

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

When an opportunity presents itself, I don't look for reasons as to why it can't happen, I ask myself "How can I make it happen?"

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Kim Lewis graduated from the IB Diploma Programme (DP) at Morgan Park High School, US. She continued her studies at the University of Illinois to receive her Bachelor of Business Administration with a double major in supply chain management and marketing. She is an entrepreneur and the co-founder of the Chicago-based hair care start-up CurlMix. She maintains a commitment to her family and community, returning often to visit her IB World School.

Why did you originally decide to pursue an IB diploma?

The schools in my immediate neighborhood fell far below the standard for high achieving students. Many of my elementary school teachers encouraged me to apply to other high schools outside of my district. They wanted to ensure that I was receiving a quality education that was challenging and engaging. The IB Diploma Programme stood out for me because of the high achievers it produced. There was one student in particular who was a few grades higher than me, but that student took me and a few friends under their wing, Jeff Nelson. He tutored us, advised us, and initially convinced us that the programme was incredibly tough, but worth every long night spent doing homework.

Now that same student has started several companies and is a co-founder of a multi-million dollar startup in Silicon Valley. He still serves as a mentor whenever I need advice on my growing business. He told me that, more than the rigorous curriculum, the small class sizes would be the most impactful. The family that I built while being a part of the DP changed my life, just as Jeff Nelson said it would. Those students, more than ten years later, are my co-founders in my businesses, my best friends, and even my bridesmaids. The curriculum prepared me for college but the friendships prepared me for life.

Which of your IB teachers inspired you most?

The IB teacher that inspired me the most was Ms. Morgan Mudron. I have never been an English buff and I was never a huge reader. That said, she made me love books and dissect them in a way that I would have NEVER done in life. I learned skills and literary devices that I still utilize in my leisurely reading as an adult. Quite often we had teachers who may have been intimidated by a classroom full of "smart kids" but it seemed to light a fire in Ms. Mudron. She was up for the challenge and

engaged us like never before. We lived for earning one of her famous gold star stickers. Mind you, there were no bonus points for such a sticker, no extra credit, no tangible benefit that would effect your grade. However, it was something that we boasted about all day if we received one in her class. You received a gold star for finding something remarkable in the text, noting literary devices, and drawing connections throughout the story. Basic connections were not rewarded, but the connections that drew from the text, life, scholarly articles, religious metaphors etc. those were worth rewarding.

Her teaching changed my life.

How did you reach where you are today?

My advice for students is this: I was able to arrive where I am in life because of GRIT. To have grit means "unyielding courage in the face of hardship or danger." I didn't let my neighborhood stop me from receiving an excellent education. I didn't let poverty prevent me from attending college. I didn't let fear hinder me from traveling abroad. I didn't let a lack of experience prevent me from starting a business.

When an opportunity presents itself, I don't look for reasons as to why it can't happen, I ask myself "How can I make it happen?" Though I have the ability to power through the difficult things, I am able to stay sane through the interests I developed while completing my CAS (creativity, activity, service) hours. I gained a love for music, athletics, and art. I often look back on high school for my fondest memories of playing the saxophone, two-a-days in basketball practice, and spending hours in my art class after school getting my piece just right.

I know it may seem like the requirements of the Diploma Programme are a lot, but I promise it will help you become an incredibly well-rounded member of society and improve your future one hundred times over.