

PYP: Meeting requirements in challenging circumstances – June 2020

In challenging circumstances, well-being remains the focus and priority for all learning and teaching in the PYP. We realise that schools may be dealing with physical and logistical challenges and uncertainty around delivering the programme as intended. This may mean that the PYP in your school looks and feels different than under normal circumstances.

We would like to reassure schools that programme requirements are still important and this resource provides guidance on flexible ways of continuing to meet requirements through challenging circumstances.

Requirement question: My school does not have regular contact with students, has no or minimal online learning opportunities or has been closed for an extended period of time. How do we meet PYP requirements?

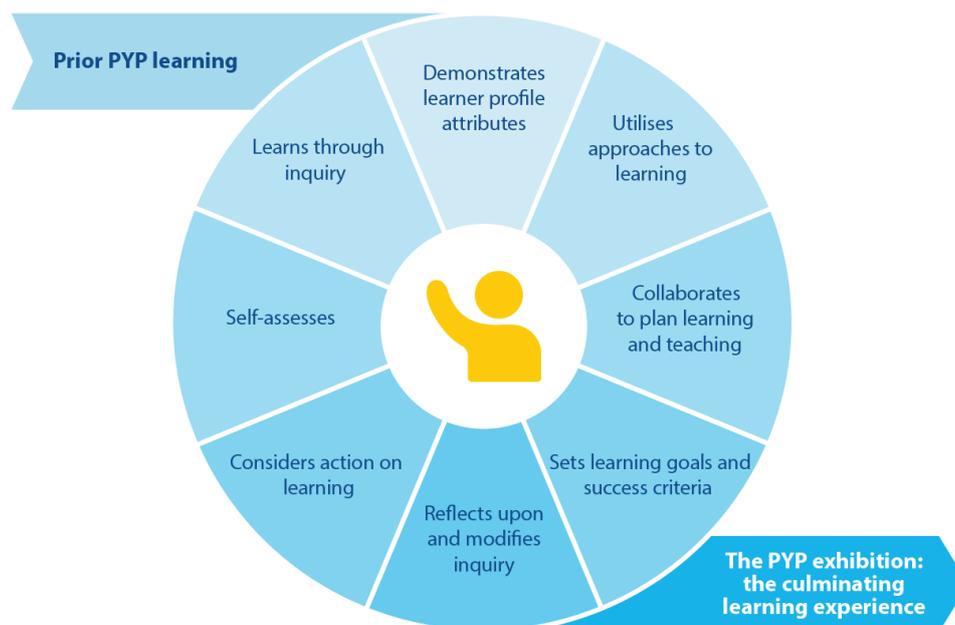
Response: For schools that are not open, operational with regular contact with students, please contact your IBWS manager.

Requirement question: Do schools have to complete the exhibition if learning has been lost over a period of several months?

Response: The exhibition continues to be the culminating, collaborative experience for students in the final year of the PYP to celebrate their learning.

All schools that are open and operational will continue to complete the exhibition. However, there are many ways the process and product might look different depending on the school’s current and evolving circumstances. Examples of exhibitions from students in PYP schools during remote learning can be found [here](#).

In addition, the exhibition can have a flexible timeframe throughout the final year to support student inquiries and school circumstances. The overall purpose of the exhibition remains the same for the student. This includes:



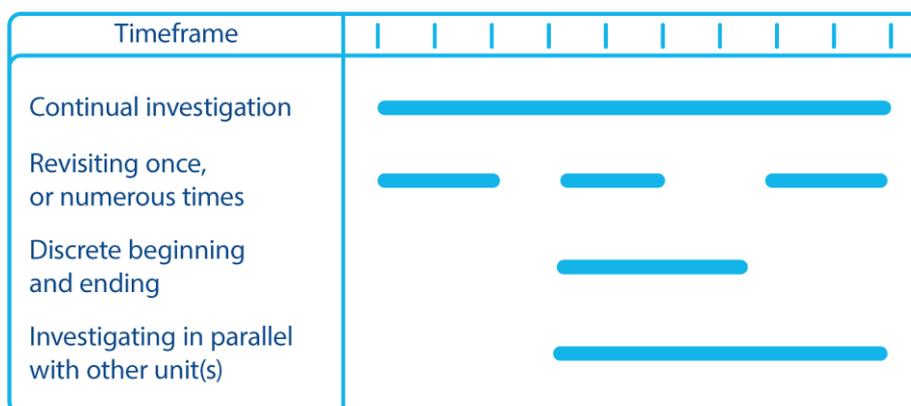
For more see: PYP: From principles into practice, IBO, 2018

Requirement question: Do we have to meet the requirement to complete the same number of units that we usually do in 2020-2021? (which differs depending on whether we are offering early years or not.)

Response: Yes, schools are still required to complete the designated number of units of inquiry, as the programme of inquiry will continue to be horizontally and vertically mapped against the transdisciplinary themes. You may continue to opt for students from 3-6 years to address a minimum of four units in their programme of inquiry each year, to include the transdisciplinary themes *Who we are* and *How we express ourselves*.

However, you may consider flexibility on starting points and time frames for your units of inquiry. For example, one unit could run throughout the whole year, while others could be revisited once or numerous times, with some overlap where appropriate. Decisions around starting points and time frames for units of inquiry should always prioritise students' needs and the impact on their learning, as well as adverse circumstances for which you are planning for. While a minimum duration of a total of 3-4 weeks is recommended for each transdisciplinary unit of inquiry to allow for breadth and depth of learning, this might look different depending on the conditions of the school year. For example, a school may choose to do a very short focused unit with the intention of revisiting skills and deepening understanding of concepts in future units.

Schools can also choose to create a school wide or partially school wide unit of inquiry under one of the transdisciplinary themes. This would replace the unit under the same transdisciplinary theme for the grades/year levels involved and could be done using the timeframe that best suits the needs of the students and school.



For more see: PYP: From principles into practice, IBO, 2018

Requirement question: Are we required to document any changes we make and can we adjust the planning process in adverse circumstances?

Response: Yes, reflecting on and documenting key changes informs direction for current and future learning and teaching. Planning teams continue to use the planning process and planners to plan, reflect on and document the effectiveness of learning and teaching for their units of inquiry. The planning process allows for flexibility, adaptation and change throughout the unit of inquiry to accommodate immediate needs and can be simplified in a variety of ways.

As learning communities are diverse, it is important to note the impact of change and challenge on all learners and how all needs are being met and barriers to learning are being addressed.

Requirement question: How can students catch up on the learning time/goals they have missed during times of unexpected school closure?

Response: It is not a PYP requirement to complete missed units of inquiry from the previous year during the time that a school was not fully operational.

Teachers foster and support the development of the learners' knowledge, skills and conceptual understandings based on where the learner is currently. Through collaboration with students and ongoing assessment, teachers notice, and reflect on students' existing capabilities, needs and interests in order to personalize and prioritize future learning and teaching using the planning process.

Requirement question: How can we meet the literacy and numeracy needs of our students through the units of inquiry?

Response: Literacy and numeracy needs can be met in various ways. Transdisciplinarity continues to be the curriculum-organizing principle to offer students a broad, balanced, conceptual and connected learning experience. It is recommended that literacy and numeracy skills and practices should be strengthened through transdisciplinary learning within the units of inquiry wherever possible.

There are many ways in which a school can adapt their current transdisciplinary programme to align with priorities and circumstances. Some possibilities include:

- Shifting the subject(s) focus within the units of inquiry to better align with mandated local/national curriculum
- Adjusting the lines of inquiry, key concepts and/or central idea to help adjust the focus of the unit
- Changing the order of units, for example, moving units that have a stronger literacy/numeracy focus to earlier in the school year could help prioritize specific skill development
- Changing the length of units (e.g. having a year-long unit would allow for extended time to help students build deeper understandings about a central idea which might address mandated local/national curriculum)
- Changing the order and/or number of subject specific inquiries to help support skill development

Requirement question: Are schools required to continue to provide a second language option if not all teachers are back at school?

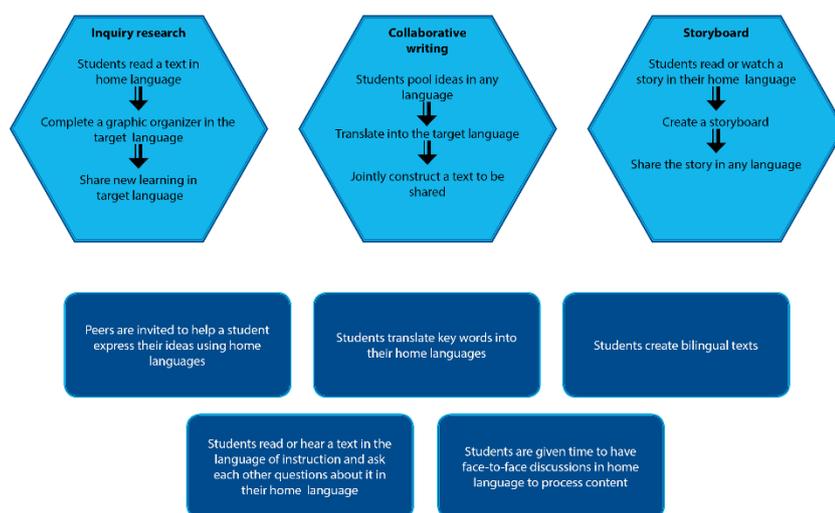
Response: Yes, the PYP requires the acquisition of an additional language from the age of 7 to support the development of international-mindedness. This additional language might be one of the languages of the school community or another language that is part of the curriculum or wider community.

In situations where schools no longer have access to their language teacher(s) there are a number of short-term possibilities. Short-term measures should look to be as authentic and varied for the students as possible. A school must consider how students will continue to learn language, learn about language and learn through language.

Some examples of *short-term measures* may include:

- Using online language programmes that students can use and then practice with each other
- Developing online communities to allow students to have authentic opportunities to communicate and build their cultural and linguistic understanding
- Find various opportunities to support translanguaging within the classroom or online (see graphic below)
- Creating inquiries into other languages using the class' language profile as a resource bank
- Having students create language portraits of themselves and their families (e.g. poster collage, language journal, questionnaire, digital photo book, poetry, autobiography)
- Focusing on a language of the week or month, with lessons/videos prepared by the school or by students and their families to share different elements from their language and culture
- Building relationships with another/other school(s) to establish partnerships with students who might be familiar with their additional language
- Pairing older children with younger ones to help younger children practise and older children consolidate their language skills

Examples of translanguaging strategies



For more see: PYP: From principles into practice, Teacher Support Material, IBO, 2018

Requirement question: How are students able to inquire when they are physically distancing?

Response: Inquiry continues to be the leading pedagogical approach of the PYP recognizing students as being actively involved in their own learning and as taking responsibility for that learning. Drawing from the transdisciplinary themes and students' interests and curiosities, inquiry is an authentic way for students to relate to, explore and interpret the world around them including current events as they develop their knowledge, skills and understandings.

There are many ways that schools can adapt their approaches to inquiry depending on current circumstances. Some examples include:

- Using visible thinking routines in a variety of ways (For example, posting on walls, allocated areas, digital technology or outside space)
- Using individual sets of resources and materials
- A focus on inquiry at home (see: *PYP Parent Guide to Personal Inquiries*, found on www.ibo.org)
- Using real world contexts, current events, challenges and personal experiences to activate individual and collective inquiries that can take place at home as well as at school (e.g. focus on wellbeing, family, home/environment etc.) Provide choice, voice and ownership.
- Focus on collaborative engagements that emphasize discussion, debate and reflection amongst peers
- Consider outdoor interactive games, explorations, experiments, etc.
- Consider interactive and collaborative online tools, activities and engagements (See: *Online learning, teaching and education continuity planning for schools* on www.ibo.org)
- A focus on play at home (see: *Inquiry Through Play - supporting PYP parents*, found on www.ibo.org)

For more information on inquiry through different modes of learning, see Transition back to school: Navigating changing times in the PYP (published on PRC August 2020)

Requirement question: Are teachers, including specialists, required to collaborate with each other in challenging times?

Response: Yes, PYP schools commit to and support collaboration in all situations to improve transdisciplinary learning experiences and student outcomes. Collaboration starts by developing a shared understanding of what students know and can do. Due to changing circumstances collaboration might be more challenging however there are many ways (e.g. asynchronous, synchronous, informal, etc.) that collaboration can remain a supportive and reflective process.

Collaboration happens within and beyond the year level teams and should be carried out as often as needed by providing regular time, support and discussion space/forum/tools. Areas for collaboration may include:

- Student and teacher well-being, needs and personalizing learning
- Effective practices for remote learning, online and blended learning, return to school learning
- Shorter collaborative meetings on a specific aspect of the planning process or student learning using various online and face-to-face collaborative tools
- Reflecting on subject focus or skill development within and outside units of inquiry to align with current needs
- Reflect on length of units, unit order or programme of inquiry alignment

For more information on collaboration through different modes of learning, see Transition back to school: Navigating changing times in the PYP (published on PRC August 2020)

Requirement question: What does assessment look like when not all our students are learning the same thing or learning the same way?

Response: Assessment in the PYP is focused on feedback to take learning forward and to inform teaching, regardless of context. While assessment includes the monitoring, documenting, measuring and reporting of learning the emphasis is on monitoring and documenting as these dimensions are critical in providing actionable feedback for the learner.

Schools and teachers continue to have the flexibility to make decisions on which assessment tools and strategies to use depending on resources, school context and the needs of the learning community.

There are many ways that schools can adapt their approaches to assessment depending on current circumstances.

Questions to help reflect on assessment practices include:

- How can we best observe and document growth over time based on current circumstances and resources?
- What is possible and appropriate to assess and in what ways? Is it the process or product of learning we aim to assess?
- How can we carry out self and peer feedback in new ways?
- How can we give regular feedback in efficient and supportive ways?
- How can we make sure to consider prior knowledge—what the student already knows and can do?
- How can students share their learning regularly and authentically?

For more information on assessment through different modes of learning, see [Transition back to school: Navigating changing times in the PYP](#) (to be published on PRC August 2020)