



STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

“The MYP gave me the skills and motivation to pursue knowledge independently”

Phoebe Hamra
2013 Middle Years Programme graduate
2015 Diploma Programme graduate
Monte Sant’ Angelo Mercy College, Australia

Phoebe Hamra completed the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) followed by the IB Diploma Programme (DP) at Monte Sant’ Angelo Mercy College, Australia and is currently pursuing a dual bachelor’s degree at the Australian National University.

I can say with confidence that the MYP gave me the skills and motivation to pursue knowledge independently, which guided my choice to continue with the DP and university studies. Having said that, it’s a challenge to pinpoint specific things I learned in the MYP—perhaps because the skills are so foundational. They’ve become so engrained in me that they are part of who I am.

I currently study a double degree including a bachelor of politics, philosophy and economics and a bachelor of art history and curatorship at the Australian National University. Both the MYP and DP broadened my opportunities for future study with their integrated and holistic curriculums. The global paradigm of the MYP and the continuity between subjects showed me the benefits of a rounded education and definitely encouraged me to undertake the DP. Choosing a university degree to lead to a future career is a daunting decision at 18 and I appreciated that the broad range of subjects I studied in the DP did not limit my options. In fact, the range of courses encouraged me to study more and keep my options open while I’m still thinking through my career path.

Students undertake the MYP at what I found to be a hugely important age in terms of establishing a love of learning, a desire for success and the skills to manage study and life. What I remember most from the MYP is the linking of topics and skills between different subjects in a way that made a lot of sense to me. This integrated style of learning drove me to independently pursue my studies outside the bounds of the syllabus, further contextualizing what I learned in school and making it more fascinating. I found this to be particularly true with the personal project.

The personal project was an unprecedented style of independent research and work that inspired me to continue my IB studies with the DP. It was during the personal project that I discovered my love of project-based learning and assessment, which lends itself to internal assessments (IAs) in the DP and later to research projects in university. The numerous aspects of the personal project—including journalling, researching and creating a project, meeting with a supervisor, planning an exhibition and writing an essay—were a challenge to manage and complete successfully while balancing other school commitments. The whole process taught me valuable time management skills, including planning and structure.

In terms of my actual project, I created one artwork about world religions, which I entered into an international youth art competition, accompanied by a series of smaller works for the personal project exhibition. I had to research both art-making techniques and world religions in order to design my artworks to convey messages of inclusivity and universality. This was the most intellectually challenging part of the project and also the most engaging. Creating the artworks was almost a therapeutic break in my intense research and planning that gave me time and energy to continue journalling the experience and to write my essay. The project focused my academic strategies and equipped me with skills that have lasted long after its completion. The success of my project, which saw my artwork shortlisted in the competition and the overall project receive a top mark, was all the more fulfilling because of how hard I worked at it.

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