

IBRU News



Richard Caffyn, recently appointed Head of Research Support and Development with IBRU, reflects on exciting new prospects

I began my work as head of research support and development at the International Baccalaureate Research Unit (IBRU) in September this year, having previously worked for 14 years in international schools throughout Europe and the Caucasus. My current position is a challenging and exciting one. It has a strong management element, involving extensive communication, organization and collaboration, which is particularly interesting for me as my background is in research and educational management.

My primary aim is to develop the role of the practitioner researcher. I have been working over the last five years on a part-time PhD with the University of Bath and have gained a lot of experience working as a distance researcher in IB schools. I will be looking at supporting research and developing methods to assist teachers working on research projects. From this initial outline plan, I aim to begin implementing the full teacher support research project in January 2005.

One of the first tasks will be to look closely at the existing support available within the IB network for teachers who are undertaking research. IBRU will investigate their needs and the ways in which they can best be supported. We will look at the issues and problems involved in undertaking distance researching. We intend to use this project to develop methods and support systems to facilitate and encourage distance learning, collaboration and reflection. We also want to look at ways of encouraging teachers to undertake more research.

Teacher research is a colourful, exciting and important aspect of education and it enables practitioners to reflect, learn and contribute to the advancement of ideas. All schools should

encourage this kind of reflective action as an opportunity to improve the performance of individuals as well as organizations, and to assist student learning. In IB schools the greatest problem is that of distance. Researchers often work alone or in small groups with few links to others. This is something IBRU hopes to investigate in detail, in order to debate the best forms of support, networking and assistance for practitioner researchers.

Services available from IBRU

The *International Education Research Database* is freely available online at <http://www.ibo.org> via the 'research' shortcut. It currently lists citations to around 3,000 books, chapters, articles, theses and dissertations.

IB Research Notes is a quarterly newsletter published jointly by IBRU and the IB Curriculum and Assessment Centre. It is available as a pdf file from the IBO public website at <http://www.ibo.org>. *IB Research Notes* provides a forum not only for reporting summative outcomes of research in international education but also formative discussion of research methods and methodology.

Recent publications by IBRU staff

Simandiraki, A. (2004) Μινωπαιδιές: the Minoan civilization in Greek primary education. *World Archaeology* 36 (2): 177-188.

Cambridge, J.C. & J.J. Thompson (2004) Internationalism and globalisation as contexts for international education. *Compare*, 34 (2): 157-171.

Cambridge, J.C. & C. Carthew (2004) Schools self-assess their international values. *ISA News* p. 7 (July 2004).

Cambridge, J.C. (2004) Review of "Comparative and International Research in Education: Globalisation, context and difference". (Crossley, M. & K. Watson, 2003). *Compare* 34 (3): 341-342.