

THE CODRINGTON SCHOOL

Barbados



IB Standards and Practices—Reflections on the Secondary School **Prepared by Eliana Marcenaro, Head of Secondary School**

The Codrington School was opened in 1917 as a boarding school for girls. It closed in the 1980's when it no longer met the changing needs of the population. Close to two decades later the Ministry of Education contacted Sylvia Johnson and suggested that she look into an international programme. The school was reopened in 2002 by Ms Sylvia Johnson, who is currently a trustee and the chairman of the Board of Directors. After submitting application A for the Primary Years Programme, Mr Dennison MacKinnon was appointed as the IB consultant. He was hired soon after to return to Barbados in 2006 as The Codrington School headmaster.

This “new” Codrington School was created with the aim of becoming an IB World School offering all three IB programmes, an aim that was taken to the next level when Dennison MacKinnon became headmaster. The school was authorized to offer the PYP in July 2008 and the DP in February of this year.

In the secondary school, we currently offer five year levels (6th grade through 10th grade) and we will begin DP 1 year in 2010-11. We have a maximum class size of fifteen and only one class group per year level. In general, we have only one teacher per subject area (except in Language B where we have separate Spanish and French teachers, and in the arts, where we have separate visual arts and music teachers) although that will necessarily change for the 2010-11 school year. Five of our secondary school teachers work in both the PYP and MYP (P.E., music, visual arts and sections of PYP Spanish.) We have 56 students in the entire secondary school, and close to 100 students in the primary school. Schoolwide, our staff represents over fifteen nationalities and our student body represents more than twenty nationalities.

Being a small community allows us to work closely with students, families and faculty. We often call our community “the Codrington family” and we are proud of the tight friendships fostered here, as well as the collegial relationship among members of the staff. Moreover, being the only school in the region that seeks to implement the full IB continuum, we feel a strong sense of pride and responsibility towards the project that is our school. For us, “there is no Plan B,” as Dennison MacKinnon says-- we are 100% committed to the IB mission, and this drives all aspects of our work with students, parents, staff, and other members of our community. Given that the school was re-opened in 2002 specifically with the goal of offering an IB programme (and by 2007 had committed to offering all three programmes), our efforts in staffing, professional development, curriculum planning and assessment, procedures and relationships with students and families are all in-tune with the IB mission statement.

Standard A1

There is close alignment between the educational beliefs and values of the school and those of the programme.

As mentioned above, the school was reopened in 2002 with the clear mission of implementing the three International Baccalaureate programmes. Our mission statement and philosophy statement are the following:

Educational mission

Using the finest international expertise and techniques we shall provide a level of academic excellence which will embrace the similarities and differences of all cultures.

There will be no more than fifteen students per class and we shall maintain our fee structure at an affordable level.

Through our inquiry-based programme, we shall create a happy experience for our students, with lasting positive memories and the desire to be lifelong learners.

We shall ensure the career satisfaction of our teachers by facilitating their professional development and valuing their cultural qualities.

The parents and alumni will be part of the dynamic team which will make our school the first choice.

Philosophy

We believe that The Codrington School is a community of internationally-minded learners, both Barbadian and foreign and both children and adults, which is committed to the success of each individual child, according to that child's age, aptitudes and abilities, whilst developing in each person the qualities outlined in the International Baccalaureate learner profile.

We further believe that all students at the school should be offered the opportunity to learn in an atmosphere of trust, security and high educational standards, without either the threat of or recourse to corporal punishment, which will enable them to be well educated in all disciplines offered by the school, whether curricular or enrichment activities.

The staff members at the school embody this philosophy. We work closely with the attributes of the learner profile, not only in our interactions with students, but also in our in-service trainings and everyday conversations with each other, including our interactions with parents. We are committed to developing internationally-minded, lifelong learners, and we constantly refer back to the learner profile in our work and in our reflections. The learner profile, the (PYP) attitudes, the Areas of Interaction—these are all visible around the school and we refer to them constantly. We ask students to use these terms in their own interactions as well as in their reflections. Rather than a “discipline system”, we turn to the learner profile to help students become more aware of their behavior and the way it impacts those around them.

We ask (and expect) that all members of our community act in accordance to the learner profile attributes. Our parents, faculty and staff, board members, students, etc. are an important part of our community, and they respond by participating actively in many areas of school life: they attend our assemblies and town meetings; they work with our students at home; they communicate with us effectively through email, letter or via conferences; they come to our gatherings and social events; they support our students in performances and competitions; and they support our staff during consultation and authorization visits.

At Codrington, a great emphasis is placed on professional development. As mentioned earlier, we are a very unique school on a small island, and we are unique in our region as well. Therefore, the school has shown its commitment to the IB mission by allocating 10% of its budget to staff training, giving each staff member a PD budget allocation and encouraging all staff members to travel to an IB workshop overseas, (or participate in an online course), at least every other year. In addition, the school has built into the calendar 15 in-service days, when teachers share their expertise (activities and insights from their own attended trainings, for example), or when outside experts are brought in to lead a workshop.

The PYP is well-developed at our school, and several of our specialists are school-wide teachers. Working closely with PYP staff and students has allowed us to build on some important aspects of the PYP. For example, teachers have gained the experience of working through inquiry-based methods in the classroom, and allowing student-centered inquiry to guide some of the planning. On a different note, many teachers

continue to refer to the PYP attitudes, which allow students to “unpack” the learner profile in greater detail. Our MYP students come to our programme with greater confidence in their intellectual work (developed in the PYP), and an understanding of the types of assessments and action steps that are a natural part of the IB continuum. The students are prepared to find the connections between programmes as well; themes are connected to the areas of interaction, exhibitions are connected to personal projects, the action component is carried over into community service projects and inter-disciplinary work is embraced.

Standard A2

The school promotes international-mindedness on the part of the adults and the students in the school community.

As mentioned above, the composition of our community (less than 40% of our students are Barbadian, and the students and staff represent over twenty nationalities as well as multiple ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural groups) allows us to foster an environment where we can develop the idea that “what unites us as humans is greater than what divides us” (to employ a phrase often used by Mr MacKinnon.) In fact, given this composition, we must constantly work towards understanding between all the members of our “Codrington family.” It is well understood in our community that the goal of our school is to help all members of our community develop the attributes of the learner profile, which are the key elements to promoting international-mindedness: since the first visit to the school, where interested parents often get a tour and a meeting with Mr MacKinnon, the vision of the school as a full IB-continuum school, and its alignment to the IB mission are made explicitly clear, with particular emphasis on the development of the attributes of the learner profile in addition to a rigorous academic programme.

Our MYP curriculum coordinator attended IB training in international-mindedness (in connection to the PYP) and her experience and resources are shared with the wider community. An excellent example is the week-long UN unit (a special inter-disciplinary unit written by our MYP coordinator and launched upon our return from half-term holidays) which involved all staff members working in teams with mixed groups of students. Sciences, mathematics and humanities teachers worked on a project around issues of health; language A and language B teachers worked with students on a project around communication as delegates to the UN; and music, visual arts and technology teachers worked on a design project. Our “Codrington Summit” on the last day involved power point presentations on developing countries by, bilingual speeches and the presentation of a collective mural piece, which is now part of our school. This unit, as the unit on genocide and the Holocaust launched two years ago, proved to our community that the curriculum work we do is most successful when connected to current international events.

The staff is also involved in training around the attributes on a regular basis (we always begin the school year with activities that relate to the programme philosophy, and they are part of the induction for new teachers, as well), to ensure that we don’t lose focus and to remind us that developing these attributes is part of our own professional and personal process as lifelong learners. We refer to the learner profile in creative activities, in our professional reflections, in our planning and in our staff meetings. As we work towards creating a coherent, challenging and exciting curriculum for our students, we constantly review our content material to ensure we are including various perspectives on an issue that has world relevance—our international staff is an excellent sounding board to this purpose. It must be noted that we recognize we are very fortunate: to have an entire school staff sit around a table twice a week and discuss issues of curriculum and programme development is an advantage that few schools have. Although working as the only teacher in a subject area is extremely demanding work, our staff members have taken on that challenge with gusto and, in fact, welcome the chance

to bounce off ideas with others who do not work within their same discipline—use of online forums such as the OCC allows the staff members to “tap into” the knowledge of other colleagues in their subject area.

In addition, our staff are able to attend professional development trainings in other countries (given our location, these are usually in Canada, USA or England) and this allows them to exchange experiences with other international educators. The OCC is a resource that several teachers use consistently, although it is our goal to increase the use for a wider set of staff members.

It is important to note that in the secondary school there are no Barbadian teachers, and therefore the staff must actively and consciously seek out connections to Barbadian experts and scholars, as well as research sites for field trips and other educational experiences that will bring students closer to the issues particular to the host country and the Caribbean region. We recognize that engaging with students in learning more about our host country is an essential component to creating a balanced international curriculum—we also recognize that we have difficulties in obtaining quality texts published regionally (particularly ones aligned with IB methodology) and in securing Barbadian staff to teach in secondary school. Moreover, we are a young school that is only beginning to develop relationships with local institutions. All of these characteristics create a tension that we must consistently work through if we want to truly develop international-mindedness in our community, ensuring that our host country and region have the place they deserve within our curriculum and in our school culture.

Given our internationally mobile student population, our students are learning to cope with what it means to work alongside peers who have had dramatically different life experiences from theirs, who may not be in school for their entire education, and who may begin or end their schooling at Codrington mid-year. This is a fairly new experience for most of our Barbadian children, and working with the learner profile gives us the tools and the language to support them in the numerous moments of transition.

From the perspective of infrastructure, we are working towards building the students' access to different cultures outside the classroom, despite our extremely limited resources. The Parents and Friends Association has been instrumental in putting together a school library, and thanks to their fund-raising efforts (and the time spent by a small team of parents in the actual planning, purchasing and setting-up of the physical space) students will enjoy a new school library in the 2009-2010 year, including a collection of fiction and non-fiction texts representing various perspectives on cultures and peoples (and in languages other than English), various international periodicals, and access to international academic databases. We are also fortunate that our book drives have secured hundreds of books with international “flavor”, mostly donated by our internationally-mobile parents. These will be beneficial to many classes for years to come.

Our entire school is now wireless, and this has proven to be an extremely useful classroom tool. Each teacher has received a laptop or desktop from the school, and we have also purchased enough projectors to share one between every two teachers. The number of staff members using web-based technology as well as video and multimedia resources has grown dramatically.

One of the areas of growth that we have identified relates to addressing the needs of our students for whom English is not the primary language. This is an area of permanent tension given that our internationally mobile families come from diverse countries, yet our resources are extremely limited and our staff is very small. We do not have “pull-out” supplementary lesson time or staff, for example, and must constantly act as liaisons between the homes and other experts in the community who might support our students outside school. Our resources (including library books in different languages) are minimal, but increasing. This is less than an optimal situation, and we often return to reflect on how we address the needs of our international students, but we have yet to develop a systematic procedure that serves them better.

Standard B1

The school demonstrates ongoing commitment to, and provides support for, the programme through appropriate administrative structures and systems, staffing and resources.

Every member of the school community is committed to developing the IB continuum at the school, from staff, administration, parent body, board of governors, external advisors, etc. Given that we are a fairly “new” school (since its reopening in 2002 with an international curriculum in mind), we consider the school we are creating to be an exciting new “project”; we have been given the liberty and support to “ask the right questions” from the very beginning. Therefore, appropriate time and resource allocation, as well as structures and systems, have been designed specifically to meet the needs of our school as it embarks in the authorization process for all three IB programmes.

First of all, the school year includes 15 in-service days, most of them focused on components of the IB programmes. New teacher induction happens the week prior to the start of the school year, and includes a number of activities to introduce the teachers to the school, its history, our mission, as well as practical concerns related to life in Barbados. Our on-site professional development workshops, planning time, and staff meeting time often focus on different areas of the programme. During the 2008-09 school year, for example, we spent four days fine-tuning our understanding of the Middle Years Programme. We began with an overview of the MYP (given that we had a number of new staff members who had worked in IB World schools which, unfortunately, did not offer the Middle Years Programme) and a workshop on the learner profile. We reviewed the subject area guides, discussing the different areas with particular attention to assessment criteria, assessment methods and areas of interaction. We mapped the aims and objectives for the first term, and looked for interdisciplinary links. Finally, we had a half-day workshop dedicated to understanding and planning for the Areas of Interaction, leaving time for teachers to meet and plan collaboratively in smaller groups. This year, given that 50% of teachers in the secondary school were new to Codrington (and most of them with experience in DP rather than MYP) we repeated the general introduction, but spent more time reviewing the curriculum that had been created the previous year by their predecessors.

In addition to the 15 in-service days, the staff meets for an hour twice a week, after lessons: Tuesday meetings are generally dedicated to administrative issues, including policy review and discussion, planning upcoming events, sharing concerns regarding specific student and planning strategies as a team, reviewing procedures and reflecting on them, etc. Thursday meetings are generally dedicated to curriculum issues, from philosophical discussions on programme components, to document preparation, to unit planning or reflection, to discussing assessment and various learning needs, etc.

Last year (2008-09) was an extremely important year in the secondary school, because we were submitting applications for both the MYP and DP simultaneously, having received our official PYP authorization in July 2008. To this effect, a very special administrative structure was created to meet the needs of the school at that exact time. In addition to Dennison MacKinnon’s position as headmaster (who fully embodies the vision and mission of the school as IB), a number of staff members were appointed to create a strong administrative staff. Eliana Marcenaro had been appointed schoolwide Director of Curriculum the previous year to focus more on the PYP authorization, and in 2008-09 she worked as a mentor and support for PYP and MYP coordinators, as well as teaching language A in the secondary school. Karen Hudson, who was head of secondary school in 2007-08, became head of lower secondary as well as language B (French) teacher, and Jeremy Hudson, who was mathematics teacher the previous year, became head of upper secondary, director of studies and DP coordinator, as well as teaching one section of mathematics. These three staff members were also part of the administrative council, which, together with the head of primary, head of admissions and headmaster, met twice a week to matters of school leadership. In addition to these administrators, Penny Clements, schoolwide

music teacher, was appointed MYP coordinator for her understanding of and commitment to the MYP. Eliana, Karen, Jeremy and Penny became the secondary school administrative team: having a team of 4 administrators (who also had teaching loads) within a secondary school staff of nine faculty members truly highlights the commitment the school placed on “getting it right” and ensuring that the work was not only equally divided among staff members, but that it did not rest on “full-time administrators.” Instead, the work from this team remained deeply connected to the programme standards and practices.

For the current school year (2009-10) the administrative team has changed. Karen and Jeremy Hudson left Barbados, and Eliana Marcenaro was appointed head of secondary school (lower and upper secondary are no longer separated); she works closely with the MYP and DP coordinators. The MYP coordinator continues to be Penny Clements, and the DP coordinator is Hettie Tinsley, a new staff member, who also takes the responsibility for teaching language A. There is no longer a director of curriculum position as it is felt that each programme needs to develop on its own; however, head of secondary school will liaise with the head of primary and with the curriculum coordinators for the connections and transitions needed between the three IB programmes.

MYP and DP coordinators share an office and have access to a printer and photocopier. They each have a laptop computer. This year, the MYP coordinator has a reduced timetable, and the head of secondary school released the DP coordinator from some language A lessons, particularly around the time of the authorization visit. By next year, the staffing grid will change to allow the DP coordinator close to 50% release time.

The Codrington School sets aside well over 2% of its budget for professional development and, as mentioned earlier, all staff members go on IB training at least every other year, not including the numerous on-site trainings we had as the school began the process for authorization. The importance that the administration places on preparing every member of the school community to understand and embrace the IB programmes is evident in the way the school administration is structured, the resources and time allocated to staff training, and the commitment to disseminating as much information as possible to all members of the school community.

The curriculum aims and objectives, recording and reporting structure, calendar of events, and other programme characteristics have become available on our school website during last school year, in addition to a wealth of other information relevant to our school programmes. In addition, the administration holds “town meetings” every month, to address specific components of the programme, as well as issues connected to school life. These town meetings are hosted by various administrators including the headmaster, heads of school, director of curriculum and curriculum coordinators. On special occasions, other members of the community have held informational meetings; a good example of this are the meetings scheduled during the MYP consultant’s visit to the school, or when the community service faculty advisor launched the community service project framework, or when the faculty and administration met with students to discuss new features of our enrichment programme. Additionally, several subject teachers send out “unit letters” describing the aims and objectives as well as the main assessments planned for that unit, while others maintain constant communication with parents via email, phone calls, and conversations during pick-up and drop-off times. During the 2008-09 school year a school server was installed, and this has allowed the systems manager to develop an “intranet” including a document repository. At this point in time only staff members have access to all the stored documents and information, but during the 2009-10 school year it is expected that each family will also have a user account and access to limited documents and information from the intranet, including programme documentation, recording and reporting structure, student progress reports, etc.

The work that this team (including the teachers) has placed on aligning the classroom experiences, assessments, practices, communication methods, systems, etc. to the IB goals is remarkable. Everyone has

demonstrated open-mindedness and risk-taking as they have been willing to re-write the curriculum (or write from scratch, for the oldest group of students), rethink the assessment methods, and prepare all the documentation for the application documents and for communications with the various stakeholders.

Staffing is a key issue at an international school like Codrington, where there is a single teacher for each subject area and our programme is completely unique in the region. Before the 2008-09 school year, all hiring was done on-island due to immigration and budgetary issues. The 2008-09 school year saw the launch of an ambitious recruitment process that yielded excellent results: we are now offering competitive packages to our overseas hires, and candidates come to us with an understanding of IB programmes (including previous IB training) as well as a strong philosophical alignment to our mission. Because a majority of staff members in the secondary school was new last year, the staff developed a strong sense of team work and commitment to our project. This year 50% our staff was new and we have documented a formal induction program for them that we hope will become a permanent part of our calendar and procedures. Most of our teachers participated in online training in their MYP subject area during the months of September-October, with the hopes that this experience will act as a catalyst for more meaningful discussions during our staff meetings. In addition, they have reviewed and discussed a number of components of the IB Diploma Programme, and prepared documentation for the DP authorization visit.

In order to support different learning needs, the school works closely with a handful of psycho-educational specialists, including a clinical psychologist and a speech/language therapist. We refer to these professionals for their evaluations, recommendations, but also bring them to lead workshops and presentations for staff. We have gathered many resources in this area that are available to all staff members, and seek to continue expanding our understanding of special needs. During the first week of in-service this year, for example, we held a workshop on special needs, led by an educational psychologist. The focus was on Asperger Syndrome and other autism spectrum disorders, but we also touched on language processing difficulties. During term three we will work with an teaching assistant for the first time; her responsibility is to work closely with two students in the first year of secondary, shadowing them in class and monitoring their progress and task management.

Given our school size, geographic location, and philosophical approach to education, obtaining and maintaining quality educational resources can be a challenge. We attempt to use local knowledge, inviting guest speakers and organizing field trips connected to the curriculum, but we do not have access to good libraries, media resources and other materials on the island. That said, the move towards increasing technology in the classroom has allowed us to move forward in providing students with a wider variety of teaching material. We also work with CES Holdings in the UK, a consolidator that ships to us resources from any country and company, an option we take full advantage of (teachers have ordered from publishers in South Africa, Australia, the United States, Canada, Spain, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, etc.) Parents continue to be a fountain of support and have often donated useful equipment, texts, and time.

Standard C1

A comprehensive, coherent, written curriculum, based on the requirements of the programme and developed by the school, is available to all sections of the school community.

The written curriculum is available to all sections of the school community through the school website. This includes links to the International Baccalaureate and Middle Year Program home pages, full course outlines in all subject for years one to five, assessment criteria rubrics, and faculty descriptors and titles. The unit work for each term is communicated via a letter sent to parents and it outlines the content, concepts, assessments and

related activities/fieldtrips intended for the coming term. Curriculum content is also shared during the reporting process where the terms' objectives for each subject are included along with the subject assessment criteria.

The curriculum is developed with students' previous learning experiences and future educational needs in mind. Firstly, as we share our campus with the PYP we have a clear understanding of what experiences our continuing students bring with them. The MYP staff has spent time discussing age appropriate content, and teaching for assessment success. This, in turn, has led to vertical planning throughout the subject groups, both in terms of content/concept development and progression of skills through ATL. As an international school we have a considerable student turn over, and a diverse population stemming from a variety of educational backgrounds. We have begun working with our staff to further develop pre-learning assessments and reflections in order to ascertain firm foundations, before building further knowledge. Our small class size means that children who join us with gaps in their education or special education needs can receive individual attention and teacher support. We have a small pool of educational needs specialists (outside school) who can help us assess where deeper problems may lie and make recommendations on how best to support a student in and outside of school. Looking at forward planning, the school submitted DP Application B, which meant that subject teachers were responsible for creating a curriculum for each of the two years of the DP, including recognizing links to TOK. We are confident that our teaching team this year is well-prepared to implement the DP curriculum expectations and are now looking at securing the necessary resources to supplement the course guides.

The curriculum places appropriate demands on students in formative and summative assessments. We plan for a variety of learners and to a variety of skills; however we will be focusing more attention on reviewing the assessment process (particularly looking at inter and intra-disciplinary units) during our in-service training for 2009-10, looking specifically at differentiation, setting and marking summative assessments in mother tongue, offering a wider variety of options within assessments to target various learner styles, and articulating prescribed minimums for different year levels. Students are exposed to exams in many subjects during term three. The final two weeks of term three are scheduled as exhibition weeks where displays, performances, competitions and concerts are held, as well as field trips and team building exercises. This is a fairly new initiative and will develop more in coming years.

The reporting process also places appropriate demands on students: the school offers two formal written reports (sent out in February and end of June) and two formal oral reports (in the form of parent-teacher conferences) in October and April. The reports are aligned with the goals and standards of the MYP, so that it includes reference to the assessment criteria in each subject area (as well as narrative comments on the student's strengths and areas for growth); the form teacher's comment on the student's development of the attributes of the learner profile; and the student reflection on their own progress. The assessment criteria for each subject are hyperlinked in the report, for easy reference. Last year we began to give students feedback on the reports using the scale of 1-7 and the level descriptors that are in-line with IB practice. This system will continue during the following years and into DP implementation.

The curriculum encourages students to become aware of individual, local, national and global issues through age appropriate content. This can be seen in the arts unit on World music and Indigenous instruments, in the humanities/language A units on the Islamic world and genocide, and in the Science unit on water. The inter-disciplinary unit on the United Nations developed by the curriculum coordinator, launched in October 2009, was extremely successful. It is our goal to include more current events in the curriculum.

The curriculum encourages students to develop strategies for their own learning and assessment, and to assume increasing levels of responsibility. This can be seen through the use of end of unit reflections completed in all subjects. The reflection addresses how well students have performed in the unit, how they

know they have done well, and issues that held them back and how those issues will be addressed before moving on. The ATL continuum which is currently being written helps to track the development of skills and strategies for learning; the development of public speaking skills and use of cue cards and the progression of research and citing skills. In music, students experience taking increasing levels of responsibility as they progress towards the personal project by undertaking smaller mini-personal projects. The idea is to begin training students to create essay plans, experiencing choice of content and developing freedom in the research progress. The curriculum also helps students develop responsibility by planning a number of short, medium and long-term projects which require multiple steps to complete (good examples of this are the MYP Science Fair, the MYP English speech contest, and the Music practicals.) The school also provides support for students who have faced difficulties in becoming independent. Student's individual needs are discussed in administrative meetings. Any cause for concern is communicated to the parents/guardians, and in collaboration with parents and student, the student can go on a daily report system to define and focus specific targets addressed in becoming independent. This daily report is viewed as a method of assisting a student in becoming more self-reflective, (as well as improving the channels of communication between home and school,) rather than a punishment for poor performance.

The curriculum promotes all the attributes of the learner profile. There are various displays of terminology and illustrations around the school, and the staff refers to them constantly. The learner profile is used in behavior management both preventative and curative, identified as skills to address certain collaborative tasks, referred to in the study of literature or case studies, and recognized as behaviors' to focus on as we approach various topics in the curriculum. Students' end of unit reflection forms, as well as their final written reports, also include a section to address which attributes of the learner profile come naturally to them, and which attributes need more attention.

The curriculum naturally offers ample opportunity for student inquiry. Small classes (maximum 15) allow students to work together as a whole class, as individuals, as pairs and in small groups--there is relative freedom from diversions and less pressure or competition to present ideas. Moreover, small class size facilitates that the teacher embark on more ambitious projects that require extensive planning and marking or editing/redrafting, given that the task of working with students is not as onerous. The small staff size allows teachers to plan collaboratively with greater freedom and ease. In addition, The Codrington School, as a private institution, is not tied to local frameworks or curriculum demands, and is the only school that does not sit the national examinations (although we do facilitate for students to sit them at another institution, if they wish to do so.) As a staff we refer to the Barbados Attainment Targets, but we are not expected to meet all the objectives outlined therein.

The curriculum is regularly reviewed in light of new developments. We have scheduled in-service training days (every half term, and start of term, as well as a week in September) where new issues are addressed; we also hold a curriculum meeting once a week to develop current issues, or agree future formats. We now have a main server where all documents will be centralized, and accessible by all staff. We will look into developing the use of wikis during staff activities next year.

Student work is visible in displays all over the campus. There is student work or reflection in all classrooms in various forms: models and cartoons, writing and images. There are big displays of summative assessments during exhibition fortnight in term three; language A hosts a display of journal entries and essays based on the Holocaust and conducts a poetry recital, humanities displays models based on topography and natural resources, and science students hold the MYP Science Fair. Visual arts work is displayed in the hall during productions, assemblies and/or parent conferences throughout the year. There are also presentations which are open to the whole school community such as the speech contest, the school production, and performing

arts composition assessments. Assembly blocks also offer opportunities to express learning experiences, recently including presentations on the school ICT policy, the areas of interaction and Barbados Independence Day. Finally, The Codrington School participates in nationwide visual arts competitions, and our students' work is displayed in conference centers and other exhibit halls on the island.

One of our goals from the 2008-09 school year, which continues into 2009-10, is creating a more ambitious and effective language B program. We feel this is an area that has not developed to the same degree as others, and we are confident that working with our two new and experienced staff members (French and Spanish teachers) will help enhance this area of the curriculum. We also think that their contribution to the team as we create a language policy will be extremely valuable. We have taken first steps into creating a language policy, but feel that the staff for the 2009-10 school year must be part of the review process, so we plan to include this conversation during our in-service days.

We are pleased with the balance we have in the curriculum at this point in time. In the secondary school, with a timetable of up to 40 blocks a week, we have the following break-down for 2009-10:

<u>MYP 1-2</u>		<u>MYP 3</u>		<u>MYP 4-5</u>	
Assembly	1	Assembly	1	Assembly	1
Church	1	Church	1	Church	1
Language A	5	Language A	5	Language A	5
Language B	4	Language B	4	Language B	4
Maths	5	Maths	5	Maths	5
Science	4	Science	4	Science	4
Humanities	4	Humanities	4	Humanities	4
Art	2	Art	2	Art/Music	3
Music	2	Music	2	ExtSci/Design	3
PE	2	PE	3	PE	3
Technology	3	Technology	3	Technology	2
Form Blocks	2	Form Blocks	2	Form Blocks	2
Study Hall	2	Study Hall	2	Study Hall	2
Hymns	1	Hymns	1	Hymns	1
Swimming	2	Swimming	NA	Swimming	NA
		Study Skills	1		
Total	40	Total	40	Total	40

Standard C2

The school has implemented a system through which all teachers plan and reflect in collaborative teams.

As mentioned earlier, the regular school calendar and timetable include in-service days and weekly meeting time dedicated to curriculum issues. This includes time for teachers to plan and reflect collaboratively. It is important to recognize that given the small staff size (one teacher per subject area, except in the arts, where visual arts and music are taught by two different teachers, and in language B, where French and Spanish are

taught by two different teachers) we can, in fact, all sit together around a (large) table and openly discuss the units we will be working on with each year group. Vertical articulation, therefore, becomes an easier task than in schools where several teachers within the same subject area must come to a consensus before sharing their plans with other teachers: we can remain flexible and, in fact, have on several occasions changed the order or scope of a unit to allow for better intra-disciplinary work. Our main concern lies in creating a coherent programme, particularly with regards to the horizontal articulation. Last year, much of the time was dedicated to documenting the units—this year, the staff will work on fine-tuning these documents and finding the best way to align their objectives and assessments, in order to provide a comprehensive, effective learning experience for the students, taking into account more carefully ATL skills and the other areas of interaction.

The MYP and DP coordinators have done an excellent job of facilitating these meetings, ensuring they are productive, and in line with IB philosophy and practices.

All staff members receive appropriate documentation, including subject guides, IB documents, access to OCC codes, etc. before the school year begins, and select documents are added during the week of in-service. There are also copies of the documentation available on the website, and hard copies are kept in blue binders in the staff room for wide use.

Standard C3

Teaching and learning at the school empowers and encourages students to become lifelong learners, to be responsible towards themselves, their learning, other people and the environment, and to take appropriate action.

The Middle Years Programme, when implemented well, naturally empowers and encourages students to become lifelong learners. It is a result from working with the areas of interaction, specifically with the reflection attached to the work with ATL; it is a result from engaging in activities that demand hands-on participation, including the fairs, exhibitions, presentations, creative performances, technology projects, community service projects, and eventually the personal project. At The Codrington School we understand and are committed to this standard, although after two years of gradually learning more about the programme implementation, we realize there is much still to do. As our curriculum becomes more coherent (better articulated horizontally and vertically) and our units naturally help students find intra-disciplinary connections, we are finding better ways of conducting formative assessments that support and strengthen student learning, as well as meaningful summative assessments that propel student understanding (and inquiry) even further. We believe that the skills and understandings the students have developed in these two years have certainly moved them towards becoming lifelong learners and developing a greater sense of responsibility towards themselves, others and the environment. We find that the discussions that connect content material with a practical use in adult life are more complex discussions, involving more students and various perspectives. We find that students begin to answer these questions for each other: they are more willing and ready to find connections to areas of interaction, for example, and they are also stronger in pointing out the value of a certain skill outside the classroom. An example of the latter would be when during the first annual MYP speech competition students were asked when skills in public speaking might be useful. Their responses ranged from using the skills for job interviews, to addressing large families at gatherings, to speaking in front of an audience as a natural component of being the head or leader of a company or organization. The variety of science fair projects, including a research project on the science behind perfect corn popping, the impact artificial versus natural ingredients can have on the rate of decay of yogurt, the importance of a number of variables on the growth rate of plants, and the connection between refined sugar and people's preference in candy all demonstrate that

students are becoming more involved in their learning process, making choices about their own inquiry that is connected to personal preferences rather than following teacher directions passively. We firmly believe that only in the continued practice of these skills, and the opportunities to make those personal choices about their inquiry (with careful reflection), will the students become lifelong learners. The fact that we continue to work with the attributes of the learner profile helps them develop the responsibility towards themselves, others and their environment. We believe that the MYP provides the best transition into the DP, and that the skills our students are learning will be useful when they being DP1.

One of the issues that we need to remind ourselves of is that as a new school with fairly young staff members (most who have not taught in an MYP school before but who do have experience in the DP,) there is little tradition we can “fall back on”. This is excellent in that it allows us to create the school that we want “from scratch”—everyone that has come to work at Codrington does it with the full knowledge that the school seeks to be authorized in all three programmes, and they arrive ready to dive into this project with all their energy. In fact, I would say that what attracts most of our new staff members to Codrington is precisely the opportunity to build an IB school from the ground up, with the full support of the community.

There is a challenge to being such a young school. Because we are self-reflective and we want to “get it right the first time” the process can feel overwhelming, albeit rewarding. Our oldest students are fifteen or sixteen years old, and they are pioneers not only in the school, but in the country, as they will be the first cohort to experience the Diploma Programme; they have no group of students to compare themselves to, and no graduating class to look up to. We observe them develop the attributes of the learner profile, and we comment on their growth in the IB system. These are the moments that staff members will share around the table at our weekly meetings, and we can pat ourselves on the back because we are accomplishing so much more for those students than we would if we did not work to implement the MYP. Having added the community service project component to MYP 4 year level last year was an excellent move--this year it is expanded to include years MYP 3-5. We have had students working with PYP 3 students (5-6 year olds); a student working at an animal shelter on weekends; a student working with the maintenance man to fix wobbly desks and to build an entire wooden swing set for the early childhood playground; a student working as assistant to the school’s fencing coach; two students working with the music teacher as backstage technicians during the PYP drama production; etc. We hope to create a school culture of service, and to work more closely to encourage students towards action that stems from their own learning and that is connected to their interests and areas of personal inquiry.

There are many ways in which we try to help student understand their own learning style, (beyond the ATL skills and reflections.) First of all, differentiation in the classroom is an issue that we discuss from the moment of conducting staffing interviews to regular weekly meetings to in-service workshops. Allowing for various learning styles is fundamental in our school—in fact, it is part and parcel of what we do because we are a school that prides itself in celebrating and working with different learners. This is one of the key reasons why we keep maximum class size at 15, and why we admit students that may have a learning difference. It is also the reason why every year we hold at least one mandatory in-service workshop focusing on a learning difference. We have also dedicated time in our meetings to discussing the importance of assigning assessments of various forms, and also of allowing students to submit work in different formats, as long as they can demonstrate an understanding and ability in the skills and knowledge being assessed. A good example of this are the music practicals in MYP 4, where students performed a popular musical piece, created a power point presentation, shared a video, composed a piece of music for piano, applied knowledge gained to tune a piano differently in order to play a new composition, and explained their reasoning and creative process when composing. Similarly, in humanities, students were placed in groups and they created models, performed skits, and gave oral presentations to highlight multiple perspectives and disseminate varied information on the

topic of colonization in New France. In the 2008-09 school year we strengthened the practice of working with rubrics that were closely aligned with the assessment criteria for the subject (written specifically for the assignment) and this tool for communication also proved to help students understand their own learning style better, as they worked to review and improve their drafts, using the feedback on the piece, as well as on the rubric.

In addition to differentiation in the classroom, we help students become more aware of their strengths and areas for growth through a number of reflection exercises, including our reports and conference system. During the third term, students, parents and teachers will all meet together to discuss the student's progress, and work to plan strategies for improvement. Finally, we use the student planners and communications with parents to encourage students to become more reflective and responsible about their own progress, as well as unit, subject, and term reflections undertaken in class.

Standard C4

There is an agreed approach to assessment, and to the recording and reporting of assessment data, which reflects the practices and requirements of the programme.

At Codrington the staff has been part of creating and reviewing the assessment procedure, which has many components. From the discussions early in the 2008-09 school year regarding different types of assessment, with particularly focus on criterion-referenced, developmentally appropriate assessments, and clarification on the difference between formative and summative assessments, the staff has moved towards diversifying assessment types, recording and reporting on those assessments clearly and widely. We have looked at creating an essential agreement on assessment, pushing staff members to utilize backward building in their planning, keeping ATL skills and unit objectives at the forefront, and allowing for various types of learners to demonstrate their understanding in a creative way. We have also discussed, led by our curriculum coordinator, various ways of recording assessment data from observational evidence to traditional testing to skills-based, rubric-explained tasks. During the 2008-09 year we practiced describing the summative assessment in detail, and creating a rubric to articulate the expectations for each of the criteria at each level. All of this information was communicated in a timely manner to students and parents. Students learned to use their planners and record carefully all deadlines and steps for project completion—at times the staff came together to create a monthly assessment calendar to ensure that students could see “at a glance” the various deadlines, and appreciate the variety and richness of the tasks assigned. At various points of the year we turned towards the subject guides, and gave teachers time to look through the documentation and reflect on the ways in which they were aligning their assessment practices to the MYP standards.

As a school, we are very proud of our reporting system because we feel that it allows us to share with students and families the child's progress on a number of areas that are particularly important in the MYP. As mentioned earlier, our reporting system has several components: a detailed written report, submitted to parents twice a year, which addresses the student's level of performance at that point in time; two formal oral reports, in the form of parent-teacher conferences (the second involving the student); a number of chats and email exchanges with parents; and task-specific comments/rubrics which the students take home and share with their family. In addition, the staff uses three other means for communicating on the student's progress with parents: student planners, a concern/commendation form that is sent home and placed on file, and a 'daily report card' which is a form the student must take with him on a daily basis and have each teacher write a comment and sign for each of his/her lessons. Naturally, given our small numbers, we often take care of

communications with parents through emails, phone calls, notes, conversations during drop-off and pick-up times, or scheduled meetings outside of the parent-teacher conferences.

As shown in the sample report, this document is a detailed account of the student's progress within the term, highlighting their performance in connection to the learner profile, aims and objectives set by the subject teachers for that term, and their general interaction within the community.

Standard D1

Students learn to choose to act, and to reflect on their actions, so that they contribute to their own well-being and that of the community and the environment.

The Codrington School respects and values self initiated action, and is working with the staff to raise awareness of this important element of the MYP. However, we recognize that this is an area where we need to continue reflecting and developing. As we review our curriculum to reflect the areas of interaction more clearly, with greater emphasis on real-world problem-solving situations, we hope that student reflection and learning will lead to meaningful action. In the meantime, we have designed a community service component for the students. Piloted in the 2008-09 year, our oldest group (MYP 4) received a packet containing guidelines for how to create a project proposal, how to identify an advisor and how to document the experience, following up with advisor comments for the duration of a term (12 weeks.) Eight students chose to remain on school grounds to accomplish their projects, but one student volunteered in an animal shelter during weekends. Several students exceeded the minimum expected hours of contribution; we believe this indicates that the students are aware of the need for action and service. During the exhibition fortnight, students shared their experiences in a small "fair", where younger MYP students could ask those students questions about their projects. Because this was the first year, we asked the students to complete 25 hours of a supervised activity, but in the 2009-10 year the minimum expected hours is increased to 50 hours (this is only a guiding figure) and students will be encouraged to seek opportunities outside the school grounds. We have also expanded the project to include MYP 3, MYP 4 and MYP 5 students to help create the ethos of service and action around the school. We hope that in the future this process will be more ambitious, with students documenting their experience and reflections more carefully and thoroughly, and preparing a poster for display, sharing not only their experience but the lessons and insight obtained from their contribution. As our PYP students move up to MYP, we are certain that their understanding of the action component will be stronger, and will lead to even more productive community service experiences. Our school wide PE teacher (and IB diploma graduate herself), Kim Adam, is our community service coordinator for the MYP, and is currently appointed to lead CAS in the next year.

Standard D2

In the final year of the programme, all students complete a programme-specific project that allows them to demonstrate a consolidation of their learning, in the case of the PYP and MYP, and to demonstrate the extension and development of their learning in the Diploma Programme.

This year our technology teacher (and MYP 5 advisor), Filiz Soyak, is the coordinator for MYP personal projects and has set the groundwork for a successful procedure towards the successful completion of the projects. She has developed a booklet to accompany the students in the process, and the timetable has designated time for work on the personal project through the form blocks. Hettie Tinsley, DP coordinator and language A teacher, is also closely involved with MYP 5 and has spoken to the students about the connections between the personal project and extended essays, as well as a number of other related factors

between the two programmes. We believe that a number of projects and objectives in the various subject curricula (language A in particular) are well-aligned with skills necessary to succeed in personal projects and feel confident about meeting this standard.