Academic honesty in the IB educational context - Diploma Programme

In this publication:

- Introduction
  - Purpose of this document
- Academic honesty in the IB
  - Making academic honesty a school priority: Developing, implementing and reviewing an academic honesty policy
- Academic honesty in the IB educational context
  - A framework for identifying aspects of academic honesty across the continuum of IB programmes
  - Academic honesty—Diploma Programme
  - Conclusion
- Appendix
  - Bibliography

Adapted from the IB publication, *Academic honesty in the IB educational context*, https://ibpublishing.ibo.org/server2/rest/app/tsm.xql?doc=g_0_malpr_sup_1408_1a_e&part=1&chapter=1, accessed April 2016.

Introduction

International Baccalaureate (IB) programs encourage students to inquire and to think critically and creatively; students are then asked to give shape to their thinking through oral discussion or presentations, through visual representations and displays, and in multiple forms of writing. However, we live in an age in which we are all flooded by information and opinions. How can we help students navigate these waters so that they are able to confidently talk or write about what they are learning, making visible and explicit how they have constructed their ideas and what views they have followed or rejected? This is essentially what academic honesty is: making knowledge, understanding and thinking transparent.

Such transparency needs to be taught and supported throughout a child’s education. In order to fully master the technical aspects of academic honesty, such as accurately citing and referencing, students need to
understand how knowledge is constructed and, consequently, their own role in furthering knowledge construction and building understanding. The technical skills are essential but the understanding of the concepts and values behind them comes first.

A safe and encouraging learning environment in which students can explore ideas and make visible the development of their own thinking will support academically honest behaviors and help to instill the values and principles that lie behind such behaviors. The attributes of the learner profile are important in nurturing such an environment. This guide will support schools, teachers and parents in providing such a learning environment and in helping students of all ages be academically honest in all their studies.

The purpose of this document

The purpose of this publication is to support IB World Schools in developing an academic honesty ethos; it offers guidance in designing a strategy that combines the school’s internal policy with good academic practice. The principle of academic honesty should be viewed positively by the entire school community and become a natural part of academic study, remaining with the IB student throughout his or her education and beyond.
Academic honesty in the IB

Academic honesty is an essential aspect of teaching and learning in IB programs where action is based on inquiry and reflection.

Figure 1
Inquiry, action and reflection in teaching and learning
Approaches to learning

Through approaches to learning (ATL) in IB programs, students develop skills that have relevance across the curriculum and help them “learn how to learn”. The ATL skills are as follows.

- Self-management
- Social
- Communication
- Thinking
- Research

Approaches to teaching are equally important in developing learning abilities. These are as follows.

- Inquiry-based
- Conceptually driven
- Contextualized
- Collaborative
- Differentiated
- Informed by assessment

Understanding academic honesty is part of this learning and teaching. It has become increasingly important as access to information through technological innovation has increased, and ideas about learning and how knowledge is constructed have changed.

Figure 2 gives a summary of the changes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previously</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge was:</td>
<td>Knowledge is:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• canonical and beyond critical evaluation of</td>
<td>• not absolute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all except ordained experts</td>
<td>• constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• authoritarian</td>
<td>• democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• disciplinary</td>
<td>• interdisciplinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated = knowledge of canons</td>
<td>Educated = ability to inquire/research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge easily transmitted with lectures,</td>
<td>Inquiry/research cycle driven by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>readings and required rote learning</td>
<td>questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate reproduction and correct answers</td>
<td>Evidence of understanding from research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tested</td>
<td>evaluated against criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge acquisition equated with IQ/</td>
<td>IQ questioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intelligence to some extent</td>
<td>Inquiry and asking questions valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphors for learning included “blank</td>
<td>Metaphors to construct, weave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slate”, banking, filling up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning/education completed</td>
<td>Lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors required from students were</td>
<td>Students expected to be active,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive and controlled by external authority</td>
<td>constructive, independent, but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collaborative, learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of a bigger modernism paradigm with</td>
<td>Postmodern paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beliefs in scientism, Newtonian physics,</td>
<td>Deconstruction of grand narratives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linear thought, clockwork universe, cause</td>
<td>Critical literacy important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and effect…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2**

Comparative chart of “recent” changes in learning

Academic honesty is part of being “principled”, a learner profile attribute where learners strive to “act with integrity and honesty” as we question, inquire and act (IB learner profile in review: Report and recommendation (April 2013), page 21).
A framework for identifying aspects of academic honesty across the continuum of IB programs

Academic honesty is an important dimension in the authentic construction of meaning and learning in all IB programs. However, since learning occurs along a developmental continuum, academic honesty will involve different specific practices in and across the different programs. An academic honesty policy should address common underlying principles applicable to all learning in all programs, but also transitions and differences between programs or articulation with previous and following educational pathways. One way in which this may be considered and expressed is through constructing a framework:

**Academic honesty in IB programs**

↓

**Approaches to teaching and learning**

↓

Self-management, social, communication, thinking and research skills

↓

Activities

- Culminating project
- Group work
- Oral presentation
- Creative work
- Other

**Academic honesty—Diploma Programme**

As young adults preparing for university studies or entry into the workforce, Diploma Programme students both enjoy the freedom and bear the responsibility of studying a course that emphasizes independence and self-reliance. DP students are, appropriately, less dependent than their PYP and MYP counterparts on the steady intervention of teachers and parents checking to make sure that lessons are understood and assignments are completed on time. On the other hand, DP students experience a set of emotional pressures—the pressure to perform on summative assessments, the stress of the university admission process and time pressures—exerted by a system that can be seen to reward the individual’s end result over the work (individual or collective) required to get
there. For academic honesty, this can mean that the idea of shared responsibility in the PYP and MYP for ensuring a piece of work is the student’s own risks becoming the sole responsibility of the DP student, should a case of academic misconduct arise (Carroll 2012). Thus, teaching and learning in the DP must develop the positive behaviors that students will need to demonstrate clearly that they complete their work carefully, honestly and authentically.

In their academic work, DP students develop research skills and study habits that are needed to demonstrate academic honesty in more formal ways than would be appropriate to expect of younger learners. DP students investigate and evaluate the usefulness of a greater variety of resources, and incorporate and reference them within oral and written presentations of increasingly complex formats. This level of rigor can present a challenge to students who certainly know right from wrong, but who may not possess the organizational and self-management skills to demonstrate clearly that their work meets a formal standard of academic honesty. All IB students understand the importance of acknowledging others because it is a central feature of the constructivist, inquiry-based approach promoted in all IB programs; yet, in the DP, this requires the explicit teaching and learning of specific conventions accepted in a community of learners for being transparent about the use of ideas and work of others—note making, in-text citation and the preparation of a bibliography, to name but a few examples (Carroll 2012: 5–6).

This section presents case studies of academic honesty in a variety of DP courses.

**Approaches to teaching and learning**

Self-management, social, communication, thinking and research skills

**Activity:** Culminating project

**DP assessment task:** English A, Extended essay

**Scenario:** A DP student is writing his English A extended essay. He has a scheduled meeting with his supervisor on Monday, where he is meant to submit a draft. Having missed his last meeting because he was off school
ill, he is behind schedule and submits a draft consisting mainly of quotes hastily chosen from internet sites.

The supervisor reminds the DP student of the importance of formulating his own ideas on the topic and a plan for the essay before consulting other sources. Without this preparation, the extended essay risks being simply a collection of other people’s ideas on the topic, which increases the temptation for the student to pass off others’ ideas as his own.

**Activity: Group work**

**DP assessment task:** Psychology, Internal assessment

**Scenario:** A DP student has been working in a group on her psychology internal assessment. A domineering member of the group is putting pressure on the student to write the reports of the experimental study for everyone in the group. The student being pressurized understands this is inappropriate but wants to be popular with the group.

The teacher notices the group is being dominated by one member and has a quiet talk with the student, reminding her that, although the data collection was done as a group, each member must write up an individual report. The teacher offers support in communicating this message back to the group.

**Activity: Oral presentation**

**DP assessment task:** TOK presentation

**Scenario:** A DP student is planning his TOK presentation. In researching the presentation he uses a variety of sources, including books, websites and newspaper articles. He is not sure how to reference these sources in an oral presentation, or even if he needs to do so since it is not a written task. He asks his teacher for advice.

The teacher advises the student that it is just as crucial to acknowledge sources in an oral presentation as it is in any other piece of work. The teacher suggests several ways in which the student may wish to do this, including verbal or written acknowledgments throughout the presentation, or with a bibliography on the last slide of the PowerPoint®.
Activity: Creative work

DP assessment task: Visual arts, studio work

Scenario: A visual arts student is trying to work out if it is acceptable to do a variation on a famous painting as one of her pieces. She is not sure if that would be considered “copying”. She asks her visual arts teacher for advice.

The teacher advises the student that this is acceptable, as it is common practice for artists to be inspired by, or to adapt, other artists’ ideas. However, the teacher emphasizes that she must explicitly acknowledge the original painting. The teacher suggests titling the piece, “After …”, so that it is very clearly attributed.

Activity: Independent work

DP assessment task: ITGS, Internal assessment

Scenario: A DP student is completing her ITGS internal assessment. The task requires her to conduct an interview with a client and to submit a written record of it. When she begins writing her analysis, she realizes that she forgot to ask some questions that would have been helpful. She is tempted to fabricate some responses to these questions, as she feels it would make her analysis and solution stronger, and help her achieve a better mark.

As the deadline for submitting internal assessments approaches, the teacher initiates discussion with the class on the importance of reporting data accurately, and stresses that each student will be required to sign a coversheet confirming the authenticity of the work. The student realizes that fabricating her client’s responses could have far-reaching consequences as a case of academic misconduct.

Conclusion

Students may sometimes be tempted to plagiarize work because they are unable to cope with the task that has been set for them. They may recognize content that is relevant but may not be able to paraphrase or
summarize, for example. To promote the development of conceptual understanding in students, teachers must take responsibility to set meaningful tasks that can be completed either independently or with the appropriate amount of scaffolding. Making the process of inquiry visible should be integral to all teaching and learning in IB programs.

Acknowledgment

The IB wishes to thank the educators for generously contributing time and resources to the production of this document.

Appendix

Bibliography


IB publications


Middle Years Programme. MYP: From principles into practice. May 2014.

Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme, Diploma Programme and IB Career-related Certificate. Programme standards and practices. January 2014.