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Teacher thinking on developing informed and engaged students for a globally connected world

Report on the study

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Executive summary

In 2011, the International Baccalaureate (IB) continuum development team invited Merry Merryfield, Professor Emeritus of Social Studies and Global Education at The Ohio State University, to consult on global engagement in IB programmes. As a result of this consultation, researchers generated a series of questions designed to identify how Diploma Programme teachers conceptualize international-mindedness and how they understand their day-to-day teaching as it relates to the goal of helping to create responsible members of the global community. A total of 124 teachers representing 110 schools across 40 countries participated. Qualitative data from their written interactions is being analysed with a grounded theory approach (constant comparative method).

The study revealed a number of preliminary findings with regard to the principles and practices of Diploma Programme teachers.

- The values expressed in the IB learner profile have a powerful influence on the way teachers understand and implement education for international-mindedness.

- Open-mindedness stands as the primary attribute that teachers believe underpins the development of responsible members of the global community.

- Teachers are concerned to create classroom environments and learning engagements that promote values, attitudes and skills that support international-mindedness. These “soft” components of the taught curriculum (including empathy, caring, listening and respect) are an important focus of professional inquiry, action and reflection.

- With regards to matters of theory, practice and observation, teachers report that they do not find any conflict in helping students to develop both national and international identities. Rather, teachers strongly support the idea that becoming more internationally minded means learning to understand and value both one’s own personal and cultural perspectives and those of others.

- Although teachers look for content that offers rich opportunities for developing international-mindedness, they have limited experience in managing the more difficult task of dealing with the critical analysis of culture (including stereotypes).

- Teachers believe it is important for students to understand global issues, including the interconnectedness that results from modern processes of globalization.

- Among the most powerful strategies for developing international-mindedness is personal experience of different cultures, accomplished either through literature, travel or technology-facilitated exchanges and relationships.

Based on the study, researchers posed some questions for reflection by the IB community.

- How does the international teaching experience of teachers shape their understanding and practice? Is this experience a determining variable in how effective they are as globally minded teachers? How can teachers in other contexts develop their own international self-understanding and classroom practice?

- Only a few of the participants raised issues of equity, privilege and power during the discussions. Is it the IB curriculum or the choices made by individual teachers that led to little emphasis on the relationships between people who hold economic and political power and the global issues that the world faces today?

- How can the IB provide ongoing forums for substantive, long-term discussions of global education?

Many participants expressed a strong desire for more opportunities to engage with the topic in a collaborative setting. Over the next two years, Professor Merryfield and her students will be developing scholarly articles based on the study.

Note: Creativity, Action, Service has been renamed to Creativity, Activity, Service. Although the word Action may appear in this document, please ensure you refer to it as Activity when leading this workshop.

Background

In 2011, the IB continuum development team invited Merry Merryfield, Professor Emeritus of Social Studies and Global Education at The Ohio State University, to consult with the IB on global engagement in IB programmes. From that work, we generated questions about how IB teachers conceptualize international-mindedness, and how they understand their day-to-day teaching as it relates to the goal of helping to create responsible members of the global community.

Over the following months, we collaboratively developed a study to address those questions. Using its regular channels of communication, the continuum development team invited administrators and programme coordinators at IB World Schools offering the Diploma Programme to identify teachers they considered to be skilled in internationally-minded education. We offered these teachers an opportunity to participate in online focus groups, where they could discuss education for global engagement, including their own approaches to teaching and learning, with colleagues in the international education community. A total of 124 DP teachers participated in these groups from October to December 2011, using the IB's online professional development course management system. Based on the language profiles of the teachers who volunteered, the groups were conducted in English and in Spanish.

The Ohio State University team worked with the IB to design the online forums and other logistics of the study. With the lead researcher, doctoral students welcomed, monitored and interacted with the teachers each day during the focus groups.

This report describes the purpose, methods, processes, and findings of the study.

Literature

As interconnectedness of the world's peoples, economies, politics and environmental issues have increased over the last few decades, educators in many countries have begun to address the goal of preparing students from kindergarten through 12th grade (5 to 18 years old) to understand the world from a global perspective and become engaged with people and issues across the planet. There are many terms associated with this goal:

- global education (Hanvey 1976; Pike 2000)
- education for global citizenship/global citizen (Dower 2008: 39-54; Myers 2010; Oxfam Development Education Program 2006; Rapoport 2009)
- international-mindedness (Hayden, Rancic, Thompson 2000)
- world-mindedness (Cushner 2002; Kirkwood 2001)
- cosmopolitanism (Mitchell, Parker 2008)
- education for globalization (Agbaria 2011; Torres 2002)
- earth citizen (Tarrant 2010), and more.

The IB is a premiere international educational organization aiming to "develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world" (www.ibo.org). With programmes in 142 nations, IB teachers are well placed to be global leaders in preparing students to be informed and engaged citizens in a globally connected world. The expectation underlying the study is that the field of international and global education has much to learn from IB teachers, their thinking and practice.

The purpose of the study

The study aims to identify how teachers working within the IB's Diploma Programme conceptualize and teach effective global and international education that prepares students to be informed and engaged citizens in a globally connected world.

Methods

Teachers were nominated by IB administrators based on their experience and expertise in global and international education. Their administrators asked if they would like to volunteer to be in the study. A list of interested teachers was compiled by the IB continuum development team and forwarded to Merry Merryfield in September 2011. Professor Merryfield emailed the participants on the list, introducing the procedures for joining the study. The IB's online professional development course management system provided teachers with an overview of the study's goals, timeline, procedures, as well as a consent form for them to read and sign.

IB staff divided teacher-volunteers into three 2-week long sessions. The 1st and 2nd sessions were divided into four focus groups of 12–15 teachers, and the 3rd session was divided into two groups of 25–35 teachers, one of which was in Spanish. Each group worked within its own secure online discussion forum. The discussions were asynchronous (people did not need to be online at the same time) over a period of 14 days. In total, 124 participants contributed 1,465 messages.

Following each group's discussion, the postings were collated and identifying data, like names and schools, were removed to protect confidentiality. Data on the country of origin and the type of school (public, independent or international) were maintained.

Using the constant comparative method of content analysis, the researchers coded the data and organized it into categories of tentative findings. The data within, and across, sessions were compared by the team for inter-rater reliability on interpretation of data into emergent categories. Findings were organized with supporting evidence for this report.

The results of the study will be integrated into scholarly articles on developing international-mindedness, online focus groups, rethinking the meaning of global citizenship and other topics.

The online discussions

In the online discussion forums participants were given space to practice posting messages before their groups began the discussion. Netiquette (a set of internet etiquette conventions) for the discussions was posted at the beginning of each discussion. Each group discussion began with the posting of bios in which the teachers described themselves, their teaching situations, their work with the IB, and their understanding of global education.

Two researchers facilitated the discussions in each group by posting questions, supporting attention to diverse points of view and encouraging reflection, illustrations, evidence and explication. Each group of participants was assigned to one of the following sessions in 2011: 5–19 October, 19 October–2 November or 16–30 November.

Changes and adaptations

Throughout the process, the research team met weekly to discuss progress, issues and solutions. According to Gaiser (2008: 290-306), one of the benefits of online research is the increase in participant interaction, leading to greater emphasis on participant perspective and a decrease in researcher bias thus increasing study credibility. After a slow start in session one, the team focused on what could be changed to help participants contribute more and, also, how to encourage participants to interact with each other. As the study moved forward to session two, the initial email, the order of the questions and our expectations for when people would participate were altered.

Initial contact

The first area to address was issues surrounding technology. Researchers had received a number of emails from the participants stating username and password issues, difficulty finding links, and emails that had been returned. Review of the literature on online research has noted that frustration with technology causes negative emotional responses that can lead participants to disengage from the group (Guldberg, Mackness 2009). We worked to overcome these issues in a timely manner with the IB staff.

These concerns also led the researchers to rethink the initial email communication to participants in sessions two and three. We sought to confirm that the teachers truly wanted to be in the study, because in session one some teachers who had been nominated did not choose to participate. We also wanted to make sure that they understood it was a study, not a professional development opportunity, as there was some confusion as to why the teachers were asked to participate. Finally, we needed to check that the timing of their participation (which session they were assigned to) was suitable, as we discovered some teachers in the first session were on holiday during their allotted session. This revision of the initial communication also permitted the researchers to take care of a variety of technological issues that had arisen during the first session.

After addressing these issues, a second email was sent by the primary researcher to all participants. It provided basic information regarding the focus group process and entry to the homepage and forums. This new process helped participants gain initial access to the research site.

Preferences and patterns

As the research team examined the postings for session one, a pattern became clear: participation was higher Monday to Friday. To meet this demand, the team allowed more time for participants to respond to questions and posted research questions during higher participation times. In this way, one of the biggest benefits of asynchronous discussions is the flexibility in responding to, and participating in, the discussion (Hewson, Laurent 2008: 58-78; Kazmer, Xie 2008; Wang 2011).

Sequencing of research questions

Originally, the focus groups started with the bios which helped to create a community and begin discussion of what it means to be an international and global educator. The second question focused on what it means to be a global citizen, and what schools need to do to prepare students to think and act as citizens of the world. The third question was centred on the teachers' day-to-day practice from activities and lessons to long-term projects, cross-cultural experiences or special events.

When examining responses from session one, the research team found three main areas to address. First, we reconsidered the order in which we posted the research questions. The participants preferred to discuss their classroom practice rather than abstract ideas on what global citizenship means. The research team decided to begin in the teacher's comfort zone and moved the third teaching practice question to the second topic discussed.

Second, the research team discovered the participants were not offering responses that directly addressed the questions being posed, which raised issues of communication and purpose. The team, therefore, altered the information to be gathered in the bios and added a section, "Elements that you see as distinguishing global/international education". The goal of this addition was to move participants into thinking about, and discussing, global education immediately, rather than waiting for later questions. When participants posted information that was relevant to answering the research questions, a member of the research team expressed appreciation to the participant and offered positive reinforcement.

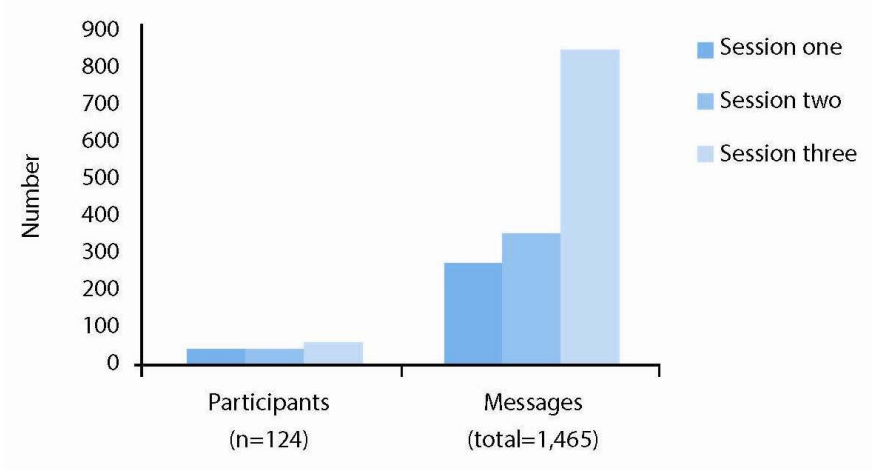
The third adjustment was the exclusion of examples. During the first session the research team offered detailed examples that aimed to help explicate and model responses. Given feedback from some of the participants in session one, the team decided not to offer examples as they were said to inhibit some teachers from sharing their own ideas.

Shifting roles of the research team

Researchers played three roles: participant/researcher, participant/facilitator and participant/observer. The team worked together to set up the research project with clear introductory materials and processes, to facilitate discussion on each research question, to provide feedback and monitor discussion threads in order to engage participants in substantive inquiry (Vlachopoulos & Cowan 2010).

By the third session, the research team had developed much clearer expectations for the introductory email and, in turn, session three demonstrated an increase in the number of messages, reflecting greater interaction among teachers (see Figure 1. Participants and their contributions).

Figure 1. Number of participants and their messages, by session



In this session the researchers explained that we would not reply to the majority of the bios or other discussion threads because we wanted participants to read each other's bios and respond to one another. The team also focused more on replying to what the literature calls "dead discussion threads" (Huei-Tse 2010). It was important for the researchers to monitor discussion threads and give prompt feedback to help generate interest in discussion threads that were "dead" so as not to add to the frustration of the participant who saw no one responding to his/her posting, which could lead to lack of engagement.

During session three, the team's role in helping to clarify meanings within discussion posts also became more prominent (Vonderwell, Liang, Alderman 2007). Researchers asked for clarification of the meanings of terms to ensure understanding and to generate further discussion. The team also looked for similarities between discussion posts in order to connect participants and their ideas—again, to increase participant-to-participant interaction.

The findings

Using a constant comparative approach to data analysis, the following themes emerged with regard to the ways teachers conceptualize and teach about international-mindedness and global engagement. The majority of the participants see the development of open-mindedness as a complex process that is both foundational and a central unifying thread throughout the Diploma Programme. According to the participants, it overlaps with culture learning, appreciating multiple perspectives, and in learning about global issues and habits of the mind (such as the ability to empathize, anticipate complexity, overcome stereotypes and recognize one's own interconnectedness with people, issues and global change).

Open-mindedness

When examining the data regarding what makes people effective members of the global community, open-mindedness serves as a unifying goal and value. It underpins all other concerns

and is the foundation from which people become capable of understanding global issues, diverse cultures and global interconnectedness. It is the cornerstone of learning about the world and its peoples because it allows students to think beyond their own cultural norms and consider the perspectives and experiences of people different from themselves—a process that is critical to understanding the world.

While participants did not define open-mindedness directly, they did refer to key IB documents and programme components when they discussed its place in the curriculum. As noted, there is emphasis placed on attitudes—specifically open-mindedness—within the IB learner profile, which lists attributes characterizing internationally minded people.

Within the learner profile, open-mindedness is one of the attributes that IB learners strive to develop. Open-mindedness is measured by the extent to which students "understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience" (http://www.ibo.org/programmes/profile/). We see these emphases echoed throughout the conversations between IB teachers.

According to participants, open-mindedness has to come first in the process of developing responsible members of global communities. A teacher in the United States commented: "Firstly, one has to be open-minded and try to rid themselves of any preconceptions or prejudices toward one or more cultural groups. I believe this is essential to thinking globally" (1C1010). An IB music teacher similarly emphasizes open-mindedness, using the concept as a starting point for the examination of the prejudices and beliefs people hold about other cultures.

We see evidence of the IB's commitment to open-mindedness when discussing necessary attitudes for international-mindedness. One teacher in India stated: "Across the age groups, teaching needs to be aligned with the understanding of cultural context and open-minded attitudes among students. [This is a] necessary skill that enables and makes students' aware of happenings around him/her" (1B1017).

The essential nature of open-mindedness in developing responsible global actors is so complete that the teachers found it difficult to think of globally focused education without open-mindedness at its heart; for example, "I think a global citizen is an open-minded person" (2G1027). A teacher in the United States takes us one step further to show us how classroom practice can assist teachers in developing open-mindedness and all of the complexity that accompanies it:

> I'm inclined to think that "being global" is an authentic openness to the truth in all of its complexity and uncertainty ... I emphasize this because I would like to suggest that other equally valid answers to this question are, in a sense, means towards this end. In other words, studying other cultures, travelling, participation in international celebrations, service work, etc are all valuable experiences which lead to this "authentic openness," which I'd like to suggest is at the heart of "being global".
>
> (2G1027)

In their classrooms, many teachers support open-mindedness by discussing global issues that are perceived as a key component in developing effective members of global communities. Nationalism was one global issue that surfaced numerous times in the discussions. When using nationalism as a topic of study, an IB teacher in New Zealand points out that every country has its own interpretations of history related to heritage, culture and politics. To achieve student understanding of nationalism, this teacher uses school books from various countries to examine how historical events are presented quite differently around the world. The teacher believes that students can develop more open minds by studying how nationalist feelings can influence the storytelling around historical events in all countries (2H1021).

This finding on the centrality of open-mindedness is significant because most other studies have found that global **content** is given primary attention in educational efforts to develop international-mindedness.

However, open-mindedness is not a single skill. Attitudes and values such as empathy, listening, respect and care were mentioned quite often as being critical for the development of globally responsible citizens.

Attitudes, skills and values

When examining how IB teachers conceptualize their identities and classroom practices as global educators, we see a focus placed on building certain attitudes and values, such as empathy, caring, listening and respect, that provide the groundwork for open-mindedness in learning about the world. IB teachers model globally orientated attitudes and values in their classroom in a variety of ways: from creating classroom space that encourages students to research diverse perspectives and express their views on global issues, to interaction with people and organizations across their nation or world regions.

One teacher in India summarizes the importance of demonstrating globally orientated attitudes and values in the classroom setting: “we take enduring values and attitudes to the classroom [that can] provide ways for active and engaged learning” (1B1009). By providing a classroom environment that supports student exploration, this teacher expresses how the attitudes and values displayed in the classroom environment lend themselves to the development of global citizenship.

It is important to note that while we discuss attitudes and values such as empathy, caring, listening and respect, the teachers did not speak of these values in isolation from one another. These attitudes and values intersect and support one another as they work toward teaching students to become global citizens.

Empathy

Empathy is one attitude and value that IB teachers discussed consistently as being important for understanding peoples and cultures around the world. One teacher in the United States summarizes an in-depth discussion regarding a variety of attitudes and values: “From reading several of the posts, I can see certain attitudes that may be used to characterize global-mindedness, in particular, empathy and compassion with, and awareness and discernment of, the human experience” (1D1010).

Empathy was discussed not only in terms of leading to greater understanding of the human experience, but also helping to create active and engaged global citizens. The majority of discussion surrounding this key value linked empathy and activism. One teacher in Canada uses empathy as a way of creating understanding of the challenges people face around the world and being willing to take action: “A global citizen is one who is aware of the challenges that people on this shared planet face, and is willing to do something about it” (1C1012).

A teacher in Hong Kong connected empathy and global citizenship explicitly, by stating that while students must have the content knowledge of cultures and peoples around the world, empathy encourages students to take that knowledge and apply it to creating positive change: “I think a global citizen is an empathetic person. Someone who uses information about other people and cultures to shape their own beliefs, attitudes, and affects the decisions they make. I think a global citizen is an activist” (2G1027). While empathy is strongly connected to the actively engaged global citizen, the data suggest that caring is also a value that grounds students in both the local and global communities.

Caring

Often linked with empathy, another important attitude and value is caring. Teachers sought to teach students to express care in both local and global ways. One teacher in Greece discusses "circles of care/responsibility" and what that might encompass for each student. This teacher emphasizes the difference small acts can make, and that these small acts can help students begin the process of becoming globally aware: “We also discuss the extent to which small initiatives can make a difference. This is where the promotion of care comes in, because if students can see that

everything, large/small does eventually matter, then they are on the road to becoming much more globally aware individuals" (3J1126).

Global citizenship and developing internationally minded students is not an endeavour solely for a single subject area. One teacher uses art as a way of helping students understand different cultures. Her goal is to help students become more open-minded and caring: "I have been testing this method for the last 15 years as a teacher and I truly believe that by practising this method I help them become more open-minded and caring. They definitely become more internationally minded" (3J1119).

This same visual arts teacher assigns her students a research project that requires students to examine one topic. The student is required to engage "different age groups and cultures and ask them questions on the given topic". The teacher then has the students visually express the different emotions they are feeling based on the information they learned. To take the project one step further, the teacher connects students to the local and global community by asking students to find an international artist who has similar work to a local artist. All of these components go into creating a final studio creation.

We also see emphasis placed on caring within the IB learner profile: IB learners strive to "show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment". A teacher in China expressed her commitment to helping develop caring students, and noted the support of the IB in this objective: "To be caring and balanced are not traditionally something that we expect to be taught in schools. Yet, through the IB programme, we integrate these skills into the way that we teach and the students learn" (2H1027).

Listening

Without developing skills in listening to others, empathy and caring have little chance of becoming values that impact students' ability to develop into global citizens. A teacher in Egypt discussed the need to help students place value on good listening: "Teach students the good listening skills to other points of view" (3J1127).

Listening to diverse points of view is critical to the development of open-mindedness, and can begin to train students to seek out complexities of interpretation and meaning that support the goals of a globally orientated education. A teacher in Greece addresses listening as an important skill as long as it is critical in its approach. She clarified the kind of listening she teaches her students: "The classroom is an ideal place to begin to reinforce the idea of respecting each other in all endeavours—listening, not necessarily agreeing, but working together to learn, to develop, to progress" (3J1128). Here we see the synthesis of values and skills. Listening to multiple student voices in a way that helps students develop their knowledge about the world can develop respect and critical thinking.

Respect

"Education plays a great role now in helping the new generation [to become] global. This can be possible by raising their social and ethical concerns in respecting others" (2E1102). According to IB teachers involved in this study, respecting others, both within the classroom setting and beyond, plays an important role in becoming a global citizen; for example:

> I would like to think that we are trying to create adults who are able to cross borders, both literal and metaphorical, with ease and skill, due to their receptiveness to the complexities of the world. They need to be able to communicate, listen, empathise, sympathise, but most importantly respect. If there is to be a global 'language' then it should consist of one attitude, 'respect'.
>
> (3J1127)

This teacher acknowledges the complexity of knowing and being within the global context. Respect, however, is a key ingredient in helping students to be able to cross cultural borders in a way that supports learning and exploration. Here, respect helps students be less judgmental of peoples and cultures different from their own.

Respect is not only discussed as a way to understand cultures with which we are unfamiliar; but also seen as emphasis placed on respecting one's own local space and place: "Understanding can lead to acceptance. And it, in its turn, leads to global-mindedness. And if I may raise one point here: [the] concept of global-mindedness embraces deep respect [of] your own heritage (familial, national, racial)" (1D1009). This teacher in Russia reminds us that global citizenship cannot ignore the personal. Global citizenship is not just what is "out there", but rather it requires respect and understanding of oneself.

The IB learner profile also supports critical self-reflection. Here, reflective learners are described as those who "give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development". One teacher in the South Pacific echoes many others when she discusses the importance of beginning her theory of knowledge course with critical self-reflection:

> At the beginning of the TOK course, I tend to spend a lot of time with the students examining ourselves. First, we look at what makes up our individual cultural context and how this relates to the local and regional context. We start to examine our own prejudices and begin to examine the strength of our beliefs. I think this theme of personal to local to global is an underlying thread.
>
> (2E1021)

A teacher in Canada also reminds us of the importance of grounding global education work within the personal: "Being aware of ourselves and identities (not just being swallowed up into the morass of being global) is the ideal. Cultivating the desire and interest in the other is important, I do think, as a prerequisite for global living, along with remembering who we are! I think of the motto of Quebec: Je me souviens ("I remember" or "I remember myself")" (1B1010).

Teachers in the study consistently point out the importance of connecting the personal to local to global. While there are critiques of global citizenship, stating that it strips us of our national identity, the IB teachers are directly contradicting this notion. The teachers clearly emphasized the importance of beginning with the local, in respectful ways, and then expanding to inquire about, and seek understanding of, the world. Seeing the local reflected in the global is important for analysing issues from multiple perspectives across time and place. The IB teachers incorporate multiple perspectives in their teaching to engage students in critical self-reflection as part of the process of developing perspective consciousness and becoming effective members of global communities.

Multiple perspectives and perspective consciousness

The development of international-mindedness is the aim of all IB programmes and is inherent to the organization's mission statement. Participants involved in this study agreed that, in order to accomplish the goals of teaching about international-mindedness and global citizenship, teachers must incorporate–and students must learn to value–multiple perspectives.

Many teachers possess a belief that before you can engage with multiple perspectives, it is important to understand how one's perspective develops and influences how one sees the world. As one teacher in Turkey points out: "Global citizens have a critical or analytical understanding of (parts of) his own and other cultures, and they are conscious of his/her own perspective and of the way his thinking is culturally decided". To help students develop perspective consciousness, this teacher engages students in critical self-reflection through the use of project-based learning. The project requires students to "take photographs related to the essential question: 'What is important to me personally in school?'" Interested in incorporating multiple perspectives to enhance students' international-mindedness, this teacher further explains that "different schools from different countries were invited to join the project" so students could share and discuss values, both shared and different, at their respective schools (1C1014).

The recognition of bias was identified as important. Teachers noted that, in working towards becoming internationally-minded, one engages in a process of "always looking for answers" because a global person "is passionate about understanding global issues and studies one issue from different perspectives" (3J1204). For a teacher in Fiji, engaging students in critical self-reflection is foundational to her theory of knowledge course. At the outset of the school year, she "spends a lot of time with the students examining ourselves. First we look at what makes up our individual cultural context and how this relates to the local and regional context. We start to examine our own prejudices and begin to examine the strength of our beliefs. I think this theme of personal to local to global is an underlying thread for me" (2E1021).

A teacher in Egypt recommends the "Six Thinking Hats method" created by Dr Edward de Bono to help with the development of perspective consciousness. His approach involves having students:

> use imaginary hats; each of which represents a way of thinking. The first is a white hat and represents neutral thinking; the red symbolizes emotions and feelings; the black represents the negative aspects, the yellow represents positive aspects, the green represents creativity, and the blue represents the development of the plan and the decision-making. Teaching in this way by giving a question to students and asking each one of them to think in a certain way, according to each hat, in the situations where the persons in the literature had, then each student analyses these situations from his point of view according to his or her hat.
>
> (3J1121)

For international-mindedness, the perspectives that students possess and the resources teachers and students use are central to teaching and learning. A science teacher in Canada organized a class debate on whale hunting to develop students' considerations of multiple perspectives as they become more internationally-minded citizens. The lesson required that the class be divided into two groups: pro- and anti-whaling. Within these larger groups students researched: "special interest groups such as Inuits, Greenpeace etc. Students wrote a position paper for their group using the "Point, Evidence, Explanation method" (PEE) and this defined their role in the debate." (3J1112). While discussions were conducted between participants regarding the incorporation of diverse sources of information, participants also valued critical readings of those resources to help students recognize biases and perspectives missing from the discussion.

"Looking at history through the lenses of the various countries of your students is a great approach [because] acknowledging the multitude of perspectives on any historical event is important. No historical account is neutral": to teach the importance of multiple perspectives when learning history, this teacher in Hong Kong drew upon what she learned during her travels to China in 2005 to create a discussion about how the atrocities that occurred in Nanjing during World War 2 (WWII) are depicted in Japanese textbooks. The importance of this lesson was elevated by the fact that many of the students in her classroom had Chinese parents and grandparents. Since the students were of Chinese and Japanese descent, "emotions were high amongst the students" during the discussion, but it is important to provide a safe place for discussion. I think it is important for educators to remain neutral and to teach students how to resolve conflicts constructively"(2H1022).

The participants involved in this study agree that effectively incorporating multiple perspectives necessitates: using a variety of resources; engaging students in a critical analysis of their own perspective; and examining the perspectives represented in the resources they use. A teacher in India shares that, when teaching skills related to media literacy, she uses "a variety of texts and other materials that help [students] to look at the media not only in France but also in a number of Francophone countries and we have a lot of interesting discussions in class" (3J1121).

To connect their students to people and ideas around the world, IB teachers use multiple resources, including technology. From the experiences of students in their classes, to web-based resources and literature from around the world, to films and guest speakers from the community, teachers valued the inclusion of multiple perspectives to help students develop international-mindedness. Integral to this, however, is the need to have students critically examine who is speaking, what may

have influenced a speaker's perspective, and how one perspective compares with other perspectives from people from different places. Understanding what informs someone's perspective is part of the cross-cultural learning process.

Learning about culture

Multiple perspectives and developing perspective consciousness are key components in developing a student's ability to learn from others who are culturally different from oneself. One English teacher in the United States uses literary works to learn about cultures different from those of her students. Her goal is for her students to gain knowledge about other cultures, "but also a sense of commonality between cultures demonstrating how similar we all are, there's a lot that unites us all and very little that divides us–division usually happens because of fear and ignorance" (3J1126). Through the use of round-table discussion called "Confronting our prejudices", a teacher in the United Arab Emirates gives students opportunities to speak candidly about their own cultural biases and to be self-reflective. This teacher found that some of her students were very candid in their remarks, while others took more time to "open up" (2E1023).

While some IB teachers discuss the importance of a critical or analytical understanding of cultures (including one's own culture) as a way of recognizing the impact of one's culture upon both their individual perspective and worldview, it is apparent, when examining classroom practice, that there are limited examples of this type of critical inquiry. One question that remains for some IB teachers is how to address and confront stereotypes. Many IB teachers discuss using literature from around the world to learn about cultures different from one's own and to provide students with multiple perspectives. A teacher in the United Kingdom notes, "Sometimes the study of 'other' literatures has reinforced prejudice in the students' own cultures" (3J1116).

Another teacher takes this one step further. Her desire to apply critical thinking to the examination of cultures around the world is clear; however, she wonders how best to do so: "It seems like the counter view and evidence is not enough to change cultural mindset. This troubles me because … the critical stance is not being applied to deep-set cultural aspects" (3J1118). Many IB teachers emphasize critical self-reflection as an important part of the process in learning about cultures around the world. As an important next step, many IB teachers also wish to add a component that directly addresses stereotypical beliefs.

Cross-cultural experiences

Cross-cultural experiences are of great importance to many of the participants. A teacher in Ghana states, "To be global, to me, is to have an attitude of mind that is informed by knowledge gained through cross-cultural interaction. This knowledge empowers the individual to look beyond his own limited horizon and to see issues through a global lens" (2E1101). Another teacher in China summarizes the role of cross-cultural learning experiences as "nurturing in each student an open outlook on life, respect for cultural diversity and the beliefs and values of all people, and a sense of commitment and social responsibility" (2H1105).

Many IB teachers find that bringing guest speakers from a variety of cultures into the classroom creates a valuable cross-cultural learning experience for students, which addresses the goal of open-mindedness and allows students to become comfortable with people from many walks of life. Teachers discuss having guest speakers share their experiences of living in their home country and of moving to a new country and culture, the similarities and differences between the culture of the country of origin and their current home, and offering students opportunities to interview guest speakers.

Other teachers provide cross-cultural experiences via technology. One teacher shares her student experiences working with "The Peace Project". Students first spent time learning about the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima and study WWII. Then the teacher provided students with the opportunity to connect and converse with students from a school in Japan about the bombings that took place during WWII. The teacher's goal was to utilize technology and personal interaction with students from Japan in order to increase cultural understanding and practice in working with different points of view. This teacher not only provided an opportunity to learn "both sides of the story", but also added an application: "students then create podcasts on various cultures and countries to address generalizations and stereotypes" (2G1024).

Global interconnectedness

IB teachers understand the concept of global interconnectedness within the context of others and other cultures. They believe that even people living in different regions or nations are globally interconnected. They think the world is small and tight, and that "what is happening anywhere in the world will affect us even if not now, it will be later" (3J1127). "A person is able to see the relationships between different cultures, both internal and external, and is able to mediate each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for others" (1C1014). The notion of interconnectedness includes global issues and engagement. Global issues are definitely linked to the whole world, not one country and people on the planet should collaborate to resolve the problem. One teacher in the United States pointed out, "I think that being environmentally conscious and responsible and understanding how we are all connected globally will become even more important" (2E1102).

Teachers have many ideas on global interconnectedness and say they want their students to understand how much they have in common with people across the world. As noted by Robert Hanvey (1976) almost 40 years ago, global education focuses as much on similarities as it does on differences. As one teacher shared:

> When introducing students to a new work in translation I sometimes start with a fairy tale or a myth from that culture, which usually has the fundamental traits of the national character in it. It's always interesting for the students to look for demonstration of those traits in the work they are reading as well as connect them with the characteristics of their own culture. They are always amazed at how much in common we all have and how small the world is, populated by people who are unique, yet in many ways very similar to us (3J1117).

A teacher in India incorporated global interconnectedness in his history class by focusing on historical similarities and commonalities across different countries and eras: "I will always make it a point to draw the attention of my class to similar situations elsewhere. For example, while dealing with terror and propaganda methods and history text book creation in an authoritarian state like Russia under Stalin, students were drawn to the attention of propaganda methods used in India in the1970s emergency, that is controversy related to the history capsule" (1B1017).

Global issues

In alignment with the IB mission statement, participants noted that teaching about global issues is essential to developing "inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world". One participant's perspective echoed that of other participants: "As an IB teacher, I keep reminding my students of the global context of everything they study" (1B1128). Teachers work to develop international-mindedness through the concepts of global interconnectedness, multiple perspectives and culturally relevant problem solving.

Participants across subject areas identify a number of global issues they use to help students develop international-mindedness from environmental sustainability, human rights, poverty, media literacy and global economics, to the work of international governing and aid organizations, such as the United Nations and Greenpeace. Other global issues included war, conflict, child labour and the use and elimination of landmines. The most frequently discussed global issues for the teachers participating in this study are environmental sustainability, conflict and human rights.

Environmental sustainability

An art teacher in the United States believes, "It is important for global and international education to give students a broad perspective and an understanding of the interconnectedness of today's world. Environmental stewardship, social awareness and cultural acceptance are issues I think play an important role in developing internationally-minded students" (2E1019).

One topic used to teach about environmental sustainability and interconnectedness by a teacher in India is the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster in India. Through the use of primary sources, student inquiry, and analysis of the multiple players involved in the tragedy, this teacher found students "were able to find the weaknesses of all of the stakeholders and did not merely point fingers at the multi-

national corporation", in order to develop a more complete understanding of the issue and see its global connection from multiple perspectives (3J1128).

Engagement with the environment serves as global pedagogy, as students apply what they learn in the classroom to the real-world of their own communities and beyond. One school is so committed to this issue that, "a sustainable development class for all students and a greenhouse where students learn how to plant and take care of plants in different ways" was created and "has had a great impact in our community" (3J1126).

A science teacher in Canada shares that every year he and his fellow teachers "take our students on a "Week Without Walls" trip. We go to a neighbouring island and the students learn about reducing their impact on the environment. They get to try composting, look at the manufacture of bio diesel, help remove trash from the beach and generally get introduced to the idea of sustainability" (3J1121).

The documentary film *Home* (2009) is recommended by one teacher as a resource for teaching about environmental sustainability within the context of interconnectedness and culturally relevant solutions. A teacher in Ecuador shared:

> I used role-playing as an important tool for motivating learning and promoting conflict resolution … I recreate a conflict of interest among several stakeholders each one from two different organizational and national cultures. Each student represents a different stakeholder (manager, environmentalist, pressure groups, minister of tourism, etc) with a different interest (increasing sales, protecting the environment, preserve the traditions, improve the national welfare, etc). Each party represents an opposite interest so conflict starts. The main goal of the workshop is to attain "win-win" situations. Students use concepts learned in class to achieve these solutions.
>
> (3J1117)

Conflict and resolution

The teachers involved in this study teach about many types of conflict with the aid of historical and contemporary illustrations. Culture, interconnectedness, and multiple perspectives emerged as key themes in teaching students about conflict and conflict resolution. As an environmental science teacher in Canada believes, "I hope that students learn to appreciate the importance of understanding other cultures and languages in conflict resolution and use their knowledge to make informed decisions about what they are going to do in their lives" (3J1123).

When teaching about cultural diversity and conflict, a participant in Russia had students explore conflicts that arise when people of different cultural backgrounds interact. Her students "discussed the problems that people who migrate from one country to another might face in the host country". To help students develop perspective consciousness and empathy, and to evaluate these developments across multiple places, students

> started with the article from the textbook exploring the views of minority groups (1st–3rd generation immigrants) on their lives in Great Britain. We asked the students to look for advantages and disadvantages of living in a foreign country and explain how they would retain their own traditions there. Then the students exchange their opinions in a classroom discussion. After that we offered them two cases for consideration. They were based on two real- life situations. The students got the task to think about possible solutions while working in pairs and then in groups of 4–5. When students presented their own findings, they were told how the problems were settled in real life and reflected on the effect of these decisions on different members of the community (1D1015).

The types of resources used and the media through which students are able to express their ideas for culturally congruent conflict resolution is also important. While teaching about the dropping of the atomic bombs during WWII, a teacher in the United States connects her students with students in Japan. She found that when

> through video and images students have a chance to get to know each other personally, this increases cultural understanding, and they view WWII from another viewpoint. This leads to discussions on Peace, nuclear weapons, and even brought up bullying in schools. The main objective has become to give the students first hand interaction with a culture very different than their own. They come to discover that although they are different at the core they are very much the same. Students then create podcast on various cultures and countries to address generalizations and stereotypes (2G1024).

Human rights

Participants incorporate human rights into their curriculum by discussing the unfortunate realities of everyday life in places around the world. Through a combination of contemporary issues, such as drug and human trafficking, and mass human rights violations in history, such as genocide, students have an opportunity to investigate a range of issues related to human rights.

As part of a lesson on the impact of transnational corporations on the economy and environment, a teacher in Canada "organize[d] the students into groups representing all the stakeholders; workers, CEO's, members of government, environmentalists, human rights activists (from both developing and developed countries)" (2E1023). She feels that, "it's crucial to explore these [global] issues from a variety of nations/cultures' points of view to give the students a more comprehensive understanding" (2E1023). The work of transnational organizations committed to alleviating human rights violations was also highlighted, with a number of participants mentioning Amnesty International, the International Red Cross, and Greenpeace.

Another teacher used *Reading Lolita in Tehran* to incorporate multiple perspectives while students learned about human rights issues and women. During the unit of study, this teacher in the United States found:

> *Reading Lolita in Tehran* was a revelation to many students who never thought about the issues women in that memoir have to deal with. However, three students of Iranian heritage had a different perspective on the subject. As a result, we had a few very passionate debates in class about cultural competence, human rights, the role the US plays on the international arena, etc. It was a very interesting experience (3J1111).

For many participants, human rights education involves applied knowledge. Teachers and students organize projects and trips to educate themselves about the realities of human rights and interconnectedness within their communities. Believing that a clean, sustainable environment constitutes a human right, a participant in Ghana notes that his favourite activity involves:

> a trip to the centre of the city with my students to observe the e-waste (used computers, television sets, stereo systems, etc) as well as other environmentally harmful wastes like used mattresses, used refrigerators, etc, that have been imported from the developed countries. Students interview the relevant stakeholders (sellers, importers, EPA agency), and write reports as one of their environmental chemistry projects … This lays the foundation for students' appreciation of the degradation of the environment resulting in the depletion of the ozone layer, and global warming. Through this exercise students have reported their sudden awareness that a safe and sustainable environment is the collective responsibility of the global citizenry (2E1021).

Many participants shared examples about their involvement in an International Day, Peace Day, Cultural Awareness Day, and many more ways in which they and their students learn about global issues while also educating others in their school and community about the importance of international-mindedness.

Engagement in the world

As can be seen in many of the examples, the teachers pursue students' engagement in their communities and the world. It is said that engagement is one of the most important goals in the IB curriculum. Many IB teachers mention, "think globally, act locally", in their conceptualization of global citizenship and their own teaching and lives. Engagement is also a salient feature to becoming responsible, global citizens. The *creativity, action, service* requirement is a fundamental part of the Diploma Programme and takes seriously the importance of life outside the world of scholarship, providing a refreshing counterbalance to academic studies (www.ibo.org).

Recognizing that all people who understand global issues do not take actions to resolve them, the participants contend **global thinkers** are quite different from **globally engaged** people: "I think a global thinker needs to be cognizant of the potential repercussions of their actions, even if they are committed only in their local community but understanding the "butterfly effect" they may be having around the world" (1D1013). Although they placed emphasis on engagement, they firmly believe that this should be based on appreciation of, and respect for, their own cultures and other cultures: "They are committed to enhancing the quality of life around the world, preserving indigenous cultures, languages, traditions, ecosystems" (B21011); "More important, is knowing and respecting other cultures, religions and traditions" (1B1015).

The teachers illustrated several different methods of engagement: organizing festivals, working with refugees, raising funds for people in poverty or experiencing natural disasters, taking national/international trips, and research projects related to global issues.

Festivals

IB teachers appreciate participation in festivals that allow students to engage in and experience other cultures face-to-face. Through these interactions, students can appreciate cultural norms and similarities, as well as differences in values and heritage: "Every year our International Club organizes an International Cultural Festival, where the girls participate in a fashion show representing different cultures of the world, sing, dance, recite poetry in different languages, as well as present a Food Fair with dishes of international cuisine made by students and teachers. It's a very popular event at our school" (3J1126).

Some teachers encourage their students to write letters on behalf of victims of human rights abuses through the Amnesty International "Letter writing marathon". Students have a chance to challenge cruelty and injustice through these actions. "Looking back on the marathons I participated in, I can tell that they are a great opportunity for all of us to learn to be more compassionate and help the people in need; to simply look beyond our backyards" (1A1019).

Fundraising

The participants encourage students to empathize with the situations of people who are having problems because of conflicts, poverty, abuses and economic crises and take some action to address the situations. These teachers' students have held festivals and raised funds for people in difficulties from natural disaster, health issues, and their own countries' internal problems. One teacher gives the example that "our students were actively involved in raising funds for the earthquake victims in Japan. This shows that they care about other people despite the differences in culture and distance" (1A1018).

Another teacher explains, "I also started [a] vision campaign in the community and with the help of the Lotus Hospital Trust students received training in initial vision care and then participated in camps helping to raise funds for the distribution of glasses and cataract surgeries" (1B1019). This teacher recognized that the students had a great opportunity to empathize with others' suffering and develop efficacy by taking action.

Travel

Many of the teachers think travel, especially an international trip, is an effective way for students to recognize their own cultural norms and values, and those of others. For some, these trips are associated with enhancing students' global awareness with regard to the environment:

> One of my favourite activities is to go on a trip to the centre of the city with my students to observe the e-waste (used computers, television sets, stereo systems, etc) as well as other environmentally harmful wastes like used mattresses, used refrigerators, etc, that have been imported from the developed countries. Students interview the relevant stakeholders (sellers, importers, EPA agency), and write reports (2E1021).

Another teacher wrote:

> I have just got back from a field trip with my grade 8 students, where the focus was on sustainability. Every year we take our students on a "Week Without Walls" trip. We go to a neighbouring island and the students learn about reducing their impact on the environment. They get to try composting, look at the manufacture of bio diesel, help remove trash from the beach and generally get introduced to the idea of sustainability (3J1120).

Projects

The teachers in this study have created numerous research and service learning projects to involve their students in the local community and beyond. Students actively participated in long-term projects to make an impact on the world and change it for the better.

> We are in our second year of working with an organization called *The Memory Project* (www.memoryproject.org). For this project, each art student receives a photograph of an orphaned or disadvantaged child from somewhere in the world. Our students research about the culture of the children and the causes of poverty/strife in their region and then they each paint a portrait of their particular child and write them a letter. The paintings are then sent back to the organization and distributed to the children".
>
> (2E1025)

> [I] encouraged students to engage in projects with international significance. One group is researching the endangered orangutans and has committed to building a viewing platform at the Sepilok orangutan sanctuary with the help of a local architect.
>
> (2F1109)

Conclusion

Among the participants, there is a universal focus on opening students' minds to different perspectives, cross-cultural experiences and conflicting interpretations of reality. These teachers believe the world is open, and their students have many opportunities to become more globally orientated. They agree wholeheartedly with the goals of global citizenship education, which in itself sets them apart from many teachers in their countries who see global citizenship education as a threat, or too controversial to tackle.

Content is used as a vehicle to address the goals of recognizing global connections, and developing skills in research, critical thinking, empathy and caring behaviours. Although the participants did not agree on everything (for example, the importance of travel), they did agree on the fundamentals that lead to global thinking and action—both considered to be key factors in becoming citizens of the world.

The study raises some intriguing questions.

How do we explain why these findings differ from those coming from studies of public school teachers conducted within their country? Are IB teachers fundamentally different from educators in other school settings? (We could not help but notice how many long-term overseas experience they have had and how much knowledge they shared about the world.)

Only a few of the participants raised issues of equity, privilege and power during the discussions. Is it the IB curriculum or the choices made by individual teachers that led to little emphasis on the relationships between people who hold economic and political power and the global issues that face the world today?

How can the IB provide a forum for long-term discussions of these and other topics? The teachers certainly enjoyed the discussions and many did not want it to end.

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