

Apuntes de investigación del BI

Información para la comunidad investigadora del BI

Volumen 6, Número 1

Marzo/abril de 2006

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En este número de los *Apuntes de investigación del BI*, Vicki Yin profundiza en los motivos por los que los alumnos del sudeste asiático optan por los programas de IBO y examina, desde una perspectiva crítica, la repercusión de la globalización y el internacionalismo en las opciones que eligen los alumnos. Además, analiza la cuestión de la lengua y hace referencia en especial a las culturas dominantes y a la creación de elites. Judith Fabian, jefa de la división de programas de IBO, comenta el artículo y sugiere que las preguntas que se plantean sobre intereses ideológicos y pragmáticos son controvertidas pero necesarias.

Aquellos que estén interesados en contribuir a los *Apuntes de investigación del BI* con sus artículos de investigación pueden ponerse en contacto conmigo a través de la dirección de correo electrónico de IBRU. Seguimos examinando los *Apuntes de investigación del BI* para mejorar su estructura y responder de forma más directa a las necesidades de los lectores. Les agradecería que me enviaran cualquier comentario sobre la publicación a la dirección: richard.caffyn@ibo.org.

Richard Caffyn

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Jefe de desarrollo y apoyo en investigación de IBRU

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Artículo principal

Vicki Yin nació en Lancaster (Inglaterra) y se licenció en química de los alimentos y nutrición aplicada. Más tarde, trabajó en el sector de la hostelería pero descubrió que la profesión de docente era más propicia para establecer una familia, mucho más satisfactoria y una manera excepcional de ver mundo. Desde entonces, ha impartido clases en muchos países, entre ellos, Brunei Darussalam, Australia, Reino Unido, Papua Nueva Guinea, Qatar, Sudán y Malasia, donde ha desempeñado diversos cargos desde responsable del currículo hasta directora, en sistemas educativos tanto nacionales como internacionales. Realizó un curso de posgrado en educación en la Universidad Griffith (Australia) y un máster en gestión de la educación en la Universidad de Southern Queensland. Está casada con un malayo y en la actualidad imparte clases en el International School of Penang (Uplands) de Malasia, donde su hija estudia el Programa del Diploma de IBO. Le gustaría que se creasen sistemas educativos donde se inculcase en los alumnos el sentido de la justicia y el respeto por los derechos humanos.

International curriculum offerings: How are they addressing the aspirations of South-East Asian students?

Vicki Yin

The majority of students in international schools in Malaysia have until recently been of a “Third Culture Kid” (Pollock and Van Reken 2001) background: their parents expatriates whose jobs moved them from country to country. There is now, however, a significant increase in students from neighbouring Asian countries who are sent to Malaysia specifically for an international education, although what constitutes an international education can be “an ambiguous term because it is used in a variety of ways”—as Cambridge and Thompson (2004) make very clear—and can mean different things to different people.

These students bring with them a different set of skills and expectations. International schools should be examining how compatible their curriculum offerings (courses such as the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme) are with these students' aspirations.

The IBO includes in its mission statement the development of qualities such as inquiry, knowledge, care, compassion and lifelong learning in an international context. It requires students to complete a creativity, action, service (CAS) programme, an extended essay and a common course in the theory of knowledge (TOK).

These are commendable inclusions, but at the same time can be seen as exclusive to students whose first language is not English, and whose educational background is Asian rather than Western.

While international schools move towards these curriculums, it is also unclear whether Asian parents and students are confident of their value. For them, it is much harder doing an IB programme than the conventional three or four A Levels (or even five as some students in Malaysia do). It requires a good command of English usage and higher level skills such as application, justification, evaluation and problem solving, which they may not have experienced in their home-country education systems. They are often latecomers to international education, whether for economic reasons or because of a desire to have a strong foundation in their mother tongue.

There are also other roads to university qualifications that are faster and therefore cheaper, such as through local colleges (whose numbers are rapidly increasing in Malaysia [Tan 2002]) linked to UK, Australian or New Zealand universities via twinning programmes. These programmes offer degrees whereby the first one or two years are completed in Malaysia, the rest overseas. Some even offer “3 + 0” courses, whereby the degree is awarded by the parent university overseas, yet the course is carried out entirely within Malaysia.

The strength of Asian currencies also plays a part in the pathways that these students choose.

International schools are therefore faced with the dilemma between ideological and pragmatic interests, as described by Cambridge and Thompson (2004: 164): the ideology of offering courses that promote international-mindedness, and the pragmatism of providing universal credentials.

Is it the case that South-East Asian students are shying away from programmes such as the IB Diploma Programme and going for the more narrowly focused vocational courses offered by local colleges, very few of which promote “internationalism”? Many of those who do choose the IB Diploma Programme find it a struggle because they do not have the language and application skills, and may end up with a poor diploma that is not a reflection of their academic ability, but rather a reflection of their lack of English language skills. Critically, are the students who can successfully manage the IB Diploma Programme the elite who have been educated in English from a young age, and is the IBO therefore perpetuating a wealthy, first-world-biased elite?

There are two strands to this problem:

1. the learning philosophy and its curriculum implications
2. the language of instruction.

In seeking to clarify some of the issues, my research led to an examination of the literature surrounding education for globalization and internationalism, with particular regard to the South-East Asian countries of Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, Korea and Japan—the countries from which many South-East Asian students are sent to Malaysia.

The learning philosophy

It is interesting to note that the “knowledge society” foreseen by writers such as Drucker (1994) refers mainly to the future for developed nations that already have a technological base upon which to build their future. It applies to countries that have passed through industrialization, and moved on to third and fourth stage industries. There is little discussion of the plight of developing countries that are still heavily reliant on primary sector industries, or the needs of those countries that, in their rush to tackle globalization, are basing their education systems primarily on the needs of the economy. Writers such as Paquette (1996) and the postmodernists raise fears about the inequalities such societies may promote.

It is here that the concept of globalization (and its relationship to internationalism) should be carefully examined, as there are again many definitions and approaches. The reality of globalization was brought home to South-East Asia by the financial crisis of 1997. The Asian Tigers tottered, and it was eminently clear that the South-East Asian economies were under the influence of a global economy. It is therefore in this economic context that globalization has most meaning for the expanding middle classes of Asia and their children.

In such a context it is hard to reconcile globalization with internationalism, as Jones (1998, quoted in Cambridge and Thompson 2004) recognizes. Globalization requires “the establishment of a global marketplace marked by free trade and a minimum of regulation”, whereas internationalism promotes “global peace and well-being through the development and application of international structures”.

A survey of Asian curriculum development shows that South-East Asian countries are eager to keep abreast of global trends by updating their educational offerings. Measures include decentralization in regulation and governance; the promotion of lifelong learning; the

introduction of “internationalization” into the curriculum; the increasing use of evaluation and control measures; and the need to bring education and work closer together (Green 1999 and Cheng 2001).

The economic context of globalization in education in South-East Asia must also be recognized: Japan has sought to introduce education with a “global perspective” (Asano 2000: 106). However, Selby (1999) says that this is understood as an education for “global competitiveness” rather than global integration. Similarly, Singapore has regarded “education and economic performance [as] indivisible” (Tan 1992).

Although Cheng warns against the dangers of generalization (2000: 208), the common theme seems to be that much of this change is rhetoric from the top, with the actual implementation failing to achieve their objectives (Green 1999). The reasons for this failure are various, ranging from a basic mistrust in administration by teachers; the inability to attract quality applicants into the profession; the difficulty in dismantling a rigid bureaucratic system; to a simple, basic lack of funding in the educational sector.

The end result is that the goals have failed to filter down to classroom practice, and the students who leave these systems to join international schools find the transition from rigid “one right answer” (Borden 2003) systems to an ambiguity-tolerant, problem-solving, individualistic education system an extremely difficult one, which they must struggle to master in an unfamiliar language.

These students are also the ones whom Cambridge and Thompson (2004: 170) refer to as members of the Transnational Capitalist Class who have “turned their backs on their own educational system and embrace[d] the values of the economically developed world”. In the transformationalist thesis of globalization (Held et al. 1999, quoted in Cambridge and Thompson 2004), this leads to a social division of the world economy, an echo of Paquette’s predictions of the strengthening of the social elites of a country, so that the gap between rich and poor is not just between countries, but within countries themselves. Is the exclusivity of curriculums such as the IB Diploma Programme cementing the status quo?

In speaking to the parents of these students, it is rare to find any understanding of the attempts that their countries’ education systems are making to address their children’s future. There is very little understanding of the underlying principles of a programme such as the IB Diploma Programme, and even less understanding of its relevance to their children’s world.

It seems that there is a large, as yet unbridged gap between the objectives of Western-style curriculums and the aspirations of Asian students. But this is where reference needs to be made to what Quist (2005) refers to as the current discourse on international education.

Quist’s argument is that this discourse is “characterized in the main by the Western (developed) world talking to itself and demonstrating an unwillingness or inability to fully engage with the relevant perspectives and demands of colonial/post-colonial discourse”. The perspectives of a region such as South-East Asia are indeed very different from those of Europe. Both may have impressive trade blocs (the EU and ASEAN, respectively), but their “historical and contemporary realities” (Quist 2005) are completely different. To expect a Western-based education philosophy to fit their needs is naïve.

Quist calls for a “radical” approach, one where we examine the reasons for the rich–poor divide. In this sense the discourse on international education must face squarely the threat that, by its exclusivity, it is perpetuating and consolidating this divide. One may argue, as Desai (1996, quoted in Wilkinson 1998) does, that as “students at IB schools very largely represent a multinational elite” who will be the next generation’s leaders, their education should prepare them for leadership that will “create a more equitable world”.

But is this enough?

Programmes such as the IB Diploma Programme should be able to reach out to a wider sector of the student population and examine the values of justice and equal opportunity in a world

context. For example, Asian countries become very cynical when the West preaches internationalism, but is in no hurry to dismantle trade barriers when fledgling Eastern economies threaten established Western markets. Are there, therefore, circumstances when equal opportunity is expendable? These are the type of issues that are under the microscope.

Language of instruction

As the postmodernists such as Lyotard (1984) and Baudrillard (n.d.) point out, language is never neutral, and can in fact be used as a tool of exclusivity. Grimshaw (2005) underlines this with his point that “political and economic realities” determine the language of use. In a study done by MacKenzie (2000), the highest ranking factor for parents sending their children to an international school was a “desire for my child to be educated in [the] English language”: they did not do this to access British/American culture, but because they felt it was the “language of the future” for their children to succeed. They seek English proficiency to avoid exclusion from globalization.

As an illustration, Malaysia was determined to unite the country post-independence (Thumboo [2005] prefers this term to post-colonialism) with a common language: Malay. By 1982, classes at all national primary schools, secondary schools and universities were taught in Malay. But in its attempts to keep pace with globalization, there has been great concern over the loss of English proficiency in the work force, (“Jobless Due to Poor English”, *New Straits Times*, 11 December 2005) and in 2003, English was reintroduced as the language of instruction for maths and science, a move that has ignited much passion and debate.

By losing proficiency in English, Malaysia has been excluded from the economic progress it desires, an illustration of the influence of political and economic realities.

It is clear that English is the language of economic globalization, and that international schools have an obligation to ensure that non-native English language speakers become proficient in order to become equal players on the world stage, or they run the risk of being perceived “condescending and patronising” as Quist (2005) elegantly points out. Or, as Salt (1998) says: “language is only inherently unequal if it cannot be accessed equally”.

But it also brings with it other obligations: that mother-tongue languages are sustained in the curriculum, and that, as Grimshaw (2005) says in championing critical international education, we must be “aware of [our] own biases and [be] prepared to acknowledge the valid claims of others”.

This latter point lies at the heart of international education, whether it be language of instruction, or educational philosophy. Too often practitioners in international education do not recognize their own biases, and try, with evangelical zeal, to convert others to their own ethnocentric world view. It is easy to patronise cultures whose values are not the same as our own, but it is not so easy, and a “road less travelled” to seek out the answer to “why?”.

I would like to suggest that this is the way forward for further discourse on international education, to reduce the distance between the “others” and the “dominant and essentially dispossessing culture”, as Quist (2005) puts it. Whether it be at policy, curriculum or classroom level it would help international schools to reconcile the dilemma between “internationalist” and “globalist” approaches, as Cambridge and Thompson put it, particularly in a South-East Asian context.

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Respuesta al artículo principal

Judith Fabian es jefa de la división de programas del Centro de currículo y evaluación de la Organización del Bachillerato Internacional (IBCA), en Cardiff. Ha impartido clases en colegios internacionales en Holanda, Jordania, Tanzania y Alemania. Antes de trabajar en IBCA fue profesora de Inglés A1 y de Teoría del Conocimiento del Programa del Diploma de IBO durante 15 años y directora de escuela secundaria en dos Colegios del Mundo del BI.

Vicki Yin raises issues that are very pertinent to international education and the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Some of the questions she asks are not particularly comfortable, but they need asking. The struggle within the IBO is between wanting to broaden access so that different types of schools and, therefore, a wider range of students can study an international curriculum, while needing to keep fees affordable and standards high. The IBO is a small organization with a large vision.

The “dilemma between ideological and pragmatic interests” is a constant dilemma for the IBO, and not just with regards to South-East Asian students. There are schools all over the world that are interested in implementing, or are actually implementing, IB programmes primarily in order to increase enrolment, or achieve more university acceptances for their students, just as there are parents who see IB programmes only as a passport to a good university, with the added benefit of developing fluency in English. The IBO does not require an oath of allegiance to the mission statement when a school becomes authorized or when a student enrolls in a programme. Instead it works with schools, and encourages and enables schools to work with students, to explore together what it means to be internationally minded and how we can all contribute to “a better and more peaceful world” (in the words of the IBO mission statement).

Is the IBO “perpetuating a wealthy, first-world-biased elite”? Is the organization naïve to expect a Western-based education philosophy to fit students such as those from South-East Asia described by Yin? These are the uncomfortable questions, and the ones that need answering. With regard to the first, I believe the assertion could be argued quite strongly, though less so today than in the recent past. The majority of the 1,600-plus IB World Schools are now state or national schools, not international. Clearly there are national schools, among them many state-supported schools, that wish to teach an international curriculum. The MYP and PYP programmes can be taught in the local language; the Diploma Programme, of course, can't. Some of these national schools are in countries such as Turkey, Russia, China and Indonesia.

Is the organization naïve to expect students from the countries such as those listed above to adapt to and find relevance in a Western-based education? The IBO has to explore this question much more assiduously than it has in the past. The soon to be published IB learner profile is the IBO mission statement translated into a set of learning outcomes. It states that IB students and teachers strive to be:

- inquirers
- knowledgeable
- thinkers
- communicators
- principled
- open-minded
- caring
- risk-takers
- balanced
- reflective.

I have met with teachers all over the world, from a range of cultures and faiths, and this profile has been enthusiastically received. Have I consulted widely and thoroughly enough? Were people just being polite in their responses?

Of course the IBO could argue that its programmes are based on the most recent educational research, and that they represent the organization's best efforts to produce programmes that will meet the aspirations of the mission statement. It could also argue that no schools or students *have* to do an IB programme, that it is a matter of choice. The first argument would suggest a degree of self-satisfaction within the organization resulting in stale, Western-biased programmes that would, ultimately, fail to meet the needs of the 21st-century learner. The second argument would support Yin's assertion that IBO programmes support only a wealthy elite.

It is incumbent upon the IBO, and other organizations that purport to offer international programmes of education, to work to "reduce the distance between the 'others' and the 'dominant and essentially dispossessing culture'"(as argued by Yin, quoting Quist) by creating more opportunities, wherever and whenever possible, to explore differences in knowledge, values and philosophy. While it would be impossible and, arguably, inadvisable to produce an educational programme that fits all philosophies, values and interpretations of knowledge, the IBO should strive to ensure its world view is not ethnocentric, and strive also to recognize its biases.

Novedades de IBRU

El profesor Jeff Thompson se jubiló del cargo de jefe de IBRU en diciembre de 2005. Jeff Thompson fundó IBRU en mayo de 2000 y su función de dirección en la unidad de investigación supuso el punto culminante de una trayectoria en IBO en el curso de la cual ha ocupado también los puestos de examinador jefe y director académico. En la unidad de investigación se echará de menos su experiencia y orientación, aunque ahora es profesor emérito de la Universidad de Bath y seguirá trabajando en el campo de la educación internacional. Este año será uno de los editores de la nueva versión de la publicación *Sage Handbook of Research in International Education* y seguirá colaborando con la Alliance of International Education, para prepararse para su próxima conferencia que se celebrará en otoño en Shanghai.

A partir de enero de 2006, IBRU se unirá a la división de desarrollo profesional bajo la dirección de Jonathon Marsh. Se trata de una evolución muy positiva y esperamos que la labor de investigación en IBO continúe su curso de forma sólida y productiva.

En noviembre de 2005 el European Council of International Schools (ECIS) celebró su conferencia anual en La Haya y, como es habitual, IBRU e IBO participaron activamente con un *stand* y varias presentaciones. El *stand* de IBRU se situó este año entre el de IBO y el de la Universidad de Bath. Se distribuyeron muchos folletos e información sobre la investigación de IBO y se debatieron diversas cuestiones de investigación y posibles áreas de colaboración con varios delegados. También hubo ocasión de entablar varias conversaciones interesantes con lectores y colaboradores de los *Apuntes de investigación del BI*.

El personal de IBRU hizo las siguientes presentaciones:

- ◆ “Self-evaluation of international values by schools” (autoevaluación de los valores internacionales de los colegios), con Clive Carthew, International Schools Association
- ◆ “Symbols in education and their role in the construction of cultural identity” (los símbolos en la educación y su función en la construcción de la identidad cultural)
- ◆ “Internationalizing intergenerational learning: issues for students, schools and the elderly” (internacionalización del aprendizaje intergeneracional: cuestiones para los alumnos, los colegios y las personas mayores)
- ◆ “Cross-cultural management in international schools: a critical examination” (gestión transcultural en los colegios internacionales: un análisis crítico)
- ◆ “Practitioner research and the IBO” (el personal de los colegios del BI y la investigación)

Sobre estas presentaciones, relacionadas con proyectos y áreas de investigación en las que trabaja IBRU, se difundirán los artículos correspondientes en los *Apuntes de investigación del BI* y en publicaciones relacionadas. Entre otros aspectos importantes de la conferencia para IBRU, destacaron varios debates dinámicos y muy interesantes que se entablaron con miembros del público, así como la representación en el *stand*.

El anterior jefe de IBRU, el profesor Jeff Thompson, que se acaba de jubilar, recibió un premio por los servicios prestados durante su carrera que le otorgó el ECIS en una ceremonia celebrada durante la conferencia.

Proyecto sobre el personal de los colegios del BI y la investigación

Se han enviado cuestionarios diferentes a 600 Colegios del Mundo del BI y en estos momentos estamos recopilando las respuestas. La información obtenida mediante los mismos se analizará a principios de 2006 y esperamos poder ofrecerles los resultados a lo largo de este año. Dicha información nos permitirá brindar un mejor apoyo a los docentes que investigan en los colegios y desarrollar la capacidad investigadora en la comunidad de IBO.

Noticias de investigación

Journal of Research in International Education

Si desea más información sobre esta publicación, visite: <http://www.sagepub.co.uk>.

Trabajos de investigación

Bottery, Michael (2006) "Education and globalization: redefining the role of the educational professional". *Educational Review*, vol. 58, núm.1.

En este artículo se argumenta que las fuerzas de globalización actuales están influyendo notablemente en las políticas de las naciones y, especialmente, en las relacionadas con la educación. El resultado de esta influencia es una situación donde la profesión docente está cada vez más controlada y fragmentada. Por esta razón, se argumenta que es necesario cambiar radicalmente la percepción que tienen los profesionales con respecto a la naturaleza de su trabajo y sus responsabilidades. En el artículo se señala la necesidad de una comprensión profesional de las cuestiones políticas de naturaleza global. También se examinan algunas definiciones generales de "globalización", se sugieren algunos tipos concretos y se argumenta que se producen determinadas mediaciones en varios niveles diferentes inferiores al nivel global. Más adelante se defiende que la combinación de estas fuerzas globales y las distintas mediaciones conducen a una estandarización y control desmesurados, así como a una flexibilidad y fragmentación excesivas del trabajo profesional, que dan lugar a varias tensiones en la práctica. En la sección final del artículo se sugiere que, debido a estas fuerzas globales, las concepciones "normales" de la función del profesional deben complementarse con más requisitos si los profesionales desean desempeñar una labor significativa en el siglo XXI.

Brown, George M. (2006) "Degrees of doubt: legitimate, real and fake qualifications in a global market". *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, vol. 28, núm. 1.

En este artículo se ofrece un análisis del fenómeno global de falsificación de títulos, un "sector artesanal" de 1.000 millones de dólares estadounidenses que ha afectado a la educación superior en Australia y no parece que esté remitiendo. El estudio se elabora mediante un marco conceptual de "titulitis", acumulación de títulos y procedimientos de selección que, según el autor, fomenta la demanda de títulos académicos, tanto legítimos como otros que, en una escala de legitimidad y aceptabilidad, dejan mucho que desear. En este documento se sugieren varios recursos y herramientas clave que pueden utilizar el personal de dirección de las universidades, las instituciones de educación superior y los responsables de recursos humanos del sector. En la conclusión se revisan las prácticas globales fundamentales que se emplean actualmente como medidas proactivas para reducir el fraude de los títulos y así poder lograr un marco de mejores prácticas para Australia.

International education research database (base de datos de investigación sobre la educación internacional)

La base de datos de investigación sobre la educación internacional se ha actualizado y actualmente contiene cerca de 3.000 artículos de investigación sobre la educación internacional y sobre los programas de la Organización del Bachillerato Internacional. Se puede acceder a ella en <http://www.ibo.org>. Seleccione **Recursos** y, a continuación, haga clic en **International Education Research Database**.

Sitio web público de IBO

El sitio web público de IBO (<http://www.ibo.org>) proporciona información general sobre la organización y sus programas.

Centro pedagógico en línea

El Centro pedagógico en línea (<http://occ.ibo.org>) está disponible para todos los profesores de los colegios del BI que se suscriban al mismo. Constituye una valiosa fuente de información para todos aquellos que estén considerando realizar investigaciones relacionadas con los programas de IBO.