



INTEGRATED STUDIES

WATER: FACING A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Why is water the most essential resource?

Key Disciplines

English / Language Arts



Water is often used in literature to represent beauty and spirituality. We must have the skills to express our thoughts clearly and convincingly. This includes handling factual information, but also persuasive and artistic language as well – sometimes a poem or a story is even more powerful than an essay at conveying an important idea.

Credit Hours: .25 English / Language Arts

Humanities



The history of humanity and the history of water are deeply intertwined, and it is in part through our understanding of the role played by water in Civilizations that we come to see its essential status. This was true long ago and it remains true today – the fate of nations relies on access to water and being able to use it appropriately.

Credit Hours: .25 World Studies

Sciences



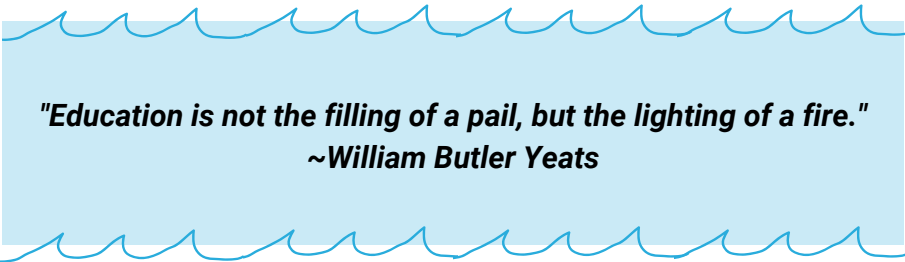
Water is a unique substance that isn't really like anything else we know of. It is a cleaner, a solvent, an acid, a base, a holder of solutions and a catalyst for interaction. The essential nature of water is clear at the most fundamental levels and at every level of chemical interaction.

Credit Hours: .25 Chemistry credit.

How Does it Work?

Daily Schedule

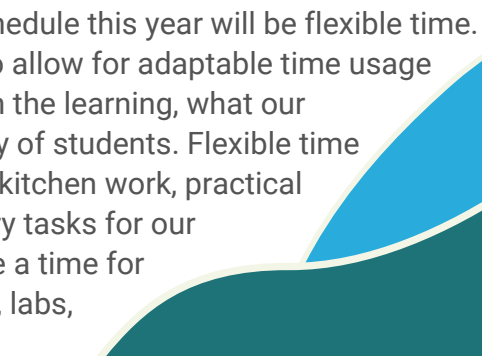
On any given day, a student will meet with their Integrated Studies class twice. These meetings may be of the entire group (all 9-12th graders), or it may be with a portion of the group – a half, a quarter, etc. These groupings are based on the needs of the period – are students listening to a speaker? Going on a trip? Tackling a lab outdoors? Each of these may require different size groups and our schedule will allow for this. Content may be repeated Morning and Afternoon if there are two sections engaging – so if you miss it in the morning, you can still connect in the afternoon. Later in the quarter students may be broken into small groups or work as individuals to accomplish key group asks.



"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."
~William Butler Yeats

Flexible Time

A new addition to our schedule this year will be flexible time. The idea of this time is to allow for adaptable time usage based on where we are in the learning, what our needs are, and availability of students. Flexible time will be used to complete kitchen work, practical work, and other necessary tasks for our community. It will also be a time for seminars, trips, activities, labs, and more.



Key Content and Skills

Why is Water the Most Essential Resource?

Understanding water and its central role in our lives brings together a lot of different knowledge and skills and numerous disciplines. Some of the key content we will focus on in this unit includes:

- How is water fundamental to human civilization and population expansion?
- What is unique about the chemical make up of water?
- How does the poetry of water teach us about the world?
- How is water understood in different cultures and places?
- What influence does available, clean water have on our lives and the lives of others today?



Harnessing water is an essential aspect of human Civilization.



Sometimes the lack of water is telling as to why water is so invaluable.

In addition, students will gain key skills through their pursuit of an understanding of water, including:

- Research skills
- Writing Skills
- Presentation Skills
- Understanding context and perspective
- Presenting for persuasion and change

These skills and content, and many more, will be encountered by students in the Integrated Studies: Water unit.

The Work

Stage 1



With any endeavor, we must first and foremost understand the question and all its implications. We have to learn about the background and fundamentals related to the topic. What are the chemical properties of water? What impact has water had on humanity?

Stage 2



Research and Inspiration are the key elements of Stage 2, with every member of the community seeking to learn more on their own and to share that information with each other, for everyone to be inspired about how we can make a difference and what a difference looks like. By the end of Stage 2, each learner is an expert in some aspect of our larger study.

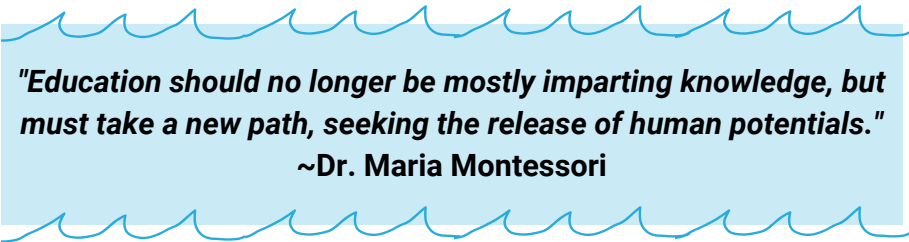
Stage 3



In order to make a change, we have to interact with the larger world. All the research and understanding in the world won't make a difference without connecting to other people, especially those with an ability to facilitate changes. Students learn to find their voice and showcase their knowledge in a way that has an impact on adults.

Why Water?

The Millennium project focuses on transnational issues and challenges that require international solutions and global thinking. There are fifteen global challenges under the millennium project, and one of this is "How can everyone have sufficient clean water without conflict?" We have made connections between this question and another question "How can population growth and resources be brought into balance?" to form our first semester of study. We see the first part of this as related to water and understanding it as a resource. We will then use this as an example to look at other resources and the role of population growth in setting us out of balance with our use of resources.

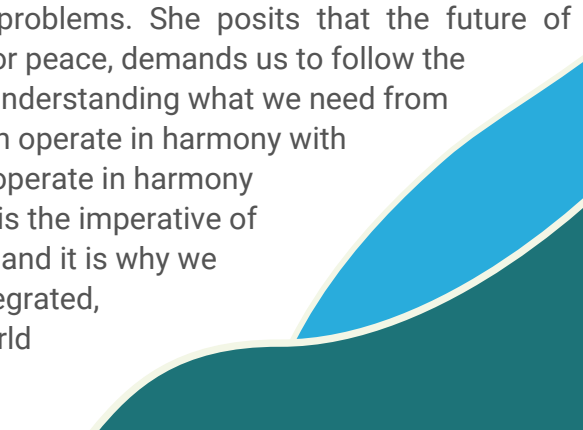


"Education should no longer be mostly imparting knowledge, but must take a new path, seeking the release of human potentials."

~Dr. Maria Montessori

Montessori Lens

Maria Montessori calls upon us to get out of the way and allow students to tackle big problems. She posits that the future of humanity, the potential for peace, demands us to follow the lead of young people in understanding what we need from nature, how humanity can operate in harmony with nature, and how we can operate in harmony with other humans. This is the imperative of her educational thinking, and it is why we choose to create this integrated, challenge-based, real world focused inquiry for our adolescents.



Our Mission

To provide beautiful Montessori environments, where learning and work are integrated within a community experience engaging intellectual, moral and social development of children and adolescents from birth to eighteen years.

Our Core Values

We believe human beings construct themselves by interacting with their social, intellectual, and physical environments. Learners develop through structure and freedom while nurtured in an atmosphere of beauty and respect within our intentionally prepared learning environments.

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