

Approaches to teaching and learning

Frequently asked questions

Question	Answer
Why approaches to learning?	Through approaches to learning in IB programmes, students develop skills that have relevance across all areas of learning and help them “learn how to learn”. Approaches to learning can be learned and taught, improved with practice and developed incrementally. They provide a solid foundation for learning independently and with others. Approaches to learning help students prepare for, and demonstrate learning through, meaningful assessment. They provide a common language for students to reflect on, and articulate how, they are learning. They prepare students for success in their studies and life beyond school.
Which term should we use, approaches to learning or approaches to teaching?	Approaches to learning can be learned and taught. An important part of each DP ATL document will therefore focus on teaching these skills. The IB has identified pedagogical principles underpinning the IB programmes; more information on these can be found in the approaches to teaching section of <i>Approaches to teaching and learning in the Diploma Programme</i> .
How will the DP approaches to learning align with the MYP approaches to learning?	The same five approaches to learning categories exist across all IB programmes. To ensure alignment, the IB has commissioned the same authoring team to develop materials for approaches to learning in the DP and the MYP.
How will this impact my school?	The development of DP ATL supports schools in meeting a number of IB programme standards and practices (2014). The impact of implementation will depend on the school context; however, some themes have emerged in initial discussions with schools: Implementing DP ATL may require a shift in focus or emphasis as DP coordinators will be increasingly viewed as pedagogical leaders in schools, there will be a need for cross-departmental and whole faculty planning of skills, and implementing approaches to teaching and learning may result in more engaged teachers and students.
What kind of support will be offered for approaches to learning?	<i>Approaches to teaching and learning in the Diploma Programme</i> will be available to all schools on the OCC. New resources are being developed including a suite of videos. Existing IB workshops will be revised and new workshops will be developed to support the implementation of ATL.
Will students be assessed on approaches to learning?	The IB recommends formative assessment of approaches to learning skills within the school, using peer and self assessment; however, there will be no discrete IB assessment of approaches to learning.
Can we use our own existing and well-embedded approach to approaches to learning?	Yes, providing it aligns with the DP approaches to learning guidance.

In terms of approaches to learning, what will the IB require of schools?	The IB will look for evidence of the development of ATL at authorization and during programme evaluation. The IB will expect that DP schools will enable students to practise and reinforce approaches to learning skills, as the benefits for student learning and engagement are potentially great. The IB expects that, over time, schools will create an overview map of ATL skills across subjects. As with other programme changes, the IB recognizes that the implementation timeline will vary as schools operate in different contexts.
Is approaches to learning something extra on top of my workload?	This will depend on the approach individual IB schools and individual DP teachers will take. Many teachers have been teaching approaches to learning skills for many years and using the approaches to teaching advocated by the IB. This development makes the planning for such skills and teaching strategies more explicit. The expectation is that teachers and schools will plan for the gradual integration of approaches to learning into their courses and programmes.
Will the IB provide guidance in each approaches to learning category?	Yes, support materials in various media will be produced. See question above about what kind of support will be offered. Each of the approaches to learning and approaches to teaching categories will be supported with guidance text and exemplified through video.
Do we need unit planners for approaches to learning? Do we have to use one?	Using unit planner templates is a way of explicitly planning teaching strategies and for development of ATL skills. Many DP teachers have requested unit planner templates. The IB will provide 3–4 examples, and teachers may choose any of those or create their own. The IB recommends the practice of planning for units rather than using only the guide or syllabus.
Are approaches to learning skills and learner profile the same thing?	No, however, the development of approaches to learning skills will allow students to further develop the attributes of the learner profile.
What professional development is available to learn more about DP ATL?	A category 3 workshop called “Approaches to teaching and learning in the Diploma programme” will be available from May 2015. Please refer to http://ibo.org/events/workshops.cfm for scheduled dates and locations. In addition, each category 1 and 2 subject-specific workshop will feature a brief introduction to Approaches to teaching and learning in the Diploma programme from early 2015; a variety of resources have been produced for workshop leaders to use.