

Middle Years Learners and Cross-Curricular Literacy Connections

2022-23 Literacy Program Highlights

1. Program Description

Mt. Sentinel's Middle Years Program (MYP) is a grade 7 and 8 program that operates within a high school context. Our mission is to provide authentic and meaningful learning opportunities that support middle years students at Mt. Sentinel. MYP accesses knowledge as it becomes relevant to our learning. We don't label subjects, but instead engage in subject-rich, project-based and contextual learning. Each year we have an overarching theme that guides our planning. Additionally, each trimester has a unique theme that informs the project work we engage in. Allowing learning to emerge holistically is more representative of how we learn outside of school. Interdisciplinary approaches to learning strengthen connection making and translating content knowledge to other contexts, when it is relevant to individuals. Interdisciplinary learning also allows for a curriculum that is student-centered and responsive to students' funds of knowledge and identity.

The integrated nature of MYP enables literacy to be embedded in all of our learning. Focusing on reading and writing strategies feels necessary as students prepare project work to be shared with authentic audiences. Because we are not in subject-based classes, literacy discussions and lessons weave themselves throughout all of the content knowledge that we engage in, strengthening students' dispositions while also solidifying an understanding that literacy is important no matter the subject matter.

2. Program Team

Our Middle Years Program teachers focusing on literacy goals in the 2022-23 school year included Ms. Carly Christy, Ms. Rachel Lacroix, Ms. Katie Comrie (September 2022 - March 2023), and Ms. Danny Rudniski (March - June 2023). Additionally, Mr. Danny Leeming and Ms. Shellie Maloff's support, guidance, and encouragement were imperative to the growth in literacy that MYP observed in the 2022-23 school year. As members of our school's Leadership Team, they worked with other staff to conceptualize our school's Literacy Exams which documented schoolwide growth in reading comprehension and expository writing. All of our Middle Years Program learners (30 grade 7 students, and 45 grade 8 students) were involved in this learning in the 2022-23 school year.

3. Program Highlights

There is significant evidence that shows the approach to literacy learning has been successful in developing students' confidence and skills in reading and writing. Here are a few highlights:

a. Students' attitudes and language towards writing tasks:

MYP emphasized the revising and editing process of writing. Learning is not linear; therefore, we wanted to work with students to understand that it is rare we get something perfect the first time! We coached students to utilize our schoolwide literacy tools (CRAAP, APES, COPS, and ARMS), and

worked with them to submit multiple revised and edited drafts of their written work. Soon, the language in the classroom changed from "I'm finished" to "can you look over this and give me some feedback?" Furthermore, students became more excited for their drafts to be returned, often asking teachers "have you had a chance to look at my work yet?" Mistakes became a part of the learning, and written assignments became more of a conversation rather than something to get done.

b. Literacy expectations were upheld in all learning tasks:

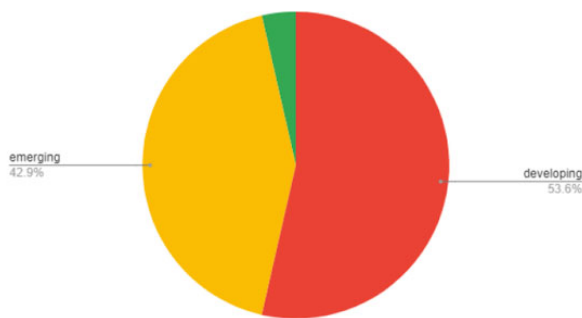
Due to the integrated nature of our program, ELA goals were present on every assessment rubric (both formative and summative), regardless of the topic. Students applied their literacy skills across all subject areas and all subject areas provided new contexts for various literacy skills. This holistic method made learning literacy authentic and contextual. Student buy-in was high and the days of the one-word answer became a distant memory!

c. Students learned that effort and pride are strongly linked, and both increased:

Our fall Literacy Assessment saw a significant lack of effort. Students knew it wasn't for marks, a motivator for some, and many of them did not try. Additionally, we were just beginning our literacy learning in MYP and the skills and attitudes we worked to cultivate were only just being presented. Our Spring Literacy Assessment was a very different experience. Students used the entire period to work on their written piece, some asked for more time to write more and edit. A student who has identified writing as a non-preferred task left the exam expressing how excited he was for the teachers to read his and that he "thinks it was the best thing [he'd] ever written." The writing scores for our MYP demonstrated the learning that students had engaged in and our students were proud!

4. Photos

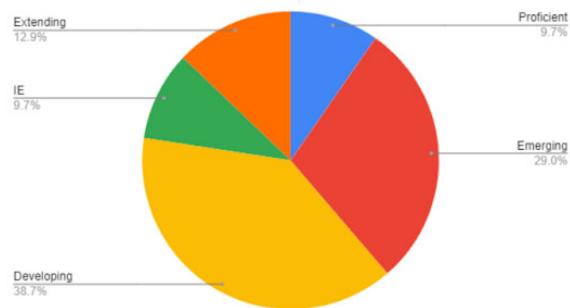
Grade 7 Written - Fall 2022



Grade 7 Written - Fall 2022 Data

Emerging - 42.9%
 Developing - 53.6%
 Proficient - 3.6%

Grade 7 Written - Spring 2023

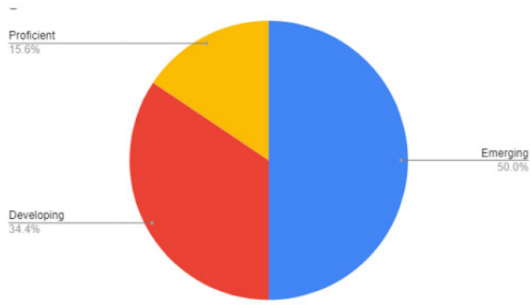


Grade 7 Written - Spring 2023 Data

Emerging - 29.0%
 Developing - 38.7%
 Proficient - 9.7%
 Extending - 12.9%
 Insufficient Evidence (IE)* - 9.7%

*IE was given to students who had a blank submission (intentional and unintentional).

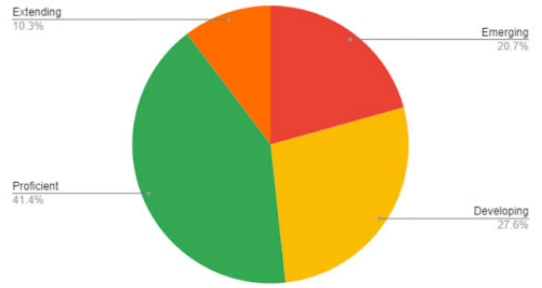
Grade 8 Written - Fall 2022



Grade 8 Written - Fall 2022 Data

Emerging - 50.0%
Developing - 34.4%
Proficient - 15.6%

Grade 8 Written - Spring 2023



Grade 8 Written - Spring 2023 Data

Emerging - 20.7%
Developing - 27.6%
Proficient - 41.4%
Extending - 10.3%