

Apuntes de investigación del BI

Información para la comunidad investigadora del BI

Volume 6, Issue 2

Octubre de 2006

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En este número de los *Apuntes de investigación del BI*, John Hardman analiza un estudio de caso sobre la conexión entre el clima escolar y las alteraciones que sufre ante un cambio en la dirección, y cómo estas alteraciones repercuten en los resultados de los alumnos del BI. Este artículo aborda cuestiones relacionadas con el grado en que una dirección eficaz puede influir en los resultados de aprendizaje. En estudios de caso como el que se describe a continuación, resulta esencial contextualizar las variables locales. El comentario del Dr. Richard Pearce aborda algunos de los temas tratados en el artículo principal y amplía el debate. La respuesta de John Hardman al comentario retoma aspectos concretos del mismo. Esperamos desarrollar este tipo de formato discursivo en los *Apuntes de investigación del BI* durante el próximo año, con el fin de ofrecer un medio de difusión de información y debate crítico más interactivo.

En las páginas en inglés del sitio público de IBO dedicadas a los *Apuntes de investigación del BI* se encuentra disponible un cuestionario en línea para darnos a conocer su opinión y obtener información sobre el uso de esta publicación. Les agradeceríamos que dedicaran algún tiempo a completar este cuestionario, que nos proporcionará una mayor comprensión de las necesidades e intereses de nuestros lectores.

Invitamos a aquellos que estén interesados en contribuir a los *Apuntes de Investigación del BI* con sus artículos de investigación a ponerse en contacto conmigo a través de la dirección de correo electrónico de IBRU. Durante 2007 modificaremos el formato de los *Apuntes de investigación del BI* con el objetivo de mejorar su estructura y responder a las necesidades de nuestros lectores de una forma más directa. Agradeceríamos, asimismo, que nos enviaran cualquier comentario sobre la publicación a la siguiente dirección de correo electrónico: richard.caffyn@ibo.org.

Richard Caffyn

Editor de los *Apuntes de investigación del BI*
Jefe de desarrollo y apoyo en investigación

Los *Apuntes de investigación del BI* son una publicación semestral de la Unidad de investigación (IBRU) y del Centro de currículo y evaluación (IBCA) del Bachillerato Internacional. Para comunicarse con IBRU, dirigirse a:

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Artículo principal

John Hardman cuenta con un máster en gestión de colegios internacionales por la Oxford Brookes University. Actualmente se encuentra en la Florida Atlantic University (sur de Florida), donde prepara su tesis doctoral sobre el liderazgo educativo en una era global, centrándose en la sustentabilidad medioambiental en el contexto educativo. Sus intereses de investigación incluyen la influencia que ejercen unos líderes con objetivos claros sobre la eficacia de los docentes y el desempeño de los alumnos, el impacto de la tecnología en la educación en el siglo XXI y el proceso de hacer de los colegios comunidades sustentables desde el punto de vista medioambiental.

Nacido y educado en Argentina, la experiencia de John como docente durante los últimos 25 años abarca la enseñanza de Inglés, Teoría del Conocimiento, Ciencias, Historia y Teatro en colegios de primaria y secundaria, además del desempeño de los cargos de jefe de sección y director en colegios internacionales de América Latina. Durante estos años, ha participado en el diseño y desarrollo curricular, en la implementación de los tres programas de IBO, en proyectos de construcción de colegios y en el desarrollo de asociaciones educativas. En los últimos años ha sido miembro de diversos comités educativos, de los cuales destacan por su importancia la Latin American Heads Conference (LAHC), el Comité regional de representantes de directores de colegios de IBLA y la Corporación Ecuatoriana para la Calidad de la Educación (CORPEDUCAR), asociación de colegios privados de Ecuador de la que es cofundador. Durante su estancia en Ecuador, trabajó en estrecha colaboración con el Ministerio de Educación ecuatoriano en la reforma del bachillerato nacional y en la mejora del sistema de supervisión de los colegios estatales.

Linking school climate to student outcomes in the IB Diploma Programme

John Hardman

Resumen ejecutivo

Este artículo pone de manifiesto que una mejora sistemática y consciente del clima escolar y las condiciones de trabajo favorece el aprendizaje de los alumnos. El objetivo del caso descrito a continuación era propiciar la transformación de un ambiente escolar considerablemente autocrático, caracterizado por un profesorado, alumnado y comunidad pasivos, en una organización de aprendizaje acorde con las prácticas del siglo XXI y la declaración de principios de la Organización del Bachillerato Internacional (IBO). Respetando en todo momento las normas y valores tradicionales del país en el que se encuentra el colegio, la estrategia general consistió en poner en marcha un proceso de desarrollo de una cultura flexible y cooperativa de ideales y toma de decisiones compartidos que, como demuestran cada vez más trabajos de investigación, permite mejorar y mantener la calidad de la docencia y el aprendizaje en un contexto de constante cambio. En el transcurso de tres años, se implementaron una serie de iniciativas con el

objetivo de crear y mantener un ideal de excelencia educativa, de alumnos y docentes eficaces, y de una comunidad enriquecedora y abierta a través de la autonomía y el liderazgo compartido. Entre los resultados descritos en este artículo se pueden citar los cambios positivos en el clima escolar y las condiciones de trabajo, y los resultados de los alumnos del Programa del Diploma desde 2001 hasta 2004.

Background

From April 2001 to July 2004, I was privileged to head an international school in Ecuador. At the time, the K-12 school had 1,600 students on roll and 140 staff, made up of teaching, clerical and support personnel. The school was structured as an integrated pre-school, primary, and a two-stream optional national and international secondary section from grades 7 to 12, offering the IB Diploma Programme to approximately 50% of the student body.

For the duration of the contract, I was afforded a great deal of freedom in running most aspects of the school's business, which empowered me personally in the role of school principal, which in turn allowed us to develop a strong self-managing ethos. Without this support from the institution's governance, I believe that the following events would not have been possible.

Improving school climate and conditions through engagement and empowerment

One of the greatest challenges to change in any organization is its culture, as embedded in the behaviours, norms and values of stakeholders, and this is particularly true when the way things have been done in the past contrasts strongly with new initiatives (Carson 2005; Hofstede 1980; Trompenaars 1993). In this particular case, the situational analysis of the school conducted at the outset revealed, among other issues, a history of autocratic leadership within a hierarchical local culture, where faculty, staff and students had little say in curriculum development and delivery, and where the IB Diploma Programme was doing little to further the mission of the IBO "to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect".¹ It was understood that a suitable environment for this kind of development would be created if we worked towards developing the school as a learning organization (Leithwood et al 1995, 2006; Senge 1990; Senge et al 2000), and that this would become possible if all staff were to become active learners and participators in the school transformation process.

The strategy for improvement therefore focused on two central themes to engage all members of the community, including the parents, for the following three years. The major goal was to establish student achievement at the forefront of all school business. However, in order to accomplish this, we needed first to improve the school's climate and working conditions, by setting in place the mechanisms that would guarantee a caring, trusting, collegial learning environment.

Methodology

To achieve this level of commitment, an anonymous climate survey was administered to all personnel in April 2001. They were informed that the instrument was designed to provide all with an opportunity to express concerns and perceptions with regard to how well they felt the school was performing its main tasks, to identify priorities and to participate effectively in whatever changes were considered to be important. On the four occasions that the survey was administered over the three-year period, over 96% of administrative, teaching and ancillary staff completed the questionnaire. The contrasted results of the two first surveys, for April and November 2001, are presented in Figure 1.

¹ retrieved 30 May 2006 from <http://www.ibo.org/fastfacts/index.cfm>

Survey findings

The results of the survey were collated by the senior management team, and reported by the head teacher to each of the three sections: kindergarten, primary and secondary. These meetings were attended by section faculty and head. At full staff meetings, which clerical staff also attended, the overall results were summarized and discussed, and particular attention was paid to those domains that received the greatest number of "hits". The quantitative results of the survey were therefore opened up to direct discussion for corroboration and adjustment purposes.

The survey was administered six months later and subsequently once a year each November to monitor how staff perceptions were evolving, and to make adjustments to the strategic plan as our priorities shifted. The first two surveys are presented here (Figure 1). They show how priorities were quickly shifted to the better through the process of staff empowerment. This shows how, through the application of different corrective initiatives, perceptions were shifted and new priorities identified.

Figure 1

Comparative results of the climate survey for April and November 2001

Climate survey comparison of results

Response: faculty and staff (96%)

Sample 93

		April 01	
Staff concerns		N°	%
K	Staff development	364	65.23
I	Motivation	337	60.39
H	Teamwork	329	58.96
D	Leadership	298	53.41
F	Resources (purchase and use)	291	52.15
E	Creativity and innovation	254	45.52
G	Problem-solving capacity	236	42.29
B	Staff recruitment	231	41.40
C	Structures and roles	199	35.66
J	Objectives (clarity and consensus)	185	33.15
A	School community environment	178	31.90
Total number of responses		2,902	
Percent in agreement		47.28	
Mean responses priority 2		279	
Priority 1 (mean + 25%)		348,75	

Response: faculty and staff (96%)

Sample 93

		Nov 01	
Staff concerns		N°	%
H	Teamwork	214	38.35
F	Resources (purchase and use)	210	37.63
K	Staff development	189	33.87
I	Motivation	166	29.75
B	Staff recruitment	152	27.24
A	School community environment	128	22.94
D	Leadership	123	22.04
G	Problem-solving capacity	107	19.18
C	Structures and roles	101	18.10
E	Creativity and innovation	97	17.38
J	Objectives (clarity and consensus)	85	15.23
Total number of responses		1,572	
Percent in agreement		25.61	
Mean responses priority 2		279	
Priority 1 (mean + 25%)		348,75	

The concerns expressed through the results of the survey are highlighted to identify their priority levels as priority 1 (dark grey, 62.50% or more as high) and priority 2 (light grey, 50%-62% as moderate). Below 50%, issues and concerns were not considered to be a priority requiring resolution at that particular time. As may be seen from the tables, over the first six months overall staff concerns were reduced by almost half (2,902 to 1,572 responses), which was translated into a perceptible improvement in the atmosphere of the school, and personnel, student and home-school relationships. There was also a perceptible shift in the concerns identified. This transformation resulted from real changes made in the school's approach to leadership as evidenced in the inclusion of teachers in decision-making processes (which went from routine matters such as assignment of teachers' daily duties to curriculum design and development), devolution of budgetary responsibility to individual sections, and a proactive approach to strengthening the home-school partnership.

When the survey was administered in November 2002 and 2003, the quantitative results were similar. However, the issues had shifted by that time to a concern about the adequacy of the school facilities and use of resources, rather than about people issues, which indicated a sustained improvement in teamwork due to an increase in trust and collegiality.

Student outcomes

The qualitative change in climate and conditions of the school is clearly represented in the responses of the staff in the surveys presented here. But this change, though significant in itself, could not be considered entirely successful unless learning outcomes in students showed measurable gains, which represented the main purpose of the entire initiative.

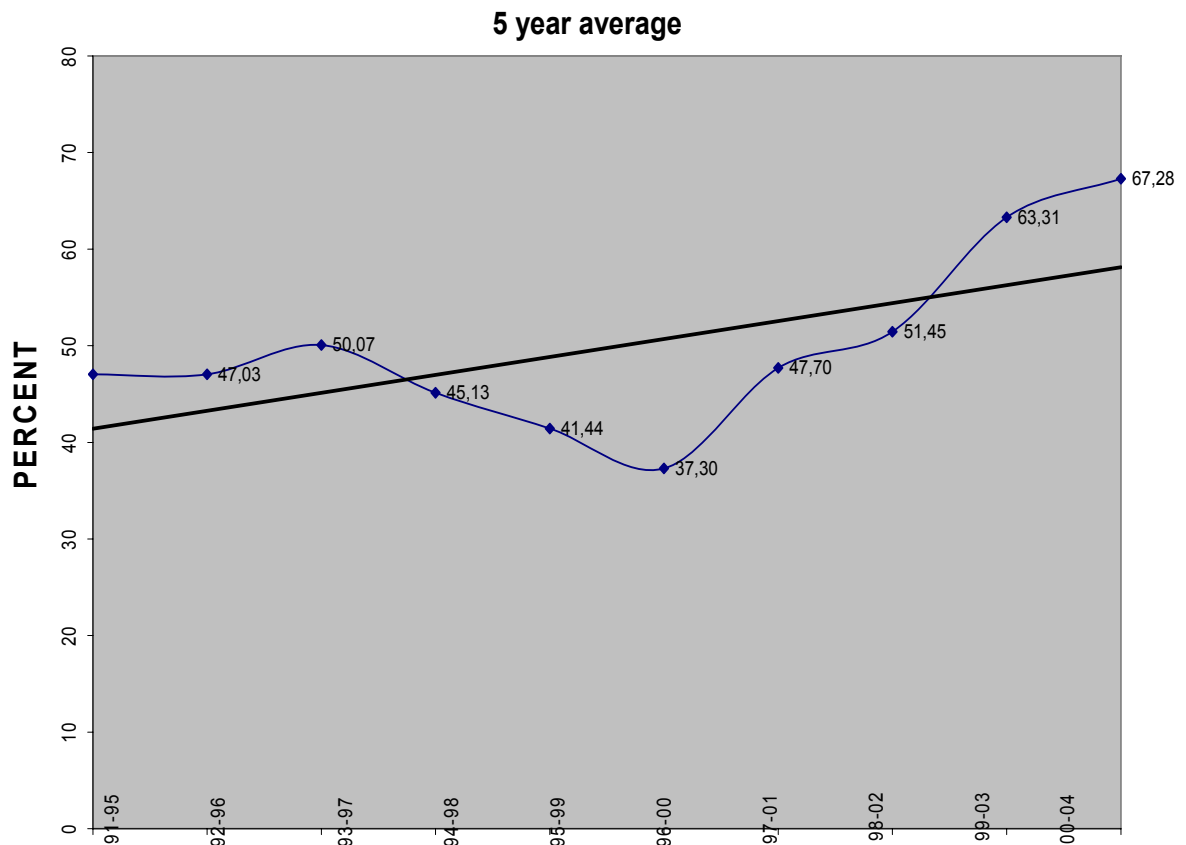
The results in the IB Diploma Programme examinations provided external validation of the gains in learning. Up to 2000-2001, students had decided whether they wished to sit for the full IB diploma examinations, or simply take individual subjects. This situation was compounded by parental indifference to both the educational value of the diploma and its recognition for university admission. In that year, 25 students of 36 volunteered to sit for the full diploma, and 52% of these obtained it. The remaining 11 students took individual subjects rather than the full programme to examination, and a number of these received certificates for subjects passed.

In 2001-2002, a change in the school policy required all students to attempt the full diploma, save for cases of exception. In spite of a more rigorous and demanding programme, 40 out of 45 students sat for the full diploma, and 62.5% of these obtained it.

In 2002-2003, 88.46% of the students obtained the IB diploma. In 2004, the results were somewhat lower, but this can be explained in part by a further increase in the demands placed on the students. For the first time we offered English A2 and physics higher level. The overall trend of student outcomes may be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Distribution of average Diploma Programme results in five-year increments



Conclusions

Though the developments presented here are set out in an organized manner for the purposes of this report, it must be said that these were only a part of a larger picture involving numerous initiatives, and that not all the initiatives proceeded to completion as smoothly as they were originally envisioned. In an age of fast-paced change requiring quick decision making, school leaders need to learn to reflect effectively, to share these reflections and engage others in meaningful conversations that demonstrate clearly that decisions are authentically shared. This shared reflection-in-action involves “on-the-spot surfacing, criticizing, re-structuring and testing of intuitive understandings of experienced phenomena; often, it takes the form of a reflective conversation with the situation” (Schön 1984: 42). When this quality of shared intuitive reflection can be instilled in all stakeholders in school cultures, including students, and intelligent, sustainable decisions can be made in keeping with the pace of life today, without fear or resistance to change, then those schools will truly become a guiding light for others to follow.

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Comentario y discusión

El Dr. Richard Pearce reside en Londres. Ejerce como educador internacional y como consultor de compañías multinacionales y familias en materia de escolaridad y movilidad internacional.

Linking school climate to student outcomes

Richard Pearce

It is surely the dream of the ambitious head to bring about those changes that will visibly raise the academic success of a school. Given the observation that the average survival period of international school heads is 2.8 years, few can aspire so high (Hawley 1994). Therefore any research that promises so much deserves attention and circulation.

Does this account tell us what we need to know to reproduce the evident success? This commentator can only claim a degree of authority in examining cultural aspects, but from that viewpoint there are some questions whose answers might add to the value of this lucid and encouraging paper.

First, what is the mix of the personnel? In this location one might expect many teachers to be from the USA and many non-teaching staff to be host-country citizens. These would represent dramatically polarized contrasts of organizational style. Concepts such as the “learning organization”, or the initiative towards “empowerment” suggest that this is in some ways a reframing of norms from local to those of the expatriate community. This could represent a movement of power from the service community to the academic community, with consequential impacts on the internal politics of the institution.

Space is bound to be a limitation in such an article, and limits the explanation of the methodology. It would be interesting, for example, to read the phrasing of the questionnaire. In a week in which a “Readers’ Digest” poll found New York to be the politest city in the world we are reminded that the answers we get depend on the questions we ask. The figures are impressive and the table admirably clear. The persistence of material concerns when social ones appear to be diminishing is a very reasonable internal indicator of validity, but some further questions are necessary. It could be that expatriates will more openly express “concerns” than will locals from a more hierarchical culture. Does reduced concern indicate growing confidence, declining novelty, or loss of faith in the process?

When the issue of causality is approached the author reasonably observes that the link between interventions and outcomes has been adopted from “a growing body of research”. However, the conclusion that priorities of concern were shifted “*through* (my italics) the process of staff empowerment”, or that “this transformation *resulted from* (my italics) real changes made in the school’s approach to leadership”, is so important that the possibility of ambiguity needs to be eliminated. Even in a domestic setting, in which there could be fewer variables, sophisticated means such as multi-level modelling (Aikin and Longford 1986) have been employed to identify the level of input variables responsible for observed outcomes. In an international school setting a further dimension of cultural variety occurs, which could perhaps be initially checked against Hofstedeian dimensions (Hofstede 1980).

The student results, too, prompt some questions. Did the increased rigour of the IB Diploma Programme lead to added seriousness or divert some uncommitted students to the national programme? Would not increased rigour by itself be expected to improve pass rates? Were there any other factors of the school demographics at work? The smoothing effect of the five-year average of results is paralleled by the smoothing effect of “numerous initiatives”, and as this brief

account stands one cannot feel convinced that the causes cited were unambiguously responsible for the exciting effects.

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Respuesta al comentario

John Hardman

The critique offered by the commentator is very relevant in that it flags up issues of validity and reliability that were also of concern to the author. However, it is important to understand that this article narrowly focuses on only one aspect of a larger improvement plan and that the main purpose of the initiative was innovation from a practitioner perspective, with all the accompanying messiness associated with change, rather than to inform research. That said, it is the author's belief that the analysis presented in this brief sketch offers those in positions of leadership a manner of addressing innovation to good effect.

The rationale for the improvement plan at this school was devised in part precisely as a response to the homogenous demographic constitution and widespread hierarchical culture prevalent in both staff and student body. The student population was over 90% Ecuadorian, though over 28 nationalities were represented, the majority of these of Latin American origin, with a small number of Asians, Europeans and North Americans. All teachers were local hires as the school did not subscribe, for financial reasons, to the practice of hiring overseas teachers. This limitation was offset to some extent by the recruitment of local teachers of foreign extraction and experience, or Ecuadorians who had been educated abroad. The search committees, which included parents, established recruitment criteria that gave preference to teachers who, aside from general qualifications and experience, were bilingual, who professed a progressive philosophy of education and who could bring a more international perspective to the school. For example, one social science teacher was Serbian, another was from Myanmar, and several had attended school in the United States. With regard to seniority, at the beginning of the innovation, over 70% of the teachers had been working at the school for eight years or more and only a few were bilingual.

The more recent hires, given their more liberal profile, did indeed give rise to friction with those espousing the dominant culture, as this was decidedly hierarchical and, in "Hofstedian" terms, was uniformly tinged by collectivism and high power distance, and a marked degree of conflict avoidance (Carson 2005; Hofstede 1980; Hofstede and McCrae 2004). Because this was reflected in the classroom in a highly directive teaching style that did little to stimulate critical thinking or experiential learning, it was agreed that this was counter to IB philosophy and pedagogy, and constituted an approach inconsistent with the needs of students in the 21st century. In response to this understanding and to the findings of the climate survey, the staff development budget was increased from US\$2,000 to US\$30,000 per annum. This included training in group dynamics, generative learning (led by trainers from the Harvard Graduate School

of Education), IB subject areas and extended essay writing, service-learning, and even meditation for stress management.

With regard to the climate survey, it should be emphasized that it was administered at a single session each time in order to preserve objectivity and sustain interest, and that the response rate, as recorded, was greater than 96% on every occasion. Prior to completion, the purpose of the survey was reviewed, as was the value of the teachers' voice in the identification and resolution of concerns. Furthermore, the results were discussed at length with each group, by level, very shortly after the survey was completed, which provided a participative forum fostering ownership, empowerment, and agreement on common priorities. The value of the exercise may be assessed to some degree by the comment of one highly regarded senior member of the secondary school staff, who stated at one of these meetings, "this is the first time in twelve years that someone in authority has come and told us the truth." The shift towards material concerns, such as limited space and inadequate resources, may therefore be seen as an indicator of the genuine reduction of vertical and horizontal distrust and lack of collegiality, the social concerns referred to by the commentator. However, the fact that there were no international teachers should not diminish the validity of the comment made regarding the possibility of a loss of interest in the improvement process or the survey by members of staff. This is a highly subjective process where personal feelings and concerns are difficult to ascertain. It should therefore be considered that the responses to the survey very probably do reflect subjective bias of one form or another. However, the consistency of the progression of results between the four applications—only two of which were shown in the article—appear to support the overall validity and reliability of the findings.

It is most probably true that the improvement in the IB examination results cannot be attributed solely to the change in the school's climate and working conditions, either through staff empowerment or a shift towards a more participative style of leadership by the section heads. Other factors, such as the impact of new hires, increased rigour and expectations, better student advising, increased investment in staff training, better systems management, sporting results, among other factors, must all have played a part in affecting outcomes. However, it is the assumption here that the increased care and support demonstrated for the staff, and their own enhanced professionalism, influenced the climate and working conditions for the better, and should therefore be seen as variables that were reflected in the survey each time it was administered, and that by extension this had an impact on student learning. It is by no means the intention here to establish linear causality between two such complex variables, an impression that may easily be read into the account due to the constraints of space awarded through this medium. On the contrary, it is the author's understanding that the success of any innovation is directly proportional to the number and complexity of the internal connections within the system, and that schools are particularly good examples of organizations governed by the complex laws of non-linear dynamics (Capra 2002). That said, Phillip Hallinger has found again and again, after more than 70 studies in this area, that indirect leadership effects are as important as direct effects on student learning. More recently, Bauer and Bogotch (in press), demonstrate the value of multi-level decision making, which was one of the intentions underpinning the change towards organizational learning and empowerment of staff. The fact that student results in the IB Diploma Programme improved systematically during the period of the implementation of this change provides some further evidence of a link between the two factors and, hopefully, may contribute to the ongoing debate on school improvement.

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Novedades de IBRU

En enero de 2006 IBRU se fundió con la división de desarrollo profesional, bajo la dirección de Jonathan Marsh, para constituir la nueva división de investigación y desarrollo profesional. Nos encontramos trabajando en una serie de proyectos centrados en los servicios y sistemas de apoyo a investigadores en el mundo del BI.

La conferencia anual del European Council of International Schools (ECIS) se celebrará en noviembre de 2006 en Niza. IBRU participará con varias presentaciones y su presencia en el *stand* de IBO. Les invitamos a que nos visiten en el *stand* tras las presentaciones.

El personal de IBRU ha realizado presentaciones en las siguientes conferencias en 2006.

- ◆ Nordic Network of International Schools, Helsinki (Finlandia)
- ◆ Conferencia regional de IBLA, Lima (Perú)
- ◆ Conferencia regional de IBNA, Bahamas
- ◆ Decimotercera conferencia internacional sobre aprendizaje (presentación en línea)

Asimismo, esperamos su asistencia a las siguientes conferencias, donde participaremos con nuestras presentaciones.

- ◆ Conferencia regional de IBAP, Hanoi (Vietnam), en octubre de 2006
- ◆ Conferencia regional de IBAEM, Atenas (Grecia), en octubre de 2006
- ◆ Alliance for International Education, Shanghai (China), en octubre de 2006
- ◆ ECIS, Niza (Francia), en noviembre de 2006

Uno de los artículos reseñados en la sección de trabajos de investigación analiza cuestiones relacionadas con la investigación a pequeña escala y los problemas y desafíos que plantea. Se trata de un aspecto esencial para los investigadores del BI, que a menudo realizan sus trabajos en lugares aislados o sensibles. Este artículo destaca, asimismo, el desafío de la investigación excesiva que puede darse en los Colegios del Mundo del BI (Morrison 2006: 255). El segundo artículo trata sobre el proyecto piloto de la Unión Europea para desarrollar y promover la conciencia internacional en futuros docentes (Dooly y Villanueva, 2006).

Noticias de investigación

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

Nos encontramos analizando los datos de la investigación y esperamos informar de los resultados en el segundo semestre del año. Se han programado una serie de presentaciones sobre el proyecto en varias conferencias internacionales y esperamos difundir información sobre el personal de los colegios del BI y la investigación en varias publicaciones de IBO.

Aprendizaje intergeneracional

La investigación sobre el aprendizaje intergeneracional ya se ha tratado previamente en los *Apuntes de investigación del BI*. Los resultados de esta investigación se están difundiendo entre comunidades académicas y de investigación más amplias. En abril apareció un artículo de Jim Cambridge y Anna Simandiraki en una colección de estudios de casos relacionados con las prácticas intergeneracionales publicada por la fundación Beth Johnson en el que se comentaba una tipología para describir y analizar el aprendizaje intergeneracional. Jim y Anna recibieron una invitación para colaborar en la publicación *Intergenerational Justice Review* publicada por la Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations (fundación por los derechos de las futuras generaciones), con sede en Alemania. Además, esperan la publicación de otro artículo sobre este tema en el *Journal of Research in International Education*.

Cambridge, J.C. y Simandiraki, A. (2006). "Typology for the description and analysis of Interactive Intergenerational Learning". En Hatton-Yeo, A. (ed.). *Intergenerational Programmes: An Introduction and Examples of Practice*. Stoke-on-Trent: Beth Johnson Foundation/Centre for Intergenerational Practice. Pp. 137-144. Disponible en línea en: <http://www.centreforip.org.uk>.

Trabajos de investigación

Morrison, K. (2006). "Sensitive educational research in small states and territories: the case of Macau". *Compare*. Vol. 32, núm. 2, pp 249-264.

Este artículo reflexiona sobre las particularidades de llevar a cabo trabajos de investigación educativa en territorios y lugares pequeños, donde el mero hecho de llevar a cabo un trabajo de investigación, independientemente de sus fines o enfoques, constituye una cuestión particular en sí misma. En él se menciona un "estudio de caso crítico" de Macau y se exploran aspectos culturales, educativos, políticos, micropolíticos, interpersonales y prácticos impregnados por las características de la cultura china que se deben tener en cuenta en la planificación y puesta en marcha del trabajo de investigación en este

territorio. Propone que, en estados y territorios pequeños, es necesario hacer concesiones en la investigación educativa, y sostiene que los investigadores deben anticiparse a una serie de problemas y solucionarlos con ingenio, trabajo en colaboración y sensibilidad. La exacerbación de las sensibilidades en estados y territorios pequeños contribuye a su ambiente educativo particular. El estudio de estos aspectos es, con frecuencia, una cuestión interpersonal y de investigación.

Dooly, M. y Villanueva, M. (2006). "Internationalisation as a key dimension to teacher education". *European Journal of Teacher Education*. Vol. 29, núm. 2, pp. 223-240.

La Unión Europea ha admitido la necesidad de promover un cambio social y político a través de la educación. Se ha destacado especialmente el papel de los colegios en el desarrollo personal y humano, así como la necesidad de una mayor comprensión de la diversidad existente en la Unión Europea y en el resto del mundo. Esto significa que ahora se espera que los docentes hagan a sus alumnos partícipes de la adquisición de conocimientos de otras culturas y de la suya propia. Este artículo analiza el proyecto piloto llevado a cabo en seis países europeos diseñado para promover la conciencia intercultural en futuros docentes. La temática del programa de capacitación incluía conocimientos empíricos extraídos de las experiencias internacionales de los docentes participantes, combinados con teoría de la comunicación intercultural. Se analiza, asimismo, el modo en que se inició el proyecto y algunos resultados y conclusiones derivados de investigaciones cualitativas y cuantitativas sobre el mismo.