

IB Research Notes

Information for the IB research community

Volume 4, Issue 2

April 2004

In this issue:

Feature Article

*Four Approaches to
Curriculum Offered in
International Schools*

Peter Zsebik

Interactive Intergenerational Learning (IIL) Project

Anna Simandiraki

Research Noticeboard

- ~ **Journal of Research in
International Education**
- ~ **Research literature**
- ~ **International education
research database**
- ~ **IBO public web site**
- ~ **Online curriculum centre**
- ~ **The Alliance for
International Education
Conference**

What are the general features of the curriculum and assessment arrangements available to schools in an international context? This issue of *IB Research Notes* presents the outcome of international curriculum research conducted by Dr Peter Zsebik that took the form of a comparative study of the IB Diploma Programme (DP), College Board Advanced Placement (AP) and programmes offered by Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). Dr Zsebik presents the views of a varied group of stakeholders in international schools comprising students, parents, educators and school administrators concerning the characteristics of the programmes. We are grateful not only to Dr Zsebik for his paper, but also to Professor Jack Levy, of George Mason University, USA and Mr Neil Richards, headteacher of the International School of Yokohama, Japan, for providing critical commentaries on this research report.

In 2001, *IB Research Notes* published an article by Roger Brown about interactive intergenerational learning. In this issue, Dr Anna Simandiraki, research assistant with the IB Research Unit, reports on progress in an inquiry being conducted in the United Kingdom into the implementation of interactive intergenerational learning in the context of CAS in the IB Diploma Programme.

James Cambridge
Research Fellow

IB Research Notes is published four times a year and is a joint publication of the International Baccalaureate Research Unit (IBRU) and the International Baccalaureate Curriculum and Assessment Centre (IBCA).

Contact details: IBRU
Department of Education
University of Bath
Claverton Down, Bath, England
GB BA2 7AY
UNITED KINGDOM
Fax: +44 1225 323 277
E-mail: ibru@ibo.org



Feature Article

Peter Zsebik has bachelors degrees from McGill University and the University of Western Ontario, as well as a masters degree from the College of New Jersey. His career as an international educator has encompassed the teaching of music, ESL, physical education and IB theory of knowledge in international schools around the world. These include the American International School, Kuwait; the Overseas Family School, Singapore; the Canadian International School, Singapore; the Thai-Chinese International School; and Vienna International School. He was awarded a PhD by the University of Bath for his research into issues relating to the concept of an international curriculum.

Four Approaches to Curriculum Offered in International Schools

Peter Zsebik

Abstract

This report discusses a comparative analysis of four major curriculums found in international schools. The curriculums discussed are: the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (DP), GCSE Advanced level (A-levels), the College Board Advanced Placement (AP), and the Cambridge International Examinations Advanced Certificate of International Education (AICE) and International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE).

The aim of this study was to answer the following questions:

- ◆ Is there agreement between different sources about what might be the common characteristics of education in an international context?
- ◆ Are there any common characteristics between the main curricular structures found in “education in an international context” that also agree with other literary sources?
- ◆ Do these common characteristics live up to the expectations of users as valid features that embrace their perception of an ideal international curriculum?

The results of this study suggest that common characteristics are found between the various curricular structures, and between independent literary sources. The results also suggest that respondents (comprising students, parents, administrators and educators within international schools) generally feel that there is room for improvement within the curricular programmes if they are to embrace the perception of an ideal international curriculum.

Introduction

The primary motivation behind this research was the realization that the term “international school” did not necessarily mean a school with an international curriculum, much as a national school would have a nationally mandated curriculum. Rather, the label international school “can mean anything from a school typical of those in the home location that happens to be overseas, to a sophisticated cultural compromise, according to local taste” (Pearce, 1994). The research was spurred further by the feeling that the socio-political paradigm of the international school could be influenced by the adopted curriculum of the school. Therefore it is possible that the four selected curriculums and their related activities are not necessarily promoting an “international-mindedness” as an educational outcome for the student. This was felt to be a disservice to those people involved, especially if they were to live and perhaps even work within this international context. It was for this reason that an extensive review of the relevant literature was undertaken in an effort to codify existing and possible future curricular practices.

The broad aims of the research were as follows.

1. To discuss the philosophical, political and sociological significance of a curricular structure and its application to the society to which it is attached.
2. To discuss the feasibility of an international curriculum that has a universal applicability to today’s social environment.
3. To determine if the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (DP), GCSE Advanced level (A-levels), the College Board Advanced Placement (AP), and the Cambridge International Examinations Advanced Certificate of International Education (AICE) and International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) curricular structures are offering an international perspective through an analysis of each programme’s claims.
4. To determine if there are common characteristics between these programmes that could provide a framework for an international curriculum.
5. To determine to what degree individuals within the school community (student, parent, administrator, educator) believe that these common characteristics are a part of the specified curricular structure.
6. To determine if individuals within the school community (student, parent, administrator, educator) believe that the common characteristics should be a more-significant part of the specified curricular structure to promote an international perspective.

Following the literature review, a survey was developed to provide some insight into the last two of these aims. The survey attempted to shed some light on perceptions of specified curricular programmes currently in use in international schools. These perceptions focused on whether the specified curricular programmes were promoting an international-mindedness in the student or something more hegemonic in nature.

Framework for the research

It was necessary from the outset to define and codify any related issues (social, cultural, political) surrounding education and curriculum generally. The scholarship leading up to data collection was devoted to defining the spheres of influence within an academic setting, analysing the curricular programmes found

within international schools, and analysing the perceived socio-political influences affecting the academic environment in question. For example, there was a need to make a distinction between “international education” (which is, in my opinion, the ideal for an international school) and “education in an international context” which means the concept of an education can be seen as separate from the concept of “international”. From this point in the research, the focus was on the curricular programmes found within “education in an international context”. A combined analysis of the different sources of both curriculum theory and practice resulted in a list of twelve common characteristics (Figure 1) that formed the basis of the research instrument.

The study

The research instrument was based on the analysis of specific findings in the literature review. These findings are summarized in a list of common characteristics (Figure 1).

	Characteristics	Sources
1	Balanced curriculum	IBDP, AP, AICE, Thompson (1998)
2	Academically rigorous	IBDP, A-levels, AICE, IGCSE, AP
3	Relating experience of classroom to outside world	IBDP, AICE, IGCSE, AP, Thompson (1998) implicitly
4	High academic standards	IBDP, A-levels, AICE, IGCSE, AP
5	Promoting ideals for international understanding	IBDP, AICE, IGCSE, AP, UNESCO (1968), Fennes and Hapgood (1997), Pike and Selby (1988), Thompson (1998)
6	Responsible citizenship	IBDP, AP, UNESCO (1968), Pike and Selby (1988), Ellwood (1996) explicitly, AICE, IGCSE implicitly
7	Critical thinking skills	IBDP, A-levels, AICE, IGCSE explicitly, Pike and Selby (1988), UNESCO (1968), Fennes and Hapgood (1997), Ornstein (1989) implicitly
8	Lifelong learners	Ornstein (1989), IBDP, AP, UNESCO (1968) explicitly, Pike and Selby (1988) implicitly
9	Participation in local and world affairs	IBDP, UNESCO (1968), Thompson (1998) explicitly, AICE, AP, Fennes and Hapgood (1997), Ornstein (1989), Pike and Selby (1988) implicitly
10	Consciousness of shared humanity that serves as universal bond	IBDP, Pike and Selby (1988) explicitly, AICE, AP, UNESCO, Fennes and Hapgood (1997), Thompson (1998) implicitly
11	Respecting a variety of cultures and attitudes	IBDP, AICE, UNESCO (1968), Fennes and Hapgood (1997), Thompson (1998) explicitly, Pike and Selby (1988) implicitly
12	Ability to communicate, implying bilingualism	UNESCO (1968), Fennes and Hapgood (1997), Ornstein (1989) explicitly, IBDP, AP implicitly in structure but not statement.

Figure 1: Common characteristics of international education curriculums

From these characteristics a total of 44 items were created for the main survey. Candidates for the survey were asked to rate their opinions via a Likert-type scale measurement to each item in two ways:

1. that the item in question **is a part** of their curricular structure
2. that the item in question **should be a part** of their curricular structure.

A total of 20 international schools from various regions of the world, equally representing the different curricular programmes, agreed to participate in the survey. Additionally, the survey included each of the “players” identified as being part of the educational environment (the students, the parents, the administration, and the educators) at each school. It was imperative to include schools from all over the world to determine if geographical location created any discrepancies.

The findings

It was found that the common characteristics, expressed through the 44 items in the survey, were not being addressed as well as they should be in an international education environment. There was general agreement by the students, the parents, and the educators as to where improvement was necessary. There also appeared to be little variance in the responses between the different curricular programmes. Interestingly, there was some discrepancy with the administration in the same educational environment as to where and how much improvement was necessary. The responses however, were categorically the same between respondent types.

The items that warranted the most discrepancy of opinion between the two areas of concern (**is a part** versus **should be a part** of an ideal international curriculum) are listed below under the common characteristic from which they stemmed. The numbers in brackets indicate the overall difference in the Likert measurements between the two responses for each item. The higher the number shown, the bigger the discrepancy between what is occurring and what should be occurring.

Promoting ideals for international understanding

- ◆ item 7 The examination process is fair to different cultures (1.14)
- ◆ item 18 The curriculum is unbiased in its cultural focus (1.24)
- ◆ item 19 The content of the curriculum can be understood by different cultures easily (1.07)

Critical thinking skills

- ◆ item 27 The curriculum requires students to think globally (1.00)
- ◆ item 44 The curriculum develops an interdisciplinary world view on relative issues (1.29)

Participation in local and world affairs

- ◆ item 32 The curriculum prepares students to participate in their own local affairs (1.03)

Respecting a variety of cultures and attitudes

- ◆ item 35 The curriculum gives insight into different cultures (1.05)
- ◆ item 36 The curriculum develops an awareness of different value systems (1.09)
- ◆ item 37 The curriculum gives students a chance to study cultures other than their own (1.11)

- ♦ item 38 The curriculum gives students a chance to study their own culture (1.16)
- ♦ item 39 The curriculum focuses on western culture and its values (-1.06).

Item 39 elicited a mean negative difference greater than -1 indicating that respondents would like to see less of this aspect occurring.

Conclusion

There appears to be a very strong kinship between students, parents, and educators regarding their feelings about what is currently in the specified curricular structure and what should be in an ideal international curriculum. In every case, they all appear to agree generally on the notion that the curricular structures that are in place in schools in an international context are in need of restructuring to address the needs of an international community who want an international education for their child. Administrators appear to have a very different mindset concerning the curricular structures in question.

Implications for the IBO

The IBO appears to have done a good job of promoting itself, and indeed entrenching itself into the still largely unexplored market of education in an international context. With some minor exceptions scattered throughout the responses, it seems that there is work to be done in all areas in order for it to live up to the standard that is expected by those who are directly involved. The general impression is that there are many good aspects to the IB programmes already, but they need to be developed more fully in the direction of having an international focus, and *ipso facto* in addressing the needs of a postmodernist society. It is only in this way that a truly international education through an appropriate international curriculum can be provided.

If I were asked which particular current curricular programme held the most promise as a departure point for an ideal international curriculum, I would suggest that it were the programmes of the IBO. This promise comes not so much from the present content of the curricular structure, but rather from the type of infrastructure the IBO currently employs, the multinational and multicultural input it allows, and the organizational (or corporate) environment it enjoys. In short, the IBO's flexibility and openness to different ways of thinking, largely due to the nature of the setting it caters to and the individuals it employs (both full and part-time), has resulted in an organization that has the potential to take on the endeavour of creating an ideal (and truly) international curriculum. It also has the necessary infrastructure, resources, and academic "clout" to realize any theoretical advancements into practical realities.

Incorporation of the 12 common characteristics into the educational mindset may also facilitate the development of a curricular framework that would promote "transformative intellectualism" (Zsebik, 2000) in the student. However, this road is fraught with political peril. Education is necessarily a political narrative, and it must be addressed as such. Failure to do so allows for a political stance that can perpetuate itself within the academic setting and that is also perhaps hegemonic in nature. This may be the biggest threat to the IBO, especially when it finds itself attempting incorporation into a national education context (McGhee, 2003).

The IBO must maintain its integrity as an international curriculum and this appears to be what those surveyed in the academic community are expecting of it. Roger Peel, a former director general of the IBO, believed that the paradigm for the

programme was shifting from “a curriculum for international schools to an international curriculum for schools” (Peel, 1997). It would therefore seem imperative that the IBO focus on nurturing and promoting an international curriculum so that the final outcome would be this “international-mindedness” that the consumers of the DP (the students and the parents) apparently hope to attain.

Advocacy of a national version of the DP (Sen, 2001) must be handled with caution. One of the unique features of the DP as a curricular programme is its potential to transcend national biases. To adopt a national perspective, should that be the case, could erode the uniqueness of the DP as an international curriculum, were it to be cast into a socio-political stance of a hegemonic variety (Zsebik, 2003). The fear is that should this path be chosen it could spell the loss of any momentum the IBO has as an independent and forward-looking academic alternative to a national system of education, and would be a step backwards for mass education generally as it attempts to survive in this postmodernist society. Most importantly, the DP could lose their value for people who are looking to have their child educated within an international perspective.

References

- Ellwood, C. (1996) “The Matter of Values”. *International Schools Journal*, 16 (1) 39–45.
- Fennes, H. and Hapgood, K. (1997) *Intercultural Learning in the Classroom*. London, Cassell.
- IGCSE (1993) “The IGCSE Guidelines”. *IGCSE News* 14 (Jan. 1993). Cambridge, UCLES.
- IBO (2001) *International Baccalaureate Prospectus*. (Feb. 2001) Cardiff, IBO.
- McGhee, R. (2003) “Implementing the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in UK Schools—Rationales and Challenges”. *IB Research Notes*, 3 (2) 3–8.
- Ornstein, A.C. (1989) “Emerging Curriculum Trends: An Agenda for the Future”, in Hass, G. (Ed) *Curriculum Planning: A New Approach*, Sixth edition, Boston, Allyn and Baker.
- Pearce, R. (1994) “International Schools: the Multinational Enterprises' Best Friends”. *CBI Relocation News* 32 pp. 8–9 (November 1994).
- Peel, R. (1997) “The IB Hexagon: Straitjacket or Flexible Model for the Future?” *IB World*, 14, pp. 7–8. (April 1997) Geneva, IBO.
- Pike, G. and Selby, D. (1988) *Global Teacher, Global Learner*. Hodder and Stoughton/Centre for Global Education, York.
- Sen, G. (2001) “Nationalizing the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme”. *IB Research Notes* 1 (3) 3–9.
- Thompson, J.J. (1998) “Towards a model of international education”, in Hayden M.C. and Thompson J (Eds) *International Education: Principles and Practice*. London, Kogan Page.
- UNESCO (1968) *Guiding Principles Relating to Education for International Understanding*. Recommendation No. 64 adopted by the International Conference on Public Education at its 31st session.
- Zsebik, P. (2000) “The politics of international education”, in Hayden, M.C. and Thompson, J.J. (Eds) *International Schools and International Education*. London, Kogan Page.
- Zsebik, P. (2003) A Comparative Analysis of Four Approaches to Curriculum Offered in International Schools. University of Bath, PhD thesis.

Response to Peter Zsebik's article: 1

Professor Jack Levy, George Mason University, Virginia, USA

This article raises a number of noteworthy issues, some of which are described below.

1. Intercultural communication

The fact that the research uncovered perceptual differences between the “real” and “ideal” is not surprising, since there is room for improvement in most educational endeavours. Unfortunately, the results indicate that the greatest gaps fall in the area of cross-cultural, cross-national understanding. Since six of the twelve characteristics of international curriculums relate to intercultural communication, the importance of this knowledge and skill set cannot be overstated.

2. Different group perceptions

The fact that the administrators' responses differed from those of the students, educators and parents was noteworthy. The author wisely chose not to hypothesize any possible reasons for this outcome (in fact, he didn't elaborate on the nature of the differences), but it requires further research. What might be contributing to the variance in perceptions of the administrators? Do they think things are better or worse? How are these differences influencing the way the school is represented externally? Why would there be greater agreement on the part of students, educators and parents?

3. Threat to “international-mindedness”

In discussing the relationship between the socio-political context in a country and its K-12 curriculum the author warns of a threat to the integrity of the IB. He confronts us with the possibility that, as the IB is adopted within national education systems, its “international-mindedness” goal might be hijacked in favour of a more hegemonic outcome. In fact, the item “The curriculum is unbiased in its cultural focus” received the second highest gap score. Another item, “The curriculum focuses on western culture and its values” also resulted in a noteworthy gap score.

When considering the “international-mindedness” goal of the IB and other curriculums found in international schools, a number of difficult questions arise. One concerns the notion of citizenship and its relationship to the socio-political milieu not just of the school, but of the society to which students belong. Whether they are agents of change, or agents of status quo, curriculums attempt to prepare students for responsible citizenship. International curriculums cannot overlook the fact that students reside within national boundaries, often for many years. How can a curriculum be relevant to the nation-state in which its students live, or to which they will one day return, while still preparing them for world citizenship? And how can this be accomplished when students come from a startling number of societies?

Parker (in Banks, 2004, 442-454) outlines five core “subject matters” for diversity and democracy that should be featured in both national and international curriculums: historiography, comparative constitutional studies, comparative ethnic studies, comparative poverty studies, and deliberation. Naturally, many of these are already included in the IB and other international curriculums. Nonetheless, they provide a helpful framework for both national and international educators seeking to develop international-mindedness in students.

Reference

Parker, W. (2004). “Diversity, globalization and democratic education: Curriculum possibilities.” In Banks J.A. (ed) *Diversity and citizenship education*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 442-454.

Response to Peter Zsebik's article: 2

Neil Richards, headteacher, International School of Yokohama, Japan

Peter Zsebik's research is yet another investigation around the quest for what appears to be the Holy Grail for international educators and researchers: a good, working definition of international education, or, as Zsebik himself puts it, "an ideal international education". However, just as the Holy Grail has proved, not surprisingly, elusive, its educational counterpart also seems able to defy our best efforts. I am reminded of Churchill's famous description of the Soviet Union as being a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. This may not be so very far from a useful description for international education in its current manifestation—it defies us both semantically as well as philosophically, because we seem to remain convinced that the answer is out there somewhere, wrapped inside the mystery of the existing curriculums and within the enigma of the international schools. Such scepticism, however, may well be heresy on my part. The problem seems to be that our schools are modelled upon national institutions; and our curriculums arise from and feed into national systems that originated and were designed out of economic and political imperatives rather than any philosophy of humanism. Zsebik's research questions themselves reflect this, and as we follow this particular track for our Holy Grail it seems, and at times tantalizingly so, to lead in the right direction, but ultimately the trail goes cold, and all we are left with are dire warnings.

Having got that off my chest, I found Zsebik's research well grounded in practicalities. The four curricular frameworks upon which the investigation is based, provide the common ground where many international schools meet, and in the case of their academic staff, often quite literally meet. This fact alone enables us to view international education as something that can be traced across national boundaries, and therefore, despite my misgivings, is worthy of close examination. If this is indeed the case, and Zsebik's research is premised upon it, then an examination of their claims is a crucial first step and an important springboard for an investigation into international education itself.

The characteristics of the four international curriculums, upon which Zsebik bases his study, are identified and provide the starting point for the main survey, but it is of interest to note that of the twelve characteristics, at least eight of them, and arguably even the remaining four, could sit just as happily within a national system of education. Zsebik's assertion that "education is necessarily a political narrative" is an important observation, and one that is, I believe, worthy of further examination. Internationalism is surely predicated upon nationalism, and since agents of globalization tend to ignore national boundaries, our obsession with the ideal of an international education should not escape unchallenged. Zsebik makes use of the term "postmodernist world", but in the educational context of this study, "post-international" may well be more appropriate...but I digress.

As a headteacher, I am somewhat disappointed by the distinction made between classroom teachers (educators?) and administrators (?), as major "players" in the main research survey. I understand perfectly that there is a difference between those "managed" and those who "manage", but a great many administrators also teach, and most would also make the modest claim that they are educators. In many ways it is the administrators who daily grapple with the broader issues that are being examined in this research. Perhaps Zsebik's findings, which seem to me to reflect a defensive reaction on the part of administrators, is indicative of an age-old antipathy between those "managed" (and I would include the students and parents here) and those who "manage". A small point perhaps, and I really understand what he means—or at least I hope I do—but it troubled me.

Having decided that an international education is a worthwhile and achievable goal, the inquiry focuses upon who can best really deliver it. Obviously, in our search for an international curriculum we must look to those organizations that are global in their influence, and the IBO is singled out as the organization with the “potential to transcend national biases”. Zsebik’s conclusion that the IBO is in the most ideal position in this regard is hardly surprising. Any curriculum that arises out of a national system must, by its very nature, be culturally protective and self-promoting, but the same observation, if not criticism, could be equally applied to the IBO curriculums, which arise out of a western educational tradition, and yet hope to achieve a global integrity. The hegemony that Zsebik cautions against with any national viewpoint or influence, must surely be just as virulent a threat within the global context of the IBO. However, the point that concerns the dangers of involvement by the IBO with national agendas is well made, and this is a responsibility that must rest heavily upon the guardians of the IBO philosophy.

Education, however, must be pragmatic. It has never been, and will probably never be, totally pure in its intent or its delivery, but if there is no Holy Grail out there, there are, at least, a vast number of good educators offering hope for us all. Zsebik’s research is founded on practicality, and his study reminds us of the real dangers of losing sight of the goal of an “ideal international education”.

Do the international curriculums live up to their claims? It is easy to say no, but as Zsebik’s research has highlighted, it is how the gap is closed between those features that “are a part” and those that “should be a part” of an ideal international curriculum that provide the challenges for the international schools. The problem is that there are no easy answers. Our schools must also reflect local cultures within the curriculum, as well as ensuring that each child has the opportunity to reflect upon and rejoice in his or her particular, and possibly minority, culture. It is very hard to achieve this while attempting to build a curriculum that simultaneously transcends such an individual cultural focus. Peter Zsebik has identified the IBO as being in the best position to address these concerns, but he has also warned of the dangers of being dragged into the national education arena. In the final analysis, he suggests that it is an international-mindedness that the “consumers” hope to attain, and this is unlikely to be achieved within the limits of national interest, or indeed, within the curriculums that are a reflection of those limits. It is a timely study, and will give the IBO much to think about.

Interactive Intergenerational Learning (IIL) Project

Anna Simandiraki, research assistant, International Baccalaureate Research Unit

The Interactive Intergenerational Learning (IIL) project follows on from a previous collaboration between the IBO and UNESCO. It is concerned with inquiry into the interactions between “non-adjacent” generations (the young and the elderly) as well as a reconceptualization of intergenerational practice in the context of creativity, action, service (CAS) activities in the IB Diploma Programme (DP). This is a pilot project that started in May 2003 and will be completed by June 2004. It is currently being conducted among schools and colleges offering the DP in the UK, but it is intended and hoped that it will lead to an international project investigating these issues.

There are three phases in this pilot study (following initial methodology and preliminary contacts):

1. a telephone survey in order to map interactions between the young and elderly in CAS activities
2. fieldwork visits to schools to gather more data and validate the telephone survey results
3. collation and analysis of all the data.

The telephone survey was conducted in January 2004. For this stage of data collection, an interview schedule to be used with DP and CAS coordinators was devised and piloted. Out of 46 schools offering the DP in the United Kingdom, 35 were successfully reached and found to be very cooperative. Of those 35, it was found that students at 28 schools and colleges have been involved with some kind of intergenerational practice through CAS, although in most it was only to a limited extent.

According to preliminary results, intergenerational activities fall within the scope of service, with interactions in which the young serve the elderly being the most prevalent, although informal occasions where both generations are learning from each other are not infrequent. Visiting the elderly in their homes was the most frequently reported activity, with grocery shopping ranked second. Doing chores, visiting the elderly at home and befriending closely follow these. These preferences may reflect a contingency in the way intergenerational activity has come to be practised or may be due to these activities being less demanding physically and emotionally than activities such as wheel-chair handling or feeding elderly patients. Teas, parties and dances were reported as the most popular informal activities where generations socialize and learn together.

According to the interviewees, the most prominent result of intergenerational activity is the change of attitude and world view in students (affective results), even though some students find it can be hard work. By helping or socializing with their elderly acquaintances, the young appear to see age, disability, the local community, and even social exclusion from a different perspective. Additionally, they cultivate qualities such as politeness, compassion, confidence, patience, and other social skills. Some students have become emotionally attached to their elderly friends, and sometimes continue to contact them even after their formal education is over. Reasons why students selected intergenerational activities were not usually given but, when they were, they involved the wish to help out in the local (elderly) community. Points of concern uncovered by the survey included child and vulnerable person protection issues.

The IIL project continues with fieldwork interviews with students in selected schools and colleges. Collation and analysis of data will then follow.

Research Noticeboard

Journal of Research in International Education

Information about this journal can be found at: <http://www.sagepub.co.uk>

Research literature

Agosto, D., Hughes-Hassell, S. and Gilmore-Clough, C. (2003) "The All-White World of Middle-School Genre Fiction: Surveying the Field for Multicultural Protagonists". *Children's Literature in Education* 34 (4) 257-275.

Johnson, D. and Kress, G. (2004) "Globalisation, Literacy and Society: redesigning pedagogy and assessment". *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice* 10 (1) 5-14.

LaSpina, J.A. (2003) "Designing Diversity: globalization, textbooks and the story of nations". *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 35 (6) 887-696.

International education research database

This database has now been launched and contains over 2740 research citations on international education and International Baccalaureate programmes. The international education research database can be accessed at www.ibo.org. Access the shortcuts menu to go to the research pages, which provide a link to the searchable research database.

IBO public web site

The IBO's main web site (<http://www.ibo.org>) provides general information about the organization and its programmes.

Online curriculum centre

The online curriculum centre (<http://online.ibo.org>) is available to all teachers in IB schools that subscribe to the site. The online curriculum centre is a valuable source of information for those considering research related to the IB programmes.

The Alliance for International Education Conference

This conference will be held in the cosmopolitan city of Düsseldorf, Germany, 1-3 October 2004. The theme will be "*Education for International Mindedness*". For more information please contact Beatrice Larose, Development Manager, International School of Düsseldorf, Niederrheinstrasse 336, D-40489 Düsseldorf. Tel +49 (0) 211 9406 712, Fax +49 (0) 211 9406 804

This conference has been organized under the auspices of the University of Bath and the International Baccalaureate Organization.