

UK Students enrolled in International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme stand out from the crowd says NFER study

IB education for 11-16 year-olds cultivates civic-mindedness, cultural awareness

Feb. 21, 2013—The International Baccalaureate (IB) has published a new comparative research study which examined differences between the IB Middle Years Programme and two popular national qualifications in the UK, and surveyed students, their teachers and parents at six schools offering the Middle Years Programme (MYP) in the UK. The findings demonstrate a clear distinction between MYP students and those who are not enrolled in the MYP.

Conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to investigate the teaching and learning benefits of the MYP, the researchers found that MYP students exhibit positive attitudes and behaviours, particularly in civic and cultural contexts uncommon in their non-IB peers. On all factors related to civic-mindedness, MYP students scored significantly higher than their non-IB peers—even in their future expectations of civic participation.

The NFER study compared and contrasted the MYP to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), similar well-known education qualifications:

Key findings among the three are:

- The MYP covers all the main areas that the GCSE and the IGCSE do, and in some cases goes above and beyond, incorporating additional areas of study.
- Non-scholastic attributes such as international- and civic-mindedness were more pronounced in the MYP students, along with the expectation to develop higher-order thinking skills.
- Science, mathematics and English are relatively well matched across the three qualifications with the following notable distinctions:
 - Science and math are less prescriptive in the MYP;
 - MYP science includes elements that are not included in the other two programs;
 - Discrete math is exclusively in the MYP domain, though calculator work is not;
 - Only the MYP includes study of visual communication skills as part of its curriculum in English.

“The NFER research demonstrates that The Middle Years Programme represents an innovative and exciting framework for educating 11-16 year-olds,” states IB Chief Academic Officer Judith Fabian. “The MYP encourages young people to go beyond simply learning for examinations, and to grow into reflective and civic-minded individuals.”

Findings: Students

Among the 309 MYP students who were surveyed, there were high levels of awareness and belief in the importance of issues such as diversity, social justice, human rights, sustainable development, conflict resolution and interdependence, as well as an understanding of how cultural values and assumptions shape human behaviour. Awareness levels of MYP students were significantly higher than those of their peers in non-IB schools.

MYP students scored high on a number of questions about civic participation and their future roles in civic affairs. They were more likely to state that they would be politically and socially active, involved inter-culturally and in controversial issues, and would help those being treated unfairly. When asked

about whether they might volunteer their time in their local community, or join a political or social cause, they indicated positive interest in doing so.

Findings: Teachers

MYP teachers surveyed as part of the study demonstrated good understanding of the values that underpin the MYP and vast agreement that the MYP provides a broad, holistic, and engaging approach that develops civic- and international-mindedness. Surveyed teachers demonstrated a collective belief in the core elements of the MYP, which emphasize independent problem-solving, thinking and reasoning skills and student inquiry. Many MYP teachers indicated that they had benefited from IB training during the past 18 months and were positive about their training.

Findings: Parents

Like teachers, a survey of MYP parents found that they had good understanding of the values that underpin the MYP and that the majority actively chose the MYP for their children because of its focus on independent thinking and active inquiry, rather than rote learning and examinations. Parents identified the flexibility of the curriculum, its holistic approach, and its broad subject base as positive elements of the MYP. In addition, many expressed their belief that the MYP offered better preparation for future study, university, and life in general. Also noted was that the MYP was considered “exciting” for their children and that it cultivated the development of research, evaluation, and thinking skills.

For more information about this research study, visit

<http://www.ibo.org/research/policy/programmevalidation/myp/>

About the IB

Founded in 1968, the [International Baccalaureate](#) (IB) is a not-for profit foundation, which offers four high-quality and challenging educational programmes for a worldwide community of schools. For 45 years, IB programmes have gained a reputation for their rigour and high academic standards, for preparing students for life in a globalized 21st century, and for helping to develop citizens who will create a better, more peaceful world. Currently there are more than 1 million IB students who attend nearly 3,500 schools in 144 countries.

About the MYP

“Innovative new developments for the MYP are to launch in 2014,” advises Judith Fabian, “to build on existing strengths and better prepare students for success in the IB Diploma Programme or IB Career-related Certificate and beyond. The enhanced Middle Years Programme will launch with an updated framework that deepens learning and understanding and increases engagement by featuring innovative, concept-based assessment options,” she says. The current framework of the Middle Years Programme encourages students to become creative, critical and reflective thinkers. Its ‘core’ features five areas of interaction: approaches to learning, community and service, health and social education, environments, and human ingenuity. A personal project is an important part of the MYP in which students learn to manage and direct their own inquiry and develop new skills. The enhanced MYP is scheduled to be introduced into IB World Schools for first teaching in September 2014.

About the NFER

NFER, a not-for-profit organization and registered charity, is the UK’s largest independent provider of research, assessment and information services for education, training and children’s services.

For media enquiries please contact: Tim Nettleton

Email: tim.nettleton@ibo.org **Direct:** +41 22 309 2532