



The International School
of The Hague

The MYP through Pathfinder

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*Curious, connected and
compassionate!*

Hi, I'm Ollie Quinton and I'm the coordinator of the Pathfinder Programme. Pathfinder is unique to ISH and in this part of the presentation I'd like to give you a background to the programme and how it works.

What is Pathfinder?

- “A pilot programme that allows students to **direct their learning based on their interests**, and **develop the skills and attributes** they need to make their way in the world and have a **positive impact** on it.”

What does this mean in practice?

- Whenever we can, we give students choice about the curriculum.



As you may know, Pathfinder was created at ISH almost three years ago and is a variation of the IB Middle Years Programme. We still work towards the same standards and objectives as any other MYP student at the school or around the world, but wherever possible we give students a choice about their learning.

In short, Pathfinder allows students to “direct their learning based on their interests, and develop the skills and attributes they need to make their way in the world and have a positive impact on it.”

Our aim in doing so is to harness a student’s intrinsic motivation for learning - that is, either learning for the simple joy of it or at least understanding it’s significance - and to help them create their own “story and mission”. By this we mean an account of the choices they’ve made about their learning and ambitions for the future, something that is essential for orienting themselves in the world and finding their own unique path through it.



We can do this because, as you will have heard already, the MYP is a curriculum framework built on concept-based inquiry. It gives schools the freedom to explore the big ideas that go across subject areas in a way that is relevant to their context. So whereas one school might choose to explore the concept of change through the Chinese Civil War, another might choose to explore it through the Renaissance. Every school will therefore effectively construct their own MYP curriculum. In Pathfinder, we take this a step-further and construct the MYP curriculum with each of our classes.

Co-constructing inquiries

Engage - Focus - Investigate - Organise - Conceptualise - Impact



Engage

- Existing interests are explored in more depth and new ideas are introduced to provoke different thinking.
- This might happen through trips, guest speakers, specialised workshops or class activities.
- Approximately 1 week.



Option B - Let your imagination go!
(approximately 1-2 hours)

Everyday objects

- Each select an everyday object from your house and brainstorm a list of questions about it. Report this back to your group.
- As a group, choose one object and transform some of the questions asked about it into imaginative ones, perhaps like the ones below:
 - What would it be like if...
 - How would it be different if...
 - Suppose that...
 - What would change if...
 - How would it look differently if...
- Choose one question to explore as a group and spend some time researching it. Then discuss your answers as a group.
- Add your group answer to the daily task sheet. Add any project ideas to the Padlet.



So how does this co-construction work in practice?

It's a fluid process, but in general we follow this inquiry cycle.

First, we engage with new and existing ideas for projects and inquiries. Teachers plan various activities to stimulate curiosity and encourage students to share their ideas to find shared interests. We might also go on trips or welcome guest speakers, and we try to make connections between subjects.

Co-constructing inquiries

Engage - **Focus** - **Investigate** - **Organise** - **Conceptualise** - **Impact**



Focus

- Subject areas narrow down ideas to define inquiry goals and questions based on the interests identified.
- "Essential" and "desirable" curriculum for that subject incorporated.
- Student pitch ideas or an inquiry might emerge.
- 1-3 weeks?



Next we begin to focus on specific ideas for inquiries. Together, a plan is made for the questions to be explored, how it will happen and how learning will be demonstrated. Teachers help build links between subjects and make sure the essential curriculum for that subject is covered in the unit plans. Sometimes, this happens through a pitch system where students pitch their ideas and the teacher “pitches back”. Sometimes, inquiries emerge naturally.

Co-constructing inquiries

Engage - **Focus** - **Investigate** - **Organise** - **Conceptualise** - **Impact**



5-8 weeks

Investigate

- Students investigate their inquiry questions, gathering information and practicing relevant process skills.

Organise

- Students make sense of what they've found out by structuring and communicating it to others.

Conceptualise

- Students make generalisations about their learning and test statements of understanding in different circumstances.

Then we move into the main part of the inquiry cycle, which varies according to subject area. Students use a variety of methods to explore the questions they've identified. They organise and share their findings, and reflect on this to build a deeper conceptual understanding of the topic.

An inquiry might move between these stages a number of times as students explore the key questions of the inquiry. Again, it all depends on the subject.

Co-constructing inquiries

Engage - Focus - Investigate - Organise - Conceptualise - Impact



Impact

- Students reflect on how learning has impacted on them and can be used positively for the communities to which they belong.
- Identifying a personal goal to pursue - an inquiry, skill mastery or a service project.
- A student-led conference allows them to include family and friends in this process.



Finally, in the impact stage, students reflect on what they've learned and where they might take it, including how they can use it to have a positive impact on the communities to which they belong.

It's at this point that students also identify a personal learning goal to pursue. This can be about absolutely anything - they might want to dig deeper into a topic, master a skill or carry out a community project. Whatever it is, we want them to pursue *personal* excellence. Their teachers will support them in this, as well as developing the skills they'll need for carrying out independent projects like the Personal Project in years 10 and 11 and the IAs of years 12 and 13.

One of the nicest events of the year is the Student-Led Conference, where students share their learning with family and friends. This gives them an opportunity to reflect on their learning goals and be proud of their achievements.

Pathfinder in Y8-9 and Y10&11



Years 8-9

- English
- Humanities
- Science
- Arts
- Design

Years 10&11

- An “elective” alongside other subjects.
- Focussed on interdisciplinary inquiries.

Although co-construction of the curriculum is at the heart of Pathfinder in all year groups, there is an important difference between the programme in year 7 to 9 and years 10 and 11.

In years 8 to 9, students follow the Pathfinder approach in English, Humanities, Science, Art and Design. But in years 10 and 11, Pathfinder can be chosen as an elective option alongside their other subjects. Here, students co-construct and carry out inquiries that involve multiple subject areas. So, for example, they might explore how art can be used to convey mathematical ideas or how neighbourhoods can be designed to support the sustainable development goals.

We use the MYP interdisciplinary framework to structure the programme in years 10 and 11, assessing each student's depth of subject knowledge, how they synthesise this knowledge to create understanding of interdisciplinary issues and how they communicate and reflect on this.



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If you're interested in joining Pathfinder, lookout for messages in January about how to sign-up to the programme. If you really can't wait, you're very welcome to contact me for more details.