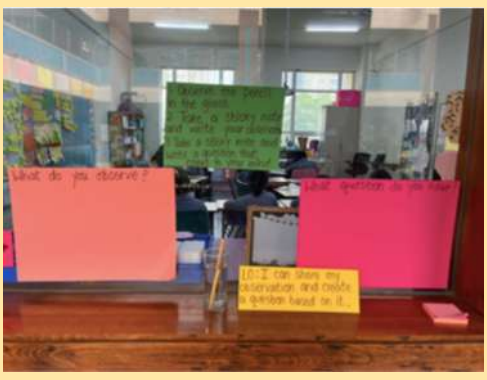
"Ma'am, what should I do next?" This was once a familiar question echoing across our classrooms. Whether students were beginning a research task, working with peers, or trying to solve a problem, many learners looked towards their teachers for the next instruction, the next idea, or reassurance that they were moving in the right direction. As teachers, we celebrated their curiosity and engagement, but we often wondered—how can we empower our learners to confidently navigate their own learning journeys? How can we move them from seeking answers to becoming seekers of answers?

This question became the starting point of our exploration with the Inquiry Learning Progressions (ILP) within the PYP framework.

At Pathways School Noida, we began our journey of understanding and implementing ILPs with the belief that inquiry is not a destination but a continuum of growth. Every learner enters an inquiry with different experiences, abilities, and levels of independence. The progressions helped us recognize that development does not happen in one single step; rather, learners gradually move from requiring support to making informed choices, reflecting on their learning, and taking ownership of their actions.

As part of our pilot practices, we focused on making the inquiry process visible for both teachers and students. The progression strands were unpacked and translated into student- friendly language, allowing learners to understand what inquiry looked like and where they were on their learning journey. Students began reflecting on their experiences, identifying the skills they were developing, and recognizing their own next steps. For teachers, these reflections, along with classroom observations and learning conversations, provided deeper insights into each learner's growth and helped us design more purposeful learning experiences.



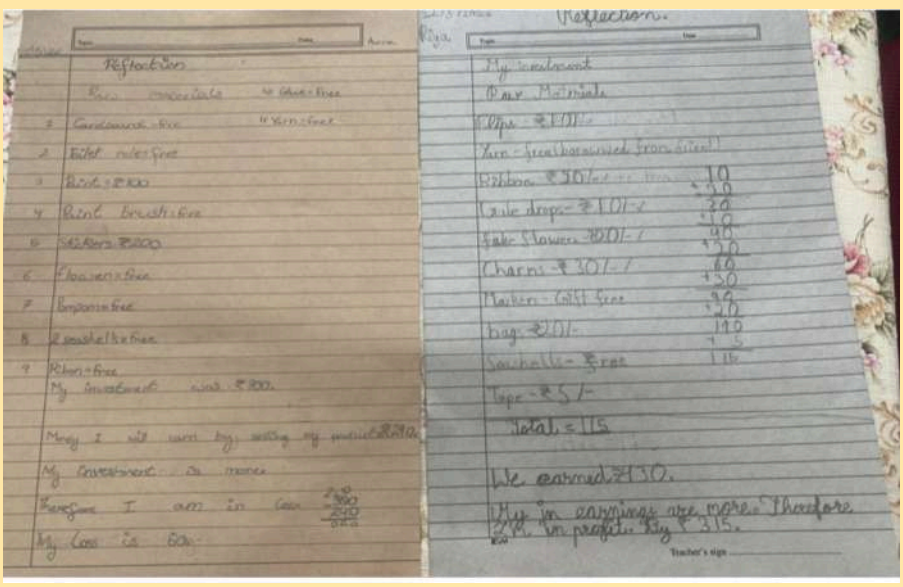


The true impact of this shift became visible during our Grade 3 inquiry under the transdisciplinary theme How We Organize Ourselves. As part of their culminating experience, students created and managed their own market stalls. They designed products, planned their businesses, collaborated with peers, and experienced the realities of running a marketplace.

What made this experience meaningful was not just the final product but the learning journey behind it. Teachers intentionally stepped back from directing every decision and created opportunities for students to exercise agency. Learners chose what they wanted to create, decided whom they wanted to collaborate with, researched ideas, planned advertisements, determined pricing strategies, and responded to customer feedback.

During this inquiry, we witnessed a subtle but powerful transformation. Students who once asked, "What should I do next?" began asking questions such as, "How can I improve my idea?" or "What information do I need before making this decision?" One student independently explored DIY techniques to enhance her product, while another thoughtfully chose to collaborate with a peer he had not worked with before, wanting to understand how they could work effectively as a team. These moments reflected growing confidence, independence, and ownership.

Reflection became an essential part of the process. Students analysed their investments, calculated profits and losses, evaluated their decisions, and considered what they would do differently in future experiences. They were not only learning about markets; they were learning about themselves as learners.



This is where the Inquiry Learning Progressions created a meaningful connection between Approaches to Teaching (ATT) and Approaches to Learning (ATL). While ATT guided teachers in creating environments that encouraged inquiry, agency, reflection, and conceptual understanding, ILPs provided a framework to identify and nurture the ATL skills students were developing. Teachers were able to observe growth in research, communication, collaboration, thinking, self-management, and reflection, while students gained a clearer understanding of their own learning behaviours.

The progressions transformed ATL skills from being statements in a planner to visible actions in the classroom. They enabled teachers to ask not only, "What are students learning?" but also, "How are they learning, and what is their next step?"

Today, our classrooms sound different. The questions have changed. Students are no longer waiting for every answer or direction; they are beginning to trust their own thinking, make decisions, seek solutions, and reflect on their growth.

If ATL skills describe what learners develop and ATT describes how teachers facilitate learning, ILP illuminate the journey between the two. They help teachers create intentional learning experiences and empower students to become confident, reflective, and independent inquirers.

Backward design in the age of inquiry

by Ms Srishti Rawat, PYP facilitator-PYP1, Apeejay School International

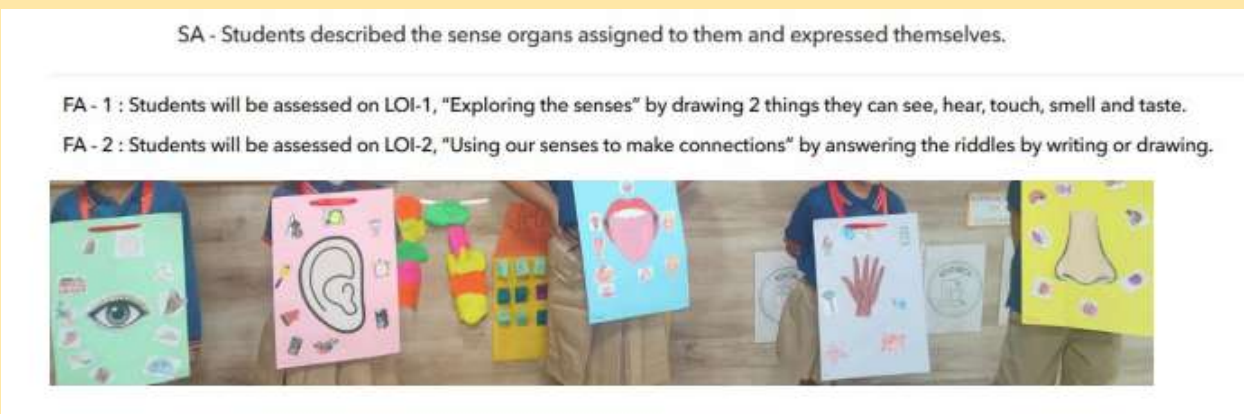
The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a global leader in international education - developing inquiring, knowledgeable, confident and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through education that builds intercultural understanding and respect. Its philosophy centres on developing the whole child into an internationally minded, lifelong learner. At the heart of the PYP is the belief that education should nurture the whole child - academically, socially, emotionally, physically, ethically, and creatively. One planning approach that complements this philosophy is backward design. Backward design asks teachers to first consider what students should understand, know, and be able to do by the end of the learning journey.
By using backward design, IB educators intentionally create inquiry-based learning experiences that support holistic development. Backward design ensures that every learning experience contributes purposefully to developing a child as a whole, reflecting the core philosophy of the IB.

Inquiry is a pedagogical approach in IB where students actively construct meaning by asking questions, investigating ideas, exploring different perspectives, and reflecting on their learning. It shifts students from passive recipients of information to active participants in their own learning, empowering them to think critically, solve problems creatively and develop a deeper conceptual understanding. Inquiries are purposeful, structured, and student-centred here. Teachers act as facilitators who provoke thinking, guide investigations, and create opportunities for students to make connections between prior knowledge and new learning. Through inquiry, students develop the confidence to take ownership of their learning, collaborate with others, communicate their ideas effectively, and engage in meaningful action based on their understanding. Inquiry also supports the development of the IB Learner Profile attributes and Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills. By fostering exploration, questioning, and evidence-based reasoning, inquiry ensures that learning is meaningful, relevant, and transferable beyond the classroom, ultimately contributing to the holistic development of every learner. Backward design supports inquiry by ensuring that learning experiences are intentionally planned around meaningful understandings rather than isolated activities. In this design, teachers begin by identifying the desired learning outcomes, conceptual understandings, and inquiry goals.

They then determine how students will demonstrate their understanding before designing engaging learning experiences that encourage
exploration, questioning, investigation, and reflection. This approach provides a clear purpose for inquiry. Rather than asking questions without direction, students engage in purposeful investigations that lead them towards deep conceptual understanding. Teachers design provocations, learning engagements, and assessments that encourage learners to ask questions, gather evidence, make connections, analyse information, and construct their own understanding. It also creates opportunities for student voice, choice, and agency, allowing learners to take ownership of their learning while working towards clearly defined goals. Backward design makes inquiry more meaningful, coherent, and effective. Backward design benefits both students

and teachers by creating focused and purposeful learning experiences. For students, it encourages inquiry and critical thinking. For teachers, it ensures that learning outcomes, assessments, and teaching strategies are intentionally aligned, making planning more effective and instruction more responsive to students' needs. As a result, backward design helps achieve the holistic aims of the IB. In my teaching practices, I have seen how backward design strengthens inquiry and creates more meaningful learning experiences.

While planning an inquiry into "Humans use their senses to make observations and choices," The desired outcomes were identified first, followed by the assessments before designing learning experiences. This helped in creating purposeful activities which were aligned with the central idea while adapting to students' questions and ideas. The approach promoted meaningful inquiry, student agency, deeper conceptual understanding, and ensured every learning experience had a clear purpose aligned with the goals.



In today's age of inquiry, backward design provides a purposeful framework for student-centred learning. By starting with desired understandings, teachers create meaningful assessments and learning experiences that promote curiosity, critical thinking, conceptual understanding, and student agency. Aligned with the IB philosophy, it supports the holistic development of reflective, internationally minded, and lifelong learners.

When educators become co-learners: Transforming classrooms into communities of growth

by: Ms. Geetanjali Malhotra-Primary Head -Mount Abu Public School

The image of a teacher standing at the front of a classroom as the sole source of knowledge is rapidly evolving. In today's interconnected and dynamic world, learning is no longer a one-way transfer of information. Instead, it has become a collaborative journey where teachers and students learn together, explore together, and grow together.

When educators become co-learners, classrooms transform into vibrant communities of inquiry, creativity, and innovation. This shift does not diminish the role of the teacher; rather, it elevates it from being merely an instructor to becoming a facilitator, mentor, researcher, and lifelong learner.

The Meaning of Co-Learning

Co-learning occurs when teachers actively engage in the learning process alongside their students. Instead of having all the answers, educators model curiosity, critical thinking, reflection, and problem-solving.

A co-learning classroom is characterized by open-ended inquiry, shared ownership of learning, collaborative problem-solving, mutual respect and trust, and continuous reflection and feedback.

Why Co-Learning Matters in the 21st Century

The future demands skills that go beyond memorization. Students need creativity, adaptability, communication, digital literacy, and resilience. These competencies flourish when teachers create authentic learning experiences and participate as learners themselves.

Educators as learners

Co-learning requires educators to embrace vulnerability and curiosity. Teachers who learn alongside students explore emerging technologies, investigate real-world problems, engage in reflective practices, seek student voice and feedback, and continuously update their pedagogical approaches.

Co-Learning in Action

Inquiry-based learning, technology integration, and project-based learning provide powerful opportunities for teachers and students to learn together. Such environments foster curiosity, innovation, and deeper engagement.

Benefits for Students

When educators become co-learners, students develop confidence, ownership of learning, resilience, collaboration skills, and a lifelong love for learning.

Benefits for Educators

The co-learning approach revitalizes teaching practice by encouraging professional growth, reflective teaching, stronger relationships with students, and greater innovation.

Challenges and Opportunities

Transitioning to a co-learning model requires a shift in mindset. Schools can support this transformation through professional learning communities, collaborative planning, and a culture that celebrates experimentation and reflection.

In an era where knowledge is constantly evolving, the most powerful educators are not those who claim to know everything but those who inspire others through their willingness to learn continuously. When educators become co-learners, classrooms become spaces of curiosity, collaboration, and discovery.

PYP exhibition: From inquiry to impact

by Ms. Charu Sharma , Grade level coordinator PYP 5, Genesis Global School-Noida

Each year, the entire school community, including learners, parents, and educators, eagerly awaits the PYP Exhibition, a significant milestone that celebrates the growth, creativity, and thinking of our learners. In our school, it is not simply the end of a learning journey, but a celebration of how far learners have come. It reflects the heart of the Primary Years Programme, where curiosity develops into understanding and learning transforms into meaningful action. The exhibition provides a space where learners begin to see themselves as thinkers and changemakers, representing far more than the culmination of learning.

It is inspiring to observe how learners, who begin as curious four-year-olds, grow into confident, balanced, and knowledgeable individuals by the time they transition to the Middle Years Programme. Over time, they embody the IB Learner Profile, becoming inquirers, thinkers, communicators, and principled individuals who demonstrate open-minded perspectives and a sense of responsibility.

The journey often begins with a single thought, a simple question, or a moment of curiosity that sparks inquiry. Learners engage in factual, conceptual, and debatable questions that guide their thinking. During this year's exhibition, learners explored the transdisciplinary theme Sharing the Planet. They developed Central Ideas and Lines of Inquiry, connecting them with key and related concepts, learner profile attributes, and Approaches to Learning skills. This reflects the essence of the PYP framework, where learning is driven by curiosity, choice, and deep understanding.

A key highlight was engagement with diverse voices within the school and beyond. Learners interacted with ISRO scientists, AI industry leaders, and a speaker associated with the United Nations, among others, gaining authentic insights and understanding real-life connections. They also engaged with parents, garden and food supervisors, the school IT team, and those involved in water and waste management systems. The involvement of school leadership further strengthened this experience and deepened their understanding.

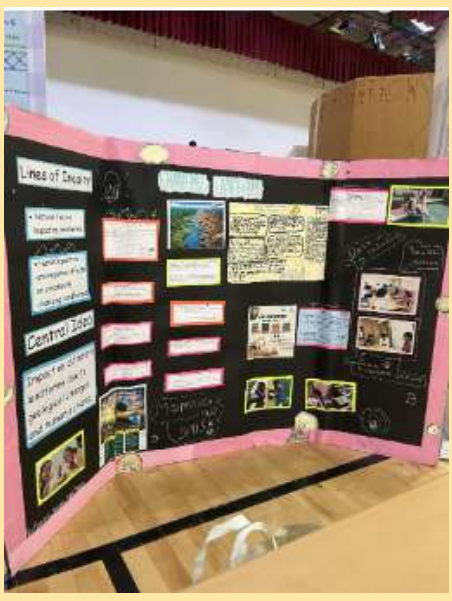
Student agency remained central. Learners took ownership by selecting meaningful issues, designing their inquiry pathways, and presenting their learning creatively through drama, nukkad natak, music, and dance. They also created their own group logos and meaningful taglines, reflecting their ideas and collaborative identity.
As inquiry deepened, learners explored environmental challenges such as water scarcity, pollution, and biodiversity loss. They recognised the importance of sustainable practices and understood how small actions can lead to meaningful change. Their learning also extended to how natural forces and human actions shape the Earth, highlighting the interconnectedness of systems.

Equally important was their growing awareness of social responsibility. Learners explored ideas of rights, equality, and wellbeing, and understood the value of empathy, respect, and peaceful conflict resolution in creating a harmonious world.

The true essence of the exhibition lay in action and impact. Learners created green spaces for pollinators, raised awareness about conservation and sustainable practices, and explored responsible use of resources. They organised donation drives, raised funds for animal care, and supported community initiatives.
In our school, learners also extended their action by writing letters to local authorities on infrastructure improvements and sharing ideas for better garbage collection systems. They educated the school community on the mindful use of computers, linking responsible digital practices to energy consumption and even water usage required to keep large systems and servers cool.
Throughout this journey, learners strengthened their Approaches to Learning skills, growing as researchers, thinkers, communicators, self-managers, and collaborators. Reflection helped them recognise their growth and impact.
The exhibition was enriched by the support of teachers, parents, mentors, and volunteers. Watching learners confidently present their journey was a proud moment for the entire community.

The PYP Exhibition ultimately shows that when learners are empowered, they move beyond knowledge to meaningful action. It reminds us that learning is most powerful when connected to real life.
Above all, it reassures us that the future lies in capable, thoughtful, and compassionate hands.

Every question begins a journey. Every action creates change.



Connecting the world through transdisciplinary themes

Ms. Unnati Pahuja, HRT Grade-2,
Heritage International Xperiential School, Gurugram

Upon asking,"Where does water come from?" every batch of students gives interesting responses. Some confidently answer, "ocean," "sea," or "ponds, " while others simply say, "from taps. " These responses reflect the world they have experienced for years. For many children, water begins at the tap because that is all they have ever known. What remains invisible to them is the journey that water undertakes before reaching their homes. Learning often works in a similar way. At first, a concept may appear simple, but it is shaped by multiple processes, perspectives, and experiences. When students explore a concept through different subject areas rather than studying each discipline in isolation, learning becomes transdisciplinary. The International Baccalaureate (IB) describes the transdisciplinary themes as broad, balanced, relevant, and transformative, enabling learners to explore the interconnectedness of social and ecological systems, integrate knowledge across disciplines, appreciate diverse perspectives, and take meaningful action on issues that matter locally and globally (International Baccalaureate, 2023). Rather than learning isolated facts, children begin to understand how the world itself is connected.

This became evident during our inquiry into the transdisciplinary theme How We Organise Ourselves. As a provocation, We displayed everyday food items at different stages of processing, all made from the same basic ingredients. On one table were tomatoes, tomato puree, and ketchup; alongside them were wheat grains, wheat flour, and chapatis, etc.

As students observed the display, they immediately began identifying relationships between the food items. They noticed how tomatoes became tomato puree and eventually ketchup and how wheat transformed into flour before becoming chapatis. Using the Visible Thinking Routine "Think, Puzzle, Explore," students moved beyond observations to asking authentic questions. How is ketchup made? Who grows the wheat? Where does flour come from? How do these products reach our homes?

Their curiosity became the driving force of the inquiry. Guided by the lines of inquiry and specified and additional concepts, students gradually uncovered the journey of food from farms to factories, markets, and finally their dining tables. They explored systems, processes, occupations, transportation, and responsibilities, realising that even the simplest meal is the result of many interconnected people and processes. The inquiry naturally expanded beyond the classroom.

Parents volunteered as guest speakers, enriching students' understanding with real-life experiences. One session traced the journey of wheat from seed to harvest, introducing students to the different stages of a crop and the work of farmers. Another focused on healthy eating, where students explored the components of a balanced diet through hands-on activities, understanding and recognising sources of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals.

Their learning did not stop there. Curious about how food reaches consumers, students investigated the concept of money and exchange through a cafe role-play, using currency manipulatives to buy and sell food while applying mathematical thinking. They further consolidated their understanding through procedural writing in language lessons by writing the steps involved in preparing food items like sandwiches and lemonade in the classroom. What appeared to be separate learning experiences seamlessly connected science, mathematics, language, and social studies within one meaningful inquiry. The impact of this approach was visible not only in what students knew but also in how they learned. They strengthened Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills by asking thoughtful questions, collaborating with peers, communicating their ideas confidently, analysing information, and reflecting on their learning.

Most importantly, they demonstrated agency by taking ownership of the inquiry, shaping its direction through their questions and interests. Their understanding moved beyond remembering facts to developing conceptual understanding of systems, change, responsibility, and interdependence. Transdisciplinary learning transformed everyday experiences into meaningful opportunities for inquiry, helping students see that the world is not organised into subjects but into connections. As educators, fostering these connections prepares learners not only for academic success but also for thoughtful participation in an increasingly interconnected world.

Belief in what counts: Assessment that sees the whole child

By Ms Nupur Sinha Agrawal
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-Examining how inclusive and responsive assessment practices can recognize diverse learner strengths, support individual growth, and create equitable opportunities for every student to demonstrate understanding, voice, and progress.

A child who could not write a test answer but built a model that explained everything. A parent's first question at a parent teacher meeting : "Is my child in the top tier?" Reality bites. In Indian school culture, marks, scores, ranks and report cards carry enormous weight. Numbers bring comfort and understandably so. This is how most of us through the years, have been conditioned.
Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore wrote, "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information, but makes our life in harmony with all existence." If standardised assessment measures only recall, is it truly a reflection of the whole child?

Inquiry is perhaps the most overstated and underutilised word in education today. But it is far more than just a jargon. When we ask children not just what they know, but what they notice, wonder, and do with what they know- we shift the very purpose of learning. PYP assessment is rooted in this shift. It is evidence of thinking, not just knowledge. The focus moves slowly from rigour to reason and the Learner Profile Attributes and Approaches to Learning find their true home. Assessment becomes less about a product and more about a process- moving fluidly between qualitative and quantitative evidence of growth. It is rarely a single written task. It is an ongoing & dynamic interaction about skills, understandings and knowledge- observed and documented over time.

At our school, continuous assessment dialogues with students and parents form the backbone of our practice. Goals are set collaboratively through Personalised Learning Pathways, ensuring every child has a platform for support throughout their journey. Student portfolios capture a range of self and peer assessment opportunities, with meaningful feed-forward that moves learning ahead. Success criteria, co-constructed with students, build agency. Student-Led Conferences give children voice and choice, allowing them to present their understanding directly to their parent community. Heterogeneous grouping brings flexibility - students of different backgrounds and understanding levels to learn alongside and from each other. Differentiated assessment tasks ensure that inclusivity is maintained. Parents of children with identified needs are partners, not recipients, in an ongoing conversation about progress and possibility.

“Human communities depend upon a diversity of talent, not a singular conception of ability." -Sir Ken Robinson mentioned in his bestselling book The Element: How Finding your passion changes everything. Central to all of this is the teacher's belief in assessment for learning, as learning, and of learning .As educators and leaders, we hold a particular power- the power to decide what counts as evidence of learning. The question worth sitting with is this: how inclusive and responsive do we choose to make it?

Pedagogical documentation transforms classroom moments into evidence of deep learning

By Ms. Sania Arora, Learners International School

Destination keeps changing, journey is the only constant~ Ganesh Kumar S

Pedagogical documentation in the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) is far more than a display of learner work. It is an active record of the thinking, inquiry, and growth that learners experience throughout their educational journey. While the units of inquiry and concepts evolve, the journey remains constant—one driven by student agency, ownership, and voice.

In the PYP, documentation captures the richness of learning through wonder walls, integrations, learner reflections, evidence of the Learner Profile and Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills, guest speaker interactions, action taken by learners, and collaborative experiences. Together, these elements narrate the learner's evolving understanding rather than simply showcasing the outcome. More importantly, they invite learners to revisit their thinking, engage in meaningful discussions, and learn from one another, making classrooms dynamic spaces where inquiry is consistently nurtured.

A simple example from a Grade V classroom illustrates this beautifully. During the unit Matter under the transdisciplinary theme How the World Works, a learner walks over to the Wonder Wall and rereads a question he had posted: "How does milk powder turn water into milk?" As he reflects on it, another question catches his attention: "Why does salt dissolve faster than sugar?" Curious, he asks his classmate whether they have found the answer. On hearing "not yet," he eagerly accepts the challenge. That evening, he researched both questions at home and returned the next day, excited to share his discoveries with the class. A seemingly simple Wonder Wall became a catalyst for curiosity, independent research, peer interaction, and authentic inquiry. This is the enduring power of pedagogical documentation—it transforms questions into opportunities for lifelong learning.

Its impact is equally evident during Student-Led Conferences. My learner stood facing the inquiry cycle displayed on the classroom wall, and she explained to her parents how her understanding of Wars evolved after listening to a classmate's contrasting perspective. She proudly compared both viewpoints, acknowledged that different perspectives enrich learning. The documentation served as tangible evidence of conceptual growth, demonstrating that learning is not about arriving at a single correct answer but about appreciating diversity in thinking and constructing deeper understanding through dialogue.

Another powerful aspect of pedagogical documentation is its role in fostering metacognition. In our Grade V classroom, we contribute to a Reflection Wall at the end of each lesson. After completing a creative writing task about an invention they wished to create, a learner placed a sticky note under the Risk Taker Learner Profile attribute that read:

"I learned to be a Risk Taker because I thought I could never invent anything."

This simple reflection captured something far more significant than academic achievement—it documented a shift in the learner's self-belief. The Reflection Wall became a space where growth, confidence, and identity as a learner were celebrated. Such moments remind us that pedagogical documentation gives equal importance to the learning process, personal growth, and emotional development.

Viewed through the lens of an educator, pedagogical documentation is equally transformative. Maintaining a teacher's portfolio for every unit encourages continuous reflection on teaching practices. It allows facilitators to thoughtfully evaluate what worked well, identify opportunities for improvement, and refine future learning engagements. Rather than repeating the same unit year after year, teachers are inspired to innovate, adapt, and respond to the evolving needs of each new cohort. After all, novelty is often the doorway to motivation—for both learners and educators.

Ultimately, pedagogical documentation embodies the philosophy that learning is a journey rather than a destination, and the process is more significant than the product. It preserves questions before answers, celebrates growth before grades, and values thinking before products. Every reflection, wonder, conversation, and action becomes a meaningful milestone in a learner's journey!

Beyond skills: The role of learning dispositions in IB PYP learning

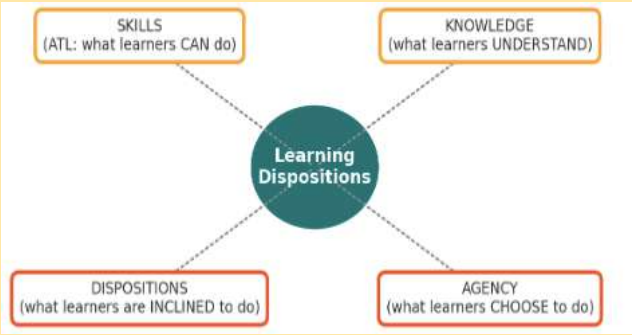
Dr Jyotsna Sharma

Head of School, Shambhu Dayal Global School, Ghaziabad

Abstract-This three-cycle action research study asked whether deliberately cultivating learning dispositions — curiosity, persistence, collaboration, reflection and risk-taking — changes how PYP learners behave when no adult is directing them. Across six months with 112 learners in Grades 3–5, self-initiated inquiry more than doubled. The findings echo a quiet global consensus: skills tell us what a child can do; dispositions decide what a child actually does.

The Question That Would Not Leave Me Alone

It began with a paradox on a Tuesday morning. A Grade 4 learner — fluent in every research skill we had taught, capable of citing sources and organising notes beautifully — sat frozen before an open-ended inquiry task, waiting to be told what to do. Beside her, a child with far weaker technical skills was already halfway down a rabbit hole about why Yamuna water froths in winter, entirely unprompted. She had the skills. He had the disposition. The IB PYP names this distinction with precision: the Approaches to Learning describe capabilities, while the Learner Profile and attitudes describe inclinations. Guy Claxton calls dispositions the difference between ability and 'the tendency to use that ability.' My research question crystallised: Can a school deliberately grow dispositions — and can we see it in learner behaviour?



Method: Three Cycles of Plan–Act–Observe–Reflect

Following Kemmis and McTaggart's action research spiral, our team of nine homeroom teachers worked with 112 learners (Grades 3–5) across three cycles between July 2025 and January 2026:

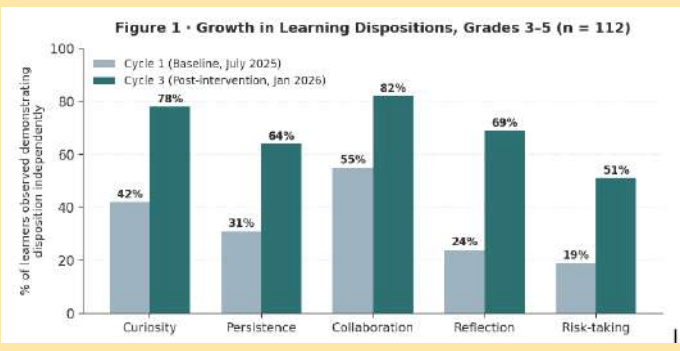
· Cycle 1 (Baseline): We observed and tallied disposition-linked behaviours using a shared classroom protocol, changing nothing.

· Cycle 2 (Language shift): Teachers replaced praise for outcomes ('correct!') with narration of dispositions ('you stayed with that problem after two failed attempts — that is persistence'). Dispositions were made visible on 'Learning Walls'.

· Cycle 3 (Structural shift): We introduced weekly 'Wonder Windows' — 40 unstructured minutes for learner-chosen inquiry — and disposition-based reflection journals replacing worksheet-style exit slips.

Data sources included structured observation tallies, learner journals, and teacher reflection meetings — triangulated to guard against our own optimism.

Findings: What the Numbers Whispered



Every disposition grew, but not equally. Collaboration — already culturally strong in our Ghaziabad context, where children negotiate shared spaces daily — rose modestly. The dramatic movement came in reflection (24% → 69%) and risk-taking (19% → 51%), the two dispositions our earlier assessment culture had accidentally suppressed. When mistakes became data rather than verdicts, children began taking intellectual risks we had never witnessed.

Figure 2 tracks our headline indicator — learners initiating inquiry without teacher prompting — against a reference band from five partner PYP schools (in Singapore, Dubai, Nairobi, Toronto and Pune) with whom we moderated observation protocols online. Our cohort began below the band and finished above it. The steepest gain came in Cycle 3, suggesting that structures (time, ownership, journals) amplify what language alone begins.

The Global Conversation

Our findings sit comfortably within international evidence. New Zealand's Te Whāriki curriculum has assessed dispositions through Margaret Carr's Learning Stories for two decades. Reggio Emilia documents children's inclinations as seriously as their products. Project Zero's 'Visible Thinking' work at Harvard shows dispositional routines transferring across contexts. What our small study adds is an Indian data point: dispositions are not a Western luxury layered onto rigour — they are the engine of rigour, and they respond quickly to deliberate cultivation, even within one academic year.

Reflection and Recommendations

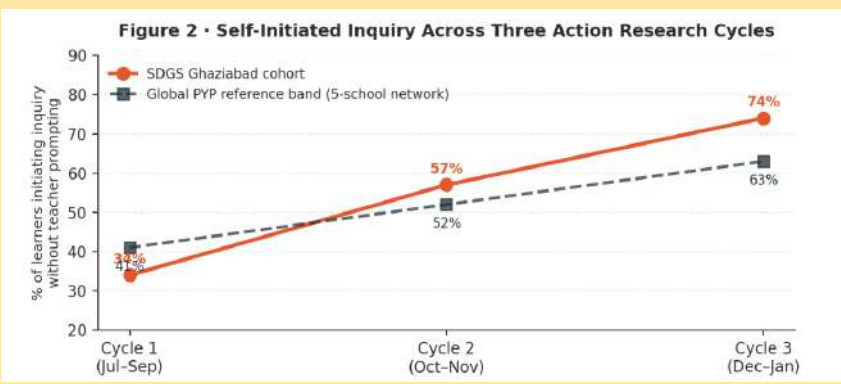
Action research changes the researcher first. I began believing we needed to teach dispositions; I now believe we need to stop interrupting them. Three recommendations for PYP leaders:

· Audit your praise. Record one lesson; count outcome-praise versus disposition-narration. The ratio will humble you.

· Buy back time. Dispositions surface in unstructured inquiry. If every minute is scheduled, curiosity has nowhere to live.

· Assess what you value. If report cards mention only skills and knowledge, learners conclude dispositions do not count.

The Grade 4 girl from my opening paragraph now runs a lunchtime 'Question Club.' She still has her skills. Now she has reasons to use them.



Where questions take the lead

Ms. Supriya Narula
PYP Coordinator, Pathways School Gurgaon

In every classroom, there is a moment that has the potential to change the course of learning. It is not when an educator shares a brilliant explanation or when a learner arrives at the correct answer. It is the moment a meaningful question is asked.

Questions sit at the very heart of the PYP. They are the bridge between curiosity and understanding, between knowledge and action, between teaching and learning. In a rapidly changing world, where information is readily available and answers are only a click away, the ability to ask thoughtful, purposeful questions has become one of the most important capabilities we can nurture in our learners.

The renewed PYP subject guides and learning progressions remind us that learning is not a destination but a journey. Progression is not measured solely by what learners know; it is reflected in how their thinking evolves, how they make meaning, and how they increasingly take ownership of their learning. Questions are the driving force behind this growth. They invite learners to move beyond recalling information to analyzing, connecting, evaluating, and creating. They help learners recognize that understanding deepens over time and that every new question can lead to a new level of insight.

When questions take the lead, agency flourishes. Learners begin to see themselves not as consumers of knowledge but as investigators, thinkers, and changemakers. They learn that their wonderings have value and that their voices can influence the direction of inquiry. A classroom rich in questioning communicates a powerful message: learning is something we do with learners, not to them.

This belief resonates strongly with the aspirations of the enhanced PYP framework and the transdisciplinary themes. Across all six themes, learners are encouraged to explore significant ideas, understand multiple perspectives, and engage with real-world challenges. Whether investigating identity, relationships, systems, innovation, sustainability, or our shared humanity, it is often a compelling question that sparks the deepest inquiries. Questions help learners connect concepts across disciplines and see learning as an interconnected experience rather than a collection of isolated subjects.

Purposeful questioning also cultivates the dispositions our world needs most, which is curiosity, open-mindedness, reflection, and critical thinking. It encourages learners to embrace uncertainty, challenge assumptions, and remain open to new possibilities. In doing so, questioning transforms classrooms into communities of inquiry where exploration is valued as much as certainty and where learning is driven by a genuine desire to understand.

As educators, our responsibility is not to provide all the answers. It is to create the conditions in which powerful questions can emerge, evolve, and thrive. It is to listen deeply, provoke thinking, and honour the questions learners bring to the learning community. Sometimes the most profound learning outcomes are not found in the answers we anticipated, but in the questions we never expected.

The legacy of education will not be measured by how many answers learners can recall. It will be measured by whether they leave our classrooms with the confidence to wonder, the courage to question, and the capability to inquire into an increasingly complex world.

Because when questions take the lead, learning becomes more than the acquisition of knowledge. It becomes a lifelong pursuit of understanding, meaning, and possibility.

From cooing to crosswords: Making language visible in inquiry classrooms

Ms Sanam Edwards- Language lead- DPS International

Language is often thought of as reading and writing. Yet, by the time a child confidently writes a paragraph, the real work of language acquisition has already been unfolding for years. Long before children recognise their first letter, they begin acquiring language through coos, gurgles, gestures, laughter, eye contact, and the sounds of familiar voices. Babies are, perhaps, the world's most determined language researchers. They listen relentlessly, imitate sounds, experiment with pronunciation and slowly transform concrete experiences into abstract understanding. Before they can say a word, they are already learning the language of conversation.

This reminds us of an important truth in inquiry classrooms: language grows first through listening and speaking. Reading and writing are not isolated skills to be mastered independently; they are built upon a rich foundation of oral language. Every conversation, every story shared, every carefully modelled sentence becomes another brick in that foundation. Children do not simply hear words; they absorb patterns, intonation, vocabulary and ways of thinking. Good language modelling matters because children borrow language before they own it.

For our youngest learners, play becomes one of the richest forms of symbolic language. A cardboard box transforms into a spaceship, a handful of blocks becomes a veterinary clinic, and a stick confidently serves as a magic wand. The objects themselves remain unchanged, but the meanings attached to them evolve. Through this symbolic representation, children experiment with vocabulary, narrative structures, social conventions and perspective-taking. They are not just playing; they are rehearsing language for life.

As learners move into the primary years, rituals and routines continue to nurture language development. Morning meetings encourage learners to greet, question and respond thoughtfully. Exit tickets, reflection circles, reading conferences and collaborative group discussions provide repeated opportunities to articulate thinking, justify opinions and build upon the ideas of others. Predictable routines reduce cognitive load, allowing learners to focus their energy on communicating meaning rather than figuring out what comes next. Linguistic diversity strengthens inquiry-driven classrooms by fostering authentic dialogue, broadening perspectives, and creating opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning across languages and cultures.

In the Primary Years Programme, language becomes visible in countless ways beyond a notebook. A conversation between peers negotiating ideas, a child explaining a theory during circle time, or a class collectively documenting their observations represent language in action. Storytelling allows learners to organise thoughts, communicate emotions and make meaning. Documentation, whether through anchor charts, thinking routines, portfolios or student reflections, captures thinking that might otherwise remain invisible.

Eventually, these rich language experiences culminate in increasingly abstract applications. Reading fluency develops into analytical thinking, and writing becomes a tool for synthesising understanding. Language games such as crosswords, word ladders, vocabulary challenges and analogy puzzles represent some of the highest levels of language abstraction. Learners are no longer simply recalling words; they are analysing relationships, recognising patterns and applying vocabulary with precision.

These experiences also provide valuable assessment evidence. A completed crossword is more than a finished puzzle as it offers data about vocabulary acquisition, spelling prowess, conceptual understanding, inference skills and even misconceptions. When viewed alongside classroom conversations, learner reflections and written work, such assessments create a rich picture of language development that informs future teaching.

Language, therefore, is far more than what appears on a page. It lives in conversations, stories, play, symbols, documentation and every interaction that helps learners construct meaning. From a baby's first delighted gurgle to a confidently completed crossword, language is not merely learned—it is lived, one meaningful interaction at a time.

Technology that amplifies student agency

Ms. Ancy, PYP Homeroom Advisor, Manav Rachna International School, Faridabad

Technology That Amplifies Student Agency
"Technology will never replace great teachers, but technology in the hands of great teachers can be transformational." — George Couros

Technology as a Catalyst for Student Agency

Technology has become an integral part of education, but its greatest impact lies in the learning experiences it makes possible. At MRIS IB technology is most meaningful when it supports inquiry and empowers learners to make choices, take ownership of their learning, and communicate understanding in authentic ways. Through the thoughtful integration of the Apple ecosystem alongside digital platforms such as Canva, our classroom has become a space where students actively construct knowledge, collaborate with purpose, and engage deeply with learning.

Learning by Teaching: The Teach to Shine Initiative

One of the most meaningful learning experiences emerged through Teach to Shine, a flipped classroom initiative where students assumed the role of teachers. Learners independently researched concepts, planned lessons, designed presentations using Canva and Apple applications, and created interactive games for their classmates. Preparing to teach encouraged deeper conceptual understanding, careful planning, and the ability to anticipate questions from others. The experience naturally strengthened communication, collaboration, and self-management while encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their learning.
One particularly memorable moment came from a learner who usually preferred to remain in the background. The student volunteered to teach a lesson on Geothermal Energy, using digital tools to organise ideas and present them to peers. The learner confidently explained concepts, responded thoughtfully to questions, and facilitated discussion. It was a powerful reminder that meaningful opportunities, supported by technology, can help students discover confidence they did not realise they possessed.

Empowering Inquiry Through Student Choice

A similar shift became evident during the PYP Exhibition. One learner found it challenging to gather community perspectives through face-to-face interactions while investigating a real-world issue. Rather than allowing this to become a barrier, the student designed a Google Form to collect responses, analysed the data, and identified meaningful patterns that informed the inquiry. This flexible approach enabled the learner to present evidence-based findings with confidence while demonstrating that authentic research can take different forms when students choose methods that best suit their strengths.

Authentic Learning Through Pravah

Student agency became even more visible during Pravah – A Learning Showcase. While exploring ocean ecosystems, learners independently selected Apple applications to create presentations explaining the different ocean layers and the adaptations that enable marine organisms to survive within them. As parents and visitors engaged with their work, students confidently explained concepts, justified their thinking, and responded to questions with clarity. The experience demonstrated that ownership grows when learners are trusted to decide how their understanding will be represented.

Making Thinking Visible Through Technology

Technology also transformed everyday inquiry experiences. During investigations into motion and forces, students used device cameras and slow-motion features to capture real-life examples of movement. Reviewing recordings frame by frame encouraged careful observation, evidence-based discussions, and deeper scientific understanding. Rather than accepting explanations at face value, learners questioned, predicted, tested, and refined their thinking through authentic investigation.

Technology as a Pathway to Agency

These experiences reaffirm that digital tools are most valuable when they create opportunities for curiosity, independence, and meaningful decision-making. Across different learning engagements, students documented their thinking, communicated ideas creatively, collaborated with peers, and reflected on their progress. More importantly, they experienced learning as something they could shape rather than simply receive.

Within the IB Primary Years Programme, agency develops when learners are trusted to make choices, take responsibility, and act on their understanding. Thoughtfully integrated technology provides multiple pathways for inquiry, expression, and reflection. As educators, our role is not simply to introduce new tools but to design learning experiences where every student finds a voice, builds confidence, and recognises themselves as capable, self-directed learners.

Future-focused leadership in the IB PYP

Ms Rachna Dua Deputy Primary Years Program Coordinator
Satya School, Gurgaon

A class has been investigating the impact of plastic pollution on local waterways, and they are debating the best way to share their findings with the wider community. Their teacher listens, asks a few probing questions, and steps back. The students decide how they will move forward. This simple moment captures the essence of future-focused leadership—not directing learning, but creating the conditions in which learners think, collaborate, and act with purpose.
Today's learners are growing up in a world shaped by rapid advances in artificial intelligence, climate change, global interconnectedness, shifting economies, and careers that continue to evolve. Schools are therefore challenged to prepare students not only for examinations but for life. In the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), this calls for leadership that is responsive, innovative, and grounded in the belief that education should empower young people to thrive in an uncertain future.

Today's learners are growing up in a world shaped by rapid advances in artificial intelligence, climate change, global interconnectedness, shifting economies, and careers that continue to evolve. Schools are therefore challenged to prepare students not only for examinations but for life. In the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), this calls for leadership that is responsive, innovative, and grounded in the belief that education should empower young people to thrive in an uncertain future.

At the heart of future-focused leadership is a belief in student agency. PYP leaders recognize that children learn best when they are given the opportunities to make choices, ask meaningful questions, and take ownership of their learning. Rather than students being recipients of knowledge, leaders inspire teachers to create environments where learners confidently explore ideas, embrace challenges, and take action based on their understanding. This requires learning experiences that are flexible, responsive, and grounded in students' interests and curiosities. Equally important is a commitment to conceptual understanding. In a world where information is readily available, the real value of education lies in helping students make sense of ideas and transfer their learning from one context to another.

Future-focused leaders champion transdisciplinary learning that encourages learners to see connections, think critically, and apply their understanding to authentic, real-world situations. Learning becomes meaningful not because students remember facts, but because they understand the concepts that underlie them.

Innovation is another defining characteristic of future-ready schools. Effective PYP leaders foster a culture where teachers feel supported to explore, reflect and develop their practice on an ongoing basis. They know that innovation is not simply about adopting new technologies; it is about being open to new ways of thinking, teaching, and learning. By promoting professional inquiry and collaborative learning, leaders create environments where educators feel confident to take risks and learn alongside their students.

How teachers lead inquiry is also affected by future-focused leadership. IB leaders model the IB's Approaches to Teaching (ATT) that promote inquiry-based, concept-driven teaching that responds to learners' needs, is informed by ongoing assessment, and is connected to local and global contexts. Collaboration is at the heart of professional practice. It allows educators to design authentic learning experiences that ignite curiosity, foster student autonomy, and accommodate the diverse abilities and needs of each learner. Leaders ensure that teaching is dynamic, evidence-informed and relevant through coaching, reflection and ongoing professional learning.

Alongside effective teaching, leaders intentionally foster the development of the Approaches to Learning (ATL) while creating opportunities for students to develop critical and creative thinking, communication, collaboration, adaptability, ethical decision-making, digital literacy, intercultural understanding, self-management, and global citizenship. These competencies enable learners to navigate complexity with confidence and contribute meaningfully to society.

Leadership in the PYP is fundamentally relational. Strong partnerships among students, teachers, families, and the wider learning community create the conditions for meaningful and sustainable school improvement. By fostering trust, inclusion, and international-mindedness, leaders build cultures where diverse perspectives are valued and every learner experiences a genuine sense of belonging.

As education continues to evolve, the role of the PYP leader becomes increasingly significant. By empowering teachers, strengthening student agency, and nurturing collaborative learning communities, leaders do more than prepare students for the future. They create the conditions in which young people develop the confidence, compassion, and capability to shape it.

Learning walls: Making learning visible

By Ms. Manya Jain,
IB Principal Bodhi International School

"The walls of the classroom should not merely be decorated; they should educate." Loris Malaguzzi

Imagine walking into a classroom and hearing a student proudly say, “That was my first idea, but now I think differently.” Nearby, another child points to a photograph and explains, “We thought plants only needed water, but after our experiment we discovered they also need sunlight to grow.” These moments capture the true essence of a learning wall.

Learning walls are dynamic displays that make learning visible. They showcase student thinking, questions, wonderings, reflections, work samples, achievements, and evidence of growth over time. Unlike traditional bulletin boards that often display only polished final products, learning walls document the journey of learning capturing the process, the mistakes, the revisions, and the breakthroughs that lead to deeper understanding.

"Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn." O. Fred Donaldson

A learning wall is not created by the teacher alone; it is co-constructed with students. It evolves as learning unfolds. During an inquiry into water conservation, for example, a Grade 3 class may begin with questions such as “Why do some places have less water than others?” and “Can we run out of water?” As investigations progress, students add research findings, photographs, diagrams, reflections, and new questions. By the end of the unit, the wall tells the story of their collective learning journey.

One of the most powerful aspects of a learning wall is that it illustrates student learning in authentic ways. Traditional assessments often provide a snapshot of learning at a single moment in time. A learning wall, however, reveals growth over weeks and months. Students can revisit earlier thinking and compare it with their current understanding.

A teacher once shared how a student stood before a learning wall and laughed while reading a prediction she had made at the start of a science unit. “I can't believe I thought that!” she said. Moments later she added, “But now I know why it didn't work.” This simple reflection demonstrated something far more valuable than a correct answer it showed growth in understanding and metacognition.

"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you." B.B. King

Learning walls also foster student agency. Students actively contribute their ideas, questions, goals, reflections, and evidence of learning. They make decisions about what should be displayed, what demonstrates growth, and what questions still need to be explored. In doing so, they become active participants in their learning rather than passive recipients of information.

A Grade 1 student once insisted that her question remain on the learning wall even after the class had completed the unit. When asked why, she replied, “Because I still want to know more.” Her response reminds us that true learning does not end when a unit ends. Learning walls honour curiosity and encourage students to continue asking questions.

Learning walls also support ongoing learning by serving as a living record of classroom thinking. They are constantly changing as students revisit ideas, make new connections, challenge assumptions, and set goals for future learning. The wall becomes a reference point that students return to repeatedly, helping them understand that learning is a continuous process rather than a destination.

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." Often attributed to Benjamin Franklin

Furthermore, learning walls help build a culture of collaboration and reflection. Students see the ideas and contributions of their peers, celebrate different perspectives, and recognize that everyone contributes to the learning community. The wall becomes a shared space where thinking is valued and visible.

For families and visitors, learning walls offer a window into the classroom. Rather than simply seeing completed assignments, they gain insight into how students think, inquire, collaborate, and grow. They see evidence of the curriculum in action and understand that learning is not just about outcomes but about the process of discovery.

Ultimately, learning walls are more than displays; they are stories of learning. They celebrate growth over perfection, questions over answers, and process over product. They make student thinking visible, promote agency, support ongoing inquiry, and inspire learners to take ownership of their educational journey.

As educators, our goal is not simply to fill walls with work, but to fill them with evidence of thinking, wondering, reflecting, and growing. When this happens, the walls truly become teachers themselves.

Future-focused leaders: Preparing learners for tomorrow

Dr S C Sharma
Principal
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The world is changing rapidly, driven by technological advancements, global interconnectedness, environmental challenges, and evolving career opportunities. In this dynamic landscape, education must go beyond academic excellence and focus on developing learners who can think critically, adapt confidently, collaborate effectively, and lead with integrity. Future-focused leadership begins in the classroom, where students are empowered to become curious, compassionate, and responsible individuals.

Modern education should nurture learners who ask meaningful questions, solve real-world problems, and embrace innovation. By encouraging inquiry, creativity, and reflective thinking, schools help students develop resilience and the confidence to navigate an uncertain future. Leadership is no longer defined by authority but by the ability to inspire, communicate, make ethical decisions, and create positive change.

Developing future-ready learners also requires fostering essential life skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, digital literacy, emotional intelligence, and adaptability. Equally important are values such as empathy, respect, responsibility, and global citizenship, enabling students to appreciate diversity while remaining connected to their cultural roots.

Teachers and school leaders play a pivotal role in shaping this journey by creating inclusive learning environments that encourage curiosity, innovation, and lifelong learning. When students are given opportunities to take ownership of their learning, work collaboratively, and contribute meaningfully to their communities, they develop the confidence and character needed to become responsible leaders.

The future belongs to individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also compassionate, resilient, and purpose-driven. By equipping learners with the right skills, values, and mindset, schools are preparing a generation capable of leading with vision, embracing change, and building a more sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous world.

NINNS PYP job alike sessions 2026 at Heritage International Xperiential School

Ms Shradha PYP Co-ordinator , Heritage International Xperiential School

On 2 May 2026, Heritage International Xperiential School proudly hosted the NINNS PYP Job Alike Sessions, bringing together educators from 23 IB World Schools across the North India and Nepal Network of Schools (NINNS). The event drew participants from across northern India, with educators travelling from diverse locations such as Jammu and Dalhousie, reaffirming the strength of the NINNS community and its shared commitment to excellence in the IB Primary Years Programme.

The event opened with a thought-provoking keynote by Ms. Anvita Gupta, titled “Unlearning to Teach: Rediscovering Learning.” Challenging educators to rethink conventional notions of teaching, she emphasized that meaningful learning begins with meaningful relationships. The keynote highlighted the importance of creating emotionally safe classrooms where learners feel seen, heard, and valued. By prioritizing student well-being, trust, and agency, educators can cultivate environments that inspire curiosity, resilience, and a genuine love for learning.

The keynote was followed by a series of engaging Job Alike Sessions facilitated by experienced PYP educators. The sessions explored diverse areas of practice, including Inquiry-Based Learning, Action in the PYP, Reimagining Assessments through ATL Skills, Conceptual Understanding vs. Knowledge Coverage, Play-Based Approaches to Early Language Development, Designing Thinking Environments for Mathematics, Voice and Choice in Literacy, Student Agency, PYP Exhibition, Inquiry Learning Progressions, The Invisible Work of Teaching: Regulate, Relate, Reason, and Embedding Design Thinking within the PYP Framework. These discussions provided participants with practical strategies, fresh perspectives, and opportunities to reflect on their own practice while learning from colleagues across the network.

The Job Alike Sessions exemplified the true spirit of professional collaboration. Beyond the exchange of ideas, they strengthened connections among educators, fostered a culture of reflective practice, and reinforced the belief that collective expertise is one of the most powerful drivers of school improvement. As educators returned to their respective schools, they carried with them not only new insights and strategies but also renewed inspiration and a stronger sense of belonging to the wider IB World School community.

Sharing the planet

Together with our editors: Helping knowledge reach further.....

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With gratitude

Thank you for being a part of this learning journey. Every idea shared, every experience contributed, and every conversation sparked helps us grow as a community of educators.

We are grateful to all our contributors for generously sharing their knowledge and inspiring others. Together, we continue to learn, reflect, and shape the future of education.