



# Key findings from research on the impact of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP)

The IB Global Research department collaborates with universities and independent research organizations worldwide to produce rigorous studies examining the impact and outcomes of the IB’s four programmes. The findings below come from IB-commissioned research relating to the MYP. Studies highlight a number of outcomes, including: the skills fostered through the MYP, non-scholastic outcomes of the programme and the academic achievement of MYP students.

Researchers explored the **implementation** of the MYP in **Turkey** as well as **outcomes** of the programme for students, teachers and schools. Findings indicated that, even for experienced teachers, the MYP helped teachers to hone their skills and to incorporate new and innovative techniques into their practice. The MYP also seems to support students’ academic achievement. In a national examination, 42% of the grade 8 MYP students were among the top 4% ranked students in Turkey (Ateşkan, Dulun and Lane 2016).

A study in a large school district in the **United States** investigated the impact of MYP participation on **high school course enrollment and achievement**. A statistical technique called propensity score matching was used to compare the high school outcomes of former MYP students with demographically similar non-MYP students. Former MYP students were 34% more likely than non-MYP students to take at least one Advanced Placement (AP) or Diploma Programme (DP) exam in high school. Additionally, 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 in the **United Kingdom (UK)** conducted a **curricular comparison** of the **MYP**, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**) and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (**IGCSE**). Researchers concluded that the content of the curriculums was largely similar, although the MYP offered greater curricular flexibility and was more interdisciplinary in nature. Additionally, the study found that, in comparison with non-MYP students, MYP students generally rated higher in certain non-academic attributes, such as international and civic-mindedness as well as global awareness (Sizmur and Cunningham 2013).

A mixed methods study in **Australia** used a variety of scales and measures to assess the **social, emotional and psychological well-being** of MYP students. Results indicated that over half of the MYP students were “flourishing” (54–55%), experiencing a positive outlook (60.1%) or experiencing a positive emotional state “quite a lot” or “all of the time” (52.4%). Measures of student satisfaction indicated that most MYP students were happy (approximately 70%) and satisfied (approximately 80%) with school (Skrzypiec, Askeel-Williams, Slee and Rudzinski 2014).

The first phase of a large-scale **global** research study highlighted the perceptions of MYP teachers (n = 4,488), coordinators (n = 435) and students (n = 486) on the **implementation and impact of MYP: Next chapter**. While, overall, survey respondents were positive about the curricular changes involved in MYP: Next chapter, some teachers and coordinators didn’t yet feel confident in their ability to fully implement the changes. Schools that had been implementing the changes for longer felt more confident and were more supportive of the changes; the study also suggested that implementation generally improves with time (Azzam et al. 2017).

	Students previously enrolled in MYP schools		Students previously enrolled in non-MYP schools		MYP effect	
	N	Adjusted mean	N	Adjusted mean	Mean difference	p
Number of AP/DP exams taken	597	5.77	556	4.50	1.27	.00
Number of college-ready scores on AP/DP exams earned	597	4.23	556	3.44	.79	.01

Table 1. Adjusted mean<sup>2</sup> number of AP/DP exams taken and adjusted mean number of college-ready scores.

<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>Adjusted for student demographic variables.

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In **China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia and Japan**, researchers compared the **DP outcomes** achieved by students who completed their middle years studies in the MYP, a state or national curriculum, or another international programme. Former MYP students performed significantly better than non-MYP students in the total DP points earned (table 2), 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, such as critical thinking and analytical skills, more frequently than the non-MYP students (ACER 2015).

Programme type	N	Mean (Total exam points)	p
MYP	408	32.64	.00
Others	115	30.47	

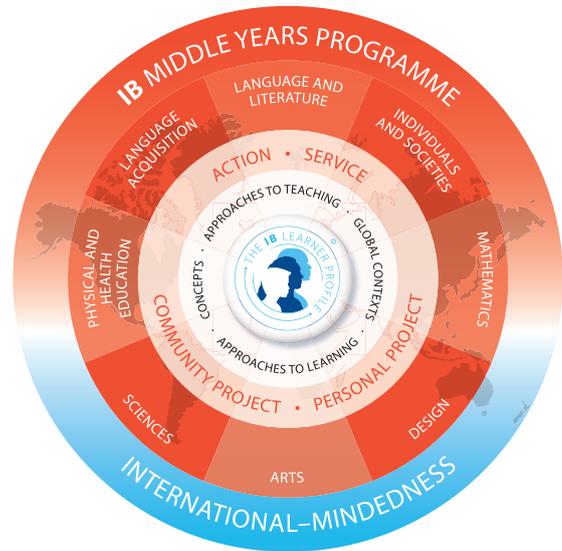
Table 2. Mean final DP scores for students according to middle years programme type and significance test.

Researchers examined the **open-mindedness** of a sample of MYP students and non-MYP students across six schools in the **UK**. Findings of the mixed-methods study demonstrated that IB students and teachers tended to have a well-developed understanding of open-mindedness. Analysis of survey data also suggested that there was a significant relationship between attending an MYP school and a greater level of open-mindedness towards cultural differences (Stevenson, Thomson and Fox 2014).

Researchers in **Spain** compared the **Spanish curriculum, Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO)**, and the **MYP**. The study indicated that introducing the MYP's concept-based learning approach, the learner profile and a more comprehensive assessment system substantially enhanced the ESO. The study also explored the **impact of the MYP** in eight Spanish private

schools. Overall, students, teachers and administrators reported that the MYP supported a range of positive outcomes in their schools, including the development of student competencies such as research and critical thinking skills, and encouraging school-wide improvements to teaching and learning (Valle, Menéndez, Manso, Garrido and Thoilliez 2017).

Another study focused on the **implementation of the MYP** in the context of the **United Arab Emirates**. Findings revealed high overall levels of satisfaction with the programme. Some of the key benefits identified by school leaders, teachers, students and parents were the flexible framework of the programme, its adaptability to the local context and its emphasis on international-mindedness. One of the main challenges for schools was integrating the MYP and the local curriculum requirements while attempting to foster a unified school culture. Researchers suggested that such a unified environment within the school must be actively created and sustained by teachers and school leaders (Stevenson et al. 2017).



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