

Impact of IB Diploma Programme on Students in Azerbaijan



Barbara Jaworska MAEM 2018

Agenda

- Research interest and significance
- Background information
- Literature review
- Methodology
- Limitations and ethical Issues
- Findings
- Conclusions
- Implications for practice and research

Why this topic?

- International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is gaining popularity all over the world as a ready-to-use model of ‘best world practices’ that can be combined with national curricula
- Growing interest in IB Diploma Programme among schools and students in Azerbaijan
- The program is implemented in five private international schools and two public schools under the direct supervision of MoE
- No research on IB Diploma Programme implementation in Azerbaijan

Purpose of the study

- To understand implications for students and schools in Azerbaijan
- To explore perceptions of students, graduates and teachers from two schools in Baku about IB Diploma Programme
- To find out to what extent IB Diploma Programme meets the needs and expectations of learners in Azerbaijan
- Research questions:
 1. Does the program support development of competencies for success in the 21st century?
 2. Which aspects of IBDP curriculum and philosophy are seen as conducive to development of such competencies?

Significance

- School communities that currently implement IB Diploma Programme in Azerbaijan, or consider adopting it in the future
- Educational leaders and policy makers in Azerbaijan
- Researchers and academia
- International Baccalaureate Organization

International Baccalaureate (IB) Programmes

www.ibo.org

THE IB CONTINUUM



4,786 schools

153 countries

1.3 million students

IB Diploma recognized by 1938 universities

What is IB Diploma Programme?

- Founded in 1968 with the aims to:
 - provide a universal high school program for internationally mobile students,
 - promote critical thinking and holistic approach in education
 - foster global peace and connections between cultures (Peterson 1987).
- IB DP offers internationally recognized high school qualification
- Reputed for rigorous pre-university preparation for students aged 16 to 19.

IB Diploma Programme: Design and Grading

(www.ibo.org)

GROUPS

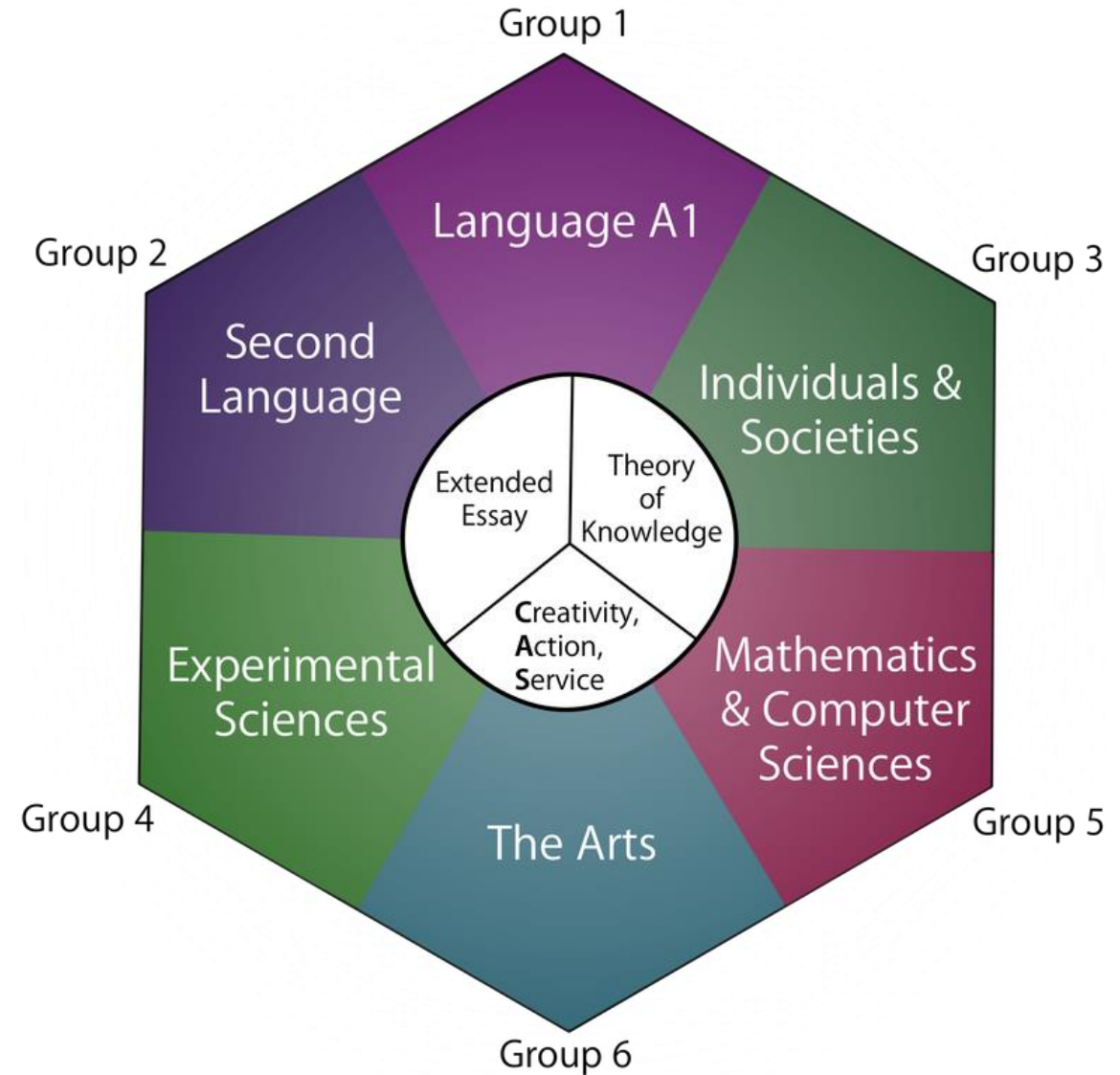
Internal + External
assessments

CORE

TOK
+Extended
Essay

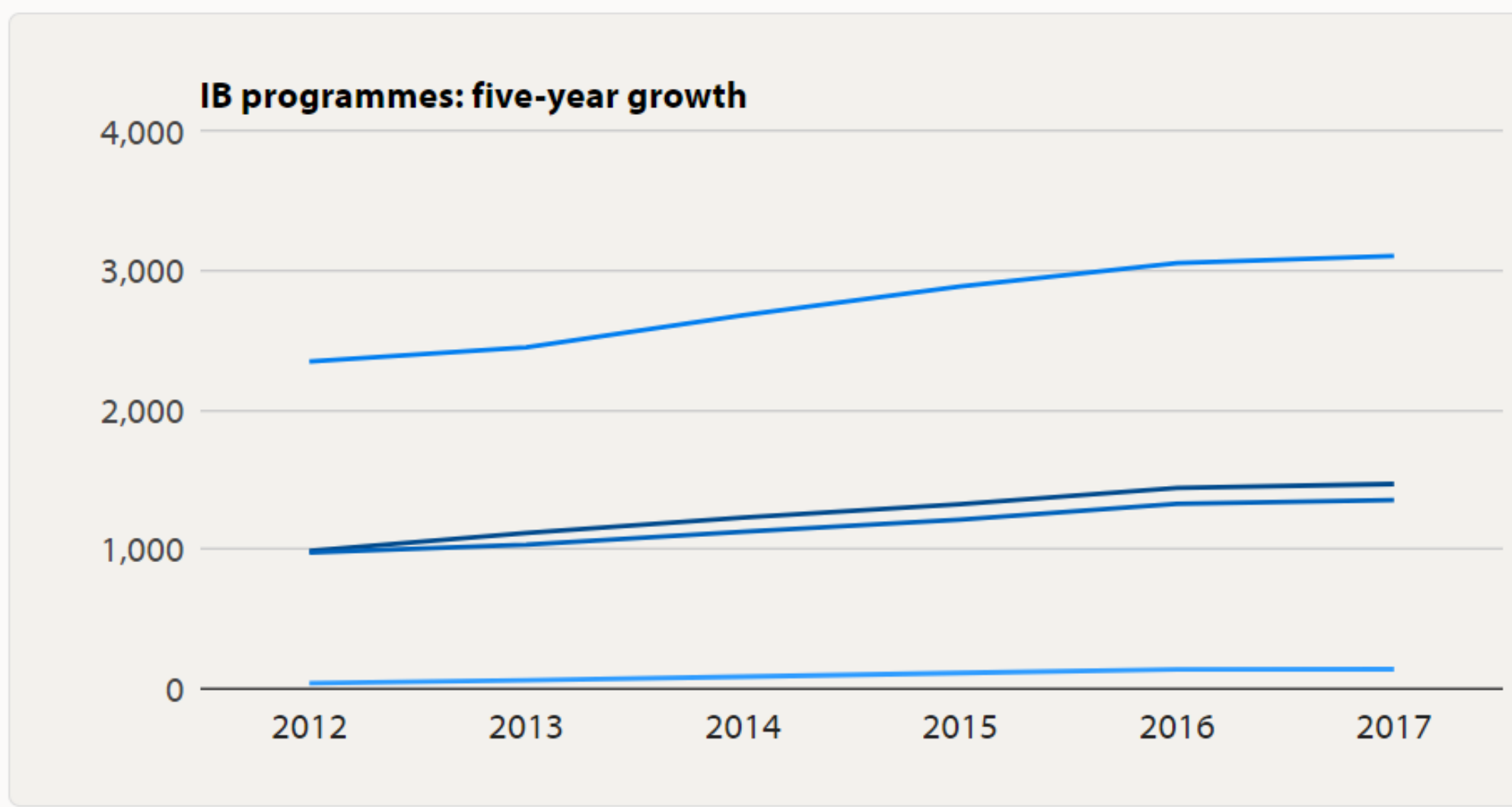
MAXIMUM

$$\textcircled{6} \times \textcircled{7} + \textcircled{3} = \textcircled{45}$$



Global Expansion of IB

(www.ibo.org, February 2018)



- IB Diploma Programme from 2343 (2012) to 3101 (2017)
- IB Middle Years Programme from 976 (2012) to 1354 (2017)
- IB Primary Years Programme from 989 (2012) to 1468 (2017)
- IB Career Certificate from 41 (2012) to 141 (2017)

Global Expansion of IB

Distribution of Schools by Legal Status

● PRIVATE ● STATE



The IB Diploma Programme Statistical Bulletin, May 2017 Examination Session. www.ibo.org

- IB is becoming an alternative to the national curricula (Bunnell, 2008; Resnik, 2012; Resnik, 2009)
- It attracts middle class families, especially in countries where quality of public education is perceived as poor (Walker, Bryant, & Lee, 2014; Resnik, 2009)
- IB's expansion is a result of economic globalization, neoliberal trends in education, and marketing strategies by IBO (Fitzerald, 2015; Resnik 2012)
- Rapid growth affects the international character of IB (Tarc, 2009; Bunnell, 2008)

Literature review: Impact of IBDP Program on schools and students

USA/Canada

- Culross & Tarver (2007)
- Mayer (2010)
- Taylor & Porath (2006)

Asia

- Lee, Hallinger, & Walker (2012)
- Wright & Lee (2014)

Turkey

- Çakir & Demircioglu (2016)
- Ateşkan, Onur, Sagun, Sands, & Çorlu (2015)

Other

- Sheveleva & Redkina (2013)
- Wright (2015)

Skills and Competencies for 21st Century

- A set of skills and competencies relevant to the challenges of globalization, technological advance and economic competitiveness
- 4 Cs: critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration

Ontario Public Service (2016)

Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2015)

Fullan & Scott (2014)

OECD, (2005)

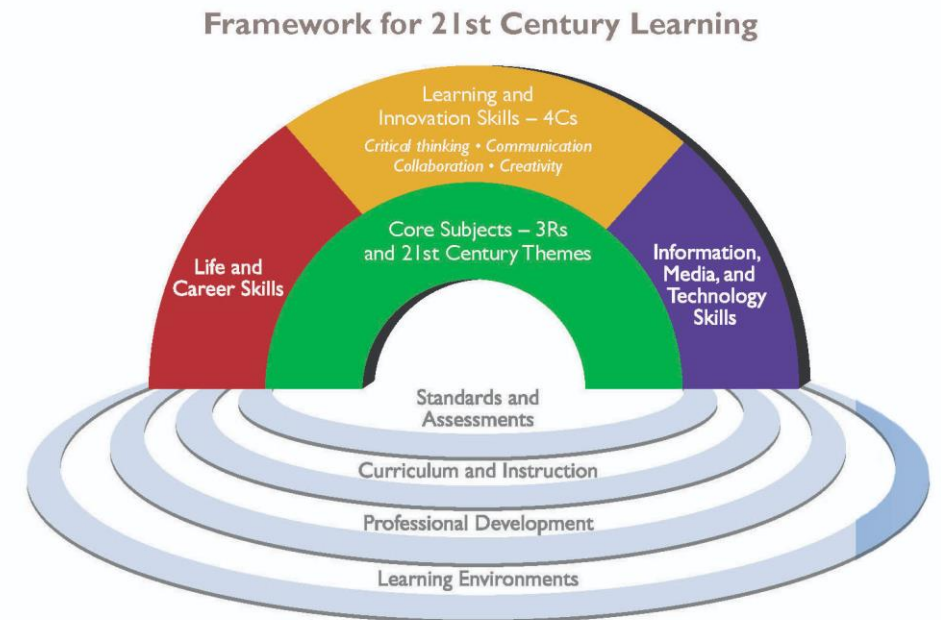
National Research Council (2012)

Bellanca & Brandt (Eds.), 2010

Gardner (2010)

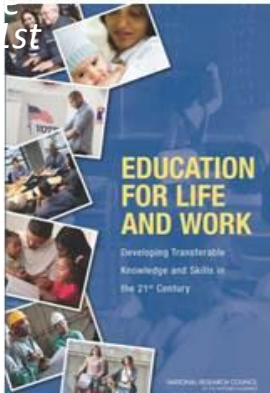
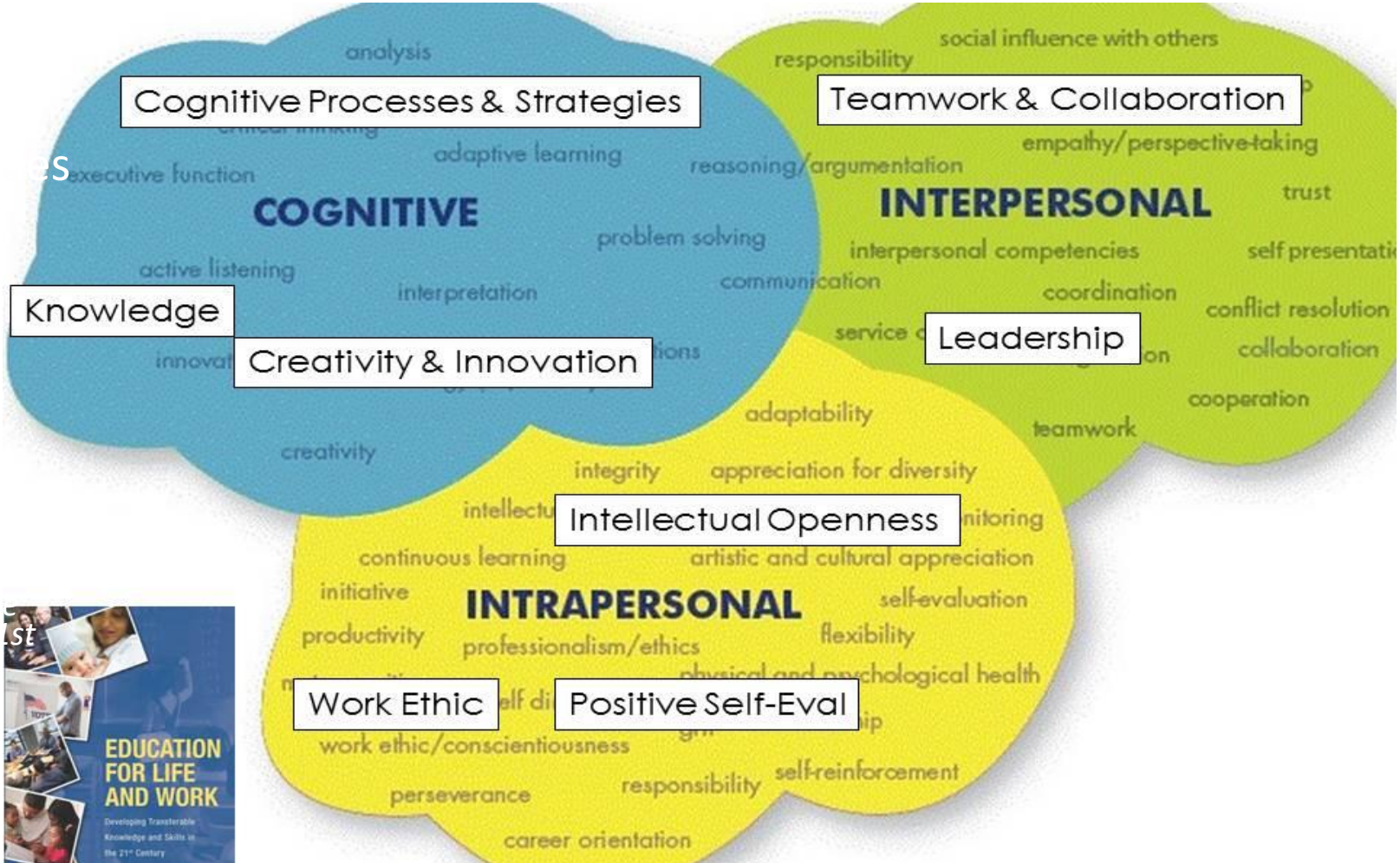
Zhao (2009)

Pink (2005)



21st Century Competencies: Three Domains

(National Research Council, 2012)



'Deeper learning'

- Learning for transfer-the ability to apply what was learned in new situations. It involves:
 - cognitive abilities (critical thinking, creativity)
 - intrapersonal processes and attitudes (learning how to learn, open-mindedness, perseverance)
 - interpersonal competencies (communication/collaboration).

(Ontario Public Service, 2016; Fullan& Scott, 2014; National Research Council, 2012)

Key terminology

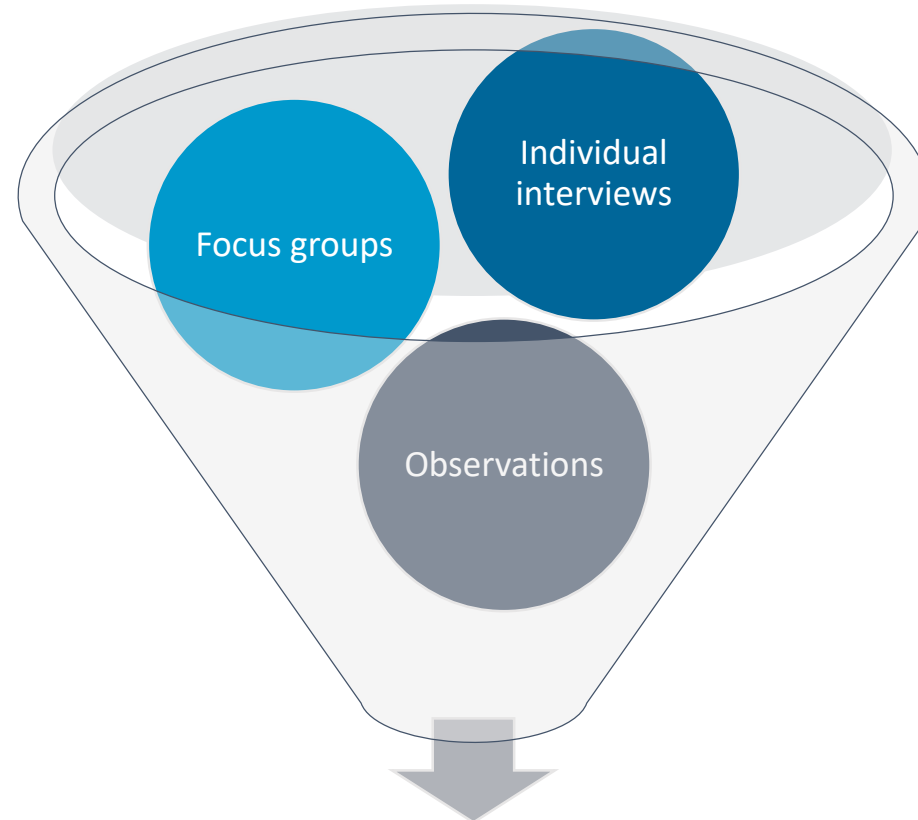
- **Skill:** procedural knowledge of “how, why, and when to apply content knowledge” (National Research Council, p. 23)
- **Competency:** “the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context” (OECD, 2005, p. 4)

Methodology

- small scale exploratory study
- qualitative methods
- purposeful selection of schools

Type of school	Private	State
Sections	Azeri, Russian, IB	Azeri, Russian, IB
IB Diploma Programme since	2009	2012
No. of students In IB Diploma Programme	33	15
No. of students in all IB programs	269	167
No. of international students	13	17

Validation of Data



Validation through triangulation of methods and sources of data (Creswell & Miller, 2000)

Methods of data collection

- Focus groups with IB Diploma Programme students (24 participants)
- Individual semi-structured interviews with IB Diploma Programme teachers and coordinators (12 interviews)
- Individual semi-structured interviews with IB Diploma Programme graduates (2 interviews)
- Non-participant observations

Data Analysis

- General inductive approach (Thomas, 2006)

- Main themes:

Perceived benefits of studying in the program

Impact on development of real-life competences

Perceived negative effects

Limitations and ethical issues

- Limitations of focus groups
- Time constraints and availability of participants (only 2 IB graduates could be contacted for interviews)
- Time of data collection: student perceptions might have been affected by the increased workload and pre-examination stress
- Risk of “social desirability bias” (Mikayilova & Kazimzade, 2017) –caused by researcher’s nationality, language of interviews, school profile, fear of being identified
- Data was collected, transcribed and coded singlehandedly by the author

Perceived Benefits of studying in IB Diploma Programme

1. IB Diploma offers significant advantages in admission to universities abroad
2. It provides good preparation for further studies
3. Motivation to study:
 - students can choose subjects
 - the program is very challenging but interesting
4. Better relations between students and teachers

IB approach to teaching and learning

- Focus on transferable skills and application of knowledge

The main idea is not [the] subject; the main idea is to teach skills: how to do scientific investigation, how to collect and process data and how to use data in daily life, how to apply it in daily life. (T6, state school)

- Autonomous learning

In IB we are doing most of the job ourselves. Teachers are explaining to us but we are working and analyzing (...) in state schools teacher says this pen is orange and that's it-you can't ask a question! (FG1, private school)

You are not the leader in the lesson (T4, private school)

- Preservation of the national identity and language

I think this is the only [international] program that allows you preserve the identity and preserve your language, not to forget it. (T2, private school)

- Comprehensive assessments

[In the national system] They have like 3-hour exam to decide their future, but we have three weeks, internal assessments, TOK. They have just an exam and that's multiple choice. (FG 3, state school)

Impact on development of real-life competences

Cognitive competencies (21 answers)	Intrapersonal competencies (29 answers)	Interpersonal competencies (7 answers)
Research skills (11 answers)	Time-management/ following deadlines (13 answers)	Communication (5 answers)
Critical/ analytical thinking (6 answers)	Open-minded/ tolerant (8 answers)	Teamwork (2 answers)
Creative thinking/ thinking 'out of the box' (4 answers)	Perseverance (4 answers)	More communal (1 answer)
	Risk-taking (2 answers)	
	self-awareness (2 answers)	

Cognitive competencies

- related to acquiring and processing information
- involve cognitive processes and strategies (such as critical thinking, analysis, problem solving), knowledge (information literacy, research abilities, oral and written communication) and creativity.
- IB Diploma Programme supports development of:
 - Research skills
 - Critical/analytical thinking

Interpersonal competencies

- linked to expressing ideas, interpreting and responding to messages from others, forging relationships.
- The participants reported improvement in:
 - Collaboration and teamwork
 - Communication and public speaking

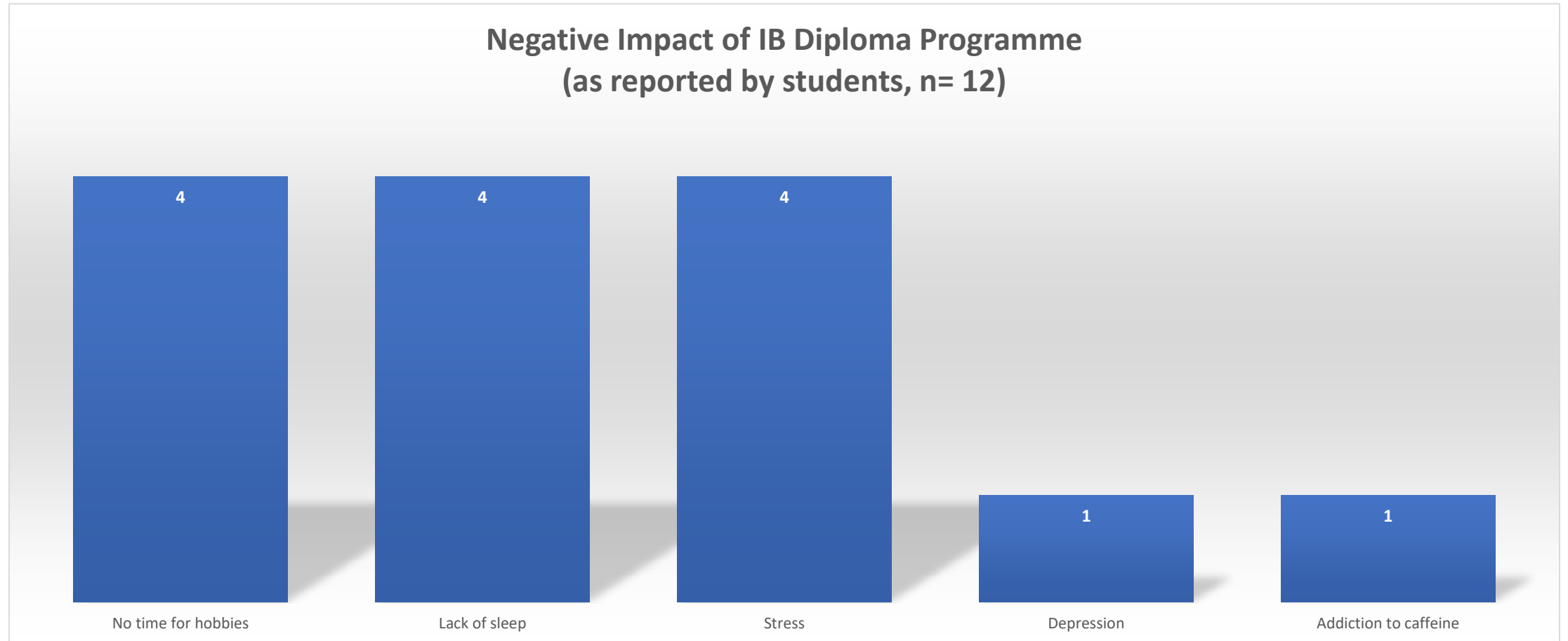
Intrapersonal competencies

- intellectual openness and curiosity ensure life-long learning
- work ethic, conscientiousness and self-confidence are positively related to personal and professional success
- According to the participants, IB curriculum helps to develop:
 - time management and self-regulation of learning: academic demands and deadlines
 - open-mindedness: students often discuss controversial topics and interact with international teachers
 - metacognitive thinking: fostered through self-reflection and peer feedback

Supporting deep learning

- IB DP curricular design: ensures a holistic growth in all areas
- Cohesive framework: competencies are promoted across disciplinary areas, core courses and IB assessments
- Research projects (for the Extended Essay and internal assessments) prepare students for university
- Working in groups teaches open-mindedness and communication

Perceived Negative Impact



Causes of Detrimental Impact

➤ Excessive workload/academic rigor

They want everything from you, they want CAS, they want TOK, they want presentations they want exams and plus they want these assessments and I think it's too much! (FG 3, state school)

➤ Transition into new curriculum (different skills, requirements, assessment criteria)

They are very good with academics; if you give them notes to remember and revise they will be able to do it, but looking in the question in DP, even if you have the best knowledge you will still be not able to solve it. (Coordinator 2, state school)

➤ Young age of students in Azerbaijan

We graduate from the school at 16-17 while usually people finish at 18 maybe 19. The later we finish IB the more we will understand (FG 2, private school)

➤ Incompetent teachers

They chose teachers that couldn't help students at all! Basically, everyone had to survive on their own and it was very hard (Graduate 2)

Conclusions

- Participants in Azerbaijan perceived IB Diploma Programme as cohesive and having positive impact on all-round development of students (similar findings reported by studies from USA, Canada, China, Turkey, Russia)
- IB curriculum supports deep learning by focusing on understanding and application of knowledge in real-life
- The program helps to develop critical thinking, open-mindedness, collaboration and autonomous learning, which can be classified as 21st century competencies
- Stress and other detrimental effects are related to academic rigor (high expectations) and hardships of transition from the Azerbaijani system into IB program
- No significant differences in perceptions between the private and the state school

Recommendations

For practice:

- Increasing cooperation between all IB schools in Baku in the area of professional development of teachers
- Counselling and psychological support to help students to cope with academic demands
- Better communication of IB philosophy (CAS) within a wider school community to build trust between IB and non-IB schools/sectors.
- Recognition of IB qualification by universities in Azerbaijan to retain high achieving students in the country

For further research:

- Comparative analysis of the Azerbaijani national curriculum and IB curriculum
- Fidelity of IB implementation in Azerbaijani schools
- Performance of IB and non-IB students at university
- Influence of international and private schooling on the quality and access to education in Azerbaijan

Thank you!

Focus Groups

Focus group	School	No. of participants	Females	Males	DP 1	DP 2
FG 1	private	7	6	1	7	0
FG 2	private	8	3	5	0	8
FG 3	state	9	3	6	6	3
Total in both schools		24	12	12	13	11

Individual Interviews

Code	Position	School	Gender	Nationality
T1 PS	Teacher English A	Private	Male	Non-Azerbaijani
T2 PS	Teacher English B	Private	Female	Azerbaijani
T3 PS	Teacher Economics/ Business Man	Private	Male	Non-Azerbaijani
T4 PS	Teacher CAS/Azeri A	Private	Female	Azerbaijani
T5 PS	CAS Assistant	Private	Female	Azerbaijani
C1 PS	IBDP Coordinator/TOK teacher	Private	Female	Azerbaijani
T6 SS	Teacher Physics/Chemistry	State	Male	Azerbaijani
T7 SS	Teacher Math	State	Female	Azerbaijani
T8 SS	Teacher PYP /CAS	State	Female	Azerbaijani
T9 SS	Teacher English A & B	State	Female	Non-Azerbaijani
T10 SS	Teacher Math sciences	State	Male	Azerbaijani
C 2 SS	IBDP Coordinator TOK/Physics	State	Female	Non-Azerbaijani
G1	IB Graduate	State	Male	Non-Azerbaijani
G2	IB Graduate	State	Female	Azerbaijani