

Why should you do the IB?

It may be obvious by now, but I am a great believer in the IB programme. I genuinely believe that a significant majority of people can do extremely well, and can greatly benefit from the IB programme. Why?

1. It encourages independent thinking

In his book, Pound suggests that A-level students are pretty show jumping horses. They have been nicely trained to do the tricks that the exam demands, but they don't really know how to do the tricks. IB students are dirty truffle-hunting pigs, who are trained to root out knowledge independently, and work hard to acquire it.¹

I think that this is the key difference of the IB. It goes some way to relieving the problem of 'teaching to the test' that is common in most exams. By promoting independent thinking, and emphasising the need to critically examine all sources of authority, the IB goes some way to encouraging people to learn for learning's sake. Naturally, it does not completely accomplish this. However, it is the closest I've seen to it, amongst school exams.

How does it do this? Principally, through ToK. ToK is taught by encouraging students to reflect critically on what they know in their life and in their schoolwork. It gives students the tools that they need to critically analyse events throughout their life in all manner of settings. Students joke about this ('I can't watch an advert without finding the ToK in it') and it is true.

¹ Pound *et al* *The international baccalaureate diploma: an introduction for teachers and managers*