

Abstract Template

TITLE: The International Baccalaureate (IB) and educational inequalities in Australia: an analysis of school recruitment, student profiles and their policy implications.

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Abstract (*no more than 300 words with no figures or tables*):

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a well-established organization in the Australian educational context. Implemented in more than one hundred and fifty schools Australia-wide, it offers four educational curricula in both public and private schools as an alternative to state certificates and diplomas. Specifically, the Diploma Programme (DP) is a challenging senior high school curriculum designed as an internationally valid university entrance qualification. However, there have been growing concerns about the position taken by the Diploma Programme in the Australian education markets and the role it could play in reinforcing educational inequalities. To discuss the contribution of the IB to educational opportunities in Australia, this paper focuses on the DP schools and the DP students to clarify the question of 'access' to the IB programs. The study consists of a statistical analysis of the DP schools' properties and of a comparison of the socio-economic profile of students in DP schools with the socio-economic profile of Australian students in general. The author argues that the self-selection of IB schools leads to an implementation of the Diploma Programme in schools with a specific profile and catering mainly for students with specific socio-economic properties. The issue of the IB contribution to educational inequalities is then related to the debate on social and academic inclusion. Given its position as the dominant alternative curriculum in Australia and its asserted desire to become more inclusive, the IB has a unique opportunity to contribute to educational equity between schools and within schools (between students).