

THE BIGGER PICTURE

MYP eAssessment is considered simply part of the Middle Years Programme at Het Rijnlands Lyceum Oegstgeest International School.

Het Rijnlands Lyceum Oegstgeest International School (ISRLO) was one of 60 schools that participated in the MYP eAssessment pilot project in 2015 and has been offering the on-screen exams to its Year 5 students since then. The school sees benefits for students and for teachers, says MYP coordinator Annelies Brabant. "We see it as a tool for everybody who's involved."

The coordinator talks with parents about MYP eAssessment and why the school requires student participation. "We don't use the results to pass or fail students but to inform [academic] choices," she says. "[The exams] are fantastic preparation for later," Brabant says, "and they show what students know and what they can do." MYP eAssessment also helps teachers rethink what they're doing in the classroom and focus their attention on professional development, she adds, and the school appreciates that it provides a way for the International Baccalaureate to monitor its programme.

To help students get ready for MYP eAssessment, ISRLO runs mock exams and familiarisation activities that allow students to practice using the tools found in the examination. "They take a little bit of the anxiety away," Brabant says.

The mock exams occur in the third quarter of the school year, functioning as both formative and summative assessments. "Teachers are savvy about integrating eAssessment into the classroom," Brabant says. "They are not teaching one way all year and then teaching toward eAssessment for three weeks."

In addition to the on-screen exams, MYP eAssessment includes ePortfolios, which enable assessment of students' coursework in language acquisition, arts, physical and health education and design. The ePortfolios are internally marked by teachers and then moderated against the IB global standard.

**Het Rijnlands
Lyceum Oegstgeest
International School
(state): MYP Years 1-5**

**First offered the Middle
Years Programme (MYP):
1994**

**Total number of students:
350**

**Head of school:
Mathijs Hekkelman**

**Middle Years Programme
coordinator:
Annelies Brabant**

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evolving and can't get
better unless teachers and
schools are part of that.*”

—ANNELIES BRABANT,
MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME
COORDINATOR, HET RIJNLANDS
LYCEUM OEGSTGEEST
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The exams allow MYP students to demonstrate what they have learned, what they know and what they can do. Typical summative assessments from MYP units are sampled, simulated or replicated. In addition, all elements of MYP eAssessment are carefully aligned with teaching and learning in the programme, so they inform classroom practice and provide ongoing accurate, useful feedback to the MYP community. “eAssessment is still evolving and can’t get better unless teachers and schools are part of that,” Brabant says.

“People were very curious about the assessments,” Brabant says. “Initially, teachers were surprised at what they actually looked like,” as they expected something more like Diploma Programme (DP) exams. However, once they saw the preview of the type of on-screen examination and type of question, “it made sense.”

“Writing authentic assessment in the MYP is a challenge,” she adds. MYP eAssessment exams occur at the end of the programme, she notes, but some form of the same type of testing needs to live across the programme.

Another challenge is how to configure the assessment environment so that it meets MYP eAssessment requirements, she says. “What do we do with kids who have extra time--do they continue as other kids leave? Who downloads responses on a flash drive? That takes a lot of time.”

Then there are unpredictable problems like computers crashing and clocks not starting, but “everything we have come across has been manageable,” Brabant says. The school loads the assessments onto extra computers so students can move over and pick up from where they were on the exam. “On the first day of the exams last year, 15 computers crashed in the first few minutes during the history assessment,” she says. “No one panicked.”

“The thing that helps us best is perspective,” Brabant explains. “The overall attitude we are promoting is this is worthwhile and a legitimate measure of what students have done over the programme.”

Some students ask why they’re doing it if it doesn’t affect their grades or entrance into the DP. “Those conversations we had gave us a real chance to come back to the grand scheme of things: it will benefit students, teachers, the school and the IB,” Brabant says. “We all have a role to play in that.” ISRLO students clearly see that perspective. Last year, MYP eAssessment was during the second week of the school’s two-week break in May, and all but one Year 5 student came in to take the assessments.

As she watches students do MYP eAssessment, Brabant says, “there is something sort of grown-up in their prepping for and completing the exams. For the first one, they come in and are unsure. By the third assessment, they come in and sit down, they have headphones and scratch paper. This moment of transformation is a rite of passage and an end marker for them.”

When the results come in afterward, students get to see how they compare with global peers. “They were never able to do that before,” Brabant says.

While internal marks determine whether a student moves onto the DP at ISRLO, MYP eAssessment results can provide insight into course choices, Brabant says. For example, if a student plans to take DP Chemistry at Higher Level and gets a middling grade on the chemistry exam, counsellors might talk with the student about that choice.

Younger students at ISRLO also are benefiting from MYP eAssessment. “We’re having larger conversations about how we’re structuring MYP Years 1, 2 and 3,” Brabant says. For example, students may take biology, chemistry and physics in MYP Year 3. “Is that developmentally appropriate?” she asks. Instead of offering geography and history separately in MYP Year 3, she says, the school is considering whether students would benefit from an integrated humanities model. “eAssessment turns a lens on what we’re doing,” she says.

It is important to think about how these assessments fit within the mission of the school, Brabant says. “They offer the chance and challenge to look at your own program critically. They have to gel with who the school is and what you say you do.”

For more information about MYP eAssessment visit: www.ibo.org/e-assessment

