Riverstone International School

The Personal Project - *Investigate, Plan, Take Action, Reflect*

D R A F T for implementation in School Year 2015-2016

Johnson 7AUG14

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Overview

Purpose of This Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide clarifying details of the Personal Project specifically at Riverstone International School. It is not intended to be a replacement for the *Projects Guide* published by the IBO. This is a Riverstone specific supplement to the IBO's guidance.

Resources

a. *Projects Guide*, September 2014, International Baccalaureate Organization
b. *Learner Profile*, International Baccalaureate Organization

c. *MYP: From principles into practice*, May 2014, International Baccalaureate Organization
d. Riverstone International School's *Five Pillars*
e. *Design Thinking for Educators*, IDEO LLC., designthinkingforeducators.com

General Information

Learner Profile

Academic Honesty

Getting Started

Aims of the Personal Project

The IBO states that in the Personal Project, a Riverstone student should:

- Participate in sustained, self-directed inquiry within a global context
- Generate new insights and deeper understandings
- Demonstrate the skills, attitudes and knowledge required to complete a project over a long period of time
- Communicate effectively

- Demonstrate responsible action
- Appreciate the process of learning

Riverstone's Five Pillars and the Personal Project

Riverstone's Five Pillars of **Academic Excellence, Community and Service, Leadership by Example, International Understanding and Outdoor Education** provide an additional context through which each Personal Project should be viewed. Just as each Personal Project is required by the IBO to have a global context, at Riverstone each project should also be viewed and justified through one or more of the Five Pillars.

Supervisors for the Personal Project

MYP Coordinator:

- Provides overall direction and supervision of the Personal Project, as well as the coordinators and supervisors, to ensure that Riverstone's process meets the guidelines established by the IBO.
- Provides support and guidance for the Personal Project Coordinators
- Provides information to parents concerning the process and expected outcomes of the Personal Project

Personal Project Coordinators:

- Responsible for the organization of systems during the school year, which students and supervisors need for successful completion of the project. This includes creating weekly plans for using Personal Project time, working with supervisors to ensure the Academic Honesty form is completed, and confirming that each student is assigned to a supervisor. It also entails ensuring that each teacher has no more than two students as advisees, and other duties as directed by the Dean of Faculty/MYP Coordinator.

- Plan, in coordination with the Dean of Faculty and the Director of the Secondary School, the Personal Project Exhibition.

Supervisors:

- Ensure the chosen topic meets health and safety requirements, legal and ethical standards ●
Provide guidance throughout the process of completing of the project
- Confirm the authenticity of the work submitted
- Assess the project using the criteria published by the IBO for the Personal Project ●
Participate in the standardization of assessment, as established by Riverstone ●
Provide Personal Project grades to the MYP Coordinator

First Steps

Problem Solving and Design in the Personal Project

There are many, many problem solving routines, techniques and strategies. You should approach the Personal Project as you would any other complex challenge - *systematically and purposefully.* Successful students approach this type of project by planning and constantly revising, asking whether their approach makes sense and confirming that it has a purpose related to their goal.

In MYP Design Technology you were introduced to the Design Cycle - Investigate, Design, Plan, Create and Evaluate. The Personal Project should be approached methodically, and the Design Cycle is one way in which you could structure the process. Another possible technique is Design Thinking.

a. The Design Cycle.
> This is a perfectly appropriate problem solving framework that you can use. You should be very familiar with it from Design Technology.

b. Design Thinking.
> This is a five step process of discovery, interpretation, ideation, experimentation and evolution. Read below for more details on this process. It is very intuitive and can help guide you through the development of your project.

The Personal Project Process

Developing a topic/subject idea.

1. Discovery "I have a challenge. How do I approach it?"

> a. Understand the challenge.
> > Write a detailed description.

> b. Prepare for research.
> > Identify what you know and what you think you need to know.

c. Gather inspiration.

Look for people or organizations that have tackled similar challenges or challenges that are analogous to yours...for example, a skateboarding project might be inspired by efforts described at ruffboards.com, skateistan.org or from interviewing the owners of Prestige.

2. Interpretation "I learned something. How do I interpret it?" This is analysis.

a. Tell stories (group, in-class activity).

This is the time to talk about what you've learned in your research with other members of the class. Tell them what you are learning. Let them ask questions. Document your thoughts and their questions with Post-It Notes. You can reorganize the notes into themes and lines of inquiry. Record this in your process journal.

b. Search for meaning.

Find themes and identify additional lines of inquiry from your research and "storytelling." Are there links between themes? Were you pursuing ideas that don't really support your project? What is most compelling? What are you going to pursue further? Record this in your process journal.

c. Frame opportunities by making your findings actionable.

Take the feedback, insights and new directions you received, discovered and took and turn them into actionable events (that drive further exploration and research) by phrasing them as questions that provoke action. For example, "How might I find someone who was involved in the earliest days of skateboarding in the 1960s?

Developing your idea.

3. Ideation.

Your primary goal is going to be brainstorming. You may have a very solid idea about what you are going to attempt, or you may not. You've asked questions, explored different themes and lines of inquiry and you've gotten feedback from your classmates. It is time to brainstorm.

a. Generate ideas.

You must prepare for brainstorming by developing focused questions for the session. Go back and look at the actionable questions you developed earlier. Use them as they are, or add to them. Your project coordinators will facilitate the formation of groups for your

brainstorming session.

b. Brainstorm.

Productive and effective brainstorming follows seven
simple rules - defer judgement, encourage wild ideas, build on the ideas of others, stay on topic, one conversation at a time (follow ideas to their natural conclusion), be visual (draw ideas), and get lots of ideas.

c. Refine ideas.

Here is where you are going to refine your idea and describe it by writing your project goal. What is most exciting about your idea? What is most valuable about your idea to you personally? Similarly, what is most challenging about your idea to you? What are the constraints on your idea? List them. Finally, write a goal statement that explains why this project idea is interesting and challenging to you, acknowledging constraints that you may encounter.

4. **Developing specifications and prototyping.**

This is an important part of your project. The specifications you develop will be used to evaluate your project. You will record these specifications in your Process Journal, share them with your advisor AND use them to evaluate your project in your Project Report.

a. Prototyping.

This is an excellent way to visualize the end state or outcome of your project idea. Often people think of a prototype as a model or basic working version of some sort of machine. However, a prototype is anything that helps you visualize what your project should be. A prototype could be a storyboard, diagram, story, an advertisement, a trailer, mock-up, model or a role play. Be sure to capture this work in your Process Journal.

b. Developing specifications.

For your project you should develop 5-7 distinct specifications. These specifications should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based.

c. Get feedback on your prototype and specifications.

5. **Evolution**

a. Evaluate your prototype with your specifications as the project unfolds.

b. Note carefully where you are exceeding, meeting or failing to meet your specifications.

c. Tweak your prototype.

Setting the Project in a Global Context

A key tenet of the Middle Years Program is that students should develop an international perspective through international mindedness and a tendency to engage with global issues. This does not necessarily mean that each student has to single-handedly tackle a problem that actually exists on the global stage, but it does mean that a student should develop the *ability* to connect issues from the local to global level.

In the MYP's Personal Project, each student must develop their project within a global context. These contexts mirror the transdisciplinary themes from the PYP while extending them in the MYP. Prime examples of issues that have local and global significance are access to health care, care for the elderly, excellent education, immigration, refugees, minority rights, etc. You must explain and justify why you chose your Global Context. Ensure that you explain how your project is set within and linked to the Global Context you chose.

Questions to ask yourself as you decide on a contextual lens:

- What do I want to achieve through my project?
- What do I want others to understand?
- What impact do I want my project to have
- How can a particular context give more meaning and purpose to my project? Include your

    justification and explanation for your Context as an appendix to the Project Report.

Personal Project Examples and their Global Contexts

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Global Context Description Example

Identities and Relationships

Who we are (PYP)

Orientation in space and time *Where*   **Personal and cultural expression**

we are in place and time (PYP)   *How we express ourselves (PYP)*

Scientific and technical innovation

How the world works (PYP)

Inquiry into the natural world and its laws; the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and on the environment.

Globalization and sustainability

How we organize ourselves (PYP)

Inquiry into the interconnectedness of human made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment

Fairness and development

Sharing the Planet (PYP)

Inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.

Inquiry into orientation in place and time; personal histories, homes and journeys; the discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind; the relationships between, and the interconnectedness of, individuals and civilizations, from local and global perspectives.

Inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.

Inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and with other living things; communities and the relationships within and between them; access to equal opportunities; peace and conflict resolution.

Researching, writing and publishing a manual designed to educate competitive ice skaters about common injuries, their prevention and healing techniques.

Designing and building a set of alpine skis designed for deep, trackless powder on steep slopes.

Researching and designing an information campaign centered on the damage wrought by disposable water bottles.

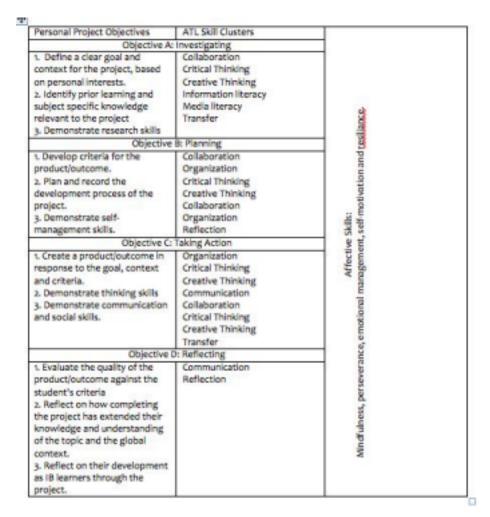Researching, writing and illustrating a children's book about the Syrian Civil War.

Researching, writing and developing a non-fiction, informational graphic book about genocide in the 20th Century.

Exercising the MYP Approaches to Learning

The Approaches to Learning (ATL) in the MYP are learning skills that are fundamental to all learning -

not just what takes place in a classroom. They are foundational skills that enable greater success in all academic environments and other results-oriented settings.

ATL skills enable greater success with the dual learning focus in the MYP at Riverstone. We expect that our students master both content and process, AND knowledge and skills. The Personal Project is an excellent way for each student to learn to distinguish which content is relevant for their project, and choose a process to sort through that content, so that it becomes useful knowledge that can be applied using academic skills.

Each student must demonstrate, in a personal way, how they have practiced, used, developed or refined their skills as a learner by documenting and reflecting on skill clusters from each of the five ATL skill categories. Include this evidence as an appendix to your project report.

Personal Project Objectives	ATL Skill Clusters	
Objective A: Investigating		
1. Define a clear goal and context for the project, based on personal interests. 2. Identify prior learning and subject specific knowledge relevant to the project 3. Demonstrate research skills	Collaboration Critical Thinking Creative Thinking Information literacy Media literacy Transfer	
Objective B: Planning		
1. Develop criteria for the product/outcome. 2. Plan and record the development process of the project. 3. Demonstrate self-management skills.	Collaboration Organization Critical Thinking Creative Thinking Collaboration Organization Reflection	Affective Skills: Mindfulness, perseverance, emotional management, self motivation and resilience.
Objective C: Taking Action		
1. Create a product/outcome in response to the goal, context and criteria. 2. Demonstrate thinking skills 3. Demonstrate communication and social skills.	Organization Critical Thinking Creative Thinking Communication Collaboration Critical Thinking Creative Thinking Transfer	
Objective D: Reflecting		
1. Evaluate the quality of the product/outcome against the student's criteria 2. Reflect on how completing the project has extended their knowledge and understanding of the topic and the global context. 3. Reflect on their development as IB learners through the project.	Communication Reflection	

Process Journal, Outcome and Project Report

Every Personal Project consists of three distinct components - the Process Journal, the outcome and

the Project Report. Every student must present all three components in order to be successful.

The Process Journal

The Process Journal is each student's personal record of the progress maintained over the course of the project. The Process Journal is comparable to the developmental workbook in the Arts, and the design workbook in Design Technology. Students may use the Process Journal resource available on ManageBac, an electronic format such as Evernote or Word, a paper format, or a combination thereof. Students must be able to show and share their journals with advisors and coordinators. All work done electronically should be backed up in a secondary location (other than the hard drive of a computer).

The IBO does not mandate a particular format, but does prescribe some essential elements. Riverstone Process Journals must:

- Define a clear and challenging goal
- Identify and justify a global context for the project.
- Identify, justify and demonstrate links between your project and one or more of Riverstone's Five Pillars.
- Identify what you know about your project initially
- Identify what you think you need to learn in order to complete the project ●
Update information as you discover more of what you need to know
- Define rigorous and measurable criteria for the project's success
- Present an initial plan that identifies time and resources
- Present evidence of reflection that caused changes to the initial plan. Provide explanations for the changes.
- Summarize significant meetings with advisors (including coordinators, if substantial conversations about your project). State the outcome and decisions made during the meeting.
- Provide examples of research (resource selection, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis) ● Include an annotated bibliography in MLA format, which demonstrates the use of a wide range of relevant and reliable sources. In each annotation, the student must clearly state the source's value and contribution to the project.

The Outcome

You must provide the final project for display in the Personal Project exhibition, which is held in late April or early May of the year that you complete the Personal Project. For projects that involve tutoring, teaching, or other activities that do not inherently produce material, you must provide visual and/or audio evidence of your project.

The Project Report

The Project Report is a spoken or written account of what you have observed, accomplished or investigated throughout the process of completing the Personal Project. It must reference the four assessment criteria of the Personal Project. The Project Report can be written or presented orally, visually or electronically.

Preparing the report is time consuming and an important part of the project. Plan accordingly.

Requirements for all reports - no matter the format:

- Must be formatted in identifiable sections that correspond to the project objectives - investigating, planning, taking action and reflecting. The report must include, either in the body of the report or in annexes, evidence for ALL strands of each assessment criterion. You should create sub-headers that further clarify your work.

- Must include **no fewer than six excerpts overall**, and **no more than ten excerpts from the Process Journal.**These are given as printed documents to the supervisor at the time of the Project Report. Mandatory excerpts include: annotated evidence of research (not from the bibliography, raw notes on actual sources), evidence of detailed planning including timeframes and resources, and evidence of your development as a learner (using the ATLs).

- Must identify and explain the project's connection to one or more of the Five Pillars ●

Must contain a cover sheet (see appendix X)

- Must include a completed academic honesty form (see appendix Y)

- Must include a Bibliography

Additional requirements for different report formats
(assessment criteria and strands may be referenced below)

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Written

Is no shorter than 1,500 words, and no more than 3,500 words.

Oral

Includes podcasts and interviews; **must be recorded** by the supervisor.

Visual

Usually a short film. Addresses all of the criteria and their strands by highlighting key moments in the project (through process journal extracts). This is a recording, and must be completed so that the supervisor can (and does) receive a copy of the report.

Electronic

Can be a website, blog, Prezi or PowerPoint. These must also address all assessment criteria and their strands. This report is usually accompanied by an oral presentation. Hardcopies of the slides, blog, website etc must be provided to the supervisor. The supervisor **must record** this presentation.

Assessment

The following offers explanations, with examples, of performance at the highest level as described in the rubrics for the Personal Project. Supervisors and students should consult these clarifications when assessing work.

Criterion A - Investigating

This criterion demands that students:

- Define a **clear goal** for your project based on personal interests
- **I**dentify what you knew about your project at the beginning and what subject-specific knowledge you will need
- Demonstrate research skills

Strand One

"Define a clear and highly challenging goal and context for the project based on personal interests"

Examples of students' highly challenging goals at Riverstone:

- Conceive of, plan, and write lyrics and music for three thematically related songs, then perform them. (2011)

- Conceive of, plan, and choreograph an original ballet that is performed by a group of dancers in a public venue. (2012)

- Tell the story of a civil war through the structure of a children's book. Use the story to teach Arabic vocabulary and provide strong visuals through original watercolors, each of which corresponds to a section of the story. (2013)

- Create a nonfiction, "graphic novel style" history of genocide in the 20th Century (2014)

- Conceive of, plan, and create an app that provides information about, and promotes cultural awareness of, the Hindu faith in Boise (2014)

Strand Two

"Identify prior learning and subject-specific knowledge that is consistently highly relevant to the project"

At the beginning of your project you must spend time thinking about and documenting what you know about your project so far, AND recording what you think you have to learn in order to complete your project successfully. This really is the first step of researching. You cannot move forward until you identify what you know and what you don't know. A great way to document what you know (and know how to do) with regard to your project is to contrast your existing level of knowledge and skill with your project specifications.

It is important to then write questions for yourself that will help your research progress - these are essential to developing the subject-specific knowledge and skills you will need to complete your project. It is strongly recommended that this evidence form one of your Process Journal extracts in the Project Report.

Strand Three
"demonstrate excellent research skills"

This can be shown through:

- Extensive annotations of sources
- A comprehensive bibliography that demonstrates the consultation of a wide range of sources. ● Clear evidence of the development of a line of research through the presence of sub-questions that guide research
- The development of a research plan or roadmap

Criterion B - Planning

This criterion demands that students:

- Develop measurable, relevant and useful criteria for the project's outcome ● Develop a plan and record the process of completing the project, commenting on the developments of both
- Demonstrate self-management skills

Strand One
"develop rigorous criteria for the product/outcome"

Considering the goal, the student develops measurable, rigorous and relevant criteria and specifications for the project's outcome.

Strand Two
"present a detailed and accurate plan and record of the development process of the project"

Students must develop a detailed and accurate plan that ensures project completion within the framework of the school's overall time plan. This plan should identify crunch spots, resource needs, personal deadlines, and acknowledge academic, personal and extracurricular activities that might impact project completion. Project-specific deadlines and events should also be included.

Strand Three
"demonstrate excellent self-management skills"

A student that satisfies this requirement:

- Sticks to the plan
- Initiates meetings with project coordinators, MYP coordinator, and most importantly, their advisor
- Demonstrates a solid understanding of the project requirements and the process

Criterion C - Taking Action

This criterion demands that:

- The product or outcome responds directly and relevantly to the goal, the global context and the criteria
- The student demonstrates thinking skills
- The student demonstrates communication and social skills

Strand One
"create an excellent product/outcome in response to the goal, global context and criteria"

Excellence should be measured with regard to the student's stated goal, to the degree that the student based and framed the project in a global context, and against the criteria they developed.

Strand Two
"demonstrate excellent thinking skills"

The student gathers and evaluates relevant data, analyzes alternatives, considers potential consequences, and draws conclusions. These processes must be recorded in a way that allows an advisor or other evaluator to see the connections and transfer of learning.

Strand Three
"demonstrate excellent communication and social skills"

Important social skills include collaboration, mindfulness, perseverance, emotional management, self-motivation and resilience.

Criterion D - Reflecting

This criterion demands that students:

- Evaluate the quality of the product/outcome against their criteria
- Reflect on how completing the project has extended their knowledge and understanding of the topic and global context
- Reflect on their development as IB learners throughout the project

Strand One

"present a excellent evaluation of the quality of the product/outcome against his or her criteria"

An excellent evaluation would likely include a graphic that lays out the student's criteria and specifications visually AND presents a written justification for each rating, mirroring the MYP criterion rubrics.

Strand Two

"present excellent reflection on how completing the project has extended his or her knowledge and understanding of the topic and the global context"

Students should develop a comprehensive, structured reflection that clearly demonstrates how the student's knowledge and understanding of the topic and global context has been increased, expanded and deepened. Use discrete ATL skills or skills clusters to discuss and reflect.

Strand Three

"present excellent reflection on his or her development as an IB learner through the project"

Requires that the student uses the IB Learner Profile as a framework. The student's comments must show an unambiguous and authentic understanding of the Learner Profile characteristics and how they personally grew, with regard to multiple characteristics. Give concrete examples and provide developed explanations.

Appendices