

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

My IB experience ... emboldened me to take risks from my first semester of college to the last.

Dr. Robin Brooks
DP Graduate
North Miami Senior High School
Florida, USA.



After graduating from the IB Diploma Programme (DP) at North Miami Senior High School, USA, Dr Robin Brooks continued her studies at Florida State University. She received her MA in Afro American Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and her PhD in English from the University of Florida. She is currently an assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh.

Why did you originally decide to pursue an IB diploma?

I was always studious, and I knew in middle school that I wanted to pursue an IB diploma. At first, I was intimidated when the local representative visited our middle school while I was in the eighth grade to inform us about applying to be a part of North Miami Senior High School's IB Diploma Programme. He did not sugarcoat the level of difficulty! Despite my jitters, I decided to move forward, and it was one of the best decisions I have made in life.

The intense level of training I received in the DP overprepared me for my undergraduate studies. I entered my undergraduate university with sophomore standing, meaning I entered as a college sophomore, because of the college credits I received by earning the IB diploma. It was a tremendous boost to my self-esteem to do so well in undergrad, and my academic performance caught the eye of many of my professors who, in turn, encouraged me to pursue a PhD and become a professor. My IB experience not only emboldened me to take risks from my first semester of college to the last, but also to further develop exponentially as a tenacious young scholar. When I graduated after three years, I went directly to graduate school and did very well there, too.

Which of your IB teachers inspired you most?

Mr John Lamb was definitely the IB teacher who inspired me the most! He was my history teacher, and though I was not the biggest fan of history, I was a big fan of his because he genuinely cared about students. He never doubted my capabilities, and that is so important in helping students thrive. He became the IB coordinator at my high school as well, so even when I was out of his class, it was pleasant to see him around the IB office. He had no doubts that I could obtain the IB diploma and no worries about me doing well in college.

How did you reach where you are today?

My IB experience, in part, laid the foundation for where I am today. I am an assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh in the Department of Africana Studies where I teach literature courses. Being an effective professor requires a lot of discipline, and the three pillars of academia are research, teaching, and service. Well, I have been doing two of those pillars since my days of IB!

As a result of the study habits and research skills I had to build during the DP, I began exercising discipline early in life, and, now, I am masterful in conducting meaningful research. My creativity, activity, service (CAS) activities, indeed, inspired me to commit to a life of service far beyond my days of schooling. I believe service is a responsibility of humanity.

What advice do you have for IB students?

An IB student is a well-equipped student! You will eventually come out on top if you embrace the IB experience and allow it to strengthen you. Continue to push forward no matter what interests you have. You get to define what success looks like for your life. We were all put on earth for a reason, so explore until you find your reason. You can do something in life that most others have not done, making a significant impact in the end. Remember, failure is an inevitable part of life, so brush yourself off and get back up when you fall. If you can make it through IB courses successfully, you can make it through just about anything because IB builds an insatiable fortitude within you.