

MES Cairo International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Open Day November 2015



One of the celebrated features of our school is that at the conclusion of Primary, students can choose to continue with the British curriculum, or they can migrate into the American Middle School Programme. At Year or Grade Ten, our students have another crucial decision to make: to either continue their education in either the American or British Sections, or, to consider the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) in DP11 and DP12. It is such an important decision for our students that all Secondary-aged students were strongly encouraged to attend the IBDP

Open Day with their parents last November.

Many parents ask us about the IBDP from as early as Foundation Stage One! That is why we recently decided that an Open Day would help all interested parents to gain a clearer understanding of the Programme. Our second annual MES Cairo IBDP Open Day was a huge success. It was attended by parents of MES Cairo students of all ages, as well as many parents who have children at other schools both here in Cairo and abroad.

Upon arrival, visitors to the Open Day were guided to the school theatre where they were given an introduction to the Diploma Programme and information about how it is rewarding and respected by universities all over the world. UK universities are increasingly recognising the value of the IBDP. They see it as something special and they welcome applications from DP students. DP students are given a special privilege in the summer months after final examinations when they are offered early clearing, ie they are offered early access to places that may still be available after results are published. Admissions units at universities across the UK have lowered their entry requirements this year as they recognise that the DP is academically challenging and holistic. American universities have offered generous credits to IBDP students for many years, in recognition of the fact that they study a range of subjects to a high level, as well as producing a 4000 word research paper (Extended Essay). IB students also study philosophy through the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course and must dedicate time to complete the Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) component of the course. At the Open Day, we outlined the structure of the IB curriculum and explained to parents how it is different to other Secondary curriculum options. This does not mean that it is a better option for all of our students, and for this reason we also explained what types of students we believe are best suited to the Programme.

Our IB students played an impressive role throughout the day. In the theatre, they added variety and fun to the informative presentations given by Ms Singleton (Secondary Principal, British and IBDP Sections) and Ms Sheehan (Assistant Head, IBDP Coordinator). The students acted as excellent ambassadors for the IBDP and for MES Cairo as a

MODERN ENGLISH SCHOOL CAIRO
Join us and plan your journey to success
IBDP Open Day
10.00am, Saturday 21st November 2015

Students in the IB Diploma Programme at MES Cairo have access to:

- an outstanding IB World School staffed by internationally certified and experienced teachers
- a broad subject offer complemented by a truly enriching extra-curricular programme
- a nurturing learning community where every student is cared for, challenged and inspired
- an annual tradition of well above world average pass rate with excellent individual scores

"The International Baccalaureate is highly regarded by Admissions Tutors at Cambridge University for entry to all subjects."
Admissions at University of Cambridge, UK

"IB is well known to us as excellent preparation. Success in an IB program correlates well with success at Harvard. We are pleased to see the credentials of the IB Diploma Program on the transcript."
Admissions at Harvard University, USA

ib WORLD LEADER

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whole. They spoke with confidence and ease about how much they enjoy participating in meaningful service opportunities and how important it is to be committed to the Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) element of the Programme. They also shared two excellent videos they had made independently; one explaining the concept of International Mindedness and another sharing highlights of their fabulous CAS trip to Aswan last term.



Students from DP12 and DP11 then led groups of parents around the school in carousel groups, where they took part in four very engaging activities. These activities involved discussions, lessons and practical experiences, giving a flavour of what it is like to be an IBDP student at MES Cairo. Parents and students of all ages enjoyed the stimulating learning settings. One was an introduction to the TOK course, the second was a painting session run by our Visual Art students and linked to the Creativity element of the CAS Programme. Our visitors also enjoyed a taster Science lesson which involved a thought-provoking experiment and generated fervent discussions. Last but not least, our visitors were able to relax in the internationally-minded Café du Monde – where the delighted clients could order explanations of 'Linguistic Perspective', or 'World Peace' or

'Sustainability', from a rich menu that generated interesting debate between the visitors and our team of enthusiastic, suitably clad 'garçons' et 'filles' from DP11.

The final part of the Open Day involved a Subject Fayre in the Multi-Purpose Hall. Our University advisors for UK, USA, Canada and Europe were available, along with admissions staff from the AUC, and they were able to explain to parents how the IBDP is recognised here in Cairo and all over the world. Current IBDP students and MES Cairo IB MESConians guided those in attendance around the subject stalls and answered questions, as did our IBDP teachers and senior members of staff, enthusiastically promoting a Programme that so many of us are passionate about.

Staff training for IBDP teachers – Webinars

As with all IB teachers all over the world, all of the teachers on MES Cairo's IB teaching team are 'IB trained'. This means that they have all completed IB training and are licensed to teach in their country of origin for the courses they teach on the IB Programme. To supplement this training and because the IBDP promotes lifelong learning, IB teachers often take further enhancement courses which are either subject-specific, or they can focus on other areas of the IBDP, for example TOK or supervision of the Extended Essay.

IB teachers have been meeting voluntarily for discussion and training sessions since last April. This academic year, MES Cairo has subscribed to a suite of Webinars specifically aimed at supplementing the expertise of our trained IB teachers and also for teachers interested in teaching the IB in the future. In Term Two we have been accessing the Webinar presentations in groups and following these up with group seminar discussions, enabling our teachers to further enhance their knowledge and understanding in a variety of areas, including TOK, Meeting the Needs of Diverse learners, and focused sessions on subject-specific assessment. Additionally, an introductory Webinar has been accessed by interested teachers not currently teaching the IB.



The IBDP staff team engaged in collaborative planning



Training Webinars were held throughout Term Two



Mr Rainford enthusing about Science and World Studies Extended Essays



Evaluating what we know about the Extended Essay so far

DP11 Extended Essay Workshop – February 2016

An important element of the IB Diploma is the Extended Essay. The Extended Essay process teaches students the academic writing skills required at university level and, in the spirit of the IB Approaches to Learning, it prepares young people for the skills they require to become lifelong learners. Students must complete a 4000 word



Ms Mathews reminded the students how to navigate around the MES Cairo research database



Mr Vandermaer speaking passionately about the beauty of Mathematics!



Ms Matthews leading the students through a referencing activity

research paper in a subject of their choice and they are advised to choose a topic that they find highly interesting, within a subject that may be connected with their choice of degree subject or major at university. Universities hold this aspect of the Diploma in high regard, stating that it prepares students very well for the type of academic writing they are expected to undertake at university level.

"We feel excited when we see applications from IBDP students. This is because we feel that the IB develops all of the skills that a UK university wants. Writing, research, referencing, discussion, independent learning, critical thinking and a deep understanding of how to avoid plagiarism. The Extended Essay is a major academic achievement their TOK studies add a whole new level of intellect that we welcome. IBDP students know many things that the students from other systems don't necessarily know - so they come to us really well prepared. There is breadth in their knowledge but they also have the depth - the six subjects definitely do not mean a compromise in depth." (Leeds University Admissions Officer, The Hague IBAEM Conference, November 2015)

MES Cairo's IBDP11 students started out on their Extended Essay journey in February, when they attended a workshop introducing them to the requirements of the EE. They were guided on how to choose a topic and create a research question, how to follow the EE timeline for the submission of drafts and how to approach the work on a one-to-one basis with their individual supervisors. Our students were excited to learn about MES Cairo's special arrangement with the AUC, as our DP students have the privilege of visiting the AUC library to access the university database for research several times before the final completion deadline, which will be in December 2016. Ms Matthews, our LMC coordinator, reminded our students of how to access our own wealth of research materials available here at school, as well as leading them through a vital and stimulating interactive workshop on the skills of advanced academic research, referencing and citation.

MES Cairo's IB subject coordinators then gave the students detailed insights into the Extended Essay in each area and supplemented this with crucial advice on how to formulate effective research questions and produce successful papers. Students enthusiastically asked a myriad of questions and many of them felt instantly inspired, sharing some fantastic ideas for their own Extended Essays. They were then given three weeks to reflect; to carefully choose their topic and collect ideas for a focused research question whilst aiming to link this research to their future study plans at university.

DP12 Students – Preparing for their final examinations



DP12 visited the AUC to work on their Extended Essays in October

Our DP12 senior students have all now submitted their Extended Essays, ready for dispatching to IB external examiners all over the world. They will be taking their languages oral examinations in March, and, early this May, they will begin sitting their final external written examinations. With the support of their teachers, they have been working hard in preparation for these examinations, as well as finalising their coursework pieces in all subject areas for submission to the IBO. Our DP seniors have already been offered places at impressive universities (including Bath, King's College London, Durham, and Royal Holloway London, UK and The University of British Columbia in Canada) and although we will miss them when they graduate, we feel extremely proud of their achievements and successes on their IB journey so far. We certainly have high hopes for them in the future and would like to take this opportunity to wish them the very best of luck. We will be watching their progress with great interest and we know they will do us proud.

Ms S Sheehan – Assistant Headteacher/IBDP Coordinator



The Group 4 IBDP Science Project

In December all of DP12 completed their Group 4 Project over two days of hard work and effort. The project is a course requirement within Biology, Chemistry and Physics in which students work with each other to complete a task and to present their findings to the whole group. It is a chance for our students to work with students who study different Sciences. Our Science teaching team assessed and moderated the final presentations.

This year the students voted to work on the theme of 'Efficiency'. This led to groups testing the effect of limiting oxygen on competing puzzles, which food changes reactions the most, building the most efficient potato gun and even investigating the efficiency of Art.

DP12 students started their projects by generating a question, planning their projects and collecting resources. Over the two days they collected data, refined their ideas and produced an answer to their question. Finally they presented their findings to all the MES Cairo DP students and teachers using music, live acting, demonstrations and videos with their efforts being recorded and contributing to their Diploma.

Mr B Rainford – HOD Secondary Science, IBDP and British Sections



History in the IB Diploma Programme



The DP11 IB History class has been enjoying a busy year matching the application of historical skills required across their three examination papers with a high level of precise historical detail. They have performed very well in their recent midyear examinations.

New and exciting developments this year have included unlimited access to the historytoday.com's digital archives as well as a range of podcasts which have been made available to them through membership of the Historical Association and subscription to activehistory.com and this has enhanced their application of historiography immensely. The class has also enjoyed engaging with world experts such as Professors John Charmley and Frank McDonough on Twitter and is presently benefiting from a range of bespoke revision podcasts made available to them on Mr. Guiney's YouTube channel, as well as receiving detailed verbal feedback for their work on SoundCloud.

"We do a lot of independent research work with the guidance and gives us a goal – good use of library space and available resources. Last term we really enjoyed working on a research project investigating to what extent WW2 was a 'total war' and trying to define what a total war actually is in terms of a country's involvement and the allocation of resources towards that war. The way that we learn in History helps us to write better essays and connects with the MLA referencing format we have been learning in English." **Mahmoud El Shabba (DP11Y), Yola Elwy (DP11Y) and Youssef Hanna (DP11R)**

It is anticipated that an upcoming school trip to Berlin scheduled for October 2016, which will include sites of historic interest relevant to the course as well as intensive exam revision workshops, will help to both consolidate and build on their in-class learning.

Mr D Guiney –IBDP and British Section History

For news about Visual Art in the IB Diploma Programme please see 'Art Beat' page 43.



IB Psychology and the MES Graduate Profile

For the first time in MES Cairo history, Psychology is now being taught as an International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme course. With the new academic year came the new IB class full of eager and focussed students, excited to embark on their IB journey. We, as MES Cairo students, have long been aware of the MES Cairo Graduate Profile. The Graduate Profile is very close in nature to the IB Learner Profile and can be defined as a set of attributes that MES Cairo students should have when they graduate from school and move on to university, building on these attributes as lifelong learners and later putting them to good use in their professional careers and in everyday life. Our fellow Psychology students provided us with their thoughts about how studying Psychology promotes some of the MES Cairo Graduate Profile attributes:

"This class helps to me relate well to other students and peers. It is enhancing **my cultural awareness** and it also gives me the opportunity to look at things from different viewpoints." Sarah El-Taweel (DP11R)

"Psychology makes me more **empathetic** and improves my **interpersonal skills**, as I am learning how people think and act and why they do things in certain ways. It is also helping me to be more **reflective** and to obtain a **global understanding** by seeing situations and experiences from other people's perspectives. Since starting the course, I find it easier to relate well to others by understanding different mindsets. I believe that this is a quality that will help me throughout my life." Kenzy McKay (DP11Y)

"I took a big **risk** when choosing Psychology as one of my courses. Although at times it has been challenging I am grateful that I have persevered and my decision to work hard is proving how capable I am of being determined and **resilient**." Shahd Rashad (DP11R)

"Psychology makes me **respect myself and respect others** because it allows me to understand the intentions and processes behind each individual mindset." Farida Geassa (DP11Y)

For all of these reasons and because we are all thoroughly enjoying this fascinating course that enables us to think in new ways about other people and the world around us. Psychology is a fascinating subject that enables us to measure our own behaviour as we get a real insight into how and why people interact the way they do in certain situations. That is why we urge you to 'keep calm and study IB Psychology'!

By Ali Bahaa-Eddin (DP11R) and Hana Mattar (DP11R)

IB English Literature – Learning Through Drama From Page to Stage

English classes in our Diploma Programme took a different turn recently when I visited them to look at the plays they were studying from a theatre director's point of view.

With DP12 we had a fascinating and illuminating discussion of the classic piece of Theatre of the Absurd, *Waiting for Godot*, by Samuel Beckett. I was delighted by the thought the students had put into their interpretation of this deliberately ambiguous piece. They had managed to move beyond the superficial reading of the script and had begun to explore deeper connections with the human condition. Together we tried some parts of the script in different, less obvious ways. We discussed the history of the piece from the initial outrage shown by audiences at its first performance in Paris through to a famous reception of the play by a group of factory workers in South Africa. It was a real pleasure to work with a group of students who were enjoying the play as much as I always have.

DP11 Students are exploring the amazing Arthur Miller play, *A View from the Bridge*. The students were introduced to an acting technique known as "actioning" and it was not long before we were up on our feet in the Carbone living room, discovering sides to the





characters we had not considered before. Bringing the physical reality of the situation to life allowed us to reassess the real reasons behind some of the characters' words and actions. The vulnerability of the character Eddie was much clearer than from a reading of the script. Suddenly, the characters' positions in relation to each other took on a greater importance, providing an audience with visual clues as to the subconscious choices the characters were making.

Mr J Todd – Performing Arts Teacher

IBDP Homeroom News and Student of the Month

Ms McTigue, Ms Creak and Mr Bullough, the DP11 and DP12 Homeroom Teachers (HRTs), have been very busy working with the IBDP Homerooms this year. As well as supporting the students pastorally, they have been keeping a close eye on assessment levels and are monitoring their academic progress. They have also been leading their Homerooms in a variety of other endeavours, including fundraising for the Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) Service project in Aswan and developing teamwork and singing skills in the IB Choir in Term One.

'I really enjoyed the drama lessons we had with Mr Todd because they helped us gain a new perspective on Eddie's character in the play, and what his intentions are. As we explored his character in depth, we felt more empathy towards him, and we were able to better visualise other characters in the story.'

Fatima Talaat (DP11Y)

This term, Ms McTigue has been supporting our DP12 students in their preparations for examinations and submissions of final coursework pieces. Mr Bullough and Ms Creak have been working with our DP11 students to set them off on their university application and career pathways, showing them how to research and evaluate university courses and to find out the entry requirements for the courses they are interested in. They have also been building up each students' My Graduate Profile (MGP) portfolio and building evidence of achievements they have made throughout their school careers. The students have been collecting certificates, photographs and letters, etc. and scanning these to upload onto their individual MGP electronic files.

A successful lifelong learner needs to forward-plan, forging a pathway to success at university and the world of work. It won't be long before our DP11s, who started out on their IB journey just last September, will be applying to universities and that is why they are already thinking about future career options. Our Homeroom teachers have been taking a real interest in all of their students' achievements and ambitions, and they are counselling them to build on their strengths and interests.

Mr MacAulay has been visiting Homerooms regularly this year, in order to work with the students on the completion of their CAS reflections on Managebac, a software system that records all of the students' Creativity, Activity and Service projects in fine detail and gathers the evidence from supervising teachers, coaches and other qualified adults. Mr Bullough has been working tirelessly to lead students and colleagues in our latest Outreach Orphanage project, ensuring that the DP students are given the Service opportunities they need in order to complete the Diploma (see page 14). Mr Tomlin was so impressed with our IB Choir last Term that there is talk of more opportunities ahead and he has invited us to participate in the MES Cairo Spring Choral Concert. Watch this space!

Congratulations to the following students who have been awarded Student of the Month this term.

January

Layla Omar (DP11) - outstanding effort and improvement in Term One

February

Nour Bahaa (DP12) - highest overall points score in the DP12 Midyear Examinations

March

Habiba El Dissouky (DP11) - highest overall points score in the DP11 Midyear Assessments

Congratulations everyone!

Ms S Sheehan – Assistant Head/IBDP Coordinator



CAS CORNER

Creativity, Activity, Service in the IB Diploma Programme

After amazing us all with his unique brand of photography in Aswan during our Creativity, Activity, Action (CAS) trip last October, Mostafa El Refai (DP12), is passing on his talent to the wider MES Cairo community every Wednesday at 3pm in room NF3. As part of one of our new student-led ASAs, Mostafa is demonstrating the leadership and creativity he has developed through the IB CAS Programme and is inspiring a new generation of budding young photographers. The students have been practising a range of techniques using a various digital devices to capture images. Mostafa has also introduced his online photography portfolio using 500px, a premier photography community. Mostafa hopes that during the course of the ASA the students will develop their skills and portfolio using Instagram before refining their work for potential submission to 500px.

Check out Mostafa's work at 500px by searching his username:

Mr E MacAuley – CAS and ASA Coordinator



Mostafa El Rifaie (DP12) teaching advanced photography skills at the Photography ASA



Mr MacAuley working with DP11 on Managebac



OUTREACH 2016



We are pleased to announce that the MES Cairo Secondary school's 'Outreach' ASA is well underway. Although Outreach continues to work with Dar Al Yosra orphanage, as it has for many years now, it has also taken a new orphanage under its wing. Dar Al Fa'Eza in Katameya, provides a home for boys and girls ranging in age from three to seventeen years.

MES Cairo students, in particular DP11 students, are helping them with both English tuition and essential skills for the 21st Century, such as use of ICT.

Our thoughtful student body has also been having fun playing sports with the children, on Sundays here at MES Cairo.

In addition to being a worthwhile project, this activity also allows our DP students to fulfil their Service. Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) hours, is an essential part of the IB Programme.

We will update you on all Outreach orphanage work later in the year!

Mr D Bullough – Secondary Science, British Section



FESTIVE FUN THE HRCF WAY!



*'Twas the week before Christmas, and all round the school,
the students were laughing, not playing it cool.
The tension was building, the game was on,
the students were working, but still having fun.
Teams were together, resources were out,
some voices were rising, but barely a shout'.*



There was a great buzz about the last HRCF lesson before the Winter break started, with many inter-homeroom competitions taking place in both the British and IB Sections. There were stations set up for different challenges in the Year Seven and Eight homerooms, but some of the most creative and unusual challenges were definitely happening in DP11 and 12!

The intrepid homeroom teachers for DP11 and 12 had joined forces and gathered all of the students into room NF2, which was a challenge in itself and each class was on a different challenge – DP11 versus DP12, who would succeed?

When I arrived there, there were students wielding chopsticks to move grains of rice from one sheet of paper to the other – some were being used quite ingeniously by students but not



in any way familiar to the use they have for eating. Ms McTigue was looking out for this and had to remind some of them that it was only the narrow ends which were to be used, and not the larger ends being held together and used as a shovel! Others were busy hopping like frogs in order to take a challenge and get their team-mates to answer. Instructions were coming thick and fast but the students were rising to the challenge; when I left the room, DP12s were in the lead with a variety of challenges in the bag.

Year Seven and Year Eight students were having a great time completing different activities and challenges in their homerooms. Some of the HRTs were even joining in by challenging themselves to complete singlehandedly the team challenges the students had. Ms Hanlon was doing a great job with her spaghetti and seemed quite determined to get the job done.

It was a great time to go round the different homerooms and see the variety of inventive strategies our students came up with in order to complete their various challenges and tasks. The pictures tell their own story!

'Well done' to everyone involved in planning the activities and organising the resources for this hectic HRCF session that took place at such a busy time of the year.

Miss M Ingham – HRCF Coordinator

