

MS

curriculum connection

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contents

Math	1
English.....	2
Culture.....	2
Music	2
Science.....	3
Arts & Design Technology ...	4
Spanish.....	5
Chinese.....	6
French	6
Physical Education	6

IB Term:

Areas of Interaction (AOI)

AOIs provide the main focus for developing the connections between the disciplines, so that students will learn to see knowledge as an interrelated, coherent whole.

The five areas of interaction are:
 approaches to learning
 community and service
 human ingenuity
 environments
 health and social education

math + % ÷

Kurt Putnam (Grade 7), Jonathan Chein (Grade 8)

Both grade levels studied the formulation, interpretation and presentation of linear functions, using fuel efficiency of hybrid cars versus that of the alternative gasoline equivalent as an IB focused project. Students were required to research different cars and then find different methods to justify their conclusions of when it was economically viable to purchase a hybrid car and could mathematics alone justify this economic decision. Students were expected to incorporate the use of IT with spreadsheets and charts to support their findings.



8th Grade

As the year has progressed, we have delved deeper into symbolic manipulation in Algebra class. The two problems below show where we have been, and where we are headed in the near future.

1. Customers of a phone company can choose between two service plans for long distance calls. The first plan has a \$28 one-time activation fee and charges 9 cents a minute. The second plan has no activation fee and charges 13 cents a minute. After how many minutes of long distance calls will the costs of the two plans be equal?
2. A motorboat travels 376 km in 4 hours going upstream and 840 km in 7 hours going downstream. What is the speed of the boat in still water, and what is the speed of the current?

7th Grade

The seventh grade group continues to work through the pre-algebra program, having completed units of study on: solving and cre-

ating variable expressions, transforming formulas and solving inequalities, solving, graphing and interpreting linear and non-linear functions, solving order of operation problems with signed fractions, variables and exponents. We are currently working on dealing with variables and exponents with multiplication and division and reducing, multiplying, dividing and expressing large numbers using scientific notation. Students will move onto advanced fraction work using variables and solving equations and complete the semester with a combination course load in proportion, rates and ratios with geometry and percentages and probability.

7th/8th Grades

We are continuing to work heavily with ALEKS.com and we encourage you to have your child share their ALEKS “pie” with you. Make sure to check out the Report tab at the top of the screen to see progress snapshots from throughout the year. Also check out the Quiz tab to see a list of past quiz results. Clicking on an individual quiz will reveal links to specific questions, each linked to the correct answer, explanation, and the answer submitted by the student.

MUSIC

Julia Brion

In general music class this fall, the MS students have focused their studies of the fundamental concepts of music and applied them to the Area of Interaction Health and Social Education through the lens of the listener, performer and composer.

In our most recent unit, “Music and Emotion: Why is music emotional?” the students participated in an informal self-study on what effect that ten minutes of Mozart would have on their mood and concentration levels before or during homework study. They read articles on several scientific studies that showed positive results correlating to the exposure of Mozart’s music. The studies found that a mere 10 minute listening session increased comprehension while studying, provided stress relief, and even had a healing effect on certain health conditions, among other findings.

The students then listened to a variety of Mozart’s works at home while keeping a written record of their reactions and progression during their two-week study, which had varied results in the end. The MS also began using developmental workbooks this semester to record and reflect on their progress through the units of study in class.

We closed our unit with an in-depth look at musical therapy and the range of use it has in our society. The students created their own mini-music therapy session to present to the class. They each wrote a therapy plan by first selecting an area to address (such as stress, insomnia, physical rehabilitation, etc) and then creating or choosing appropriate music/dance to help alleviate the issue. Lastly, they wrote an outline/plan of

continued...



english

writing us

Nicole Butterfield, Anne Salzano, Susan Leitner

During the months of November and December, students completed a unit on leadership, loyalty and betrayal, which included the study of a Shakespeare play. MSA read *Julius Caesar*, and MSB read *The Merchant of Venice*; interdisciplinary work on these plays will be reflected in their upcoming theater performances. The summative assessment for the unit was a 5- or 6- paragraph essay on a theme in the play. They also read *The Little Prince* by Antoine de St. Exupery, a French novella that challenged them to consider themes including childhood, friendship and exploration. All students compiled fall semester writing portfolios before departing for the winter break.

During the months of January and February, students will undertake a unit on travel that will include writing from and

about Italy by notable writers such as Charles Dickens, Eugenio Montale, Grazia Deledda and Oscar Wilde. Upon their departure to Italy on February 3, they will have each developed a plan for writing about the trip on three different topics (such as architecture, food, and history) in three different styles (such as journal, poetry, and news article). The summative assessment for the unit will be a polished collection of writing from the trip that includes the three topics and three styles. Upon our return, students will participate in a unit called “Making Peace with Grammar Boot Camp,” a systematic, intensive 2-3 week study of grammar and usage designed to launch each individual writer on a personal mission to improve this aspect of his or her writing by developing a stronger understanding of the English language.

culture

Caroline Stuart, Anne Salzano

In November and December, MS Culture students focused on the unit question: What did it mean to be a Renaissance Person (then and now)? Significant concepts included:

- Humans share, spread, and adapt ideas to fit the unique experiences within their own societies.
- The arts are an expression of man’s desire to promote political, social, and economic change.
- Renaissance People/Global Citizens develop a broad spectrum of talents and interests and communicate their ideas effectively.

The AOI was Human Ingenuity.

The summative student assessment students determined what it means for a person today to be a global citizen. They selected themselves or someone else to compare with a figure from the Renaissance to analyze the traits of what a Renaissance person is then and now. The students compiled a web-based exhibit to make these comparisons.

Currently, MS Culture students are answering the questions: How are humans inherently explorers? How does exploration change the explorer’s old environment and the environment being explored? How does exploration affect environments? Significant concepts include:

- Nations explore to gain wealth, power, or prestige.
- Exploration may lead to conflict and oppression of native cultures.
- Political competition initiates exploration of new ideas/ways of doing things.

The AOI lens is Environments. The summative assessment will have students work in small groups to *become* the explorers. They will go thorough the process of securing funding (economists), getting government approval (politicians), approval from the Catholic Church (religious tithes), building ships, plotting out the course (cartographers), arriving at their destination, relating with the Natives, and finding and securing riches. They will then report back on their goals and

music, con't

how they would lead the class in this therapy session.

The MS students are now beginning a unit on storytelling in music (“How does music bring us together?”), focusing on the Area of Interaction Community and Service.

We will first take a look at Italian Opera (to prepare the students for our upcoming trip to Italy), progress on to musical theater, and then turn our studies to look at folk music traditions from around the world including Appalachian Bluegrass and Irish music, among others. We will be studying these topics by creating a few short operettas in class, listening, singing songs, playing instruments and exploring “Why music.”

We will continue to build theory skills and practical musical knowledge through observation and application as the listener, performer, and composer through in-class projects and documentation in our developmental workbooks.



culture, continued

accomplishments, describe the exploration process of their European country, rank and defend the exploration achievements of competing European countries, and gather information on the resources from their acquired

land. This summative assessment will include research, written expression, oral presentation including defense and debate, visual work, technological presentation, and group effort.

science



Blake Glaeser, Erica Kucharski

In November and December, MS students focused on the unit question: How do you design a machine to solve a complex problem? The significant concepts included:

- Newton’s three laws
- Archimedes’ principle
- Buoyant force
- Science allows us to better understand motion
- Motion can be manipulated through the application of science.

The student summative assessment was to independently design a plan to create and test a submarine that will complete one full cycle of movement. The AOI was Human Ingenuity and the connection was to allow students to explore and analyze how science allows man to design better machines.

In January and February, MS students will begin to focus on the question: How does chemistry impact health services? The significant concepts for this unit include:

- Atomic theory
- Elements and their properties

- Bonding and combining elements
- Chemicals formulas and balancing chemical equations
- Chemicals in our lives

For the summative assessment students will write a research essay on a topic of their choice that relates chemistry to one aspect of health services. The AOI is Health and Social Education and the connection was to allow students to investigate the MYP unit question and better understand how a healthy productive life in our culture is supported by our medical industry that is dependent on the principles of chemistry.

arts & design tech

Kim Guzowski

A Note About Performances

Please note that because the LE, ME and UE are only seeing part of the performances in school, your child may wish to see the full performance. Before you bring your younger child, please consider that *Julius Caesar*, the MSA play, has battle scenes and two on-stage suicides (two military commanders who refuse to be captured) and *The Merchant of Venice* centers, in part, upon the Renaissance European Christian/ Jewish divide, an argument that escalates as the play climaxes. If you have any questions, please contact Kim Guzowski, theatre teacher at Whitby: kguzowski@whitbyschool.org.

Performance Dates

Performances will be an hour and a half. Performance dates are Thursday, January 21 (MSA/*Julius Caesar*); Friday, January 22 (MSB/*Merchant of Venice*); Saturday, January 23 (Afternoon MSA/*Julius Caesar*; Evening MSB/*Merchant of Venice*). Times for each performance will be publicized soon in WOW, through Friday Folders and on our website, www.whitbyschool.org.

Shakespeare for Young Students

The Shakespeare program at Whitby is fairly unique, but there are other schools who perform Shakespeare with seventh and eighth graders, and even younger. If you are curious about how Shakespeare is taught in classrooms to young students, please see the documentary film “The Hobart Shakespearians” about a wonderful fifth grade academic performance program in California (available on Netflix).

This year the Middle School Shakespearean Theatre program has grown to include a new IB mandated course, Design Technology Theatre, and the production of two Shakespearean plays, *Julius Caesar* and *The Merchant of Venice*.

Each year of our Shakespeare program the Middle School population has grown. For our largest class yet, we thought that it would make sense to do two performances instead of one. This division of the MS into two casts has allowed each student a significant acting role or roles with which to develop their acting and language skills, while also providing each student with large design and fabrication responsibilities with which to develop their Design Technology skills.

The Design Technology curriculum engages students in the process of design, promotes development of their skill using the design cycle and provides experiential learning through hands-on activities and problem solving opportunities. Students explore problem solving, design, fabrication and evaluation by studying theatrical design and technology disciplines such as: set, prop, light, sound and costume design; rendering, model making, design presentation, electric wiring, use of costume patterns, sewing machines, hand sewing, use of the light and sound boards, care of equipment, and light carpentry.

Through both of these courses, Middle School students have been exploring the elements that are used in the theatre to tell Shakespearean stories: text, rhythm, poetic language, character, relationships and environments—both physical and emotional. Elements are studied to help students gain facility with acting, directing, design and fabrication skills and to help them make educated choices as artists and technicians. As students study each element they are asked

to consider how to use the element to best tell the story to the audience and, in design technology, how best to aid the actor and director in telling the story.

One of the key unique elements to telling Shakespearean stories is the use of the First Folio text. In the fall, students learned that Shakespeare instructed actors through using special forms of punctuation, capitalization, repetition and poetic structure, but that modern editions have so altered the original form that many forms of instructions are completely missing in modern texts. This revelation surprised the students, leading to new understandings about the role of editors, the fluidity of language and a discussion about the evolution of the English language, especially in written form. In the Shakespearean Theatre course, we use a slightly modified version of the First Folio text. As actors, the students have been learning how to use the First Folio grammatical cues to improve their character creation and deepen their understanding of the text.

The stories they are exploring reinforce their current Culture studies in the European Renaissance period, previous Culture studies in Ancient Rome, Language Arts studies in Shakespearean text and prepare them for their trip to Italy through cultural, historical and architectural studies of Rome and Venice. The plays will culminate with a partial showing of each play during school hours to LE, ME & UE, a showing for parents in the evening of each full play, and an alumni/parent day of performances which will be a fundraiser for the MS trip.

For a good synopsis of the upcoming plays, please visit the “No Fear Shakespeare” website: <http://nfs.sparknotes.com/>

We look forward to seeing you in the audience!

online resources

The Whitby website (www.whitbyschool.org) has several resources for students and families:

Course Overview/Academic Resources

Home > Academic Programs > Middle School:Grades 5-8 > Middle School > [subject]

Daily Homework

Home > Academic Programs > Student Portal > [MSA Homework Calendar or MSB Homework Calendar]

The MS curriculum immerses students in the Spanish language (Language B) through inquiries into real world issues, as exemplified below. To meet MYP standards, teachers concentrate daily on listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills.

MS BLUE SPANISH

Unit Question

What do you do to stay in shape?

Area of Interaction

Health and Social Education

- Students learn about athletics and athletes around the world. They compare sports practiced in other countries with that of their own.
- Students learn about health professionals and their use of Spanish in the workplace.
- Students reflect on how they look after themselves by what they do to exercise and maintain overall good health.

Significant Concepts

- Living a healthy lifestyle through exercise and diet helps to maintain a strong body, mind and higher self-esteem.
- Cultural perspectives regarding athletics and those who have had a significant influence in the world of sports.
- The importance of Spanish in the medical community.

MS WHITE SPANISH

Area of Interaction

Health and Social Education

- Students will read about the importance of friendship and how friends play a mayor part in our mental and physical health.
- Students will compare how the United States perspective on friendship is different from that of a Spanish-speaking country.
- Students learning expectations will include reflection on understanding how they look after themselves and others.

Significant Concepts

- There are different cultural perspectives regarding friendship.
- Having good friends increase your enjoyment of life and improve your health.
- Friends are our truest treasures.
- We live longer and we are healthier with close friends.
- A good friend is someone that lets us be ourselves and hopefully encourages us to become the best part of ourselves.

spanish *buenos días*

Melinda Popiel (MS Blue)

In November and December, students in MS Blue started a unit entitled “Staying in Shape.” They completed a variety of activities including interviewing each other about maintaining good health, working with various web sites to research sports, different foods and their health benefits, and viewing the periodic table in Spanish to determine how different elements affect health. In this unit, students are also learning the *preterit*, one of the past tenses. To demonstrate their knowledge, students reported on sporting events, recorded their voices narrating how a sport was played, described their experience training for a mile run in physical education, and wrote reflections on various readings. As an extension of our study of the *preterit*, the class has begun reading *The Little Prince* in Spanish.

This month, students will also complete a final assessment project. Using the Internet, they will be asked to research how Spanish is used in the medical profession in the United States and abroad. They will also be asked to visit a medical establishment such as a hospital, doctor’s office, clinic, school



etc. to complete their research. As part of this project, students will prepare an essay and give an oral presentation.

An additional project for advanced students will be to research an athletic club or organization (e.g. YMCA) in a Spanish-speaking country of their choice. Here they will be asked to prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the popularity of sports practiced, competitions, as well as outline any cultural differences and/or comparisons found between their country and the United States. Students share their presentations with the class.

Patricia Amesquita (MS White)

In November, students in MS White started a MYP unit entitled “A Conocernos” (Let’s Meet). They worked on a variety of activities to demonstrate their understanding on the new vocabulary and grammar structures. Some of this included reading, writing and giving presentations describing people, talking about what others like or don’t like, discussing cultural perspectives on friendship, recording a song in Spanish, and working on personal projects. As part of this unit, students used interactive activities such as audio, pronunciation practice, video, links to workbook pages and games.

This month, students will be working on their final project for this unit. The objective

of this assessment is to reflect on the unit question: What does it mean to be a good friend? Students will be asked to use PowerPoint and make a photo album about their close friends. The album will include descriptions of the photographs and a minimum of six slides. Students should use prior knowledge and make connections between what they learned beforehand and now. An oral presentation will complete the project. Website resources include: <http://go.hrw.com> (Textbook website filled with grammar, vocabulary, audio, video, online recording and interactive drills), www.quia.com, and www.wordreference.com.

PHYS ED

Jared Trippel

The Middle School finished a Team Handball unit before the holiday break. In this unit the students learned about the rules of the game and offensive/defensive concepts that helped them to participate in small-sided games.

As the Middle School moves into the New Year they will take part in a Basketball unit that will focus on offensive strategies and the concept of “moving without the ball.” The students will use these skills to play in small-sided games. They will also participate in a Badminton unit that will introduce them to the sport, and have them develop the different shots and styles of play needed to play in singles and doubles games.

chinese 你好

Zhen Goldowski

This month, the 8th grade Chinese students are studying the unit, “Birthday Celebration and Traveling.” These lessons teach students how to communicate about birthday celebrations, including giving and replying to invitations, buying and receiving gifts, and attending parties. The lesson also includes topics such as special Chinese festival foods and comparing physical features. The lessons on traveling teach students to discuss travel plans, read travel brochures and flight timetables, assess photographs, talk about travel preparations and see someone off on a trip.

Next month, the students will engage in

lessons about sickness, culminating with a review of the past few units. In these lessons, we use all kinds of activities to help students remember the lessons we have learned. This unit teaches students how to talk about illness, read medical instructions and write notes of absence. In addition, students will learn how Chinese medicine can be very effective in treating health problems. It focuses on diagnosing and treating the underlying imbalance that produces the symptoms of food allergy. It can reduce the body’s negative reaction to foods, support the functioning of the internal organs, and improve the immune system.

french bonjour

Vanessa Robinson

Before the break the students finished Chapter 9 in their textbook *Allez Viens!* In this chapter they learned to use the past tense, appropriate language for a telephone conversation and how to console a friend. They also learned about the historic greco-roman city of Arles, France. Before we begin Chapter 10, we will review the material from Chapter 9 as well as reinforce some of the basics learned over the years such as conjugating verbs in the present and previous vocabulary. In the next chapter, the students

will learn about shopping for clothing in francophone countries as well as how to ask for and give advice, express needs, give and receive compliments and offer constructive criticism. The students will also learn how to properly use direct object pronouns. We will discuss fashion in francophone countries. Two more chapters remain in the textbook, one dedicated to going on a vacation and the last to city life. As a class, we are committed to preparing ourselves for high school French.