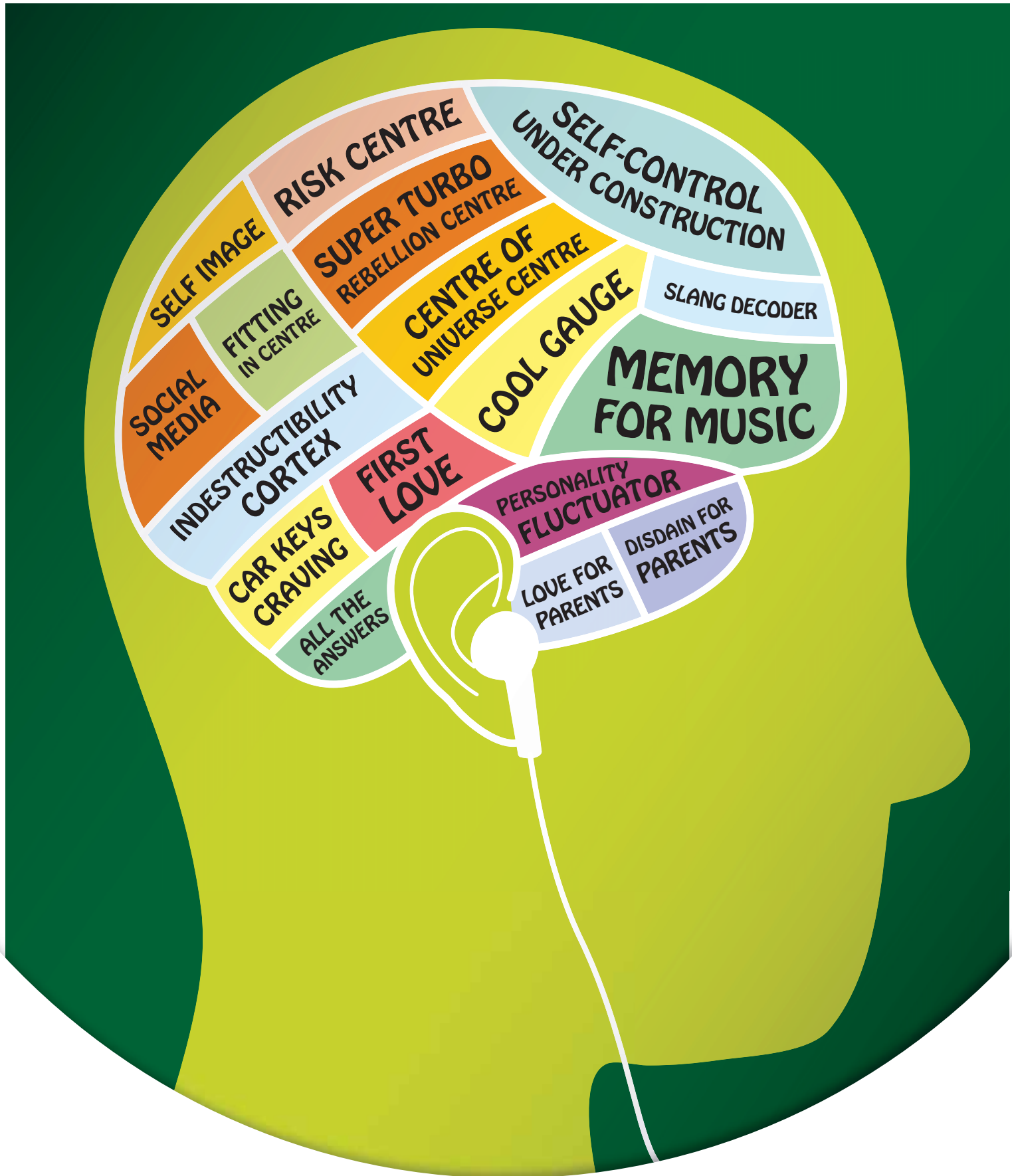




**MAKING
MEANING
CONNECTING
LEARNING
DEVELOPING
MINDS**

A curriculum for 11-14 year-olds from Fieldwork Education



Teenagers have particular needs

An effective curriculum is designed to support and improve their learning through this critical time.

OUR GUIDING QUESTIONS

Over the years that we have been designing and producing curriculums, key questions have guided all of our work. Here are the questions and why we think they are important:

1. What kind of world will our children and students live and work in?

Teaching and learning is exciting (and difficult) because it looks both forward and back. We look back because, in part, learning is about taking on the heritage of our culture and learning about what has made us who we are. We look forward because we know the world is going to be different than it was and we accept the challenge of making the best judgments we can about what that world will look like.

2. What kinds of students are likely to succeed in the world?

We are tasked with making the best predictions possible about the state of the world in the future. We have to do this because it guides our thinking about what kinds of people students will need to be. Their personal dispositions will be the key to whether students can make the best of their learning in the years to come.

3. What kinds of learning will our students need and how should they learn it?

A view about the future world and the personal qualities that will matter helps us decide what kinds of learning children and students will need. Knowing what kinds of learning they need guides us to what learning should look like in the classroom.

4. What kinds of unique needs do students of this age group have?

The International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC) is specifically designed around the needs of the developing adolescent brain in order to improve the way 11 – 14 year olds learn. It addresses five key needs of the teenage brain based on recent and consistently proven brain research.

- Much of this research tells us that the brain learns in an associative way; i.e. connecting new learning to previous learning, and adapting previously learned concepts to incorporate new learning. Making connections between the learning of different subjects is just as important as making connections within subjects.
- Because the adolescent brain is at a stage of specialising and pruning connections in a 'use it or lose it' fashion, it is crucial for students to make meaning of their learning to help strengthen the new connections and to ensure that the existing knowledge or skills connections are not lost or pruned.
- Teenagers also don't view risk in the same way that adults do. As teachers, we need to create opportunities for teenagers to be active, practise their decision-making skills and to be given the opportunity to take risks during their learning, but to do so in a safe environment.
- Peers play an increasingly important role in validation for teenagers as they move from childhood towards adulthood.
- Lastly, the adolescent's prefrontal cortex which houses the executive function, is in flux during the teenage years; specialising and maturing. As a result, teenagers need extra support with behaviours affected by the executive function such as self-organisation, decision-making and self-control.

It is these five particular needs of the teenage brain that the IMYC has been specifically designed to support while at the same time providing challenging, engaging, rigorous learning that middle years students find relevant, inspiring and enjoyable.

LEARNING WITH THE IMYC



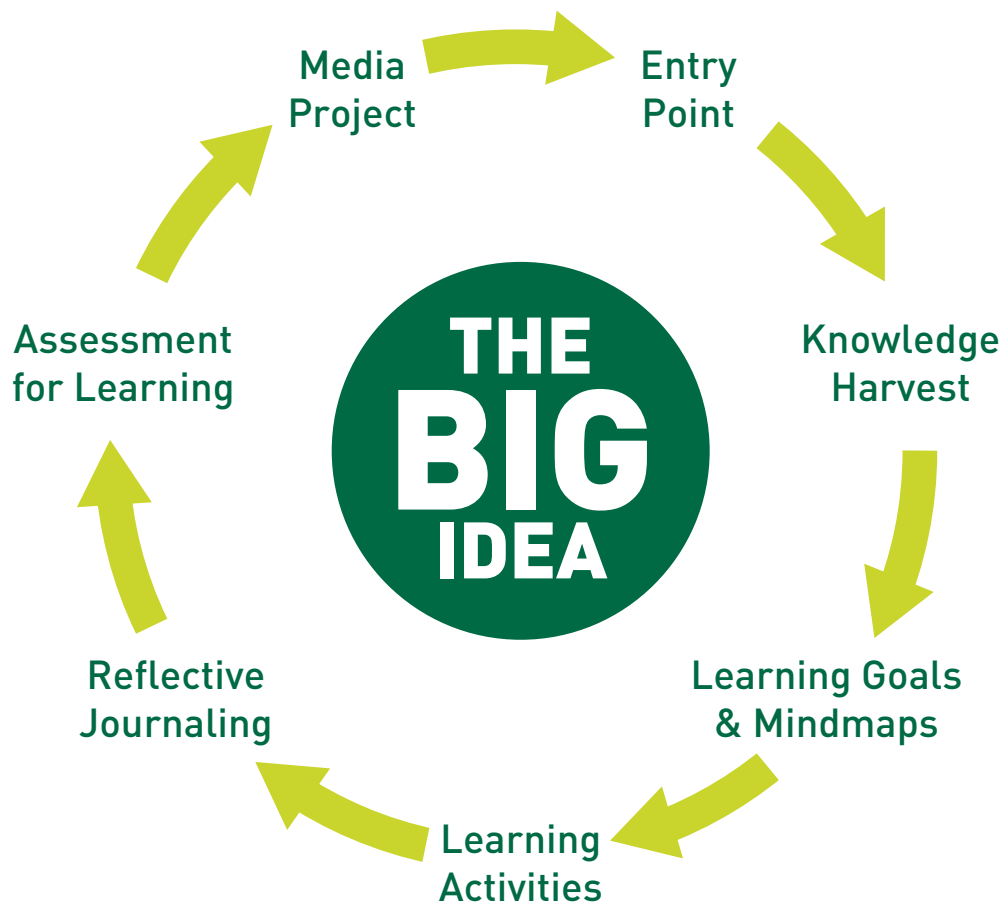
Learning with the IMYC follows six-week units based around a conceptual idea, called the ‘big idea’. An example of a big idea is: ‘Things are more stable when different elements are in the correct or best possible proportions.’ Students link the learning in their different subjects through the big idea, considering what they are learning from personal, interpersonal and global perspectives.

Students reflect regularly by responding to structured questions. This process is called ‘reflective journaling’ and is designed to help students formulate personal and conceptual understanding of the subject knowledge and skills that they are learning about, linked to the big idea.

At the end of each six-week unit, students work individually or in small groups to create and present a media project that reflects their understanding of the ways their subject learning links to the big idea. This gives students the opportunity to express their own ideas through modern, creative media.

The IMYC Process of Learning creates opportunities to connect learning and develop a personal perspective, to work with peers, take risks in a safe environment, and to help students to become confident, independent and engaged learners. It also provides them with the necessary academic rigour and transferable skills to prepare them well for GCSE or IGCSE, A levels and IB Diploma.

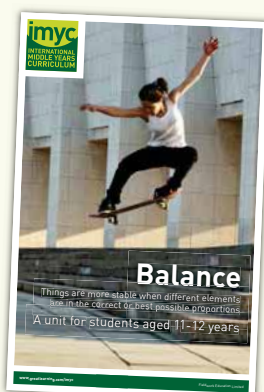
THE IMYC PROCESS OF LEARNING





THE 30 UNITS OF THE IMYC

The IMYC provides schools with ten units for each of the three year groups or grade levels it covers. Below you will find outlines of examples of units from each year group.



Balance (For 11 to 12 year olds)

The Big Idea

Things are more stable when different elements are in the correct or best possible proportions.

Subject coverage

- ✓ Art
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ History
- ✓ ICT and Computing
- ✓ Language Arts/Literacy
- ✓ Music
- ✓ Physical Education
- ✓ Science

Resilience (For 12 to 13 year olds)

The Big Idea

Success over time requires persistence.

Subject coverage

- ✓ Art
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ History
- ✓ ICT and Computing
- ✓ Language Arts
- ✓ Physical Education
- ✓ Science



Challenge (For 13 to 14 year olds)

The Big Idea

Facing up to, or overcoming, problems and barriers increases possibilities in our lives.

Subject coverage

- ✓ Art
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ History
- ✓ ICT and Computing
- ✓ Language Arts/Literacy
- ✓ Music
- ✓ Physical Education
- ✓ Science
- ✓ Technology

WHAT IS SO DIFFERENT ABOUT THE IMYC?

“It is the first curriculum that really addresses what 11 to 14 year old students need. It actually attempts to put theory into practice and openly addresses the challenges that schools face when trying to bridge this gap. The IMYC shows real understanding of the unique philosophy and approach to learning that students at this developmental level require.”

Alison Lipp, Secondary Principal and Curriculum Director at the American International School of Rotterdam



The IMYC addresses the needs of middle years (11- 14 year old/KS3) students and helps them develop as 21st Century learners. It is based on clearly defined subject learning goals and standards which outline the knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects, international mindedness and the personal development students need during their middle years experience.

The IMYC provides freedom and autonomy for teachers. It enables them to choose how to reach each learning goal, using the IMYC unit tasks, or adapting them to their students' needs, to facilitate learning and skills development. Throughout the three years of the IMYC they will have multiple opportunities to enable the practical development of skills and allow sufficient time in class for students to practise properly.

For schools, the IMYC provides a cohesive structure that links learning and develops knowledge, skills and understanding across multiple subjects all linked to a unifying conceptual idea delivered over a six-week period. It has been developed with the understanding that schools should not be forced to revise their school structure. It complements and supports existing middle and secondary school structures and planning processes. It creates formal opportunities for subject teachers from multiple disciplines to collaborate and provides a cohesive learning experience for all students – again promoting relevance, engagement, skills and subject knowledge acquisition, personal and international development.

Once schools become members of the IMYC they can access the IMYC Members' Lounge. The Members' Lounge supports teachers in their planning and use of the IMYC and helps them to become part of a worldwide learning community using the IMYC. It includes handy tools like the Route Planner - an innovative teacher-friendly tool that helps teachers plan for their subjects for a whole year, ensuring suitable subject coverage of the learning goals for every year group. The Assessment for Learning programme and its tracking tool are resources that help teachers track subject skills over three years and give teachers online access to the latest updated IMYC units.

ABOUT FIELDWORK EDUCATION

In 1984, two headteachers and long term colleagues, David Playfoot and Martin Skelton, began Fieldwork Education. Their goal was to offer the best help to schools they could, help they felt hadn't been available to their own schools, and help that was firmly rooted in best practice and research but that was also practical, accessible and jargon-free.

Something else was important too. Even as far back as 1984, they recognised that learning was what schools were all about and that everything else in school should be judged on how well it contributed to children's and students' learning. *Improving learning* soon became the mission statement of Fieldwork Education and the defining characteristic of all of the early training work we carried out.

Fieldwork Education has grown and changed since those early days although our passion for improving learning remains as strong as ever. We now have long term relationships with schools, working with them over time to build capacity and improve learning for everyone.

We have developed the fastest-growing independent primary curriculum in the world. The International Primary Curriculum (IPC) is now used by schools in over 92 countries where thousands of children experience great learning, great teaching and great fun. And we have also developed a range of assessment and evaluation tools, all – as you might expect – focused on learning. From Learning-Focused Reviews to our Assessment for Learning Programme to our transformational Looking for Learning protocol and The Looking for Learning Toolkit.

The IMYC represents the latest piece in our programme of learning-focused support for schools. We remain thrilled and buoyed by the support we get from schools and the feedback they give us about all aspects of our work.



“ After just one unit the students love it already because it is exciting to learn this way. They want to learn because it means something to them. ”

Head of School

“ Our learning now, you can see how one thing links to another, it's like you're building a mosaic. You find a piece and it fits and helps you to make a big picture of what you're learning. ”

Student

“ The staff were shocked at how much understanding the children had gained from their learning. We were amazed at the engagement and the work produced. It's so exciting. ”

Head of School

“ The students are seeing the links in their subject learning before the adults do. We hadn't anticipated the students' ability to make the links so effectively and what's most interesting is that it's a very personal thing for each student; they can find connections in very different ways. ”

Curriculum Coordinator

“ Because there is one big idea (for each 6 week theme), most subjects all link to that and it helps so you can focus on it; you can see it in a geography way or an ICT way and in other subjects too. ”

Student

“ Students can identify connections in their learning in ways that we teachers don't always see and they understand exactly how to use the big idea to help them find relevant links. ”

Curriculum Coordinator

*“ That was awesome!
I want to do it again! ”*

Student after first exit point



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