



## International Baccalaureate (IB) Programmes

# Getting the grade you need in IB Diploma Program

Studying diligently is simply not enough to secure a high IB grade. So how can IB students study smarter? Two IB graduates share their experiences about achieving excellent IB results.

Students, parents and educators worldwide regard the IBDP as a rigorous and challenging curriculum, but studying diligently is simply not enough to secure a high IB grade. So how can IB students study smarter? Joyce Wu and Olivia Wong, graduates from Li Po Chun United World College, achieved 44 and 41 marks respectively, out of a possible 45 at IB level. They founded CANA Elite Education Centre four years ago with a mission to share their personal experiences of achieving outstanding results with the growing number of IB students in Hong Kong.

**What challenges do students face which prevent them from achieving a top IB grade?**

The IB diploma program aims to develop global citizens who are inquiring, knowledgeable and caring. From our own experience, as well as our students', we have identified three key elements to success in the IB diploma program. These are solid language skills, self-management and an inquisitive mind.

IBDP students must complete a number of presentations and write multiple essays, not only for two mandatory language subjects, but also for additional courses. They are also required to submit a 4000-word Extended Essay (EE), a Theory of Knowledge (TOK) essay and presentation. Students with a good command of English often have a competitive advantage. They

can focus their studies on formulating a coherent argument and analyzing points for discussion and evaluation, rather than spending excessive time forming grammatically sound sentences or looking up new vocabulary in a dictionary.

Students who manage their time effectively and take the initiative to learn often achieve higher grades at IB level than their counterparts. At CANA Elite, our teaching staffs meticulously monitor the progress of students' internal assessments (IAs). These IAs account for up to a quarter of their final IB grade, and in order to achieve the highest grade possible, it is imperative for students to produce excellent IAs and have a consistent and effective revision timetable in place.

Students who lack an inquisitive mind and the acumen for success may find some of the IAs challenging. For instance, students are required to develop their own research topics and design investigations for IAs in experimental science. In Economics, students must write a commentary on a news article of their choice using economic theories they have learned during the course of their studies.

**How does CANA Elite help students achieve better results?**

We acknowledge that all students have different strengths and weaknesses, so we do not offer a one-size-fits-all solution. Our teachers identify the needs of individual students, and then provide a suitable approach to meet their requirements. Some students demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subject matter, but lack the required examination technique, while some students require further consolidation in their understanding of the subject materials. Many students seek guidance to interpret and understand the expectations and assessment criteria for their assignments. Our one-on-one tuition can match each student's pace and target gaps in areas of knowledge. We have also published IB study guides for subjects including Mathematics, Economics, Physics and Chemistry. Together with our structured courses, students can hone their exam skills while strengthening their knowledge and understanding of subject contents.

Our teachers have extensive experience of their subjects and have a solid reputation of dedication to their studies. We are very selective when hiring staff and our teachers consist of graduates from world-renowned institutions such as Cambridge, Oxford, MIT, Stanford and the University of Toronto. We provide a comprehensive training program



Olivia Wong (left) and Joyce Wu (right) have founded the Cana Elite Education Centre to share their IB experiences with fellow students

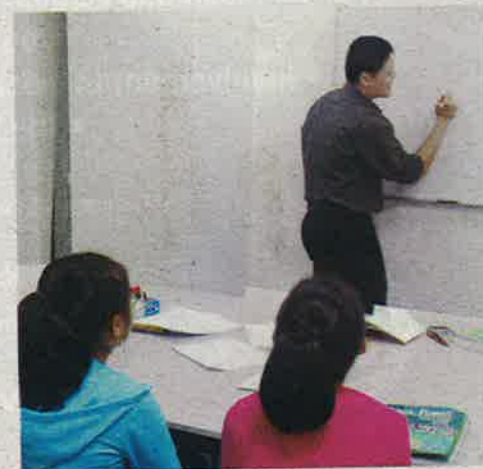
for all staff members and our teachers are all effective communicators and patient mentors. They specialize in their fields of study and are equipped with a thorough understanding of the syllabus and assessment criteria.

**Does a good IB grade guarantee entrance to top-tier universities?**

The IB diploma program is highly regarded by many top-tier universities worldwide. A good IB grade is only a basic requirement, but there are many other essential factors which are taken into account during the university application process. These include the range of subjects studied, extra-curricular activities, an outstanding personal statement, and standardized test results. To assist our students, we offer additional services to support students through the university application process. We provide comprehensive academic planning at the start of the course to guide students through the major milestones of the two-year diploma program, and offer advice on subject selection based on a student's interests, academic strength, and objectives for higher education. Many of CANA's students have been accepted by their first choice universities, including Columbia, Cornell, UCLA, Cambridge, Oxford, LSE, and Imperial.

**How have students from the IB program performed at CANA Elite in previous years?**

CANA's students have achieved very good results. About 40% received 40 or above out of 45. We are delighted to have observed many students making significant improvements during the course of their studies at CANA Elite. Notably, one student came to us with a predicted grade of 33 out of 45. After studying with us, he achieved a total grade of 40 out of 45 in his final examinations.



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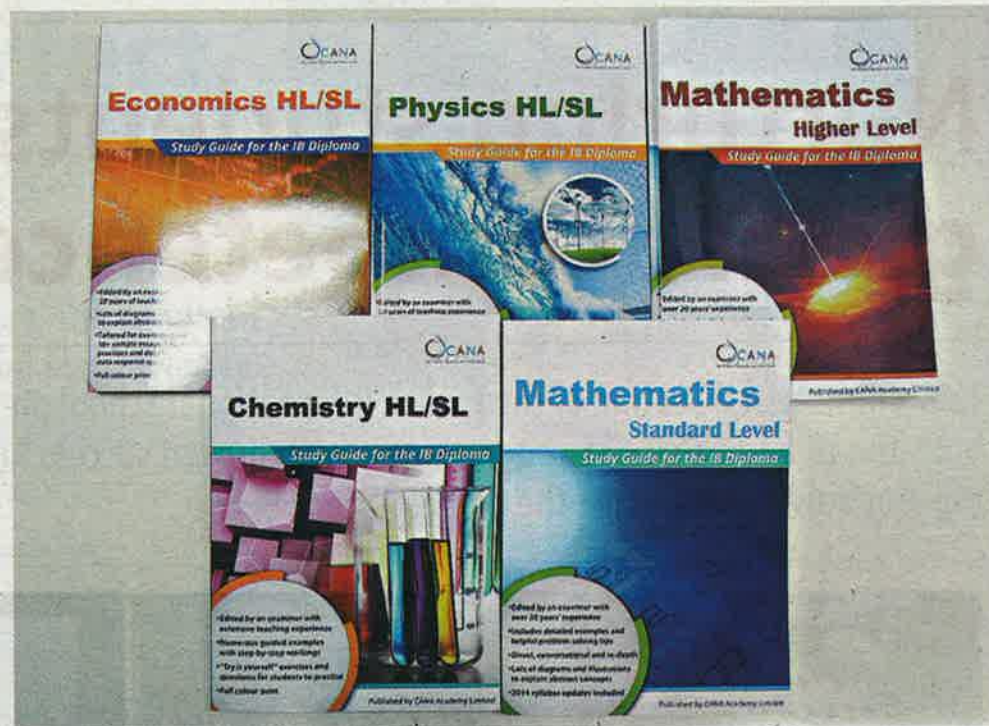
# International Baccalaureate (IB) Programmes

## The MYP dilemma: How can schools develop self-motivated inquirers whilst facing the reality of formal education?

Over the years, more and more international schools in Hong Kong have adopted the IB diploma program. As parents embrace such change positively, a good number of these schools have begun to experiment with the Middle Years Program (MYP). According to one of the founders of CANA Elite, Olivia Wong, parents and students have mixed responses to the MYP. "We have received more inquiries for tuition for MYP students," said Olivia. "Many parents have expressed unease that they cannot be certain of their child's academic level. Some students are frustrated because they feel lost undertaking the assignments." In the absence of a public examination, the MYP curricula are very flexible, with schools and teachers often having a high degree of freedom to design the content. MYP students are expected to take

an active role in learning through self-directed research, designing and conducting their own investigations and formulating their own opinions and insights into course materials. Unlike traditional curricula, it takes a vast amount of resources to implement the MYP successfully.

Through her experience of tutoring MYP students, Olivia observed that the quality of the program varied drastically between Hong Kong schools. One student was expected to answer a series of questions about population dynamics in Hong Kong and was given a link to the census on the internet, but the teacher had not explained any of the terminology. "While it is good to develop students who take the initiative to learn, we still need to provide sufficient guidance, otherwise students become very frustrated in learning. There is a fine balance to strike and it takes a lot of discernment," Olivia explained. "Teachers in schools may not have the luxury of time to cater to every student." Another variation



IBDP program study guides co-authored by IB examiners and curriculum developers to foster better exam techniques

in designing and implementing the program between schools is the content bridging between the MYP to the IB diploma program. It has been observed that students who have completed the (I)GCSE tend to have a better start in the diploma program as they cover a substantial portion of the subject content in a more structured way.

In response to the difficulties that MYP students

face, CANA Elite has devised a supplementary tuition program. "We have included subject content which lays a strong foundation for the diploma program. However, our approach is tailored to hone the skills which are vital to support MYP students on their way to become successful life-long learners, such as note-taking, research skills, and presentation and writing skills."



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