

## Practitioner Research

### Overview of the project

The Practitioner Research Project is an IBRU investigation into the needs of researchers based in schools throughout the IBO world and what kinds of support they require. It will look at the following:

- The ways in which teachers and school staff working in IBO schools can be supported and encouraged.
- The needs and perceived needs of research practitioners working in schools.
- The possibilities of online learning, the use of the web and other distance learning systems.

Research in this context is any reflective study done by practitioners; academic, professional development or otherwise. It will involve schools and practitioners throughout the world. Primarily the focus is a study of the research needs of those working in schools, be they teachers, administrators or support staff. It is intended that this will lead to the creation of a network for encouraging and supporting research. There is a strong link to the IBO strategic plan and how IBRU and eventually the IBO can offer support for teachers in schools.

### Research structure

The Practitioner Research Project (PRP) has completed the pre-pilot stage which has entailed sending out a questionnaire to a sample of practitioner researchers. The data collected enabled the testing of the method and its revision.

We are now piloting three questionnaires in 60 IB schools worldwide:

- Practitioner researchers
- Non-Researcher practitioners
- Management

The main questionnaire is that for practitioner researchers one which is divided into several discrete sections looking at:

- A profile of the researcher, their research and the school
- Issues that the researcher faces

The other questionnaires follow similar lines but are shorter and aim to supplement the research by focusing on those who have potential for research but are not actively engaged in it, and those who hold gatekeeper or managerial roles in the school.

From this we will then increase the number of schools and send out further questionnaires to form the main research stage. It is hoped that this quantitative method will also be triangulated using qualitative techniques including interviews with practitioner researchers in a number of IB schools. This would involve a small group of case studies to look in-depth at the research going on in the school. It would also aim to focus on the school's research culture and inter-relationships.

### Outcomes

Articles using the research findings, and support systems for practitioner researchers, will be major outcomes of the project. It will also assist the IBO in the development of research development systems.

Under the direction of Zhen Yao, the content of the IBRU website has recently undergone a 'makeover' to improve services to users. The improved website includes information about the IBO Research Committee, IBRU publications and projects, and links to information about individual members of the Research Unit. The IBRU web page also provides a link to the International Education Research Database, which is a free resource listing over 3,000 references to academic and professional publications in the international education literature. "Our aim is to make a user-friendly resource that can be used not only by teachers and academics, but by anyone who is interested in international education", says Zhen Yao. To reach the IBRU website, go to <http://www.ibo.org> and follow the shortcuts to 'Research'. The International Education Research Database can also be found at: <http://research.ibo.org/>.