

IB Research Notes

The most recent edition of IB Research Notes has been published, and is available on the Research pages of the International Baccalaureate Organization website (www.ibo.org). The lead article, written by Ruth McGhee, a researcher from Canada, will be of interest to many readers and is entitled "Implementing the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in UK schools - Rationales and Challenges".

New Members of the Research Unit

We are pleased to welcome three new members of staff to the International Baccalaureate Research Unit. Jim Cambridge, as many will be aware, was editor of Intercom and a Teaching Fellow at the University of Bath. Jim has now joined IBRU as a Research Fellow and commenced working on a number of projects within the Research Unit, one of which is the Interactive Intergenerational project described below. In addition to Jim's appointment, two Research Assistants will be joining the team. Anna Simandiraki and Zhen Yao will take up their posts in July 2003.

Learning between the young and older persons

An important component of the IB Diploma Programme is Creativity, Action, Service (CAS). In many schools, CAS activities involve students working with the elderly. Interactive Intergenerational Learning (IIL) can take many forms, with one challenge being how to evaluate and assess the informal experiential learning that arises from such activities.. Collaboration between UNESCO and the IBO

in the field of intergenerational learning was established in 2001, arising directly from important characteristics of the work of the two organizations. Initial discussions led to a joint objective to pursue enquiries that would lead to a better understanding of the nature of the learning arising from intergenerational interactions and at the conclusion of the first phase of the study a report was published. [See <http://www.bath.ac.uk/ceic/ibru/index.html> and select the link to IB Research Notes 1 (2) for more information.] Phase two of the project consists of the selection of a representative sample of UK schools in which to undertake in depth case studies with a view to understanding more fully the nature of learning that takes place in intergenerational activities. To this end a telephone survey of IB schools in the UK was conducted during May 2003 with the aims of establishing contact with IBRU and finding out about the types of IIL-related activities being conducted in the context of CAS. Criteria for selection of the schools in the survey were: their appearance in the Directory of IB schools (IBO, 2003) and their relative proximity to Bath, with schools in the Southwest, Midlands and Home Counties being given priority. However, priority was also given to schools recommended by colleagues for the quality of their intergenerational activities.

Selection for inclusion in the survey was balanced between institutions in the private and maintained sectors, with nine private and twelve state schools and colleges contacted. Schools reported a variety of activities with the elderly, most of it involving the young giving service to the old. They expressed interest in the research question, particularly in terms of the question of how experiential learning is assessed in the context of CAS. The outcome of this survey has been the identification of a number of schools as potential partners to take part in the next stage in the project.

We would be pleased to hear from teachers who have activities that they believe would be of interest for this ongoing research project.