



AN INVALUABLE TOOL FOR SUCCESS

In February 2018, the Swiss International Scientific School Dubai made a distinct step forward in its core offering; the school succeeded in its authorization for the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP), with the intention of implementing the eAssessment as an efficient way to monitor and modulate student progression.

Opening the school gates in August 2016, current MYP coordinator Martin Keon wasted no time in securing MYP authorization, a process he managed just 18 months later, with the introduction of the eAssessment being a driving motivator.

The UAE, Dubai in particular, is heavily populated with IB World Schools. In a bid to stand out in a crowded market, the Swiss International Scientific School Dubai opted to offer the eAssessment to 16 year old students at the end of the MYP journey; the majority of schools offering the MYP will choose to offer Cambridge's International General Certificate of Secondary Education (iGCSE) in Grade 9 and 10. Martin Keon explained that the eAssessment gives a competitive advantage against other schools in the area, and many parents want their child to attend the school because of this style of assessment and its inherent focus on developing strong critical thinking skills and problem solving.

Meeting student needs

Swiss International Scientific School Dubai has a rich community of nationalities including a large number of students from different European countries, so it is important that the school ensures the eAssessment is effectively meeting all of its students' different learning needs. "We are proud to be a diverse school – welcoming international students from many different countries is one of the defining characteristics for us, and we view this as a major strength. We have a large number of students attending our school from France, Germany and other central European countries, which means that we need to cater to their needs. To do this we offer the eAssessment in two different language strands (French and English)," confirmed Martin Keon.

Martin Keon further explained that one of the main benefits for offering the eAssessment to the school's international cohort is that they are able to leave the school with an internationally recognized qualification, which means that they can easily transfer between countries and join another school: "We have found in the past that students returning to their home country, having studied MYP but not undertaken the eAssessment, are at a great disadvantage. Schools and colleges find it difficult to understand the academic level of that child; the eAssessment removes that ambiguity".

Swiss International Scientific School Dubai

First offered the Middle Years Programme (MYP):

2018

Head of school:

Norbert Foerster

Middle Years Programme coordinator:

Martin Keon

The school has also seen the eAssessment impact students' learning. "The eAssessment has assisted our MYP students in organizing the way they work, helping them to horizontally plan between their subjects. It also influences their motivation for learning; it gives them the "boot camp" factor, meaning that they begin to take responsibility for their learning and start to take their education more seriously" explained Martin Keon.

Advantages to teaching

It isn't just the students that have benefited from the eAssessment, teachers at the Swiss International Scientific School Dubai are finding that they are gaining more valuable information on their students' advancement. "The eAssessment provides us with detailed data on a student's progression. You can see the trajectory of their development, and if necessary, we are able to make interventions at the right time. It can help us compare the students' predicted grades against their final grades and gives us plenty of data to analyze. This allows us to effectively set our targets, for example, setting a five-year target with the aim to achieve good school and subject results." said Martin Keon.

Preparing students for further education

Martin Keon is also the IB's Career-related Programme (CP) coordinator at the school and sees a useful connection between the MYP and both the CP and Diploma Programme (DP) – both of which are also offered at the school, he explained: "The MYP eAssessment aids students in selecting their DP and CP subject choices, they know in what subjects their strengths lie and this supports them in deciding what subjects to study at higher and standard level. The MYP brings in "vocational" learning early on and, as a whole, is a skills focused programme, meaning when students come to finish the MYP, they will have maintained and improved upon these skills. This is really useful for them when moving forward into the CP, for example."

Many MYP students who have undertaken the eAssessment tend to have a good grounding when starting their DP journey too. Martin Keon commented: "I think there is an extremely valuable link for students who have been through the MYP and are moving forward into the DP; they are more rigorous learners and have developed self-regulating and assessing abilities. It keeps our classes actively engaged with their learning, as they undertake peer assessment through evaluating another student's research, while they learn to formulate and justify research questions".

Recommending eAssessment

For other IB World Schools, implementing the eAssessment will be a valid decision due to its benefits in tracking student progression and the assistance it provides in setting targets. Martin Keon highlights that the new system has worked well for his school and advises that others should trial it in order to see its advantages first hand.

"IB World Schools don't have to implement the full eAssessment." he comments. "I would recommend looking at the BQC (Building Quality Curriculum) first, and then test it out; it can give an indication as to how assessments are structured. You don't know if it will work for your learning community unless you try it out. I think schools should absolutely consider the eAssessment if they already offer the MYP and DP as it fits so fluidly around these programmes, allowing teachers to effectively monitor student progression through the MYP provides great indications to their expected performance within the DP. I have, however, been impressed with many, and sometimes smaller, schools which are willing to take the opportunity and give eAssessment the chance it deserves. I think it provides great benefits to MYP students who will be moving through into the next stages of their IB education."

For information about MYP eAssessment visit: www.ibo.org/e-assessment

