



A-Levels or IB. Which is Right for My Child?

Amy Lee
Director, IB and
International
Development
Westbourne School

Curriculum Structure



A-Level

Normally 3 subjects

Optional extra elements

Grades from A-E

Necessitates specialisation

IB

6 subjects from a range of disciplines

Underpinned by three core elements

Grades from 1-7

Keeps future options open

A broad range of skills



Despite recent reforms, the A-level system ... channels young people into narrow pathways for learning far too early in their education....None of these forced choices serves universities or prospective employers well.

Thursday, 2 September 2010

The Independent newspaper, education section

Professor Don Nutbeam is vice-chancellor of Southampton University

In a 2003 study questioning 71 universities, 96% favoured the provision of a broad curriculum

Core elements



A-Levels (optional, limited schools)

- Critical thinking course
- Extended project
- Enrichment activities

IB (compulsory)

- Theory of Knowledge
- Extended Essay
- Creativity, Action and Service

In the same 2003 survey, 78% rated IB students better in the areas of critical thinking, communication, self-management and motivation

Character development



The depth, rigour and consistent standards of the IB lead to the development of a student with the character attributes essentially required by Universities:

- A strong work ethic
- Time management skills
- Ability to learn independently
- Demonstrates leadership qualities
- Is self-motivated

Applying Internationally



- IB is recognised by Universities in over 100 countries internationally
- Many Universities offer special credit on some courses for those with the IB Diploma

Applying to UCAS



- Students can choose up to 5 universities

Success will depend on:

- Grades
- Teacher reference
- Personal statement by the student

Students need to show that they have more than just good grades

Universities want people who are not only knowledgeable but who know how to think, learn and challenge themselves

Applying to UK Universities



“Over the past 20 years,
the proportion of A
grades has risen from
nine per cent to 26.7 per
cent”

The Daily Telegraph 20 Aug 2009

“Admissions service UCAS
said 187,488 university
hopefuls are in clearing
and that more than
150,000 would be
turned away”

The Guardian 23 Aug 2010

With grade inflation and
the difficulty
differentiating top
students, it is ever more
important to be able to
offer more than just
grades

Applying to UK Universities with IB and A-Level



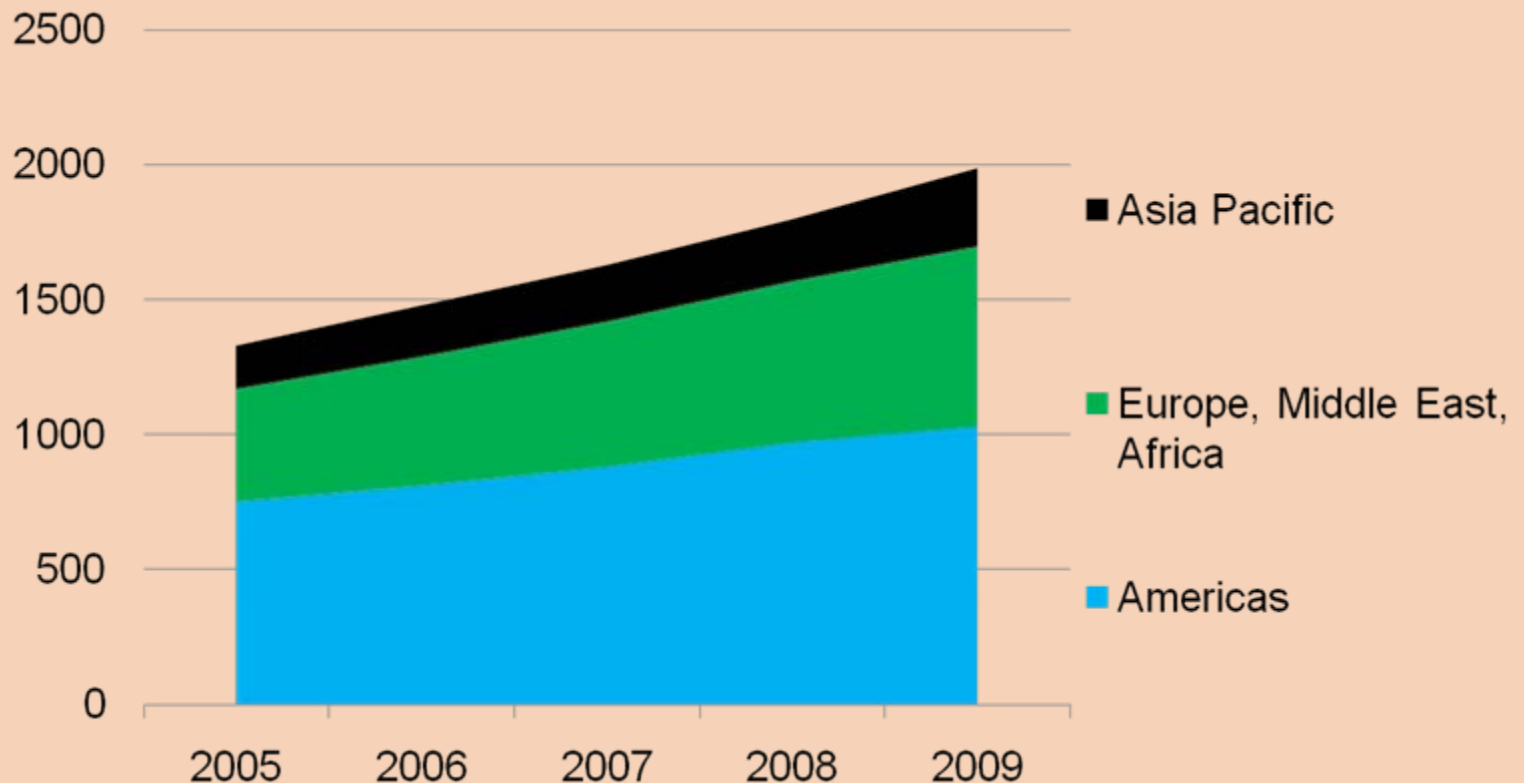
These [A-Level students] are straight-A students who might reasonably have expected to be welcomed with open arms at Oxbridge or one of the other elite universities, but who will increasingly find, ... that their choices are more limited.


It may no longer be enough to be very clever to get into a top university – utter brilliance may become the minimum requirement. Oh yes, and a nicely rounded personality, while a decent dollop of extracurricular sporting, cultural and community volunteering achievements would be nice, too.

Number of schools following the Diploma Programme



**Students everywhere are recognising the advantages of the IB
Demand has exploded – by 50% in just 4 years**





Financial Times: 10 out of 10 for IB...

“The best exam route to university”

International Baccalaureate

this international currency is particularly strong ... the IB does put you significantly ahead in the global race for the best universities.

Marks: 10 out of 10

In the same article, A-Levels scored 7 out of 10

May 29th 2008