

## INTRODUCTION ISSUE 7

### 50 YEARS OF AN IB EDUCATION

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#### 50 YEARS OF A MISSION

In 1968, inspired by a spirit of hope in a time of instability and the IB pioneered a movement for international education. Our founders saw a need for an international approach to education which would bring young people together with the skills, values and knowledge necessary to build a more peaceful future. Our vision is to foster open and enlightened minds for all primary and secondary students, aged 3-19. We have been successfully doing this for decades, and will continue to do so in a world where we face an unprecedented pace of change. IB students use the skills they've developed to help make the world a better place. Our founders' vision—of an education that can unite people, nations and cultures for a sustainable future—has never been more urgent.

Our founders' mission—of a better world through education—was rather revolutionary back in 1968. Today we continue to foster that vision. It is still relevant in a world where we face an unprecedented pace of change—the needs of education and employers are constantly changing.

The IB recognizes that the solutions of yesterday, can inform but cannot solve the problems of today. Students and graduates need new skills to thrive and succeed in both their future education and their careers. We promote new approaches, such as the Careers-related programme to prepare students for future careers, e-Assessments to assess new skills through digital assessment, and online learning.

#### EDUCATIONAL AND ASSESSMENT APPROACH

We design our curriculum so that students build a deep appreciation of how their studies fit into the wider context of our world. All of our programmes are driven by a commitment to multilingualism and international mindedness, and to action through service in the student's own community and beyond. We encourage the curiosity inherent in every child, developing an attitude of constant questioning and a hunger for knowledge and understanding.

Each of the four IB programmes provides a detailed and developmentally appropriate curriculum or curriculum framework that is broad, balanced, conceptual and connected.

IB programmes offer students access to a broad and balanced range of academic studies and learning experiences. They promote conceptual learning, focusing on powerful organizing ideas that are relevant across subject areas, and that help to integrate learning and add coherence to the curriculum.

The programmes emphasize the importance of making connections, exploring the relationships between academic disciplines, and learning about the world in ways that reach beyond the scope of individual subjects. They also focus on offering students authentic opportunities to connect their learning to the world around them.

The four programmes are all underpinned by a shared focus on international-mindedness and developing the attributes of the IB learner profile. Yet each programme also has its own identity and developmentally appropriate elements.

- In the Primary Years Programme, learning aims to transcend traditional boundaries between subject areas. Students explore six transdisciplinary themes of global significance: who we are, where we are in terms of place and time, how we express ourselves, how the world works, how we organize ourselves, and sharing the planet.
- In the Middle Years Programme, students explore six global contexts that are an extension of the Primary Years Programme transdisciplinary themes: identities and relationships, personal and cultural expression, orientation in space and time, scientific and technical innovation, fairness and development, and globalization and sustainability.
- In the Diploma Programme, the curriculum consists of six subject groups and the three elements of the Diploma Programme core. As one of these core elements, the theory of knowledge course encourages students to become more aware of their own perspective and assumptions through an exploration of the fundamental question of how do we know what we know.
- In the Career-related Programme, students combine the academic rigour of Diploma Programme courses with the professional aspect of career-related studies alongside the four elements of the Career-related Programme core. As one of these core elements, the personal and professional skills course focuses on preparing students to effectively navigate a range of personal and professional situations that they may encounter in life and more specifically the workplace.

All four IB programmes also require the completion of a culminating project (the Primary Years Programme exhibition, Middle Years Programme personal project or community project, Diploma Programme extended essay and Career-related Programme reflective project). These projects provide an opportunity for students to showcase their knowledge, understanding and skills (IB, 2013).

Our assessments are internationally-recognized and designed to consistently challenge students to think critically, rather than simply to recall knowledge—we assess what is important to measure, not what is easy to measure. We design curriculums that allow teachers to be passionate about their subjects and focus students not only on content, but also on how they think and learn. Our programmes and assessments evolve with the changing demands of information technology, global interconnectivity, higher education and employment.

## THE IMPACT

International Baccalaureate (IB) Research collaborates with universities and independent research institutions around the world to produce rigorous studies examining the impact and outcomes of the IB's four programmes: The Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-related Programme (CP). This resource provides a brief overview of key findings from recent studies that were commissioned or conducted by IB Research.

### **Primary Years Programme (PYP) Studies:**

A study across five countries (Russia, China, Mexico, the UK and Kenya) explored student, teacher and parent experiences with the PYP exhibition—the in-depth, culminating project of the PYP. Study participants found the exhibition to be a pivotal experience that helped students to develop critical thinking skills, international-mindedness and learner profile attributes. Additionally, parents valued the exhibition for fostering “real world” skills, such as evaluating information and reflectiveness (Medwell et al 2017).

Researchers examined student performance in 14 state and private schools in New Zealand as well as curriculum alignment between the PYP and the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC). Analysis of a national standardized test indicated that achievement in the PYP schools generally exceeded

achievement in non-IB schools with similar student populations. The study also found that the PYP and NZC are largely compatible, although there were a few points of difference, specially the emphasis on international-mindedness, inquiry and action in the PYP (Kushner et al 2016).

### **Middle Years Programme (MYP) Studies:**

As a result of the growing interest in the MYP in Spain, researchers explored the experience of implementing the MYP alongside the Spanish national curriculum in eight private schools. School leaders indicated that the MYP contributed strongly to school transformation by introducing a wide range of pedagogical practices and embedding interdisciplinary learning. Heads and coordinators also suggested that the MYP supported the development of important skills, such as critical thinking, inquiry, teamwork, research and communication (Valle et al 2017).

Within a large school district in the United States, researchers investigated the impact of MYP participation on high school course enrollment and achievement. The findings indicated that former MYP students were 34% more likely than non-MYP students to take at least one DP or Advanced Placement (AP) exam in high school. Furthermore, MYP enrollment significantly increased the likelihood of earning at least one “college-ready” score<sup>1</sup> on a college preparatory exam (by 39%) (Wade and Wolanin 2015).

Researchers investigated the impact of middle years curriculums on student outcomes in the DP, comparing students from 22 schools across China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia and Japan. Former MYP students performed significantly better than non-MYP students in the total DP points earned, as well as in subject exams in language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, and mathematics. The MYP students also reported using higher-order thinking skills more frequently than the non-MYP students (ACER 2015).

### **Diploma Programme (DP) Studies:**

Interim findings from a long-term study highlighted the high school and post-secondary outcomes of low-income DP students from US public schools. Compared to their non-IB peers, DP students generally perceived their classrooms as more rigorous, participated in more extra-curricular activities and had higher educational aspirations. Preliminary findings about DP alumni indicated that this group of students transitioned smoothly to college, had strong study skills and demonstrated self-efficacy and resilience (Aldana and Mayer 2017).

Researchers investigated the impact of creativity, activity, service (CAS) by exploring the perceptions of those involved in the programme, past and present. Coordinators, students and alumni surveyed from across the world believed that CAS helps students to become better at “taking on new challenges”, “learning to persevere” and “developing better interpersonal skills” (Hayden et al 2017).

In Turkey, researchers investigated the university outcomes of DP graduates and their non-IB peers at Turkish universities. Compared to non-IB students, DP graduates generally had higher subject grades (in all subject areas examined), overall grade point averages and graduation rates. DP alumni also reported feeling well-prepared for university studies, particularly with regard to English language skills and academic skills, such as writing and managing independent work (Ateşkan et al 2015).

To examine the higher education outcomes of students in the United Kingdom, researchers explored the university enrollment and achievement of statistically matched groups of DP and A level students<sup>2</sup>. DP students were significantly more likely than their A level counterparts to attend a top 20 university in the UK and to receive a 1st-class honours degree. Additionally, DP graduates were somewhat more likely to enroll in further education after completing university (HESA 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> A “college-ready” score is defined in this study as a three or higher on an AP exam or a four or higher on a DP exam.

<sup>2</sup> This study used propensity score matching in order to compare IB students with similar non-IB students. This allows the researchers to better isolate and identify the impacts of the IB programme specifically, as the two groups are similar otherwise.

In the context of growing interest in the DP in Spain, a study was undertaken to investigate the impact of DP implementation, as reported by various stakeholders in 26 Spanish state schools. Moreover, with the aim of developing understanding of the medium- and long-term impact of the DP on students, the study also investigated the experiences and professional paths of DP alumni from Spanish state schools. Based on the data collected in this study, the DP and its implementation in the context of Spanish state schools is perceived to have a range of positive outcomes and challenges. Overall, the implementation of the DP is believed to be yielding positive outcomes, including a beneficial shift in school culture and climate, a change in teaching and learning approaches and the development of specific competencies in students (Valle et al 2017).

### **Career-related Programme (CP) Studies:**

IB Research conducted a study to examine the higher education pathways of all CP graduates in the US from 2013 to 2015. The study found that 81% of CP graduates enrolled in university sometime after secondary school, with 76% enrolling immediately. Additionally, 79% of students who enrolled in higher education chose four-year over two-year colleges, compared to 64% of students nationally. Regarding university persistence, 89% of CP graduates who enrolled in university came back for a second year (Mack et al 2017).

## **THE FUTURE**

With an increase in global inequality and access to education becoming more problematic, the IB believes that there should be no barriers to any child getting the best possible education. We work tirelessly to bring the highest quality education available to as wide a range of students, from every and any socio-economic background and region. More than half of IB World Schools are state schools, several of which offer IB programmes and courses for free such as Chicago Public Schools. Others such as United World Colleges offer scholarships especially for refugees. Our wish is that more and more schools will offer IB programmes to children from all income group families. We always get hugely excited whenever we get a request from a school to offer our programmes for free. This education—an IB education—will be the same regardless of where the student lives or comes from.

In a time of growing societal challenges, the IB promotes open, tolerant, enlightened international mindedness in all its students, teachers and alumni. Our programmes teach a range of skills such as cognitive skills and inter- and intra-personal competencies, problem-solving, global mindedness, cultural sensitivity and leadership. The IB champions and builds critical thinking in its students and turns them into open, curious lifelong learners, to question “fake news” and information channelled to match and reinforce pre-existent opinions. I consistently hear students talk about how the IB engendered a lifelong love of learning, and how it influenced their lives with positive, meaningful, long-term effects.

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