

“Creating a Better World”: The International Baccalaureate  
and the Reproduction of Social Inequality in Australia

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## Abbreviations

AC	Australian Curriculum
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
CP	Career-related Programme
DP	Diploma Programme
IB	International Baccalaureate
IBO	International Baccalaureate Organization
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage
MYP	Middle Years Program
NRIPS	Net Recurrent Income Per Student
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PYP	Primary Years Program
Q1	Most Advantaged Socioeconomic Quartile of the Population Considered
Q2	Second Most Advantaged Socioeconomic Quartile of the Population Considered
Q3	Second Most Disadvantaged Socioeconomic Quartile of the Population Considered
Q4	Most Disadvantaged Socioeconomic Quartile of the Population Considered
SEA	Socio-Educational Advantage
SES	Socio-Economic Status
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America

## **Abstract**

The role of education in the reproduction of social inequality has been consistently demonstrated since the seminal research on the subject in the 1960s. Yet changes in the structures of education systems constantly re-problematise the (re)production of social inequality. In particular, new forms of educational differentiation bring the question of the social distribution of educational opportunities to the fore. One recent form of educational differentiation has been the development of curricular alternatives, and the most prevalent of these alternative curricula are the programs developed by the International Baccalaureate organisation. In this project, I attempt to understand the contribution of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, a two-year pre-university credential, to the reproduction of social inequality in Australia. To that effect, I examine the quality of the Diploma Programme opportunity, in comparison to alternative programs. I then assess the social background of students choosing the Diploma, in order to evaluate the implications of the introduction of this alternative senior secondary curriculum for the social distribution of educational opportunities. I conclude the analysis by addressing some elements of explanation for the Diploma Programme's contribution to the reproduction of social inequality. Finally, I propose some modest reforms for using this new form of educational differentiation as an instrument for devising a fairer distribution of educational chances.

## Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Quentin T. Maire

September 2016

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